

Eyes on the prize

HOWARD PORTER HAS BUILT A SOLID REPUTATION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S MINING INDUSTRY FOR DESIGNING INNOVATIVE TRAILING EQUIPMENT. NOW, THE COMPANY IS LIFTING ITS OWN BENCHMARK WITH THE RELEASE OF A NEW QUAD ROAD TRAIN FOR QUBE'S PORTS AND BULK DIVISION.



Built specifically for hauling iron ore and manganese minerals from the Pilbara region, WA's key mining hub, Qube's new quad road train has been more than nine months in the making and is the result of an ongoing alliance between Howard Porter and the State's central road authority, Main Roads Western Australia. "One of our main objectives as a business is to develop innovative equipment that can help grow the mining industry, bolster the businesses involved and help the government improve road safety, and those factors are what's fuelled this latest project," says Todd Emmert, Director of Qube Ports and Bulk, which operates the Utah Point bulk facility in Port Hedland. "We're very excited to put this new combination into service and it will deliver higher safety performance and efficiency improvements across our operations." Howard Porter has designed the new quad-axle, quad road train under the Performance-Based Standards (PBS) guidelines. The combination includes four side tippers and stretches up to 60m long, almost half the

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length of an AFL football field. It can also carry up to 140 tonnes of payload, according to Roy Lombardi, Managing Director at Howard Porter. "We all agreed on the PBS design with the view of lifting productivity and safety for Qube, as well as reducing the amount of trucks and trailers we have on the road," he says. "This combination is the first for the Pilbara region and could potentially open the door for more growth throughout the transport and mining industries." Qube's views are also shared by Main Roads WA. "Approval of these vehicles supports improved industry productivity and lower costs," a spokesperson for the road authority says. "Additionally, it also introduces a safer vehicle to the road network and has the potential to reduce the number of trips

required. The increase in efficiency has the potential to reduce the number of quad road trains required to service Utah Point by 20 per cent and take 38,500 trips off the Pilbara Road network per annum." Safety is one significant area that all three parties were adamant about prior to production. "Safety is a major consideration when assessing these vehicles. The quad road train has been specifically designed and assessed to meet strict Australian Design Rules and safety standards," says Main Roads WA. "Additionally, this full combination, which can travel at 100 km/h, will now be limited to a maximum of 90 km/h to allow other road users to safely overtake." According to Howard Porter, the design of the trailers will improve stability and tracking when

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Opened in 2010, Qube Ports & Bulk in conjunction with the Port Hedland Port Authority helped develop the Utah Point Bulk Facility. The facility currently operates at an export capacity of 24 million tonnes per annum exporting products such as iron ore, manganese and chromite. At present, Qube Ports & Bulk utilises a fleet of more than 1,000 trailers, encompassing 240 B-double, triple and quad road train combinations nationally.

compared to the conventional quad road trains currently in operation. "Qube will use the latest in European prime movers on the market that boast the best safety systems including DSS seeing eye machines and GPS monitoring to constantly monitor the operator for alertness, fatigue and distraction," Roy says. "The trailers on the other hand will feature York axles and suspension, as well as the latest in EBS units from Air Brake Corporation, all with the goal of improving the overall performance of the road train. "In addition, each trailer is constructed from heavy-duty steel, designed to withstand the harsh environment and high temperatures of the Pilbara region. It's all about ensuring Qube's drivers are comfortable and are kept out of harm's way during those long trips." This isn't the first major purchase from Howard Porter for Qube. In 2014, the company took delivery of five PBS-approved triple road trains for transporting salt from the Dampier Salt facility. The success of those combinations is what prompted Qube to come

back. "This is now the second time Qube and Howard Porter have delivered PBS vehicles into the Pilbara," he says. "The triple road trains have worked out so well and have been successful in taking 3,500 truck trips off the road per annum." With Howard Porter's new quad road train rolling into service, Qube Ports & Bulk says this latest combination will be a major component of Australia's next mining boom. "The innovation and approval of the trailer configuration has been another success for Qube and a win for the entire iron ore and manganese industry," Todd concludes. "We've been dealing with Howard Porter for up to 15 years and Roy and his team have continued to set the standard in the industry with innovative equipment that breaks new ground." 

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