

## Tasmania and Queensland: two key markets for Bridgestone

*Glenn Jackson, Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres recently appointed Queensland Executive Manager, was previously state manager of the Tasmanian Branch.*

Having spent the past 17 years with Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres' Tasmanian branch, and recently taken on responsibility for Queensland, I'd like to look at the role these two key markets play in our operations.

During my time with the Tasmanian branch, I've seen the operation grow from an annual turnover of \$3 million to \$10 million, with market share expanding to almost 85%. Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres typically has a 45% market share nationally.

In 1996, Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres made a significant investment in Tasmania, establishing a large warehouse with a variety of stock as well as a range of associated products to service the mining industry. We also have the appropriate, fully equipped service vehicles and accredited personnel to ensure complete satisfaction to the industry.

It's all about supporting our customers as well as OEMs, such as Caterpillar Elphinstone, with whom we work very closely.

We also initiated the manufacture of wheels in Tasmania to provide a service for OE manufacture, and the replacement market particularly the underground mining sector. This further supports our ability to provide the complete range of products directly associated with earthmover tyres.

Our approach – no matter which state we are operating in – is all about providing a complete service for our customers.

In Tasmania, with such a large market share we are always in the sights of our competitors, so we have to continue to develop our product offering.

With my recently announced move to Queensland, as Executive Manager, I can look forward to new challenges (and a warmer climate).

The Queensland branches have some very talented personnel employed with Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres and I look forward to working with them in achieving goals that will benefit not just our customers, but also our company and our people as well.

Queensland is the one of the largest operations for Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres in Australia, with branches in Mt Isa, Mackay and Brisbane servicing the mining sector in particular.

Strategically, Queensland is very important to us; in terms of sales it is our largest state, closely followed by WA.

With the current tyre supply issue it will be difficult to exploit new areas, so a key issue will be managing existing stocks to ensure we can continue supplying all our major contracted customers, particularly those in the mining sector.

Although Bridgestone is expanding its manufacturing facility at Shimoneseki in Japan for giant off-the-road tyres and extending its Hofu plant to increase the supply of underground tyres in particular, tyre



*Glenn Jackson, Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres' Executive Manager, Queensland.*

supply will be the key issue for some time to come.

The days of supplying tyres off the shelf have gone for the time being, so we are focusing on educating our customers to develop better tyre management programs and practises that will extend the life of tyres.

Perhaps brighter news is that we are forecasting substantial growth potential for our Diversified Products Division in Queensland.

With the number of major infrastructure projects planned for the state, the Queensland civil construction industry is extremely strong and we see tremendous opportunities to grow the market for Diversified Products such as rubber tracks and tyres for compact and utility equipment.

*Glenn Jackson, Queensland Executive Manager,  
Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres*



## The dedicated craft of tyre repair

Tyre repair – still more of a craft than a science – is a task that has assumed far more importance in the past 12 months as the worldwide shortage of mining and earthmover tyres begins to bite.

And the people who carry out tyre repairs are finding greatly increased demand for their skills, as customers opt for a wide range of approaches to extend total tyre life.

David Oliver heads up Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres Repairs division, which consists of a dedicated team of people who display great pride in their craftsmanship, and who bring considerable skill to the job of repairing what can be seriously damaged tyres.

Although not all damaged tyres can be repaired, Bridgestone's tyre repairers make every possible effort to return damaged tyres into service in a safe condition – and if they can't bring a tyre back up to a safe condition, they will not repair it.

David has been in the tyre repair business for many years, but he maintains that it's only since he joined Bridgestone five years ago that he gained a true understanding of a tyre's structure and construction – enabling him, as a tyre repairer, to carry out far more effective, efficient and durable safe repairs.

"I believe that working for a company like Bridgestone gives our tyre repair team a great advantage in doing each job more effectively and delivering a higher-quality end product," says David.

"We all work closely with the Bridgestone's design and technical staff to ensure we have a good insight into the structure of a tyre, and we always have the information we need close at hand. As a result, we have developed the skills to repair any type of off-the-road tyre.

"And many of the insights and technical knowledge we have gained as part of Bridgestone are simply not available to all tyre repairers. We are all better tyre repairers and produce a superior product as a result of these insight," he says.

David argues that manufacturers of tyre repair materials are not always up with current practices on tyre construction – frequently recommending a repair system that has not changed in many years.

"For example, we have developed our own repairs for a particular type of tyre, in response to a particular mine site's specific conditions," he says.

"Not every application is the same, not every tyre is the same, not all damage is the same, so we have to adapt and fabricate repairs to suit.

"How you repair an off-the-road tyre depends on the location of the damage, specific tyre construction and intended application.

"Different techniques and materials are required for all the variations that are involved. This is because the tyres are stressed and flexed differently in different areas, so you need a solution that reflects this."

Tyre life after a repair will vary considerably, depending on the nature of the repair, the application and jobsite conditions. However, a repaired tyre should have the potential to reach full tyre life, providing a number of benefits to customers, including lower costs and increased stocks of tyres.

It's also important to realise that while a repaired tyre may have the potential to achieve the same full life as a tyre that has never been damaged, it must very carefully maintained and cared for.

"Users need to understand that a damaged tyre has been compromised. Tyre manufacturers don't design and build tyres with a focus on reparability to gain a full life; they design them to maintain ultimate integrity through correct use and optimum wear patterns," says David.

"Because of this, a repaired tyre requires additional care and attention, over and above that needed for a tyre which hasn't required repair, to give it the best possible chance of lasting as long as an undamaged tyre."

