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SPRING 2008



## SHIPPING STEEL

**CATERING SOLUTIONS**



**PFD IN GREEN BID**



**ORESOME OUTBACK TRUCKS**







# CASTING A PRESENCE IN STEEL

It takes a steely resolve to make it in the construction industry; the high safety demands and pressure to deliver on time requires a proactive and innovative approach to ensure success.



*The extendable trailer can easily be adjusted.*







**W**hen it comes to occupational health and safety, requirements can be extremely strict especially in the construction industry where workers operate large machines, and transporting heavy, and complex loads of building materials is all in a day's work.

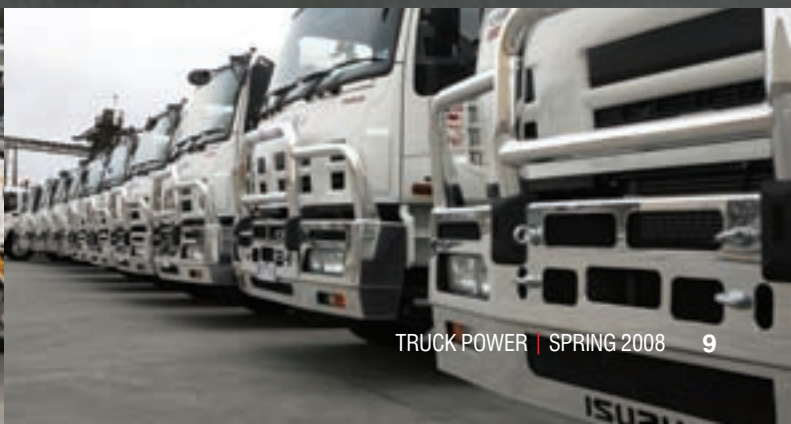
While in some areas of business it's the Government legislators that set the standards for workplaces to adhere to, some companies have taken it upon themselves to surpass the legal requirements by setting even higher voluntary safety benchmarks.

The goal of greater safety not only applies to the company itself, but often flows-on to affect a host of suppliers and business partners who must also lift the performance bar.

It was this focus towards providing a high quality and safety-orientated transport service using the latest in truck and trailing solutions, that enabled Melbourne-based transport and logistics company, Metropolitan Express, to secure a new long-term contract with Australian steel building solutions manufacturer, BlueScope Steel.

With its previous construction industry experience with organisations including Onesteel and Smorgon, Metropolitan Express was well placed to deliver all of BlueScope's freight and associated safety requirements for the timely delivery of steel products to Melbourne, surrounding suburbs and well beyond.

Key to meeting BlueScope's requirements is a newly commissioned fleet of Isuzu trucks and customised Krueger trailers.





Operating the equipment is a team of professional drivers who have undergone extensive training to equip them with all the necessary skills to allow them to work safely and efficiently in this industry sector.

According to Metropolitan Express co-owners Tony Van Kuelen and Sam Pantou, the acquisition of 11 heavy duty Giga 455 CXZ prime movers, four F Series rigids, 30 odd trailers and two terminal tractors will go a long way to helping fulfill BlueScope's distribution requirements.

"Metropolitan Express has invested heavily in capital equipment to fulfill this contract, and paramount to our purchasing decisions have been the important criteria of safety along with environmental considerations," Mr Pantou said.

"Having had a very good experience in other contracts with previous Isuzu trucks, our purchase of the latest models was little more than a formality, especially given the new levels of safety, innovation and technology on offer in the new trucks.

"The combination of anti-lock brakes, driver airbag and ECE-R29 compliant cab makes for a safe driving experience, while features including the Isri air suspension seat, automated manual transmission and 455 horsepower all provide a comfortable and stress-free driving environment."



Trailers feature an in-built retractable ladder with handrail.

Similarly Metropolitan Express' close collaboration with Krueger trailers on this project has resulted in the development of fit for purpose trailers which showcase some outstanding innovations.

The pride of the Metropolitan Express fleet is one of the Giga 455 CXZs fitted with a Hiab crane and pulling a Krueger extendable trailer.

The trailer can extend an additional 4.2 metres in length to accommodate the over dimensional long and flat steel products needed for big construction jobs, while the crane provides the versatility to deliver to sites where there are no forklifts or other lifting equipment.

"The new trailers feature an in-built retractable ladder with handrail, along with adjustable tailboards that can be easily moved to block in product depending on the length of the steel being carried, to ensure safer carriage," Mr Pantou explained.

"We will also shortly introduce a top of truck solution that will restrain the driver when they're on the trailer; potentially this will significantly reduce and may even eliminate any falls from the trailer.

"Complementing this set up are the latest Ausbinder Series Mark II loadbinders - the sum of all, is extremely secure and safe transportation for everyone involved in the distribution process along with other road users."



A Hiab crane provides added versatility.



From l-r: Metropolitan Express co-owners, Tony Van Kuelen and Sam Pantou with BlueScope's National Transport & Procurement Manager, Jason McCallum and State Distribution Manager Vic/Tas, Simon Reid.



According to Mr Pantou, the current range of Isuzu models have extremely strong environmental credentials, an important consideration for all companies including BlueScope when the carbon emissions trading scheme is eventually introduced.

“The new Isuzu F Series rigidids we have on fleet are rated to EuroIV emissions levels, a standard that is considerably more stringent than the USEPA04 measure used by its competitors,” Mr Pantou said.

“And with the Giga models, the environmental performance is even greater, as these trucks meet emissions requirements that are not due for introduction in Australia until 2011.”

Mr Pantou attributes Metropolitan Express’ success and strong growth in recent years to high quality and personalised service from both he and Tony.

This personalised care from the company owners is no mean feat considering Metropolitan Express’ size; the company has a fleet of 150 vehicles and also operates taxi trucks, a courier division and a warehousing service, to deliver a very holistic overall logistics package.

“Tony and I as the owners take a very hands-on approach with the business – we don’t hire reps preferring to have direct contact with our customers and prospects ourselves,” Mr Pantou said, “and we have a strong customer service focus that filters all the way down from the top of the organisation.”

During a time of widespread skills shortages across the transport industry, Mr Pantou said that good working conditions including access to modern equipment, along with quality training were important factors in attracting quality staff.

Vehicles are replaced at least every five years, a policy that is yielding benefits for both Metropolitan Express and its growing list of customers.

“By regularly replacing our fleet we keep the moral of drivers high, while providing a strong corporate image for our customers, overall it’s reinvigorating for the business,” Mr Pantou said.

“So far driver feedback on the new Isuzus has been very good; the drivers are extremely pleased with the vehicles, it’s only fair that our drivers are provided with the best.”

Aside from having access to top notch trucks and equipment, Metropolitan Express also provides its drivers with extensive training to empower them with the necessary skills to excel in the construction transportation business.

Using both internal and external trainers, drivers are not only trained and examined for their competency on the road, but must also be thoroughly up-to-date with BlueScope’s stringent OH&S requirements along with general knowledge about safely transporting construction materials.

“Our attention to detail and extensive driver training provides Tony and I with peace of mind; we have a duty of care to our customers, staff and other road users to ensure we have every safety aspect covered,” Mr Pantou said.

“We’re setting a new standard in this industry; we’re a market leader but have not sacrificed our safety focus to get here – I think our customers and staff appreciate this.”

Metropolitan Express is aiming to bring its expertise to other states, beginning with New South Wales where discussions are already underway with several high profile companies.



*Adjustable tailboards ensure safer carriage.*