

LIFTABILITY

Maxilift Australia covers a broad spectrum of lifting requirements – Report by Stuart Martin.

A range of vehicle-mounted machines capable of lifting from 500 kg/metre to 30,000 kg/metre is undoubtedly a broad claim, but, as Maxilift Australia points out, it can fulfil all demands throughout that weight range requirement.

The company has operated in its current form for the last six years, but has more than three decades of experience behind it on which to draw. Maxilift Australia started in 2009, built from the foundations of current managing director Bob Davis' BG Crane (established in 1991).

General manager for the last two of her six years at the company is Kimberly Davis, who told *PowerTorque* the company was in 'a good place' at the moment, although suffering the same struggles as much of the industry.

"There are no trucks in the country (for immediate delivery). Good on the dealers for selling the country out of trucks. Our order books are full, and we've got a lot of great things on the go, but deliveries are spread out because we're waiting for trucks and body builders," she said.

"It's always been vehicle loading cranes, BG had small Maxilift-style and knuckle boom cranes, and Unic straight-boom cranes. Maxilift Australia started with the small cranes, and we've grown over time into the bigger ones," Ms. Davis said.

The company began in Lonsdale south of Adelaide with just five staff, but has grown to employ more than five times that many, opening a new branch late last year in Regency Park, just 10 km north of the Adelaide CBD.

"We started with five staff, and as of last count we had 37, in November last year we opened our first branch.

"We had been running more as a wholesale business for the first few years. As we grew we needed more people and more technical skills and knowledge to support the industry and our customers, so, in November in the north of Adelaide, we opened the first branch," Ms. Davis said.

The Adelaide-based company has a broad range of vehicle-mounted offerings within Maxilift's catalogue, starting with the Maxilift-branded small cranes.



Designed for installation on light-duty vehicles, Maxilift's standard cranes range from 0.5-tonne/metre to 5.0-tonne/metre units that are regularly tasked with lifting duties in forestry, marine, agriculture, civil and industrial maintenance and general building among others.

Ms. Davis said the company had been built on the idea of customer service and its interstate dealer network reflected the company service ethos.

"It's something we're passionate about, offering the best level of service to our customers.

"We don't have our own branches in other states. We have a fantastic dealer network that we work with, together with a number of people we have signed up as a formal dealer network for service and support. They're a fantastic team of people who have had factory training, and we've run our own courses for them and we trust them to do the same kind of work as we would carry out ourselves," she said.

The G2 ranges from 460 to 590 kg capacities on the LCV utes and 730 kg ratings on light trucks, which can also be fitted with the Tommy Gate Lift 'n' Dump.

Delivering the same 730 kg lifting performance, the dual-cylinder hydraulic tailgate has 'dump-through' capability, and standard safety features include a 'time-out' system and a two-pin platform lock.

Expanding from a wholesale operation into retail distribution required growing the company's network.

"As we've moved into retail, we have put on more sales people for feet on the ground – the key (to continued success) is that dealer network. It allows us to service and support our customers to the level that we need," she said.

The network is able to offer some of the largest vehicle-mounted cranes available anywhere through the availability of the Effer knuckle boom range.

Utilising experience gained from operating for more than half a century of history in the lifting industry, the Effer brand delivers machine capacities ranging from 2000 kg/metre cranes to 30,000 kg/metre monsters. The brand has a strong reputation worldwide and is known for lightweight machines with world-beating power-to-weight ratios.

The company is also in partnership with Tommy Gate hydraulic lift-gates. These have been available in the US since 1965, subsequently coming to Australia.

Constructed on a galvanised frame, the Tommy Gate G2 Series is popular for LCV utes and employs two hydraulic cylinders on the platform. Each is available with a standard remote control and steel checker-plate, extruded aluminium or open-mesh platform options.

"The brand has a strong reputation worldwide and is known for lightweight machines with world beating power-to-weight ratios"

Construction, mining and marine industries are all within the scope of the Effer brand. Each product is available with radio remote control, overload and operator protection systems, with manual or hydraulic swing-up stabiliser legs amongst the features.

Customers opting for cranes over 25-tonne/metre will also have access to a specialist engineer – as well as the sales staff – to ensure the optimal truck/crane combination is delivered for the customer's requirements.

The Effer brand is growing, with the ability to offer a basic crane or one with all the 'bells and whistles' up to 30,000 kg/metre cranes



"We are the only crane retailer in the Australian market able to offer cranes rated from 500 kg/metre to 30,000 kg/metre. At its maximum capacity of 30,000 kg/metre it's the largest crane available from Effer. It's a very specialised unit, and, although I doubt we'll see one here, the exciting point is that Effer can deliver such a crane and that we are partnered with them. That is what excites us about the business," she said.

"The growth in the crane market is currently with the higher-capacity weight range in models such as the Effer knucklebone cranes. With the Effer brand being relatively new in the Australian market the brand is growing its identity and has a lot of potential.

"The Maxilift cranes are really consistent with a great product range that has been a consistently great seller for 30 years. Future growth, though, is currently with the Effer brand. We took on the representation of Effer some two or three years ago and there's been natural growth," Ms. Davis said.

Maxilift also offers Unic vehicle loading cranes for high-level lifting work. There's a wide working range for customers and using them is a very easy operation. More than 70 years of experience is put into the Japanese brand's hydraulic truck cranes, which the company claims offer excellent operational control even in tight work spaces.

The Unic crane is lauded for high-lifting work that is due to its hoist-winch and long, straight telescopic boom combination. Its key safety features include the new Super Stability System and Super ML Radio Remote Transmitter – these allow the operator greater control and provide access to critical information. Lifting capacities range between 2330 kg (at a 9.8 m hook height) and 8200 kg with a 17.5 m hook height.

Adelaide company, Waternish Constructions Pty Ltd, recently took delivery of a Unic straight boom telescopic 12,000 kg/metre winch truck-mounted crane, one of the largest straight boom cranes on offer.

"Waternish had previously purchased a Unic crane, and now they've purchased a second unit. I think we have a good base of repeat customers and that's because we appreciate their involvement and respect their businesses," Ms. Davis said.

The company's stated aim is one of market leadership through sustainable, steady growth, not only for itself, but also its wider network.

"We want to grow not only our own company, but those associated with us. A win-win for us, and the people with whom we are in business. That means as we grow – and we plan on doing that – we hope that our dealers and partners will grow with us," Ms. Davis said.

"Slow and steady wins the race. There's no point in rushing ahead and not being able to sustain that. Sustainability is really important," Ms. Davis added. 