

Haulin' the harvesters

MENTION LOGGING AND TRAILERS IN THE SAME SENTENCE AND THE FIRST THING MOST PEOPLE PICTURE IS THE TRADITIONAL JINKER MODEL EQUIPPED WITH POLES. BUT AS **TUFF TRAILERS** DISCOVERED, ITS 6X8 STEERABLE LOW LOADER HAS BECOME AN IMPORTANT TOOL IN THIS NECK OF THE WOODS TOO.

Situated along New South Wales' Pacific Highway – a well-known pathway for many Australian fleet operators – sits the picturesque town of Coffs Harbour, located some 540 kms north of Sydney and boasting a chorus of national parks and touristy attractions such as the 'Big Banana'. Coffs Harbour is also home to Burgundy Heights, a logging transport company that has operated for more than 30 years.

Having spent much of his career working in tough and remote country terrain, Burgundy Heights Fleet Manager, Jarrod Smith, knows exactly how to handle the trying conditions. "You've got to know how to survive on your own especially up here in the bush. If you get hurt or your equipment breaks down for whatever reason, don't expect help right away," he says.

To prepare himself for the task at hand, Jarrod applies the same principles to managing the equipment that Burgundy Heights uses daily. It's why for the first time, Queensland trailer specialist Tuff Trailers has supplied the company's newest equipment purchase – a 6x8 widening steerable low loader that Burgundy Heights took delivery of in April. Renowned for its work in Australia's forestry industry, Burgundy Heights has evolved dramatically over the past 15 years, with founder, Dennis Smith, and sons Jarrod and Brad spearheading the change of direction. What started as a traditional logging company operating in the bush, the Smiths have expanded into a harvester fabrication and design business, which Burgundy Heights, in conjunction with DJM Fabrications, now supplies to local companies and exports

abroad as well.

"We've grown into a business employing several skilled people who maintain and operate an inventory of six prime movers, six logging skel trailers, one A-trailer and a tag trailer, as well as most of the relevant equipment to the forestry industry – including excavators, bulldozers, grinders and harvesters."

According to Jarrod, the timing was right to add Tuff Trailers' 6x8 steerable low loader to the mix and for a number of reasons. "Unlike conventional excavators, which can be loaded on and tied down, harvesters require the boom to be stretched out on the trailer to keep the height to a minimum, as per restrictions currently in place in NSW," he says.

"We've tried a 4x4 and even a 4x8 float, but those units simply couldn't handle the size and



the weight of the harvesters, hence why we opted for more axles to cater to both. Late last year, one of my colleagues suggested a Tuff Trailer low loader and found that the company itself specialises in customising to the client's specifications. After a few phone conversations with Managing Director, Denis Di Pasquale, and the company's engineering department, it knew exactly the design we needed. We even travelled up to Tuff's facility to see how it build its designs and it was safe to say, we were amazed with their operation."

The new 6x8 steerable low loader, which is also equipped with a 2x8 dolly, now means Burgundy Heights can haul up to 105 tonnes of equipment at any time. As Jarrod emphasises, that kind of flexibility is key to its field. "When the trailer hydraulically widens,

the steerable axles widen with it and don't require any mechanical linkages to operate or configure, which is ideal for the harvesters and keeps us within the height restrictions as we can take advantage of the open centre," he explains.

"Tuff also fitted what's called a 'live compensating gooseneck' that's operated hydraulically, which means we can choose between two modes of tractive force onto the drive via remote.

"The gooseneck reacts very well to the varying road conditions. For instance, if we drive over a railway crossing, the trailer will automatically push the gooseneck down, which helps to keep even traction across the unit. This prevents a roll over and ensures proper weight distribution. It's quite a sophisticated setup, but it has proven invaluable to our operation considering we experience all kinds of roads

here in the bush."

While Tuff's 6x8 steerable low loader is still in its early days with Burgundy Heights, the unit is already making a strong statement amongst its team, particularly from a manoeuvrability point of view. "Having steerable axle control gives us improved stability and means we can easily navigate through all tight roads," Jarrod notes.

"Tuff has delivered on everything it promised and addressed all the issues as well. We couldn't be happier. This will no doubt have a major impact in the years ahead thanks to Tuff Trailers' design capabilities."

Contact

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Fast Fact

As the only manufacturer in Australia to fit EBS & ABS to steerable trailers, Tuff Trailers has added a new feature to the unit's braking system, specifically configured by Knorr-Bremse braking expert, David Oliver. The KB system includes new features such as on-board digital load scales, allowing the operator to position the load optimally and legally. Due to the effectiveness of the system, it has now become standard on all Tuff Trailers' steerable models.

