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EQUIPMENT

Boost for productivity

IN recognition of the growing road-freight task, the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads has opened up its first performance based standards level 2B vehicle combination (30m) route from the Port of Brisbane to Toowoomba and back. PBS class B vehicle combinations are

longer than currently allowed freight vehicles. Goondiwindi-based Woods Transport will be one of the first companies to take advantage of the route, with a high-productivity vehicle expected to halve the number of trips the company needs to complete its bulk grain-haulage task, shuttling two 28-tonne, 20-foot equivalent unit containers from Toowoomba to the Port of Brisbane.

The containers will be shipped on A-double combinations built by O'Phee Trailers, based in Brisbane.

O'Phee Trailers general manager Mick O'Phee explained at this point of the season Woods Transport averaged 500 TEUs a month and the practical benefits of the A-double combinations meant half the truck movements for the same freight task.

At the peak of the season this amount increases and can double.

"For example if you base it on 500



O'Phee Trailers' A-double combinations will help reduce truck movements.

containers a month, (with) the old system, because they are 28-tonne containers, you could only transport them singly from Toowoomba down to the port because they are too heavy for B-double combinations, so they would have to go on a single trailer," he told *Big Rigs*.

"This new PBS level 2B A-double combination can move two, so we have halved those truck movements so it is down to 250 truck movements.

Mick said the flow-over effects and savings extended to public safety, environmental, equipment and asset savings, as well as crucial productivity gains.

"It is a

higher-productivity vehicle and it is all about working within the performance based standards framework, which isn't for everyone because not everyone can comply with the PBS framework as there are certain operational conditions that an operator must comply with," Mick said.

Mick said the PBS scheme was perfect for a defined freight task moving from point A to point B and back to point A.

He said onboard mass and IAP were two crucial things needed to be able to run in the strict boundaries of PBS level 2B.

"This project actually took three years in the making. Firstly you start with a freight task, and it's got to be a

specific freight task," he said.

"You work with a customer and design a vehicle that A) he is happy with that can suit his needs, then B) we make it work in the parameters of PBS.

"Once we have the vehicle approved you then have to work with the local government authorities as far as an application and route assessment."

One of the biggest hurdles in the project was getting the route approved from Toowoomba to Brisbane. "It is a very big envelope that needs to be put together, but the end result is what you see here and what can be achieved when industry works with government to achieve a common goal."

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