

Neil Peterken - Road Runner Trailers

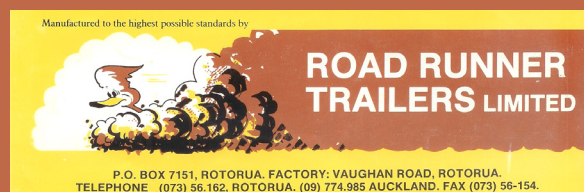
The criteria we use for honouring individuals with a Life Membership of the TTMF includes this, "Life membership is awarded to those individuals who have contributed to our Federation for many years and whose innovations have inspired a number of the designs we have today."

Few, to date, have achieved as much in that regard, or deserved the honour more, than Neil Peterkin.

Neil has worked with and for some of the giants of our industry in its formative years. They include Dave Domett, H. Allen Mills, Manu Tuanui and Ian Patchell, and, along with them, he was hugely influential in transitioning trailer building from a Wild West mentality into the professional and thriving industry it is today. Neil started his working career as a marine engineer. In 1960, he came ashore and joined Dometts in Feilding as a designer and engineer, working alongside another TTMF Life member inductee Russell Law. In 1962, Dometts moved him to Auckland to handle the company's northern operation.

Recognising that the engine room of trailer building had moved to the Bay of Plenty, he tried to persuade Dometts to open up a branch there. When he failed to do so, he decided to do it on his own and in 1967 moved his family to Rotorua.

It was from there the Peterkin name became indelibly linked with our industry, most notably, but not confined to, innovative logging trailers and equipment and the introduction into New Zealand of curtainsiders.



In 1972, he would become the instigator and facilitator of an event that would make the industry much of what it is today. He started Road Runner Trailers.

Despite having no money, Neil would attract to Road Runner many of the future leading lights of trailer building who would navigate the industry through the last quarter of the 20th Century and well into the 21st Century.

For that alone, many regard him as the "Father" of our industry.

Neil is gone now. Retired from trailer building, but still active working through other opportunities.

But for what he did while he was here, for the trailers he built, for those he employed, mentored and trained in our industry, he is a worthy Life Member of our Federation.



*Neil built the first B train in NZ
in 1980 to carry posts for John
Ramsey*