

# Hard wearing, cattle caring

**Cannon Trailers Manager, Rod Cannon is well aware that his family's company can't take undue chances with their products as it has been solely dedicated to manufacturing cattle trailers over many years.**

He should know as he is responsible for all in-house design and drafting work as well as quality control at the company which has been a long-time user of Australian-made tubular steel from Orrcon Steel for its trailer bodies over many years to provide consistent quality.

The company's trailers are mostly Australian-made with only the wheel hubs, axles and tyres imported. Cannons is an important local employer with more than 30 welders including several apprentices working full-time on quality Australian-made heavy duty transport units that are used across Australia. Business is booming for them with plenty of work in front of them to meet demand.

"With livestock averaging approximately 800kg per head, a trailer can be rolling down the road carrying 40 tonnes," said Orrcon National Sales and Marketing Manager, **Lester Kirkwood**.

"Whilst the stresses and strains on the heavy-laden trailers moving over uneven roads creates hefty tension and torsion on the equipment that has to be handled time and time again, the steel is able to withstand the rigours of the Australian landscape and tough roads."

Steel products provided include rectangular hollow sections (RHS) for the main superstructure, taper flange beam (TFB) and merchant bar.

"We use the Orrcon hollow product for sliding doors, swinging gates, load-through flaps, side load gates, ladders, rear bumper assemblies and latches for gates and flaps," Mr Cannon said.

"Most of the gates and flaps consist of a RHS frame with a pressed infill sheet that is welded in place with the spring-loaded latches fitted to the gates and flaps to allow them to slam shut in place. The TFB is used as the combing rail of the trailer which creates a base for the superstructure."

Starting in a small factory shed and subsequently moving to a large factory complex on a four-hectare industrial site at Crows Nest on the New England Highway, north of Toowoomba, the company has been building cattle trailers for almost 20 years. The family-owned company employs around 40 staff, most of whom are boilermakers by trade, together a small administration, design, and management team. Cannon Trailers is arguably the largest employer in Crows Nest.

It has grown from building around 30 trailers a year to be now manufacturing between 90 to 100 cattle trailers that operate in every State across Australia.

Taking account of the many intricacies of transporting live cargo has meant there can be no herd mentality at the company which custom-makes trailers in every configuration, be it single trailer, B-double, B-triple or even triple road trains. Each trailer is custom-designed and built to order with capacity for 45-60 head of cattle per 40-foot trailer.

"The biggest aspect for us is specialisation," Mr Cannon said as they need to be made to suit a range of demanding conditions, both inside and out.

The trailers need to withstand the loading and unloading of walk-on freight that can weigh hundreds of kilograms each and in-transit to be able to tolerate and contain effluent discharge inside and handle some of the roughest roads and almost non-existent bush tracks.



The company's trailers are each based of its mono crate design that allows all strength to be in contained in the crate structure itself using the tubular steel sections with side cross-bracing.

This design approach allows for a lower height so the company is even able to produce double-decker versions within allowable freight vehicle height limits.

Mr Cannon said the trailers are mostly developed with a 20-year design life and in the company's long experience, there have not been any major issues reported and apart from routine maintenance, have been relatively trouble-free.

Trailer body components are all welded and are each inspected before coatings are applied.

He said a lot of the company's work these days comes from repeat business with one customer in particular having ordered 40 units over the years they have been in business.

A leading provider of transportation in the agribusiness sector across regional, rural and remote Australia, **Gordon Martin** has been sourcing purpose-built livestock trailers from Cannon since its inception.

"Our focus on maintaining state-of-the-art equipment and services helps maintains our position as a leader in the industry," Mr Martin said.

He said Cannon build trailers to meet all operational requirements of Martin's from light weight B-Doubles to full Type Two Road Trains that operate in NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory. Cannons has also been innovative in working with Martin's to develop ladder systems, work platforms and walkways to provide a much safer work environment for drivers.

"We look forward to continuing to work with Cannon into the future providing long-term solutions to the heavy workloads our livestock fleet handles each year."

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