

# LIFTING THE IMAGE

Two years ago Melbourne-based manufacturer, Tieman, quietly became the sole Australian distributor of Dhollandia tail lifts. But now, with predictions of increased tail lift use by the local trucking industry, Tieman has decided the time is right to get the Dhollandia message out to the masses.

**PAUL MATTHEI** reports.



Global connection. Tieman national sales manager, David Freeman (left) with Dhollandia's international sales representative, Johny Jonckheere.

**Y**ou don't need to be a Rhode's scholar to work out that there are major differences between trucking in Europe and Australia. Take tail lifts, for example.

Whereas some 80 percent of Continental urban delivery vehicles are equipped with tail lifts, here the number is only about 20 percent. But the number is steadily rising and local tail lift, tanker and transport equipment manufacturer Tieman has sensed the need for a more comprehensive range in this country.

Around two years ago the company formed an association with Belgium tail lift producer, Dhollandia – a company that claims to be the largest tail lift maker in Europe – to give Australian trucking operators a much broader choice in hydraulic tail lifts. Since then the relationship has built to the point that late in 2006 Tieman held an event at its Campbellfield (Melbourne) plant to inform customers and the media about the partnership. Part of the proceedings involved an address by Dhollandia's international sales representative, Johny Jonckheere, who travelled from Belgium for the occasion.

Johny began by pointing out some similarities between the two companies. He mentioned that both have been building tail lifts for a long time, in Dhollandia's case 35 years and Tieman's 30 years. The pair also shares strengths in product support, durability and the ability to adapt

specifications to meet unique requirements which, Jonckheere added, were instrumental in Dhollandia's rise to prominence.

"The company was founded by Omer Dhollander in 1968 initially building side tippers and tankers," he related. "In 1971 the first tail lift was built and by 1988 production had reached 3000 units a year."

In 1986 Dhollander's son Jan took the reins with a dream to one day achieve a yearly sales result of 10,000 tail lifts. By 1994 the annual tally had reached 5000 units and just two years later Jan's vision of 10,000 sales was realised. Today, with production facilities in four countries, Dhollandia has a sales presence in 30 European countries and last year had worldwide sales just shy of 30,000 units of widely varying specifications and with capacities ranging from 300 to 9000 kg.

## ON A WINNER

These sentiments were echoed by Tieman group sales manager Marcel Wynn who said the new partnership means there's virtually no end to the versatility the company can offer in tail lift design.

"About four years ago we recognised the limitations of our own range of tail lifts in relation to the trend towards higher volumes and the demand for more diverse specifications in this market," he stated. "When we started looking seriously at other tail lift manufacturers we found

that Dhollandia had a business philosophy that was very similar to our own."

Marcel was quick to add that the new arrangement certainly won't mean customers with older tail lifts will be left out in the cold when it comes to parts and service.

"Although we have rationalised our own range and slotted in Dhollandia product, we will continue to support and service every tail lift we have ever sold as well as those of our competitors," he affirmed, adding that customer training for all new tail lifts in the Dhollandia range, and for that matter any other brand, is an important aspect of Tieman's commitment to the industry it serves.

As for the product range, Marcel is adamant that Dhollandia can supply tail lifts for every conceivable Australian application. For example, "we are introducing an expanded range of cantilever tail lifts with both steel and aluminium platforms that will be sold in 2.0, 2.2, 2.4 and 2.6 metre variations to suit a diverse range of trucks," he maintained.

While Tieman is proud to have notched more than half a century in Australian manufacturing, the company has realised that long term viability in the tail lift business dictates a global partnership that adds synergies and economies of scale to the range. Therefore, the decision to become sole Australian distributor for Dhollandia will ensure there's no tailback in Tieman's progress in the foreseeable future. **IIL**