



## Australian pride

DRIVEN BY PASSION AND COMMITMENT TO THE INDUSTRY, O'PHEE TRAILERS HAS BECOME AN ICONIC NAME IN THE AUSTRALIAN TRAILER BUILDING BUSINESS, WITH A REPUTATION FOR BUILDING QUALITY AUSTRALIAN MADE TRAILERS THAT STAND THE TEST OF TIME.

The O'Phee's have been involved with the design and manufacture of semi trailers for over 40 years, the O'Phee name has become well known for building trailers that are built to the highest standard and for demonstrating the utmost professionalism in every aspect of its work. From its modern 7000 square metre premises in Rocklea, Queensland, O'Phee Trailers custom builds a wide range of innovative trailers including skeletal, drop deck, flat top and curtainsider trailers and dollies; as well as

specialised solutions that meet the precise needs of its customers. Key to the company's success is its close-knit team of hardworking staff which is combined with the hands-on approach of its owners Mick and Sharon O'Phee. They believe that a business is nothing without the people behind it and make a conscious effort to get to know each of their employees on a personal level – this is underpinned by the slogan 'The people who make it, make the difference' and 'we mass

produce quality' which is proudly displayed on the large overhead cranes present at the facility. O'Phee Trailers now employs approximately 40 staff, many of whom have been with the company for over two decades. "While there are many long-term employees at O'Phee Trailers, we also put our efforts into training young Australian apprentices," says Mick. "We don't use imported labour and instead choose to look after young Australians and teach them the skills they need to keep


this industry strong in Australia. We are very passionate about skilling young people in Australia – it is Australia's and our future." Although Mick and Sharon understand that most apprentices come into the business without many skills in the industry, one thing they always look for is people who are passionate about the industry and are willing to learn. "Many of our employees have been with the company long term, some have started as apprentices and have remained with O'Phee Trailers for over 10 years and beyond. Our staff are as much a part of O'Phee Trailers as Sharon and myself. It becomes one big family. When you develop a team that has the same passion and sense of pride as the company's owners, everything blends together perfectly." Prior to putting a trailer into production, O'Phee Trailers believes in meeting clients face to face in order to find out exactly what the customer is after and how it can offer an improved solution. Every tradesman at O'Phee Trailers is trained to be multi-skilled and is involved in every step of the trailer building process, taking it from the

initial stages through to the finished product. In fact, it is not uncommon for tradesmen to become involved in the original design process of the trailer, providing them with the opportunity to suggest any changes that may improve the end result. All trailers manufactured by O'Phee Trailers are completely Australian made using Australian steels. "We use Australian steel for its high quality and don't use any imported steel in our designs. In our 40 years of trailer manufacturing, we've learnt that while you can opt for lighter higher tensile steels, there is a limit. The roads in Queensland make the conditions slightly more arduous than in the southern states and as such the trailers need to be built to cope with these conditions. At the end of the day you are reducing tare to carry more payload, but there is a fine line. Design obviously is very important, as is longevity, but Safety and Vehicle Performance is paramount" explains Mick.

"Because we are a mid-sized niche manufacturer, we have the ability to build all of our trailers to order. There are no stock units, everything is custom made."

Currently, O'Phee Trailers is heavily involved with Performance Based Standards (PBS) requirements in both Queensland and Victoria. "PBS is going to be the way of the future," says Mick. "Higher productivity vehicles and different types of combinations improve productivity and efficiency. PBS allows us to work with our customers and the relevant regulatory bodies to develop innovative trailers that reduce freight movements, and allow users to carry higher mass loads or unique loads for a special freight task. As we have one team working on a trailer from start to finish, we are very flexible in the sorts of trailers we can develop.

"In saying this, PBS is not for everyone though, as it comes with special operating conditions that not all can comply with," adds Mick. O'Phee Trailers is now undergoing trials on a new PBS design with Queensland Transport and Main Roads. Under PBS approval, Mick believes that this innovative trailer will revolutionise transport

movements throughout Queensland. Look out for this PBS approved O'Phee combination on the roads in the near future. 


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While O'Phee Trailers may be best known for the quality trailers it builds, both Mick and Sharon O'Phee have also worked extensively with various transport associations. Mick has devoted much of his time to working with regulatory bodies throughout Australia and assisting customers in gaining approval for new and innovative trailer design concepts designed to increase efficiency. Sharon has also shown her commitment to the industry through her extensive work with industry associations which includes her role as former Chair of the CVIAQ, and Chair of Skills Tech Australia where she assisted in the implementation of various structural changes to update several TAFE courses in Queensland. This level of commitment is also mirrored in the efforts that go into each O'Phee Trailers display at the Brisbane Truck Show, where the company has received the prize for Outstanding Trailer Display on many occasions. Despite the company's level of success, both Mick and Sharon are quick to acknowledge the efforts of their staff which they say are responsible for building each of its trailers – alluding back to its motto 'The people make the difference'.



The award winning stand at the 2009 Brisbane Truck Show.



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