

The A-League trailer

EVER SINCE IT HAS COME TO LIFE IN 2006, THE MAIN THRUST OF THE PBS SCHEME WAS TO CREATE A BREEDING GROUND FOR INNOVATIVE ENGINEERING. O'PHEE READILY EMBRACED THAT OPPORTUNITY FROM THE OUTSET AND HAS NOW HELPED QUEENSLAND COMPANY GRAINHART TRANSPORT MAKE A QUANTUM LEAP IN PRODUCTIVITY.

It is safe to say that the PBS scheme created a great space for innovation but, so far, nothing has matched the leap in productivity achieved previously by the introduction of the B-Double. O'Phee has now set out to create the 'next big thing' – an O'Phee 40'/40' A-Double combination that is able to outperform the industry's reigning performance champion.

Oakey-based grain packer Grainhart has already received three such A-Doubles built by O'Phee and will have taken delivery of the fourth combination by the end of February. It is no surprise that Managing Director, Peter Hart, is convinced that the

O'Phee PBS-approved A-Double is the vehicle combination of the future.

"It's all about productivity gain, efficiency and reducing the number of vehicles on the road – the new A-Doubles, together with market leading subcontractors and existing resources, helped us save a lot of time and money," he explains – pointing out the ground-breaking potential of PBS.

"We've been looking at different PBS solutions for quite some time – as there are other options out there, but they didn't convince us. O'Phee conducted trials with QTMR between Toowoomba and the Port of Brisbane, and it was the basis of these

trials that the route was first validated. We then sat back and watched what happened before we made our decision. We did not have to wait too long as the O'Phee A-Double combination was simple, low-maintenance, and safe to operate – including full EBS with roll-over stability function. And, even the longevity aspect was already showing in the early days."

Established in 2007, Peter started off in the contested grain trading industry all alone, focusing on storage and packaging. "It was a great time to get involved in the industry, and ever since day one, the business has gone from strength to strength," he says.

"Today, we employ some 30 people, the transport division being an offshoot of the grain business. We first relied on subcontractors only, but the advent of the O'Phee A-Double encouraged us to create a dedicated transport division because we kept having issues with the lightweight B-double sets we used before."

Since Grainhart Transport was born, Peter has become a firm advocate of high-performance engineering. "Our clients demand a weight of 25 tonnes per container, which makes it 27.5 tonne altogether – per box. The only way to legally meet those requirements is using an A-Double. It's just a logical decision," he says.

On the other hand, PBS still is a complex system that can easily be very confusing – a side effect O'Phee can rule out, as the company's A-Double is pre-approved, reducing lead-time and bureaucracy to a minimum.

"PBS is a great scheme but quite intimidating at the same time," says Peter. "We were lucky that Mick O'Phee was able to walk us



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through the whole process; otherwise the complexity of the scheme would've scared us off. I think pre-approved designs are the only way to go because they give both trailer builder and customer more security in what to expect.”

“These achievements have been the result of a lot of hard work over a very long period of time,” says Sharon O’Phee, revealing that O’Phee’s smooth service is the result of a straining approval process. “It’s been a lot of work, but at the end of the day, those people who were prepared to think outside the box have produced the

results we can see out in the field today.” “Peter Hart runs a very smart operation – everything from the loading/ packing facility to every single vehicle on the road is very well presented and a credit to the company,” Mick O’Phee adds.

Located in the Darling Downs region in southern Queensland, each A-Double is going back and forth between Oakey and Brisbane and is covering 6,000km per week. All of the O’Phee 40’/ 40’ A-Double trailer combinations are pulled by all new Volvo prime movers. “We buy all our gear brand new; it’s not worthwhile using second hand

equipment,” says Peter. “Our Volvos, for instance, are cheap to run, reliable and strong.”

“There has been no problem whatsoever,” says Peter. “From now on every trailer we purchase will be an A-Double, we won’t go back to B-doubles, especially for our container freight service.”

And, there is a good chance Mick and Sharon O’Phee will be awarded the contract again. “Mick and Sharon are a good team and very knowledgeable. They know all about the PBS scheme, and that’s a real selling point. 🇺🇲

O’Phee A-Double

The A-Double is a Multi-Combination vehicle with two Semi trailers linked by a Converter dolly between the two trailers. These vehicles are manufactured to approved PBS standards and operate under strict approved PBS/ QTMR special operating conditions.

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