

Shedding some light

TO HELP ITS CUSTOMERS FULLY UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANT EARNING POTENTIAL OF PERFORMANCE-BASED STANDARDS, **SOUTHERN CROSS TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT GROUP** HAS NOW APPOINTED A DESIGNATED NATIONAL PBS SPECIALIST.

With Performance-Based Standards (PBS) enquiries continuously gaining momentum across the industry, Andrew Schipper, Sales Manager at Southern Cross Vans, has no doubt that high productivity combinations will account for the majority of the Southern Cross Group's production moving forward. To help its growing number of customers get the most out of the scheme, Remo Centofanti has taken on the role of Business Development Engineer – PBS Vehicles and is now leading the Group's dedicated PBS division.

Q: What does your new role at Southern Cross involve?

A: I manage our PBS services on a national level, and because it is a relatively new parameter, my main job is helping customers understand the benefits and combinations that are now achievable with PBS.

Q: What are some of those benefits, exactly?

A: The biggest thing is the earning potential – some of our customers have seen a 25 per cent increase in productivity. Figures like this trigger operators to consider replacing superseded models with PBS designs. Why would you carry three containers when you can carry four and in some cases six, or 34 pallets instead of 40? There is no doubt there is a significant advantage with PBS, but the major loss of earning potential is through a lack of understanding of what can be achieved.

Q: How do you help customers to understand the scheme?

A: Firstly, I present engineering drawings of a standard combination and compare it to that of a PBS design, which gives a visual representation of exactly what the differences are. This allows the client to immediately quantify the loading capabilities. I then help the client through the whole project.



I organise access and in-principle pre-approvals and communicate with road managers in various jurisdictions around the country, as well as the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR, ed.). I also manage the PBS assessments, design approvals and co-ordinate the build, right through to the PBS Certification and Final Vehicle Approval.

Q: What else do you do?

A: We provide an on-going service to help our customers when they're out on the road 24/7. For example, if there's a road closure on their usual HML-approved route, we can help them find an alternative, or if they get pulled over by an authority that is not familiar with their particular combination, we can help clarify the situation. We also supply comprehensive swept path analysis on mapped overlays into depots, client's driveways and cross overs.





Q: What types of PBS combinations have you built?

A: At the moment, we have 11 different pre-approved configurations for flat top, curtain-sider and refrigerated van combinations that we have designed with our customers. That includes A-doubles, Super B-doubles and 53-foot, 26-pallet high cube refrigerated and dry freight double drop deck Level 1 combinations with mezzanine decks, so they can be double stacked for a total of 52 pallets. Currently in production in our Melbourne van manufacturing facility is a 53-foot, 26-pallet quad-axle freezer van with a front lift up axle and a ear steerable axle. We have also delivered two 34-pallet twin steer 25m Super A Level 2 flat top combinations, which are the most efficient combinations we've built to date.

Q: How do you design these kind of combinations?

A: The first thing is to understand the task at hand, taking into account how the cargo is being freighted, whether it is palletised, or the weights and measurements for cubic commodities. Then we design the trailer to optimise and "value add" the task or freight movement – if there's a way to put less tyres on the road, we'll do it. But to make it work you also have to have an advanced understanding of the national road network.

Q: Why is that important?

A: You have to know the roads to be able to work within their infrastructure limitations. Having a national role, I have a good understanding of the major arterials and

routes, as well as remote and regional areas. We also make sure that the combinations we propose will actually function in our customers' depots.

Q: How do you manage that?

A: I go out to depots and routes to familiarise myself with their characteristics, and use mapping apps' turn-by-turn features to view road widths, bridges and roundabout characteristics. I'm constantly working closely with councils to establish critical bridge ratings and assessments. That way I know whether or not a design would be approved before applying for access.

Q: If you could change anything about PBS, what would it be?

A: I would consolidate the processes to make it more streamline. It would be an advantage if there was more transparency with the road network classifications and bridge and load ratings classifications. But I have to say, Australia is leaps and bounds ahead of any comparable systems overseas, whether you look at the US, Canada or Europe. The evolution of PBS in Australia has been positive and exciting, and I believe the NHVR is doing a brilliant job. 

Contact

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16 PALLET RIGID

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- We look after all PBS processes from Network Access Approvals, Assessment, Design Approval, Certification & Compliance to your final on road permits.



19m B-DOUBLE

SPECIALISING IN

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- 26-Pallet Trailers - Tri-Axle / Quad Axle Combinations.
- 36 Pallet B-Doubles.
- 40 Pallet Super B-Doubles.
- 40 Pallet A-Doubles.



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26 PALLET QUAD AXLE