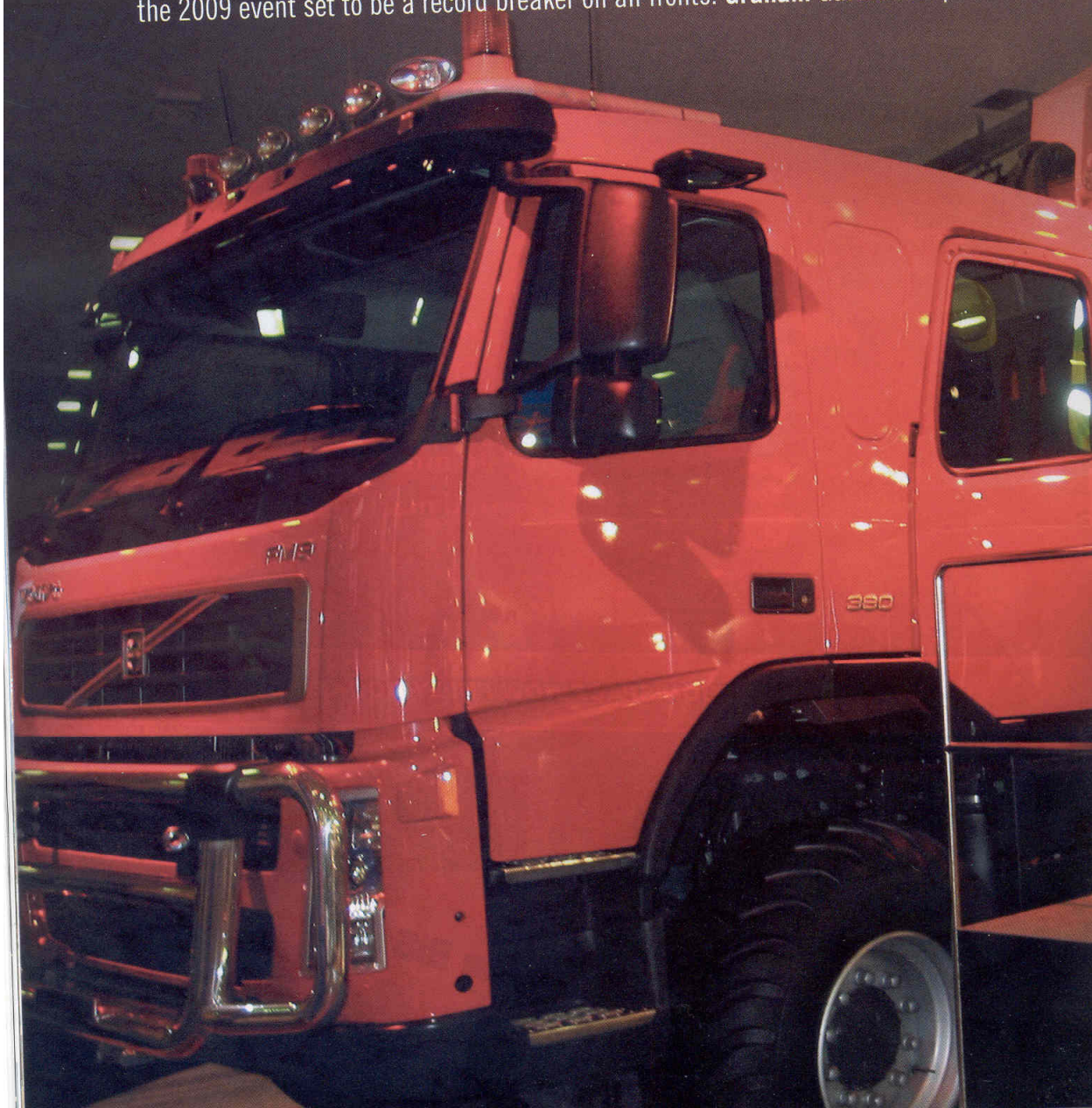


on the road » TRUCK AND MACHINERY SHOW

# *TRUCKIN'* ALONG

Despite the economic uncertainty the Queensland Truck and Machinery Show is expanding, with the 2009 event set to be a record breaker on all fronts. **Graham Gardiner** reports



**T**he 2009 Queensland Truck and Machinery Show has shrugged off the global economic slowdown to attract a record number of exhibitors. It's an achievement that will enable organisers the Commercial Vehicle Industry Association of Queensland (CVIAQ) to continue to fund its high number of industry development activities.

