



## Smart gear to meet growing dock demand

On December 5th, 2006, road transport heavy weights gathered to participate in a special demonstration of Vawdrey's new 40/40 High Efficiency Container Transport (HECT) B-Double trailer. **Vawdrey Australia, TrackAxle, Daysworth International, Westgate Logistics** and the **Port of Melbourne** hosted the exercise, which saw the TrackAxle assembly, along with Kalmar's latest 60 tonne Ottawa terminal tractor, showcase the latest in dock transport efficiency.



The Vawdrey 40/40 HECT B-Double is, as its name suggests, a large B-Double unit that can carry two 40-foot containers simultaneously.

Often referred to as the 'Super B-Double' (a tag industry bodies are cautious to use), the HECT B-Double offers transport operators substantial operational efficiencies compared with a conventional

B-Double.

This includes up to 35 per cent more load capacity and a corresponding reduction in the size of truck fleets and kilometres travelled, leading to substantial cost reductions.

In one scenario, suggested by the National Transport Commission (NTC), a fleet comprising of about 40 percent of

HECT B-Doubles could offer operators up to 25 percent in trip savings and 21 percent in kilometre savings.

Paul Vawdrey, Vawdrey Trailers Sales Manager, said they were constantly looking at emerging technologies and designs, such as the HECT B-Double, to offer improved operational efficiencies to its customers.



The HECT B-Double is fitted with the TrackAxle self-steering axle system, which is designed to offer the 40/40 B-Double far greater manoeuvrability, particularly when reversing in the tight confines of a crowded dock area.

"There's a lot more to be developed on this design and we will continue reaching for new levels as we build each trailer and tweak elements so it operates more efficiently," he said.

"There's things we'll do differently next time, including cutting the tare weight down to fifteen and a half tonne."

Paul added that while the HECT B-Double may cost more than an ordinary B-Double, he stressed that the technology will pay for itself in no time."

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Part of the demonstration that day was to put the HECT trailer through a series of tight parking manoeuvres, which the unit passed with flying colours.

Kerry Atley, one of the founders of TrackAxle, said that the revolutionary self-steering system complied with the

footpath of Level 1 access and that its performance on corners is excellent. "We have a 52-foot motor-bike trailer which we built to indicate we could have a simple trailer that can comply with general access regimes," he explained.

**"We're going to need inland hubs that provide the facilities we have here at the port, otherwise the port will become so clogged that it will cost us money."**

"That trailer is operating in Brisbane at the moment with NOX and is the first Level 1 case study. The drivers all love it and NOX is happy with the productivity gains," said Kerry.

Currently, the TrackAxle system is exclusively available through Vawdrey, who have produced a number of designs to accommodate the revolutionary self-steering system.

The Ottawa 60 tonne terminal tractor, distributed in Australia by Daysworth International, highlighted the versatility of this type of unit on the docks.

Being compact, yet powerful, and offering a tight turning circle with excellent all-round driver vision, terminal tractors are increasingly becoming an integral piece of equipment when it comes to moving container shipments on the docks, transport depots, distribution centres, warehouses, production facilities as well factory sites.

One other major advantage of terminal tractors is their hydraulic fifth wheel that eliminates the need to lower and raise the landing gears when moving trailers, offering substantial time savings.

Daysworth's Dr. Chris Brennan told crowds: "Our new tractor offers pro-





ductivity gains through fast, safe, and cost-efficient operation. It's tough, it's purpose-built, it's reliable, it's fuel-efficient and it's road-safe."

Guests were also treated to a series of addresses from keynote speakers, including Philip Giltinan, Program Director – Performance Based Vehicles at the National Transport Commission (NTC); Ted Vincent, General Manager – Traffic & Transport Integration, VicRoads; Rob Connelly, General Manager of Extra Transport Group; and John Begley, Chairman of the Victorian Freight and Logistics Council (VFLC).

Philip Lovel, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Transport Association (VTA), was the MC for the day.

Philip Giltinan and Philip Lovel both outlined the NTC's and the VTA's respective involvement with Performance Based Standards (PBS), particularly the testing of new vehicles, such as the HECT fitted with TrackAxle, by the Interim Review Panel and the subsequent process of recommending suitable vehicles be endorsed and accepted by the various

State regulators and authorities.

Ted Vincent described the HECT B-Double as "an innovative vehicle that will do a great thing for productivity... Melbourne's freight task is huge. One of the ways to meet that challenge is by using higher productivity vehicles and Victoria has a reputation in that area that is probably as good as, if not better than the other States, with several new vehicles operating in specific transport tasks," Mr. Vincent explained.

Rob Connelly spoke on a similar theme, warning that the transport industry and Governments must work closely together to develop common sense ways to cope with increasing transport demands. He used an interesting scenario to illustrate this point. "If you are running a transport company with depots in Laverton, Somerton and Dandenong and you're moving 100 containers per day to these depots and each one required a turn-through, this means 200 semi-trailers are running up and down our freeways just to service one group of customers in one direction," he said.

"If you replace that scenario with vehicles such as this 40/40 combination, which can run at night and then use local shuttles for deliveries, you end up taking 200 semi-trailer movements off the freeway during the day and replacing it with 50 overnight. That's a 75 percent decrease in total road usage."

"This also equates to an efficiency gain for the operator and overall it becomes a win for the industry, the public, and ultimately the end-user customer. I struggle to find a loser in this scenario," he said. In his closing speech, John Begley (VFLC) also touched upon the challenges facing the Victorian freight and logistics industry if Melbourne is to retain its competitive edge as Australia's number one container port.

He pointed out that shipping companies are not only interested in the Port of Melbourne, but Australia as a market. He cited Portland on the west coast of the United States as an example of how a port can be bypassed if it doesn't meet the shipping company's requirements. "We have to open our eyes, extend our vision and see that the Port of Melbourne just doesn't end at Footscray Road, or Dynon Road. We're going to need inland hubs that provide the facilities we have here at the port, otherwise the port will become so clogged that it will cost us money and be totally unsatisfactory and inefficient," Mr. Begley concluded. **TBB**

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