



BPW axles are a long-standing feature of ERH's trailer fleet. Durability and reliability over the long hauls make them a standout success.

When you're on a good thing

FROM ITS DEPOT AT LAVERTON IN VICTORIA, **ERH REFRIGERATED TRANSPORT** RUNS A FLEET OF TEMPERATURE-CONTROLLED TRAILERS, THE VAST MAJORITY OF WHICH ARE EQUIPPED WITH **BPW** AXLES.

Operating a time-sensitive transport service on the eastern seaboard between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, ERH Refrigerated Transport has a long association with BPW Transpec and since 2014 has been specifying BPW axles including steer axles on quad-axle semi-trailers with a payload capacity of 28,500kg.

These units feature self-tracking axles in the forward position of the axle group which according to ERH Refrigerated Transport Director, Rupert Smith, was the preferred configuration six years ago when the company embarked on the Performance-

Based Standards (PBS) approved quad-axle journey to increase payload capacity. "For us PBS has been a moving target and we have continually evolved our equipment from 2014 to the present time in the never-ending quest for improved efficiency," Rupert says.

He proceeds to explain that the company recently ordered a new refrigerated van that features split axle groups with a tri-axle at the rear and the self-tracking axle at the front with a gap between the two.

"This gives us an extra four tonnes of payload capacity," Rupert explains, adding that the company divested its B-doubles three years ago in favour of 28 pallet semi-trailers, the latter measuring 17.65 metres and giving an overall length of 20 metres including the prime mover.

"In the refrigerated transport sector the 26 and 28 pallet vans will be the new 'small' trailers while B-doubles will potentially become obsolete and A-doubles with tri-axle converter dollies will take over from B-doubles," Rupert predicts.

"With the A-double you don't need the roll-back body that is necessary on the lead trailer of a B-double; plus you get an extra 10 pallet spaces and it doesn't cost that

much more to run than a B-double."

As for brands of trailers, ERH runs a mix of Lucar, Schmitz Cargobull and FTE, with the latter being the predominant brand within the fleet.

Asked about the company's history with BPW axles, Rupert's reply of "since Jesus played halfback for Jerusalem" pretty much sums it up.

"BPW axles are tried and true and we have simply never had a drama with them," he says.

"With all the technology that's involved with axles these days such as electronic braking systems (EBS) it's imperative that we have access to technical support.

"Having our depot just around the corner from BPW Transpec's premises in Cherry Lane at Laverton is a huge benefit to us as we know that any technical assistance we need is readily available."

Rupert goes on to mention that the most important aspect of the maintenance regime as far as the trailer axles are concerned is regular greasing of the steer axle linkages and pivot points to ensure long life and minimal wear.

When it comes to prime movers, ERH runs a mix of Mercedes-Benz and Kenworth 6x4 units with the Australian-built Kenworths predominating.

According to Rupert, the company runs the two brands for a number of reasons including to cater for differing driver preferences – some like the European characteristics while others prefer the North American style. Also, alluding to the mix of cab-over and conventional configurations in the fleet, he says it comes down to putting the trucks in the most suitable vocation for the specification.

"The new Mercedes-Benz Actros is a spectacular truck and this can be seen in



Hauling between Sydney and Melbourne, ERH Refrigerated Transport uses 28-pallet vans with a payload capacity of 28,500kg. BPW quad axle groups feature self-steerable axles at the front.

the numbers they've sold over the past few years," Rupert says. "I reckon it's probably the best truck Mercedes-Benz has had in the Australian market since the legendary 1418 model of the 1970s," he jokes.

On the topic of extra driver workload involved with B-doubles on fridge work between Melbourne and Sydney, Rupert estimates that operating semi-trailers rather than B-doubles saves each driver roughly 20 hours of worktime per week, due to not having to uncouple and recouple B-doubles for the purposes of loading and unloading.

"The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR) needs to be commended for opening up the road network to other high productivity combinations that can provide better efficiencies than B-doubles

without the extra driver workload in specific applications," he says.

Playing a major role in this significant improvement in vehicle safety and stability, particularly when it comes to PBS combinations, is BPW with its durable and technically proficient axles incorporating EBS. For ERH with its fleet of refrigerated trailers, the quality of the BPW axles and the close proximity to technical expertise from BPW Transpec when its needed ensure maximised uptime and productivity. ➔

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