

Taking the lead with PBS combo



Andrew Woods and
O'Phee GM Mick O'Phee

FOLLOWING THE recent Queensland Transport ruling allowing Class 2B heavy vehicles to operate between Toowoomba and the Port of Brisbane, Woods Transport will be one of the first operators to take advantage of the new route.

The ruling means heavy vehicles of up to 30 metres overall length can now operate on the permitted roads between Toowoomba and Brisbane's port.

Based at Goondiwindi in southwest Queensland, Woods Transport will now send two fully laden 20-foot containers of export grain, each grossing 28 tonnes, in a single shipment, using new PBS approved trailers.

The containers will be shipped on A-double skels built by O'Phee Trailers, designed to meet the requirements of Performance Based Standards (PBS) regulations, covering areas such as axle loadings and on-board weighing systems.

Carrying the payload of two conventional trucks, the A-doubles will also be able to carry three empty 20ft containers on the return leg to Goondiwindi.

Andrew Wood of Woods Transport says the company needed to carry additional legal weight to compete with tippers on the same route, with the factory producing an average of 500 containers per month.

Woods says while the new trailers represent a large investment, the payback will come through a number of identified savings, including an expected reduction in fuel consumption, down from 72,000 litres per month to 44,000 litres per month.

Mick O'Phee, general manager of O'Phee Trailers, says the new trailers include on-board mass management with a live link to Queensland Transport, and although based on a regular container skel required a major re-design to ensure the PBS rules were met, including axle mass distribution.

O'Phee says his design team worked in combination with Woods Transport, component suppliers and Queensland Transport to ensure the trailers included the necessary features while remaining cost-effective.

Bruce Olassen, general manager of road safety and system management for Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads, says the department is focusing on working with industry to achieve the demands of the increasing freight task.

Olassen says there are plans to approve more Class 2B routes in Queensland, however he would like the transport industry to help identify which the routes that would be of most help to operators. ■

— Gary Worrall