



SRTLogistics, Tasmania's largest distribution network, puts its first Scania's to work for Woolworths, clocking up major distances in the smallest state.

A COMMITMENT TO RUNNING A modern, efficient fleet, meeting the most stringent emissions, safety and performance standards, drove Tasmania's SRT Logistics to consider adding Scania prime movers to its fleet. And when the drivers had their say, the deal was as good as sealed.

A pro-active approach from Scania New Account Manager Michael Waddington, supported by Ian Long from C & I Transport Repairs, inserted a selection of Scania demonstrator vehicles into the consideration set when SRT Logistics was already well advanced with its thinking on new vehicle acquisition.

The need for additional vehicles was prompted by a new contract to deliver groceries for a new Woolworths and Statewide Independent Wholesalers distribution centre, conveniently located metres from the SRT Logistics' Launceston operation.

Cool running



Cool running

SRT Logistics had received excellent back-up and service for other European brands in its fleet from C & I Transport Repairs in Launceston – and its sub-contractor, Midland Truck & Bus in Hobart – in the past 18 months, so Ian and Michael's suggestion of a Scania for the new contract was given due consideration.

"We knew the company was well into its testing of rival products when we turned up with the Scania," says Michael. "We were confident they would perform well, so we asked Robert and the team to give them a go."

Much to the surprise of the SRT Logistics team, the Scania V8-powered R 560 prime mover matched or beat its rivals on key criteria such as on road performance, fuel consumption, driver comfort and price competitiveness.

Safety equipment and access to a range of advanced electronic systems such as Lane Departure Warning, Adaptive Cruise Control, Downhill Speed Control, plus the Fully Automated (2-pedal) Scania Opticruise and Scania Retarder also helped win over the SRT Logistics panel.

"The driver acceptance of the Scania was exceptionally high," Michael says. "Coupled with the best fuel result, it helped us win the business."

The new trucks are the first Scania to do duty with SRT Logistics, and they bring the fleet tally to 67 trucks and 120 refrigerated and dry trailers.

"Back-up and service is very important to us," says Robert Miller, General Manager of SRT Logistics, a family-owned and run firm.

"We undertook a comprehensive review of competing brands, and Scania achieved very high levels of driver acceptance, as well as providing high levels of safety and efficiency. In terms of engine performance and fuel efficiency Scania came out on top or equal with the best, and the price was competitive, so in the end



SRT Logistics

A family owned and run business headquartered in Tasmania, SRT Logistics is one of the three largest distribution companies on the Apple Isle. SRT focuses on frozen and chilled distribution and grocery, rather than general freight. The company has four depots, in Launceston, Hobart, Devonport, and Melbourne.

As a progressive enterprise, SRT Logistics has its own full-time OH&S officer and Driver Trainer within its payroll of 200, a far cry from the 8 or 9 staff who started out with the company in the late 1990s.

"We are a family business. We have worked in it from the ground-up, we are selling something we understand, so we don't overpromise and under-deliver," Robert

Miller says. "We have all the traits of a typical family transport business. We want to present well, look after our drivers, be passionate about quality, and we will stay focussed on refrigerated transport for the wholesale and retail food industry. We're not going to branch off into general freight.

And as company patriarch and Managing Director Jim Miller steps back from day-to-day operations, sons Robert and Brent (who runs the Melbourne operation), together with Fleet Manager Nigel Froud, will steer the company into the future.

"In the next 12 months we are going to consolidate and implement some new IT systems, and bed down the new contract," Robert says.



SRT Logistics' history in brief

1988 Jim Miller and partner buy Statewide Refrigerated Transport delivering meat carcasses around greater Hobart.

1996 Partnership separates after developing a good general freight, warehousing, and frozen/chilled food distribution business, the latter remaining with Jim Miller.

1997 Brent Miller leaves his banking career to work with Jim. Later that year Robert leaves Makita Power Tools to join the family business, which has 6 trucks and 10 staff.

1998 Woolworths takes over Purity supermarkets in Hobart, awards SRT Logistics the contract for delivery to all Woolworths from SRT Logistics' warehouse in Devonport.

1998 Statewide Independent Wholesales builds a new frozen chilled warehouse near the airport serving 180 stores around Tasmania. SRT Logistics wins contract for delivery of that product. Staff grows to 30 with 15 trucks.

2005 Steady growth focussed on frozen and chilled distribution. SRT Logistics wins a contract with Coca-Cola Amatil for bulk distribution in Tasmania.

2007 National Foods grants SRT Logistics a contract for all milk warehousing and distribution. Melbourne depot opens for frozen/chilled distribution into and from Tasmania.

2009 SRT Logistics builds Launceston warehouse with dedicated milk cool room, runs pick-and-pack for major supermarket chains in Launceston and Hobart for milk.

2011 Woolworths and Statewide Independent Wholesales open new grocery and produce distribution centre in Launceston adjacent to SRT Logistics' DC; awards it distribution for produce statewide and grocery and liquor for south Tasmania, and independent supermarket deliveries, in addition to a renewal of the frozen/chilled distribution.

Scania was a straight-forward choice," Robert says.

The trucks are expected to cover 300,000 km each year for the next 5 years, double-shifting 7 days a week on the run from Launceston to Hobart. Already, after only six weeks on the road, the trucks are consistently returning between 1.8 and 2.2 km per litre, according to data drawn from the Scania Fleet Management System that monitors each truck and how it is driven.

