FEATURE RIG OF THE MONTH

WORDS & PICS // BRAD HAYES WORDS & PICS // BRAD HAYES





2011 to be named after his wife. Sadly, two days later, his plans were upset in a most tragic way. Craig and Nicole's son Rowan took his own life.

Rowan John was born in Dandenong in November, 1993. He grew up in the Narre Warren/Berwick area, attended St Margaret's Primary School, and Beaconhills College until the end of Year

in November, 1993. He grew up in the Narre Warren/Berwick area, attended St Margaret's Primary School, and Beaconhills College until the end of Year 9, when he left to start an apprenticeship with a fabricator. Rowan caught the family bug for trucks, understandable given his environment while growing up. The boy was ecstatic when Craig put the registration plates ROWAN 1 on one of his trucks. But trucks weren't his only love – Rowan loved basketball and music, and was a very talented extreme BMX rider.

built the company into a diverse range

of specialist equipment that focuses on moving loads that are far from ordinary.

Craig has a fondness for naming his

trucks after family members, and after a search for a suitable vehicle, he purchased a Kenworth T904 on the 15th of March

Then on the 17th of March, 2011 – two days after Craig bought the 904, Rowan Membrey took his own life.

"Rowan was always smiling," says Craig. "He was a really polite kid, a popular kid with a heart of gold. He had many, many friends."

Craig believes Rowan grew up too quickly. "He started going out to nightclubs and mixing with the wrong crowd. He started abusing drugs and

he family has been in the trucking game since the sixties, well into the second generation.

Membrey's Transport and Crane Hire is well

known in over-dimensional transport, and their distinctive white and green trucks, specialist trailers, cranes and pilot vehicles have travelled the length and width of our great country. But over the past several months, Membreys have been the focal point for a different reason – a truck called ROWAN.

Craig Membrey is the Managing Director of the company. His father started J&N Membrey & Son in 1962, and Craig took over the company in 1989 and has







alcohol, and was silently dealing with depression and suicidal thoughts."

Unaware of Rowan's pain, Craig was making plans to refurbish the 904, but those plans changed after Rowan's passing. Craig decided to rebuild the truck in Rowan's honour.

A 2006 model, the T904 was used as a road train by Toll before being purchased by Craig. Powered by a 600hp Cummins Signature, the truck had travelled 1.4 million kilometres in its previous life. The truck would be rebuilt to become a permanent reminder of Rowan.

Membrey's head mechanic Darren
Voros was in charge of the truck's total
strip down and was eagerly helped by
anyone that happened to be in the yard
at the time. Rob from Victorian Truck
Painting, then laid the paint on the
chassis and body panels, before the truck
was taken to the Trucker's Toy Store in
Sunshine where TTS kindly allowed the

use of their workshop for five months while Darren started putting the truck back together, adding a huge array of customised stainless products and accessories provided by TTS.

While Darren was hard at it, Craig Rodgers was equally busy. The talented artist spent 600 hours on the massive airbrush mural on the rear of the sleeper, a real highlight of the truck. Showing Rowan in three stages of growing up, it also pays tribute to Rowan's skills at BMX riding.

Blazoned across the top of the sleeper on each side, are the Beyond Blue logos, with the words 'Proudly supporting Beyond Blue the national depression initiative'. Craig thought the truck might help get the word out there about depression, so he contacted Beyond Blue, and they were just as enthusiastic as Craig to have their name connected to Rowan. While meeting Craig and viewing the truck for the first time early in December

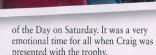


2011, former Victorian Premier and Beyond Blue chairman Jeff Kennett gave an outstanding endorsement of the truck. "He was absolutely delighted with our efforts in getting the Beyond Blue message out there," Craig said.

What does the future hold for Rowan? "I want to show the truck," says Craig. "I want it to make appearances at events of all types to create awareness of depression, and to get the word out there that there is help available."

"Rowan was a fantastic kid. I miss him each and every day. It's not easy with him not being here, but you have to adjust your life. I think of him and I get a tear in my eye. You wouldn't realise just how hard it is until you lose a child. Family and friends have been fantastic with the truck – all have been very supportive, and they love the truck."

On its show debut at the 2011 Castlemaine Truck Show, the Membrey Team were elated when Rowan won Rig



If you get the chance to see the truck, make sure you check out every detail, and have a chat to Craig - a very approachable man who takes great pride in both the truck and talking about his son.

Truly a remarkable effort by all involved, and a sensational tribute by a loving father for a son gone far too soon.

Depression is a life-threating condition that can affect any of us. Anyone needing immediate assistance can call Lifeline on 131 114.

For information about depression, call Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636 or visit www.beyondblue.org.au