CVIAQ Chief Executive Brett Wright says the Association has filled all previous exhibition space amid a surge in manufacturers lining up to be part of the event.

In addition, organisers have filled all space available on Gregory Terrace, which previously split the show site in two, after Brisbane City Council approved CVIAQ's Traffic Management Plan to close the street for the four-day event.

Gregory Terrace, in particular, has provided organisers with much-needed outdoor space to accommodate more trailer manufacturers.

All major truck manufacturers, with the exception of UD (and Hino looking at dealer representation), are returning for the 2009 show, which will be held from May 14 to 17 at the Brisbane RNA Showground.

New exhibitors include Volkswagen, which will occupy some of the space previously used by Hino, and Drake Trailers, which will be housed on Gregory Terrace. All the majors have not reduced space allocations, with Scania actually expanding its presence.

"The 2009 event is destined to be a record breaker on all fronts. Despite the economic uncertainty, we are expanding," Wright says.

The signing of three major event sponsors for the first time — Fleet Partners, BP Australia and Brisbane's RiverCity Motorway Group — also points to the strength of the show, he adds.

"We have seen no more turnover this show than in previous shows. Our waiting list of additional exhibitors now stands at well over 200 applications, all of whom are keen to get a spot at the show for the first time," Wright says.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

To accommodate the record 300-plus exhibitors, the closure of Gregory Terrace will enable organisers to open up new space in front of the Commerce Building as well as Primary Street (the street backing onto the building).

Exhibitors will also for the first time be housed in the lower level of the Dairy Pavilion adjacent to Primary Street.

## "THE SHOW WOULDN'T BE HERE UNLESS IT DELIVERED RESULTS. IT'S WHY MANUFACTURERS COME BACK AND SUPPORT OUR SHOW."

"[The lack of access off Gregory Terrace] is the reason we haven't used these little nooks and crannies before," Wright says.

In a year that has seen the cancellation of numerous motor shows both in Australia and globally, Wright attributes the show's success in difficult economic times to the simple fact that it delivers results.

Economic analysis by the AEC Group in 2005 found that the show displayed product valued at almost \$90 million and generated product sales of around \$388 million.

"The show wouldn't be here unless it delivered results. It's why manufacturers come back and support our show. We admit we don't have the newest buildings but the show does work, manufacturers sell trucks off their stand," he says.

"And the oldest (the Industrial Pavilion) will be an all new world class exhibition building for the 2011 show; that marks

the start of the planned redevelopment of the 22-hectare site. The pavilion should be operational by the Royal Queensland Show [Ekka] in August 2010."

Truck shows, he adds, play a much more critical industry development role than motor shows, many of which have been cancelled this year.

"There isn't [a truck show] in every capital city every year. The Brisbane Truck Show was held every year between 1968 and 1983, but industry came to us and said let's do it every two years and we listened to industry," Wright says.

"The support by industry comes down to the fact that the show is effective; people do business at our show.

"Because it is organised by an association it mightn't have the razzmatazz of other shows; it is purely focused on delivering the maximum number of the right people to the show.

## Rick Copping

Developer of the  
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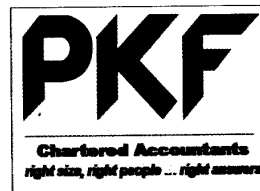
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### “OUR FINANCIAL POSITION PROVIDES CVIAQ WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE PROACTIVE AND IT ALLOWS US TO PROVIDE THAT WATCHDOG ROLE AT EVERY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT...”

“Our show has always been — and remains — the most cost-effective show. Industry [through the CVIAQ] sets the prices. We don’t have an exhibition company working on performance bonuses.”