Scania FMS specialist Jason Grech put a lot of effort into setting up the monitoring system to meet SRT Logistics' needs for specific performance data.

SRT Logistics also acquired new FTE refrigerated trailers and Southern Cross dry grocery trailers to service the new contract. These trailers are refrigerated and fitted with advanced safety features such as an Electronic Brake System, which integrates with the Scania system. The drivers are also able to view a digital readout of the weight over each axle on the prime mover and trailer, to ensure compliance with loading regulations. The trailers also feature a soft-docking feature from BPW, and side underrun protection.

Drivers have been issued with an electronic identity key, which they must plug in prior to driving. This is the first time SRT Logistics has run a prime mover monitoring system. It allows Fleet Manager Nigel Froud to study the vehicle data in real time. Previously SRT Logistics mostly monitored data from the refrigerated trailers carrying frozen and chilled goods, to ensure temperature consistency.

"Our drivers are appreciative of the positive feedback the FMS provides. Where necessary we will discuss results with them, and you can see an improvement within a few days," Robert says.

The drivers are also working the Scania Driver Support system, which critiques driving style and rewards smooth acceleration and braking, hill cresting anticipation and promotes safe and smooth driving.

Drivers have reported seeing their efficiency percentages rise from 60% initially, to much closer to 90%.

"The Driver Support system is showing them how to drive the truck in the most efficient manner. We have also had some driver training from Alan McDonald which was well received and which has added positive reinforcement," Robert says.

"Scania Driver Training is good, it is probably the single biggest thing to help the drivers look after the truck. You can't get enough of that. Most of our drivers were receptive. I think they realise that if they drive more cost-effectively that leaves more money in the business," he says.

Scania provides four hours of free driver



C & I Transport Repairs

Ian Long, owner of C & I Transport Repairs is the independent dealer in Tasmania who delivers Scania's after sales and service. Based in Launceston, he has been providing service to SRT Logistics for 18 months.

"We took over the Scania representation in Tasmania six years ago and we have an agreement with Phil Dodge of Midland Truck & Bus in Hobart, which looks after Scania vehicles in the south," Ian says.

"In April, Scania delivered 15 new vehicles for a 48% market share, a record for Tasmania," he says proudly.

The 15 vehicles were 9 R 560s for SRT Logistics, 2 G 440 and 1 P 360 prime movers for Statewide Independent Wholesalers, an R 620 for Spencer Griggs, a G 440 prime mover for Kerry Hingston and a 4x2 P 320 prime mover for Leigh Morris Plant Transport.

"I think the 9 trucks for SRT Logistics is the biggest single delivery in Tasmania for quite some time," he says.

C & I Transport Repairs offers full after sales care for Scania customers in Tasmania, including a fleet of roadside assistance vehicles, parts delivery on demand, as well as scheduled servicing, repairs and servicing for trailers.

"Most of the new SRT Logistics V8 Scania's will be serviced by Midland in Hobart, but C & I will look after two based at Launceston," Ian says.

optimisation assistance with every new vehicle purchased, typically delivered after the first month when the drivers have settled in to the trucks. The aim is to ensure the vehicles are being driven as efficiently as possible, and to answer any questions that have arisen during the bedding-in process.

"We have younger drivers than average in the new trucks, and they have been quick to adapt to the new technology that includes Scania Opticruise and Scania Retarder. We brought in some new drivers and told them we were getting Scania's and they have taken to them well," Robert says.

SRT Logistics specified the new Sleeper

Cab trucks to a high standard. It added luxury leather upholstery and trim, wood and leather steering wheel, alloy wheels and a factory bull bar to the standard specification that includes a fridge and freezer located under the new Scania extendable bed. The trucks were among the very first 6x4 configuration Scania's in Australia fitted with LDW and ACC.

"I think the drivers are appreciative of the high quality vehicle and the comfort features we have specified," Robert says.

"They are reporting reduced fatigue, saying the cabs are extremely driver friendly, comfortable and quiet. I drove the vehicles a bit myself, and you feel refreshed when getting out.

"We run an up-to-date fleet which means we don't need extra vehicles sitting around as back-up. New equipment means fewer breakdowns, but that means we depend on good service and maximum uptime," Robert says.

"We will run a conservative servicing programme in order to avoid unplanned downtime," Robert says.

"That way we should pick up any issues before they become problems.

"We aim to keep these vehicles for five years, but we may review this after three years depending on the prospective trade-in value," he says. ●

Cool running



Driver's view

Dave is one of the new recruits to SRT Logistics, formerly the driver of an American brand of logging truck. He can't believe how comfortable the Scania is, the quiet and refined driving position, not to mention the good forward visibility, which makes city driving a pleasure.

"The Adaptive Cruise Control is a feature I wasn't sure about until I tried it and now it's second nature," he says.

"After six weeks behind the wheel I don't miss not having a gearstick," he says having mastered the Scania Fully Automated (2-pedal) Opticruise gear change system.

"Another advantage is the Scania Retarder which means you're not riding the brakes, but also you can pass through the small towns really quietly. I also like the spotting mirror and the electrically adjustable left hand mirror, which makes it easier to reverse a B-double into a tricky loading bay.

"I was also surprised how good the lights on the roof are for lighting up the road.

"I'm enjoying the Driver Support feature too. I did think it was a bit gimmicky at first, but now I am using it, I can get 85% efficiency scores, and have learned to lift off before the crest of hill and coast down. It's making me more efficient," he says.