

## Crossing Bass Strait

Tasmanian-based **SRT Logistics** has been specialising in refrigerated transport throughout Tasmania for the past 15 years. A recent expansion onto the mainland meant that the company needed to be able to track the progress of their trailers across Bass Strait so as to ensure consistent temperatures and product integrity. The company turned to **Exago** to provide them with the perfect solution.

Started by Jim Miller, the business today is run by Jim and his two sons - Robert and Brent. For 15 years the company has been distributing frozen and chilled produce and certain groceries for companies like Woolworths and IGA. "Our business really started to expand during 1998 when we won our first Woolworths contract. We went from having six drivers to nearly 80 today," says SRT Logistics' General Manager, Robert Miller. The business has been so successful in Tasmania, and after interest from customers, SRT found there was an opportunity to open a branch in Melbourne. "A lot of our customers are Melbourne-based and have had to transport their products to Tasmania with other carriers. Only

when the products arrived in Tasmania would we do the distribution. Obviously the process is a lot more efficient and easier for the customers if they only have to deal with one transport company. We can now collect the product from their operation in Melbourne and deliver it to the end destinations in Tasmania and vice versa."

"Tasmania is a difficult state to distribute in as the population centres are widespread. The average kilometre travelled for each carton delivered is quite high. We are fortunate that because of our supermarket delivery work we have a reason to send a truck at least weekly to pretty much every town in Tasmania." SRT's fleet is made up of 15 refrigerated

vans, 15 heavy rigid trucks, close to 20 prime movers and nearly 40 trailers. "For our refrigerated trailers we tend to purchase FTE Trailers, while we use Vawdrey for our tautliners and grocery vans. When it comes to refrigerated equipment we predominantly use Thermo King, although we do use some Eez Freez on our smaller vans," says Robert. The opening of the Melbourne branch and the subsequent cross-Strait journey meant there was a point in the delivery chain where SRT would not have access to the refrigeration units. "It is of the utmost importance that everything is running smoothly with the fridge units, because if something goes wrong it could have significant consequences for our customers' goods. We needed to find a way to maintain some control over the fridge units and to have visibility to their operating condition. For this we turned to Exago."

SRT fitted five trailers with the Exago monitoring system, allowing the company



SRT Logistics unloading their new trailers on the docks at Port Melbourne.

to monitor the integrity of the temperature throughout the journeys across Bass Strait. "The Exago system gives us GPS monitoring of the trailer and is also interfaced into the Thermo King fridges to alert us of any temperature problems. So when we drop the trailers off at the wharf in the afternoons we are able to log-on to the Exago website in the evenings to ensure that there are no refrigeration system faults and that the temperatures are correctly set," explains Robert.

"The main benefit of the Exago system is that if a fridge shuts down and requires a technician, then we are alerted ahead of time and can have one waiting at the dock when the ship berths." While there haven't been any faults to deal with yet, Robert says that one night the fridge unit didn't start up correctly and they were able to contact the ship and get someone to restart the unit for them. "Without the Exago system there is no way we could have done that in the past

and the product would have been ruined." SRT have been operating the Exago system for the past four months and say that while they are only using it for monitoring purposes at the moment, they hope to utilise the system to its full potential during the course of the year.

"With the stringent food safety standards that are in place today and the level of trust the customer is placing on us to look after their products, it makes sense for us to use the Exago system to provide our clients with peace of mind knowing that their valuable cargo is being monitored, even when it is out of our sight." In time, SRT hope to roll-out the Exago system throughout their entire fleet. "Everything in our fleet has an average age of three years, so the technology can be easily retrofitted to the existing fleet. Over time, we hope that every new piece of equipment will have Exago fitted as standard," describes Robert. The future is bright at SRT as they con-

tinue to improve on the services they offer their customers in Tasmania and Melbourne. "Because we have just opened our doors in Melbourne we aren't in a rush to go out and win a thousand jobs overnight. We want to grow steadily so that we can ensure we maintain the high level of service we have traditionally offered in Tasmania."

"Our aim is to offer a complete service to our customers. We can collect the product from their door, transport it across Bass Strait, then store, pack, distribute and control it right throughout the chain in company trucks with our own drivers. Exago has made this process a lot simpler for us." **TBB**

**Contact:**  
Exago  
138B Thistlethwaite Street,  
South Melbourne, VIC 3205  
Phone: 03 9686 6011

SRT Logistics  
PO Box 1448  
Glenorchy, TAS 7010  
Phone: 03 6262 5111  
Fax: 03 6262 5112

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