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## GOING WITH THE FLOW

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### FEATURE

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*Brisbane operator H2Flow Hire maintains a fluid approach to business*

Running an efficient fleet takes a variety of different skill sets ranging from mechanical aptitude and understanding, the introduction of specific programmes to initiate the checks and balances that control the fleet and a strong understanding of customer service.

One attribute that is generally not up for discussion, except possibly in the coach-travel sector, is a high degree of understanding of the tourism industry.

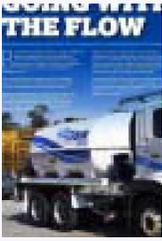
The three equal partners involved in H2Flow Hire, the Brisbane-based specialists in the supply of water and fluid-based distribution services, did in fact all work together for many years building up tourism accommodation businesses.

Having taken that company from concept stage to culminate in a successful public stock issue, the three partners - Scott Beioley, Paul Ryan and Mark Broekman - were looking for a new venture and realised that the effective and efficient supply of water to various industries could become their next collective challenge.

"We started H2Flow Hire with three second-hand trucks and from the outset we brought in a mechanic to work through the fleet and bring everything up to the correct standards so we could progress the business," said Scott.



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**H2FLOW HIRE**

“Interestingly, the same mechanic is still with the company as Fleet Service Manager, but the fleet has now grown to over 100 vehicles and 80 trailers.”

The H2Flow Hire truck fleet operates in both wet and dry-vehicle hire, providing the transport of water and associated services through its fleet of truck-mounted water tankers ranging in capacity from 6000 litres to 28,000 litres. For cartage of smaller literage volumes there are water-tank trailers available for hire of 1500 litres upwards.

The supply of domestic quality approved water requires each potable tanker to be licensed under similar regulatory control to the restaurant industry, and in this category H2Flow Hire can supply rural landowners that require water for domestic use in times of drought, or for inner-city operation the same quality water can be supplied for swimming pool installations and refills.

The entrepreneurial skills of the three partners have enabled H2Flow Hire to continue its planned expansion into other water supply areas, such as civil earthworks and excavation sites to assist with soil compaction or dust control; regular horticultural watering programmes such as required for the creation of gardens and lawns, or to reduce erosion during the development of new housing and industrial estates.

“A new area we have recently entered is for soil erosion prevention where we use a polymer to provide stability by spraying banked areas bordering major road development. We also can provide a polymer-based spray that assists in soil retention, and erosion avoidance during the development phase of a major earthworks project.

“It’s areas such as these that are ideal for the Hino 500 Series bogie-drive as a 15,000-litre water truck. This has a side-mounted cannon and a 15m-wide boom spray for polymer spraying. This level of performance enables us to complete these types of tasks quickly and effectively,” added Scott Beioley.

The company has grown from its original depot at Sumner Park to include a new head office and depot at Beenleigh, plus further depots at Mango Hill and Griffin on the northside of Brisbane.

The company fleet of approximately 100 vehicles comprises bulk water cartage, water blasters, vacuum trailers, solar-powered fuel tankers trailers and also, in a new development, tanker trailers for the supply of AdBlue to vehicles operating away from the usual truck stop depots. Also available are mini-tippers and relocatable site tanks of 28,000-litres and 56,000-litres capacity.

Forging a good relationship with Hino Trucks Australia has resulted from the specific needs within the company for vehicles able to travel and maintain slow running speeds while spraying water through truck-mounted water cannons and chassis-mounted spray bars.

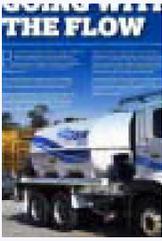
“We have standardised now on the Hino 500 Series for our medium and larger weight vehicles. With an Allison torque-converter automatic transmission, the driver and operator is able to select a suitably slow speed and maintain that without the risk of excessive clutch wear,” said Scott.

“An automated manual transmission (AMT) simply does not have the right level of control when travelling at very slow speeds, or while operating a power take-off to pressurise the spray systems. We found excessive clutch wear and varying degrees of speed control when trialling AMTs.

“Since ordering our first Hino 500 Series fitted with an Allison automatic transmission, we have repeatedly ordered more examples with a further four new trucks currently being supplied through Sci-Fleet Hino. Bodies are supplied by Peak Engineering Transport Services of Peak Crossing, QLD, with bodies for civil use supplied by STG Global of Ormeau on the Gold Coast.



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“We work closely with Hino for parts supply and also when specifying vehicles. Hino has been very good when it comes to supplying engineering charts to the bodybuilders. This assists in the correct placement of bodies to maintain excellent weight distribution. On our latest Hino 500 Series, when fully laden to GVM, it was exactly one tonne under maximum weight limits on both the front and rear axles.

“On the pump side we use the Truck Master Series by Finsbury and Hatz motors to drive the pumps on the larger trucks. We have YANMAR stationary diesel engines for the smaller trucks and water tankers. Hatz motors are more expensive than other makes but they are superior in terms of reliability and longevity.

“We maintain our fleet efficiency by servicing on a time-based interval, rather than distance, as our vehicles do not travel high kilometres through the year. We have full NHVAS accreditation for our larger vehicles and each piece of plant or equipment undergoes a regular A, B or C-service, supported by an independently completed full annual three-day examination protocol that coincides with the C-Service.

“Our maintenance requirements for the past 7-8 years with our larger vehicles have been completed through M.K. Equipment Services of Rocklea and since the move to fully automatic torque converter-equipped transmissions, clutch repairs are no longer a feature of our service and maintenance regime.

“We incorporate telematics where there is an advantage. As an example, all our pre-check protocols are completed by the drivers using their mobile phones prior to the start of their working day. As soon as the drivers have completed their pre-start check it is visible on our management system. It also monitors the visual inspection of the vehicle including tyre condition,” added Scott.

The company has established a tyre-maintenance programme with Bridgestone Tyres, which supplies all vehicles with a standard steer-tyre pattern and a standard drive-tyre pattern, which is consistent across all vehicles throughout the fleet.

The standard reverse camera system fitted to Hino trucks makes additional camera fitment for forward left-hand side vision much easier and are simply added to the in-cab digital display.

“We see reverse cameras as essential. The installation of front left-hand side camera vision is also a major safety benefit for operators working on horticultural watering. It displays the position of the water cannon and spray bar effectiveness on the screen in front of the driver, without restricting vision of the road ahead.

“The automatic gearbox with Hino is a better proposition for our type of work. Our 9000-litre mid-range Hino 500s with single axles carry a load exceptionally well, providing zero trouble with the gearbox. We see our future certainty with Hino and the good experience we have with the 500 with a similar experience extending down to the 300 Series,” added Scott.

The Hino 500 Series is available in 4x2, 4x4, 6x2 and 6x4 configuration with the choice of a standard cab or wide cab. Power options cover the spectrum of 215–350 hp with peak torque ratings from 673-1422 Nm.

It’s the safety features of the 500 Series that are of particular interest, with the inclusion of vehicle stability control and reverse camera, ABS, traction control, ECER29 cab rollover protection and front under-run protection on all MY17 Wide Cab models, with the addition of Hino Pre-Collision System with pedestrian detection, autonomous emergency braking, adaptive cruise control and lane departure assistance all fitted to the new MY19 500-Series Standard Cab models.



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Scott Beioley