

CASE STUDY

Kennedy Trailers



CATEGORY:
Manufacturing

LOCATION:
Bairnsdale, Victoria

PRODUCT:
RAEX Wear Resistant steel
OPTIM High Strength steel

Trailer Made

30 years ago, when a young boilermaker was travelling through rural Victoria in an old Falcon ute doing welding repair work, he could only dream that one day his sons would be running the successful Australian manufacturing business that he started from those humble beginnings.

In 1980 as his fledgling truck and trailer repair business outgrew his parents' driveway and garage, a young Garry Kennedy founded Kennedy Trailers in Bairnsdale, Victoria.

Six years later, Kennedy Trailers built their first logging trailer from purchased drawings and plans and the way forward was set.

With Australia's then-strong timber industry booming, Kennedy Trailers continued to grow and as the needs of the logging industry changed, Kennedy Trailers moved to manufacture more custom-built designs and developed a strong reputation for their top quality, purpose built, tough trailers.

Using his hands-on experience and self-taught design skills, Garry introduced a number of new concepts to his trailer designs such as a unique folding skel trailer that hydraulically folded onto the prime mover allowing for better access to bush tracks and logging coups.

Fast forward to 2014 and now employing 40 staff, Kennedy Trailers has expanded their expertise into the manufacture of logging, mining and heavy transport equipment.

RUUKKI

Raex®

Optim®

“Kennedy Trailers is one of those great family business success stories that are such a part of the Australian manufacturing sector,” explained Nick Marchesani, BlueScope Distribution’s Morwell Branch Manager.

“Garry and his wife Debbie started the business from scratch and now, 30 years later, their sons Lynden and Cory have taken over the day-to-day running of Kennedy Trailers.” Not surprisingly, maintaining a successful manufacturing business is not without its challenges.

“Like most Australian manufacturers, we’re seeing increasing competition from fully imported or part-imported trailers,” said Cory.

“Fortunately for us, Dad built this business on a philosophy of fully understanding our customers’ needs, engineering a solution that specifically met those needs, only using quality materials and with our commitment to quality manufacturing, we ensure our customers always get the best trailer to suit their requirements.

“We’re proudly Australian and we believe that being close to our customers means we can offer them a level of service and customisation they can’t get from overseas manufacturers.”

A key advantage Kennedy Trailers has over many other trailer manufacturers is their ability to undertake a complete design and build in-house.

“We start the build process by talking to our customers about their specific needs. Every application will have different functionality, dimensions, tare and even OH&S requirements,” explained Cory.

“The functional specification we develop in those discussions then goes to our in-house design team.

“Our designers are some of the most experienced in the industry and they draw on their years of experience to develop a specific design that efficiently meets the customers’ functionality, performance and importantly, weight requirements.

“From those designs we then individually build each trailer, piece by piece, from the ground up.”

Kennedy Trailers recently purchased a state of the art CNC plasma cutting machine to supplement their in-house manufacturing capability.

“With our own machine we can design parts, cut and make any small adjustments quickly and easily with a minimum of impact to our production schedules,” explained Cory.

Adding this capability to their already efficient manufacturing process means Kennedy Trailers can now build a complete two dolly (carriage), four bin side-tip trailer in two weeks.

Meeting the needs of the mining industry requires a rig that is not only extremely tough, impact and wear resistant but its structural weight needs to be minimised to maximise the payload while meeting a range of transport and safety legislations. That means a special grade of steel is required. To support Kennedy Trailers’ requirements for a suitable wear and high strength steel, BlueScope Distribution has recently commenced supplying a new to market wear resistant and high strength steel from Finland. To provide this product a partnership has been formed with Ruukki, a leading Scandinavian steel manufacturer.

“Kennedy Trailers came to us with a requirement for a particular grade of tough heat treated steel plate that was outside the normal BlueScope range,” explained Nick.

“Not being able to satisfy their requirements with a BlueScope product, we used our international expertise and networks to identify and evaluate the perfect solution from Ruukki in Finland, which has now grown into a strong distribution partnership to supply Ruukki’s RAEX Wear Resistant steels and OPTIM High Strength steels.”

To ensure the best supply package for Kennedy Trailers, BlueScope Distribution also worked with Ruukki to develop a special non-standard plate length that better suited Kennedy’s requirements. Rounding out the supply package, BlueScope Distribution now hold stocks of the Ruukki plate from which Kennedy Trailers draw on to match their production schedule.

The end result being that Kennedy Trailers has on-demand access to the special steel plate product they need without having to maintain a large, costly, stockholding.

“Essentially it’s that combination of technical expertise and ability to develop and manage customised product supply packages for our clients that’s at the heart of the BlueScope Distribution offer for Kennedy Trailers,” explained Nick. That’s a sentiment shared by Cory Kennedy.

“BlueScope Distribution has been an integral part of the Kennedy Trailers story from the start and this latest supply arrangement with Ruukki plate is just another example of the service and expertise they’ve been able to provide over the years, meaning we can focus on building the best trailers and rigs for our customers,” said Cory.

For more information on Kennedy Trailers visit:
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www.bluescopedistribution.com.au

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