

# A different direction

TO ENSURE IT HAS COMPLIANT AND RELIABLE TANKERS, SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT COMPANY, **GERICKE BULK HANDLING**, SPECIFIES EQUIPMENT FROM COMPONENT SPECIALIST, **JOST AUSTRALIA**, AS A STANDARD FOR ITS FLEET.

Casting back to 1927, the first colour television was only just being invented in Scotland, and in the US, the pop-up toaster was developed. Closer to home, the year also saw the inception of Naracoorte-based transport company, Gericke Bulk Handling.

A lot can change in 90 years, though. The large, flat screen colour televisions of today bear little resemblance to the small, boxy machines of their first iteration, and Gericke Bulk Handling has morphed from a small wheat and wool transporter into a highly-specialised tanker operation carting crude and refined vegetable oils.



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The cargo isn’t the only thing that has changed at the family-owned and operated business, explains third generation Gericke family member and Operations Manager, Matthew Gericke. “There have been countless major changes to regulations and technology since my grandfather started the business in 1927, much of which has taken

place in the last ten years,” he says. “The changes to the Chain of Responsibility has prompted businesses to look very closely at the strict weight rules, for one thing.”

Another strict regulation that Gericke takes seriously is the cleanliness guidelines set out for the refined vegetable oil transport task. “Refined vegetable oil is subject to close scrutiny when it comes to cleaning out prior loads, the washing process is very stringent,” Matthew says. “We spend a lot of time and money making sure everything is clean.” That dedication to cleanliness is also reflected on the outside of the 12-vehicle strong fleet, Matthew adds, which is a mix of Kenworth, Mack and Western Star prime movers.

“Presentation goes a long way, keeping vehicles clean and presented nicely makes the difference between rocking up to a delivery looking professional, or looking unorganised and casual,” he says.

To help keep his fleet looking spick and span, Matthew says Gericke Bulk Handling runs a ‘one truck, one driver’ set up. “It makes a big difference, and I think it helps attract a better class of driver,” he says. “The drivers know what they’ll be driving, and accept the responsibility of keeping it clean.”

Just as he relies on his drivers to look after the trucks, Matthew says he relies on his suppliers to help ensure the 26m B-doubles and single tankers in the fleet are compliant to the strict regulations. For Gericke Bulk Handling, two suppliers he notes are Holmwood Highgate for the tankers and JOST Australia for its fifth wheels and landing legs. “Cost is one thing, but reliability is more important,” he says. “The key is to look for value for



money in components, which is why we have exclusively used JOST’s JSK37 fifth wheels and landing legs across the fleet since 2000.” Ordered through Holmwood Highgate as a standard equipment spec, Matthew says he has had very few issues with the JOST equipment, and any problems have been easy to solve. “We do our own maintenance on site at our fully operational workshop in Naracoorte, so we really appreciate when equipment is easy to maintain,” he says – adding that the ease of maintenance is increased as the JOST JSK37 fifth wheel jaws can be replaced while it is still mounted to the truck or A-trailer. “The JOST team members that I have worked with are very helpful with quickly supplying spare parts, or

providing me with the requested diagrams and service procedures if I need them.” On top of the ease of maintenance, the JSK37 fifth wheels are also easy to use when coupling and uncoupling trailers thanks to the easy pull release handle. “It’s good to have, even though we try not to uncouple the trailers very often,” Matthew says – explaining that the grease line to the locking jaw and king pin allows the combination to stay connected for longer intervals.

Though a lot has changed at the 90-year-old business since it first started, the 17-year relationship with JOST Australia looks likely to remain a permanent fixture to the business, Matthew says.



JSK37 CZ.

**Fast Fact**  
South Australian company, Gericke Bulk Handling, is a highly family-oriented business, with Operations Manager, Matthew Gericke, working alongside his father Robin Gericke, and sister Sandy Edwards. “We have a great working relationship, and are good at leaving the work talk at the office,” Matthew says.

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