It’s also big business. The show is Australia’s biggest industry gathering, with an estimated 40,000 visitors clipped through the turn stalls in 2007. The AEC Group’s economic analysis found the four-day show boosted gross state product (GSP) by \$17.9 million, generated additional expenditure in the Queensland economy of \$42.9 million, and provided full-time equivalent employment for 306 persons.

But it is much more than that — for one it’s a major social event for industry, helped by the location’s relaxed and informal setting.

“People come to catch up with friends; that’s part of the attraction of the show, they do business and get together socially,” Wright says.

“Some 10 percent of people are from overseas and one-third of attendance is from interstate.”

And, most importantly, the show plays a vital role in providing much-needed funding for the CVIAQ’s diverse industry development activities.

#### CVIAQ FOR GOOD

The association draws around 25 percent of annual funding from membership fees from its 150-odd members; with the remaining 75 percent coming from investments in activities such as the truck show.

“We make good money from the show, which allows us to do what we do,” Wright says.

“We have worked very hard to be in a very strong financial position through the excellent work of our boards over the past 20 to 30 years.

“When we moved [the truck show] to the RNA in 1983 [from the original site at the Rocklea wool stores] we put [the show] in a position to grow. In 1997 we had 138 exhibitors — now we have got more than 300.

“The board has been very astute in how it handles the industry’s and the association’s finances — they have been very prudent and very conservative.”

Over the past decade or so the nature of the CVIAQ’s activities has changed dramatically.

Twelve years ago vocational education and training (VET) represented just 5 percent of activities; VET now represents 40 to 50 percent of work.

The CVIAQ is a shareholder of the Queensland Automotive Skills Alliance ([www.qasa.com.au](http://www.qasa.com.au)), which provides strategic information and advice to government to address the skill shortages and future skills demand of the industry; and also has representation on the committee that oversees Manufacturing Skills Queensland (MSQ), a body that assists manufacturers to develop skilling strategies to ensure global competitiveness.

“They are both recognised by the Queensland Government as a primary source of advice [on VET issues],” says Wright, who also sits on the SkillsTech Australia (TAFE) Industry Reference Group and the national



steering committee for the Automotive Manufacturing (Bus, Truck, Trailer) training package.

All this activity delivers measurable results. For example, through its active involvement in the development of qualifications for body and trailer manufacturers, Queensland now employs more truck, trailer and bus apprentices than all the other states combined.

The CVIAQ is now actively lobbying the Federal Government for funding under the Federal Government’s Productivity Places Program (PPP) to subsidise post-trade training up to Certificate 4 level.

Locally, the association is working on a proposal for a Centre of Excellence for commercial vehicle at SkillsTech Australia, Queensland’s leading institute in automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering, and electrical/electronics

studies — a facility Wright says would be “world class”.

“[The CVIAQ] is an overnight success that took 40 years to get there,” he says.

On industry development, the association also hosts an annual dinner which has at its centrepiece the Apprentice of the Year Awards.

“The aim is to promote the vocation and show them that we value them as part of our industry,” Wright says.

As the representative body of the commercial vehicle, the CVIAQ is also active in technical and regulatory issues.

At present the association is working with the Brisbane City Council on its clean air strategy; at a state level it is engaged with Queensland Transport on reviews of vehicle safety standards, heavy vehicle modifications, authorised inspection stations and the use of dealer trade plates; while at a federal level in the past 12 months it has provided submissions on a number of Australian Design Rules and industry circulars that propose changes to vehicle standards that could have a “dramatic” impact on the industry.

“That’s the importance of our role — we are a watchdog for industry,” he says.

Wright stresses the CVIAQ focuses on developing solutions to many of these issues — for example, on heavy vehicle modifications it is in the process of gaining approval as the provider of industry training for the Approved Persons Scheme.

“It is about raising the bar for the industry. We are all about providing a solution to the problem,” he says.

“Our financial position provides CVIAQ with the opportunity to be proactive; it allows us to provide that watchdog role at every level of government, and in the VET area in particular to develop training packages, both directly and indirectly.”

And beyond the industry the CVIAQ hosts an annual charity dinner to raise money for leukaemia research.

To date it has collected more than \$600,000. ■