



Productivity

PRIORITY

Grainhart Transport is serious about achieving productivity gains and boosting performance in grain packaging, cartage and export. It has invested heavily in high technology equipment designed to meet those aims.

Young Harry Hart is in the box seat of the information stakes at the Grainhart depot in Oakey on Queensland's Darling Downs. The three year old is son of Peter Hart, Director of Grainhart and Grainhart Transport, a company involved in wheat and cotton seed export and there is every chance Harry will follow in his father's footsteps.

Harry knows all trucks and trailers in the company fleet, who drives them and indicates he has more than a little pride in each and every one of them. It is an opportunity he is probably yet to appreciate, but in the future he will undoubtedly reap the benefits. Peter Hart had a very similar upbringing to that afforded to his son – close exposure to trucks leading to an affinity with diesel power as experienced by most in the trucking industry, and if

you thought Harry was a little young to have an understanding then think again because Peter is passing on the same valuable information he took on board as a youngster. "My father Ron had tippers and was working in civil construction on the Gold Coast during my early years which gave me ample exposure to their operation," Peter tells. "The family then moved west and went into farming where again trucks played a major

role in the rural business. "Things evolved on the land and a move to Oakey followed. Grainhart was established where the core activities were packing grain for export. The collapse of the Australian Wheat Board opened doors for us and we grew the business with a growing number of truck movements during the height of each grain season, with storage also expanding as the customer base expanded." The Oakey facility is located on the corner of the Warrego Highway and Oakey Biddeston Road, a well structured complex complete with silos, an extensive array of grain handling equipment, a container area, a weighbridge and an area for expansion

as growth dictates. Grainhart was using a number of companies to carry containers to the Port of Brisbane but in 2009 the decision was made to operate its own trucks, with the first put into operation and a plan established to improve efficiencies in a business that was looking towards future growth with high standards across its operations. "It was simple really, it was our intention to continue driving success in the best manner possible and structure our activities. It was obvious we needed to streamline all sectors of the business to deliver the best in productivity and soon other trucks followed to complete our transport needs," Peter says.

With new trailer technology evolving he looked at combinations suiting the business and converted one prime mover to 90 tonne capability to realise payload advantages. He is continually looking at ways to implement technology into the business in the pursuit of productivity and excellence and with the advent of A-double trailer combinations in Queensland, Peter could see the ability to deliver enormous productivity gains. He approached O-Phee Trailers and work began on meeting stringent requirements to place them in operation in the Grainhart Transport fleet. "Carrying our own containers to the Port of Brisbane on A-doubles meant we could increase our tonnages dramatically.

The fact we can carry two 20 footers and a 40, or two 40s or four 20 footers gives an enormous amount of flexibility in our operation, particularly when the grain season is in full swing," he says. "There is an enormous amount of work to be done to meet the required standards, but Mick O-Phee has a good handle on it and did much behind the scenes to help gain approval. The IAP requirements mean on-board mapping reports directly to Queensland Transport and Main Roads and with each axle weight legal and the fact we are speed limited to 90km/h, it is a very safe combination," he says. Grainhart Transport operates six days a week with the trucks working 18 hours on most of those days with driver changes, and Peter reports the operation is achieving increased efficiency in leaps and bounds. Recently he took delivery of two Volvo FH prime movers, the first delivered on 1 September last year, with the second going into service just a matter of weeks ago, and while the company is seeking increased efficiency, it also looks to cost

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reduction in all areas possible and the Volvos have proven to be exceptionally good on fuel. "Ours is a high volume operation and we seek the best possible return on each combination. So far the Volvos are saving around 149 litres on fuel each day and that is proving to be financially beneficial to us. The first has covered over 100,000 kilometres and not given a hint of trouble and I am expecting the same of the second truck," Peter says. While he remains at the forefront of operations and administration you

will often find him loading containers, and just to make sure he is aware of what is happening out there on the road he is definitely hands-on and will do the occasional run to remain in touch with what his drivers encounter every step of the way. "We have a very good driver team that is highly professional in everything they do. With an average age of 42 years they are all highly experienced and they work well together to ensure we maintain a high level of service with safety. All of our drivers live locally, either in Oakey





or Toowoomba, and they take pride in both the trucks and the work they do. “We have people come in to wash the trucks on a Sunday but you will find if they need a spruce up, the drivers will do that when time allows. A mechanic comes to the depot to do the usual servicing, and everybody works to ensure there is as little downtime as possible,” Peter tells.

While Grainhart is primarily involved in wheat and other grain export, it is expanding its activities in cotton seed packing for overseas customers and Peter says that this is also increasing the cartage role.

“We are naturally looking to expand our business and improve it on all levels and we have identified there is a growing need for other products around the globe. As our activities expand so too will the need for trucks operated by Grainhart Transport and the fleet will expand as the movement of containers dictates.

“The growth of our transport business has been encouraged by the introduction of A-double combinations and who knows what is ahead in the

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realm of high productivity vehicles.

The fact we can progressively introduce new combinations and lower the number of truck movements on our roads delivers benefits to everybody, the safety and productivity gains cannot be underestimated or ignored,” Peter says with conviction.

The Grainhart Transport fleet has grown from one truck in 2009 to five today and while the number may be small in the overall trucking scene, it is testament to gains made through high tonnage volumes achieved with larger vehicle combinations taking efficiency to the

next available level.

As young Harry Hart grows he will undoubtedly see an increasing number of changes in the trucking scene and be well placed to plan further into the future if he follows the same career path as his father. Performance Based Standard (PBS) vehicle approvals have been slow in realisation across many sectors of the road transport industry but the introduction of the A-double in Queensland, with some operating in New South Wales, has provided a productivity boost much applauded by operators and customers alike.