

Merging expertise

THE STEADY EXPANSION OF THE **DRAKE TRAILERS** PORTFOLIO OVER THE LAST HALF-DECADE HAS PROMPTED THE COMPANY TO RELAUNCH AS **THE DRAKE GROUP** THIS YEAR, BRINGING A NUMBER OF BRANDS UNDER THE ONE BANNER.

When it was founded in 1958, Drake Trailers had a simple goal: to build the best trailers available in Australia, offering innovative designs to best suit the needs of its customers. The family-owned and operated business has actioned this goal throughout its nearly 60 years in business by constantly developing new trailer models, and actively seeking to improve its skillset.

Over the years, its search for improvements has found the company both looking internally and externally, bringing in knowledge from a number of experts in specialist markets to bolster its own. Now, the company has brought the Drake Trailers, O'Phee Trailers, Drake Collectables, BoXLoader, Cometto and Sunseeker East Coast Australia brands under the one banner, launching as The Drake Group earlier this year.

"The launch of The Drake Group is a definite advantage for clients as a whole, merging engineering expertise and capability from all the brands under the one banner," says Sam Drake, Business Development Manager at The Drake Group. "We have had great success with bringing all the companies' products on board which will continue to strengthen under The Drake Group."

Now, Sam says The Drake Group can offer a much larger range of trailer models, from general freight trailers, specialised Performance-Based Standards (PBS) approved combinations, low loaders, steerable platforms, mine site transporters, special heavy vehicle trailers and Modular Self Propelled Electronic Trailers (MSPE). The MSPE expertise comes from Italian company Cometto, which joined with Drake

in 2011 when they teamed up to create an Australian version of Cometto's ANT model – a fully modular self-propelled trailer for the construction and mining industry capable of handling loads up to 1,000 tonnes.

"This product continues to grow and develop in a tight market, which we anticipate will continue with Belgian trailer builder Faymonville acquiring the global Cometto brand this year," Sam says – adding that Drake is looking forward to growth

opportunities through the Faymonville product as well.

Drake carried out an acquisition of its own, with the purchase of O'Phee Trailers in 2015 a significant stage of the Drake Group's formation. The acquisition brought the already renowned O'Phee capability for developing new designs together with Drake's expertise in using high-tensile steel for a new generation of trailer product lines. "The synergies between both companies have always been undeniably strong and complementary, and bringing together these great manufacturers provides customers of both O'Phee and Drake access to a diverse range of transport solutions," says Sam. "O'Phee has offered extensive advice



and development into the Drake product both through manufacturing efficiency, techniques and general product improvements. The marriage of the two companies has been a great success and continues to strengthen."

The combined expertise has recently been demonstrated through recent projects including a super lightweight retractable Skel, PBS-approved Skel A-doubles and

BoXLoader combinations.

"French-built BoXLoader side-loader cranes fitted to O'Phee trailers continue to develop their light and efficient designs using high-tensile steel," Sam explains.

Currently, The Drake Group has many special projects in production, such as a new generation Semi Modular Low Height Steerable and a tri-axle extendable low loader with an extremely low deck height, widening decks, and a removable hydraulic raise and lower gooseneck.

"In light of the recent launch of the grouping of companies, the Brisbane Truck Show will give The Drake Group the opportunity to showcase our vast capabilities," says Sam – adding the family-owned company has only grown by sticking to the same goals from when it started 59 years ago.

"We look forward to seeing everyone at the Truck Show as we have some very interesting products on display from across many of the brands under The Drake Group banner."

Fast Fact

The Drake Group is involved with Prestige Motor Yachts through its Sunseeker East Coast Dealership. Sunseeker is a UK-built luxury motor yacht with boats from 40ft to 155ft. "This arm of the Drake Group was born through the owners passion for boats and interest in the luxury boat market," says Sam Drake, Business Development Manager at The Drake Group.

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