

Changing the game with O'Phee Based Standards



BASED IN THE TRANSPORT HUB OF ROCKLEA, BRISBANE BUSINESS O'PHEE TRAILERS IS KNOWN AS A PIONEERING FORCE IN BRINGING AUSTRALIA'S WORLD-RENOWNED PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS SCHEME TO LIFE.

After a half-decade long struggle to gain traction in the marketplace, Performance-Based Standards (PBS) is now a household term in Australia's increasingly competitive transport equipment industry. However, only few know that much of the groundwork for the world-famous concept was laid well before the hype in the Queensland office and factory of O'Phee Trailers, now part of the Drake Group.

"We always knew that to survive in a fast-evolving business landscape, we had to seek new avenues of growth, so we embraced the idea from the outset. This was important for our customers too, as they also had to become more efficient and reduce the cost of moving freight. As a result, we put PBS-approved equipment into service long before

our competition even realised it existed," says, Mick O'Phee.

"Since then, PBS has become vitally important for our economy and allows us as a country to compete in the world arena. What's important to understand, though, is that it was never just an engineering challenge. For us as a manufacturing company, PBS meant embracing a whole new business philosophy. We needed to create a more comprehensive infrastructure around it, from sales consulting through to approval management. It was an important lesson at the time and is still true today: If you can't translate the inherent complexity into a stress-free experience for the client, you will fail."

According to Mick, O'Phee Trailers' PBS venture really took off after the company

Client Focus

One company that has embraced up the PBS concept long ago is container-handling expert ACFS/ Patrick Logistics. In April, the company's Brisbane operation took delivery of two O'Phee A-doubles, with more Rocklea-built PBS equipment in operation in Melbourne. "PBS has given us a real productivity advantage," comments ACFS/ Patrick's National Fleet Manager, Greg Ubank. "The savings in registration fees, fuel and tyre usage and driver time are just too big to ignore."

unveiled a new A-double design in 2009. Permitted to run at 79 tonnes GCM at the time, the new combination consisted of a single trailer capable of carrying one 20-foot container, which pulled a second trailer using a converter dolly. The second trailer was able to carry two more 20-foot containers or a single 20' / 40' container.

Mick says industry took up the concept very soon after the launch, prompting O'Phee to progress to a full fledged 40/40 A-double design and develop a whole range of additional PBS equipment at higher GCM – most often with a special focus on container handling and always working hand in hand with the leaders of Government regulatory bodies and O'Phee's loyal clientele. To date, O'Phee has manufactured A-double combinations in various configurations, from a simple container skel design through to flat top, drop deck, curtain-sider and tipper variations, all with the inherent safety and productivity

Early Adopter

Since the early days of the PBS scheme, O'Phee Trailers has established a reputation for innovative engineering and personal back-up service that is unique in the Queensland PBS market.

gains that come with PBS approval. "It's fair to say we brought something new to the market back then," says Mick. "Think about it – with our new A-double design, we were able to halve the number of truck journeys to the port of Brisbane. Of course that achievement was the result of a lot of hard work that happened well before the A-double launch in 2009; but the result is just remarkable."

As containerised trade through Australian ports is forecast to rise consistently until 2033*, with the largest annual growth rate expected in Brisbane, Mick says the company's expertise in PBS-supported container handling will be especially valuable. "Shipping is the main mode of transport for Australia's exports and imports and will continue to play an important role for our country. The question is, how can we transport all those containers in the most efficient way, and that's where PBS equipment from O'Phee Trailers will come into play."

Going forward, Mick says that PBS-approved equipment will become even more prevalent

Connectivity

In the early days, Mick O'Phee cooperated with Queensland Transport & Main Roads, in particular with Les Bruzsa and his team, to design special configurations to suit particular freight tasks – resulting in the design of a whole range of high productivity vehicles that we see as standard today, such as Road Train and Super B-double combinations as well as quad-axle designs. Today, he is working closely with the NHVR and all relevant authorities in Australia.

in Australia. "I think we have only just scratched the surface," he says. "More and more customers are now asking us about PBS on the first enquiry. Although some say an A-double is just a combination of trailers, a dolly and a prime mover, I believe the PBS process behind it – the design, the build, the productivity gains and the safety aspect behind it – makes it one of the best commercial vehicles available in the world market today."

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