

True to type

IN 2008, **CHRIS'S BODY BUILDERS** DELIVERED THE FIRST PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS APPROVED THREE-AXLE DOG TRAILER IN VICTORIA. FROM ITS FIRST PBS BUILD TO ITS MOST RECENT, THE TIPPER SPECIALIST PREFERS **JOST** COMPONENTS.

Sunshine-based Chris's Body Builders (CBB) has built a reputation for being focused on its end tipper portfolio, solidifying its manufacturing prowess over three decades in business. The one-product approach, however, does not mean that CBB is short on options for its customers.

In fact, CBB Managing Director, Chris De Bono, says it's quite the opposite, as specialising allows his team to custom build customer projects under the Performance-Based Standards (PBS) scheme. "We were the first to market with a three-axle PBS-approved truck and dog in Victoria in 2008 and we've been growing in the high productivity scheme ever since," Chris says. "Now, about 70-80 per cent of the work we do is PBS combinations. We have around 20 different blueprints for PBS tipper combinations, including variations to suit American or European truck specifications." The CBB blueprints cover three-, four-, five-

and six-axle truck and dog combinations, with the three- and four-axle versions the most popular among its quarry and excavation customers.

"These combinations provide a massive gain in payload while still retaining the best versatility when it comes to access," Chris explains. "When you add more axles, you start seeing restrictions in road access. With the three- and four-axle tippers, you can go on general access as well as high mass roads, which is important for access for some work sites."

Much of CBB's orders these days are repeat business, with its customers ranging in size from small operators to fleets upwards of 80 trucks. "Our customers come back to us every time because we're a specialist in what we do," Chris says. "We only do tippers and we do them well – it's a quality product that is only built from quality components."

Across the tipper range, German-engineered

equipment supplied by JOST Australia is the standard specification, and has been for over two decades.

"We use a lot of various JOST parts, including its hoists, hydraulics, ball races, aluminium rims, tow couplings, tow eyes and landing legs," Chris lists. "They are high quality

Fast Fact

The largest Performance-Based Standards (PBS) approved combination that Chris's Body Builders has manufactured to date is a six-axle truck and dog boasting a 47.5 tonne payload for Carter's Transport in Cavendish, Victoria, for grain haulage.



components and it's an easy company to deal with, so we use the equipment across all our builds."

Two factors that make JOST easy to work with, Chris explains, are its national distribution network and after sales service. "JOST's motto might as well be 'get the vehicle back on the road'. It'll replace a part and send the tipper back to work first and foremost. Only after that will it look into the cause of the issue. JOST isn't playing the blame game," Chris says. "That's a part of why we've been using its equipment for 20 years."

According to Chris, particular components such as tow couplings and ball races have to be specified as part of the PBS application

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process, with the CBB blueprints all featuring the JOST equipment.

"PBS is always changing, especially when it comes to regulations and access. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR, ed.) has become a lot easier to work with. It has implemented new systems and running a lot smoother in the application process. The more you work with it, the more you understand," Chris says.

While comprehension of how the high productivity scheme works has improved among the industry, Chris adds there is still confusion from fleets and operators on how to get the most out of it. "We spend a lot of time explaining PBS to our customers. The most important thing to understand is that once you've passed the initial hurdles and gained the blueprints, it's easy for them to place an order," Chris says.

With his order book filling, Chris says the outlook for 2017 is positive, with major infrastructure and rail projects beginning, as well as new housing estates all calling for his customers to invest in new tippers.

"We work with some of the major players in the industry and they're all telling us there are a lot of tenders out at the moment for large jobs across the country," Chris reveals. "Because many of our customers have worked with us before, they trust us to guide them through the PBS process and produce the right tipper for them for these jobs, using only the best components."

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