



Vanessa Hilditch, Annelene and Theo Heuft and Scott Hilditch



# CARRYING ON THE TRADITION

*When Theo and Annelene Heuft arrived in Australia in 1980 from Holland the couple brought with them their proud Dutch heritage along with the desire and skills to start a new business. So by 1984 Theo and Annelene registered their company, Transmech, and began creating their own enterprise, which 25 years later is supplying some of the industry's most sought after vehicle transporters.*

**"I'VE** been associated with transport all my life working behind the scenes in various workshops. In fact I could weld before I could walk," laughed Theo. In the year of 1999 Transmech built six trailers that Theo tells us were very well accepted because the mechanics of the designs resulted in an easy to operate trailer. Furthermore, Theo's car carriers held up well in the field and as such word soon spread about the quality of the Transmech brand. "Early in the years, due to our service of providing repairs and maintenance for the car carrying industry, we discovered why and where trailer chassis were cracking. So with that knowledge we engineered our designs to make them more flexible to ensure all the torsional forces were covered to prevent premature operational damage occurring," said Theo.

Over time the company engineered vehicle transporters ranging from carrying four cars through to their latest eleven car B double, built for a private contractor carting for CEVA.

"This particular choice of trailer was for our 'flat loading system' which we first introduced in 2004 for both on and off loading safety reasons. The design has been so successful that now everyone wants one," Theo said.

During the company's growth Theo managed the design and manufacturing processes with his inimitable 'hands-on' approach while Annelene and later on, their daughter, Vanessa, handled the firm's finances and office duties.

Nowadays Annelene is involved in Human Resources issues and Vanessa handles the day to day 'front of house' administration.

With everything humming along Transmech gradually extended its services to offer the complete customised package including design, engineering, manufacturer, fabrication, repairs and maintenance, even supplying emergency 'on-site' back-up services. To make sure all the company's promises are met for their expanding clientele, the business recently employed Scott Hilditch as general manager to oversee all operational processes.

Scott says that his role will free-up Theo's time to do the things he does best.

"The success of the business has always been Theo's drive for perfection so it's important that he continues to focus on his areas of expertise, like designing and building trailers.

"Since joining the company I've been heartened to see Theo's

passion for the job filter through to everyone on the workshop floor. From our supervisor, Damien Petty, to our apprentices, everyone takes ownership of their job to the point they even wave goodbye to the finished product as it rolls out the door," smiled Scott.

Over the past couple of years Transmech has begun fitting BPW running gear to their carriers in a bid to further add value to their approach to customer service.

"We offer the BPW package partly because some of our customers are now insisting on the brand and partly because we feel confident that BPW will help protect the longevity and therefore reputation of our trailers.

"By using BPW we can also offer their 'free' first service, genuine spare parts support, even down to the BPW bearing grease developed especially to suit their system. We are very much preventative maintenance structured so BPW fits in with our policies well," said Theo.

Another recent development for the company is that Scott and Vanessa have announced they will be married in September this year.

"Vanessa and I will make sure we keep Theo's legacy alive. Over the years his quest for excellence has been driven by pride not money, a trait that has resulted in the company's continual expansion over the past decade.

"As a family business we are all in it for the long haul to make Transmech the No.1. car carrying trailer builder in Australia. ■

