



Tried and tested

FOR **JR STEPHENS & CO**, WHEN THE TIME CAME TO EXPAND ITS OPERATIONS INTO CONTAINER TRANSPORT, **CIMC AUSTRALIA** WAS THE LOGICAL CHOICE FOR THE FIRST SKELS THAT ENTERED THE COMPANY'S DIVERSIFIED FLEET.

Established in 1953, JR Stephens & Co is a highly diversified transport operation based in South East Queensland. It is a third generation family business that was started by John Stephens. The company's current Director is John's son Daryll, who is also joined by his own son Nathan, who holds the role of General Manager.

In the early days, JR Stephens & Co's core operations were centred on coal and grain haulage. By the 1980s, the business had moved into the area of recycling and waste transfer, which now makes up the largest part of the business, with 3 million cubic metres of waste and recycling transported each year. More recently in 2014, the company expanded its operations to include container transport, responding to the needs of its existing customers. Warren Woods joined JR Stephens & Co as Container Manager, bringing with him previous experience in the sector.

With the expansion into container transport came the need for new trailers. "When we

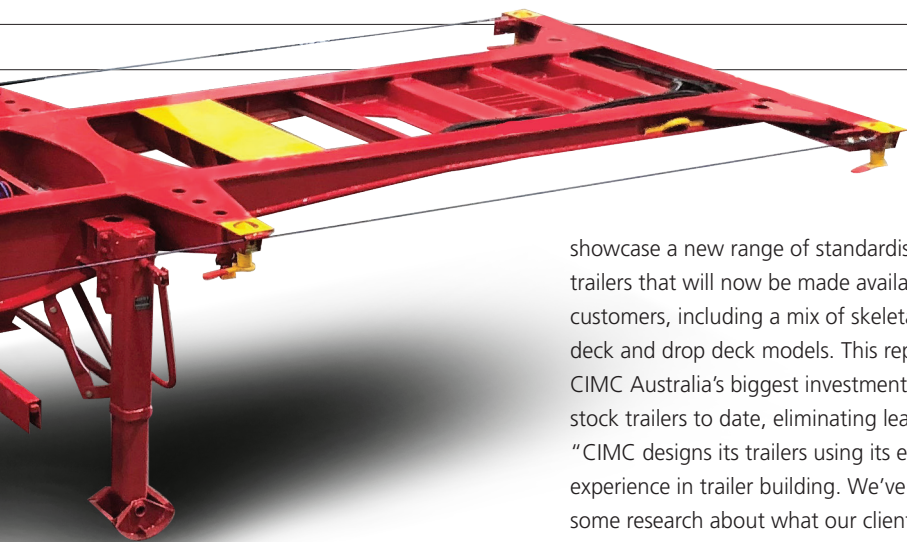
started the container transport division, we didn't have any skels. In a previous role, I was one of the first to purchase skels from CIMC Australia, when the brand first landed in Australia over 10 years ago," says Warren. "I knew the CIMC product, so we purchased our first four skels from CIMC Australia."

JR Stephens & Co's container transport division has grown relatively quickly, with the fleet of skels now encompassing 22 trailers, which are used as both singles and B-doubles, to meet the general import and export needs of its extensive customer base.

Four years on from when the company received its first CIMC skels and Warren says that the trailers have proved to be extremely hard-wearing. "The trailers have been spot on. CIMC manufactures equipment that is quite durable without any major engineering issues whatsoever, which is great. And that's what it's all about – getting the right equipment for the job."

Since entering the Australian market, CIMC Australia has worked hard to ensure its





trailers are the right fit for its customers' needs. Although the production process for its trailers begins overseas, CIMC tailor makes its product to suit Australian conditions. The early stages of the production process are conducted in the state-of-the-art facility in China, with key components sourced from around the world before the remainder of the trailer is produced at the Melbourne-based factory to ensure its trailers best meet the needs of local operators. Over the past 18 months, CIMC Australia has made a significant investment in local manufacturing, with a new 63,000 square metre facility being opened in the suburb of Cranbourne. With this, CIMC Australia has also assembled a new team to bring in their local know-how and expertise including a new production manager and new engineers. The new site includes a showroom to

showcase a new range of standardised stock trailers that will now be made available to customers, including a mix of skeletal, flat deck and drop deck models. This represents CIMC Australia's biggest investment in floor stock trailers to date, eliminating lead times. "CIMC designs its trailers using its extensive experience in trailer building. We've done some research about what our clients need," says Bill Adams, Regional Sales Manager for CIMC Vehicle Australia. "When a customer places an order, it usually takes 14-16 weeks if not more, whether it's built here or overseas, so CIMC is trying to take away that lead time because sometimes customers don't want to have to wait that long. With CIMC's new facility, there is greater capacity to have more stock trailers ready for purchase." As JR Stephens & Co's container division continues to grow, Warren says the business will look at purchasing more skels in the future to help meet the growing demands of its customers. "CIMC's experience in the industry, proven reliability and value for money is what their product is all about. The brand's trailers stand up to the rigour of our day-to-day tasks. From a maintenance point of view, the whole of life costs of our CIMC skels have been great. The trailers hold up very well," adds Warren.

Fast Fact

The current standardised trailer range available through CIMC Australia includes:

- 40ft three-way twist-lock skel trailers in both standard and lightweight variants;
- Retractable tri-axle skels;
- 48ft ultra low profile tri-axle skels;
- 45ft heavy-duty tri-axle drop decks.

All standardised trailers feature several design improvements that CIMC Vehicle Australia has incorporated across all of its 2018 models, aimed at enhancing their ease of use and reliability.

Contact

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