

Tailored approach

GTS FREIGHT MANAGEMENT TAKES GREAT PRIDE IN ITS HIGHLY CUSTOMISED FLEET, WORKING WITH SUPPLIERS TO IMPLEMENT THE LATEST IN SAFETY TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION. WITH **JOST** FIFTH WHEELS ALREADY SPECIFIED ACROSS THE NATIONAL FLEET, THE BUSINESS IS NOW WORKING WITH THE EQUIPMENT SUPPLIER TO RETROFIT A NEW SENSOR SAFETY SYSTEM TO EACH OF THESE UNITS.

Established in 1980, GTS is a family owned, full service logistics company that operates out of Mildura, in Victoria's north-west. From humble beginnings, starting with just a single truck, it has grown to become a respected national wine and beverage transport company. Today, it operates a national fleet of over 150 prime movers and 450 trailers; specialising in glass and finished product transportation. "In the last five years, the business has doubled. We attribute that growth to our focus on innovation, quality and service," says Damien Matthews, Managing Director of GTS. "The business has changed a lot in many areas. We are trying to better understand our customers, and tailor make our service to best suit their needs." When it comes to sourcing equipment suppliers, GTS chooses carefully, and has

developed several long-standing relationships. "We always look for a quality product, but we also look for innovation and businesses that can stand behind their product and service what they sell," adds Damien. For around 20 years, GTS has continued to turn to Jost for its fifth wheels, landing legs and king pins; and to Vawdrey for its specialised trailer needs. Despite being regionally based, Damien asserts that both suppliers are always on hand when needed. "The relationships we've developed with both Jost and Vawdrey have been terrific. Fifth wheels are only a small part of a trailer, but they are an important one and Jost regularly communicates with us to see if they can help with anything or if there is anything we need," adds Damien. GTS predominantly specifies Jost's JSK 37C

series fifth wheel. In the last few months, the company has begun retrofitting Jost's sensor safety system to its fleet. The sensor system allows drivers to check the status of the fifth wheel from the cabin of their truck. GTS began the rollout of this technology earlier this year and plans to have it installed across the entire fleet before the year's end. "As a business, we keep on analysing our safety procedures and initiatives to prevent issues. Rather than being reactive, we prefer to be preventative. GTS does a lot of work for the supermarket industry, and there is a big push on safety. Anything we can do that prevents potential safety issues is our main aim. We have a lot of automation through satellite tracking, automatic emails to the senior management team – our IT system is very modern and allows us to be very proactive.

We also have a team of full time personnel for compliance and safety," adds Damien. "The focus we place on safety is huge, right from day one. When employees start working for us, inductions are nearly one week long to instil GTS's values."

Along with the new fifth wheel sensor system, GTS has also begun fitting forward-facing cameras internally on all prime movers, as well as additional cameras on either side of the truck that point towards the trailers and provide the business with real-time visibility of its fleet, while out on the road.

The business also maintains its fleet to the highest standard. The Mildura facility features its own mechanical workshop, equipped with specialised machinery and vehicle wash bays that are used to exclusively service the company's immaculate fleet.

Vawdrey has manufactured almost the entire GTS trailer fleet. "With the sort of work we do, we can't just buy something off the shelf. The whole trailer is custom designed. It's not just one little area of the trailer but every little bit of it; and we keep trying to improve on them every year. We work with Vawdrey to design something that is tailor-made for our customers," explains Damien.

Much of the fleet is comprised of Vawdrey's lightweight, straight deck B-doubles, which incorporate a range of features designed to enhance both performance and safety. Among these is Vawdrey's patented LatchLiner curtain system. For reduced tare weight and increased capacity, they also feature aluminium floors, foam rear walls and aluminium gates. With a



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36 pallet capacity, these B-doubles are used to transport glass bottles and palletised goods. The fleet also includes several Performance-Based Standards (PBS) approved hi-cube triple drop deck B-doubles, also built by Vawdrey. They feature a 4.6m high frame capable of handling 72 pallets across the whole combination. Operating under PBS, they can achieve a 68.5 tonne gross vehicle mass. The most recent triple drop decks purchased also incorporate Vawdrey's automatic mezzanine deck system, allowing for an additional two pallets on the second level, without the need for the decks to be manually adjusted by the operator or forklift.

"Vawdrey incorporates a lot of safety features into the new equipment, and can perfectly match its equipment to our operation. With all of the products we use from Jost, we don't have many issues at all, that's why we keep buying their product," says Damien. Looking ahead, he says that GTS plans to

maintain high levels of growth. "Our growth has been at about 20 per cent per annum and we are hoping for similar growth over the next five years. We've purchased another 10 acres next to our office for a new development that will feature an office and a 10,000 square metre warehouse. It's due for completion by March 2019. This will be the 10th warehouse we've built and will facilitate growth in warehousing and associated freight volumes, and deliver future growth for our administrative and operational requirements. We will also look to increase our fleet to cater to the new site. Our outlook is to increase to about 500 trailers by the end of 2019."

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