In addition, tyres which have undergone major repairs (for example, where structural integrity has been affected) should never be used in steering positions.

And while tyre repairers provide a repair response intended to out last the life of the tyre, the extent of the initial damage and operating conditions will have a strong influence on the final repair performance.

According to David, tyre repair skills are akin to any other fabrication skills at the highest level.

"It's a high-precision job; we approach the damage very very carefully with the aim of saving the structure of the tyre," he says. "I think we all tend to regard ourselves as craftsmen; you've got to have passion and commitment to do this job properly. It's a real craft."

So with these skills, can David and the team repair any tyre?

"Absolutely not. Reparability is the first thing we'll look at when inspecting a damaged tyre. Not every damaged tyre can be repaired – and the critical issue here is safety. Safety is far more important than shifting dirt or saving money. Attempting to repair a tyre that is beyond saving just compromises safety.

"Because of the tyre shortage, we are getting more people trying to repair damage which is too severe, and which then won't stand up safely.



*Tyre repair to the high standards required for safe operation and long life demands skill and craftsmanship.*

"We won't repair every tyre – but what we do repair, we know will achieve a good post-repair life.

"At the end of the day, customers should judge the quality of repairs on the life a repaired tyre will achieve in service. Before sending your tyres for repair the question should be asked: 'Am I going to get the highest repair performance and is there verifiable data to support the repair performance claims?'" says David.

## Contractor is happy to get his hands on Firestone

A southern Queensland contractor thought all his Christmases had come at once recently, when he learnt he could easily source Firestone Duraforce tyres through Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres.

For years, Angelo Musumeci, director of Frank's Bobcat Hire, had been told that the Duraforce tyres supplied ex-factory on his Mustang skidsteers simply weren't available as replacement tyres. As a result, he'd been stuck using inferior tyres that gave around half the life – or even less – of his OEM-fitted Duraforces.

So when he saw that Bridgestone is now supplying Firestone Duraforce tyres, he was straight on the phone – and had a replacement set the next day.

Franks Bobcat Hire is a family-owned contracting business and one of the largest operating in Stanthorpe, a country town about three hours' drive southwest of Brisbane.

"All our Mustangs come factory-fitted with Firestone Duraforce, but until recently, we haven't been able to source them as replacement parts," he said.

"One of our machines managed 1500 hours on the Firestones that came with it, while another operating on another brand of tyre, but doing the same work in the same conditions managed only 500 hours," said Angelo.

"We couldn't be happier that Bridgestone is now selling this brand; for us the Firestone Duraforce is the best on the market, it's been proven time after time, and that's why OEMs like Mustang fit them in the first place," he said.



*Above, a happy Angelo Musumeci, able at last to fit Duraforce tyres to his skidsteer.*

# Longer life with Seal-zit tyre and rim protection

Seal-zit, marketed exclusively by Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres is a specially formulated light viscosity fluid that offers exceptional tyre and rim protection when added to the tyre air chamber.

Proven over the past 40 years, it is an essential tool in prolonging tyre and rim life -- which is particularly important given the current global tyre shortage.

Seal-zit has three key functions:

- As a rust-inhibitor on wheels and rims
- As a tyre coolant
- As a tyre/rim sealer.

**Rust-inhibitor:** The use of Seal-zit ensures wheels and rims remain rust-free, prolonging wheel, rim and tyre life and making the removal of tyres for servicing much simpler.

It eliminates difficult demounting, as well as the need for sandblasting and painting.



MANUFACTURED EXCLUSIVELY FOR  
BRIDGESTONE EARTHMOVER TYRES

Rims that are already scaled with rust can easily be cleaned prior to tyre removal. Install Seal-zit and with just 30 days of normal equipment operation, rust scale will be lifted and tyres will remove easily. No rim cleanup will be required before remounting.

On-going use of Seal-zit means no messy compounds are needed for beads or rims, and gutters will be kept free of rust and scale.

**Tyre coolant:** It is a proven fact that cooler tyres last longer. Seal-zit substantially reduces tyre running temperatures, prolonging the life of tyres.

**Tyre-rim sealing:** Seal-zit reduces normal air loss between regular tyre pressure checks by at least 60%. Under-inflation is a key factor in shortening tyre life.

Bead seats, O-rings, vent hole leaking, blistered or cracked inner liners (even liners that are lifted loose from the ply) are sealed off very effectively by Seal-zit.

Seal-zit is a nonflammable substance and is safe for personnel and equipment, because its active ingredient is food-grade propylene glycol. To dispose, simply dilute it with copious amounts of water.

Using Seal-zit can also help tyre maintenance crews discover cracked rims before any cracks are large enough to become a hazard.

And because no fibres or fillers are used in Seal-zit, rim cracks or serious tyre damage can lose air normally, reducing the chance of tyre loss or blowout as injured area expands in size (as may occur when puncture-sealing products are used).

For further information, please contact Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres on phone (02) 9722 6111, email [info@bridgestone-earthmover.com.au](mailto:info@bridgestone-earthmover.com.au).



*Nathan Colliss outlines some key points of Diversified Products to Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres account and sales managers.*

## Diversified Products training success

Bridgestone Earthmover Tyres' Diversified Products Division recently conducted a two-day training course for the company's account and sales managers.

According to Nathan Colliss, Specialised Products Co-ordinator and one of the presenters, the prime objective was to create an open forum for discussion on the various market sectors and future sales direction for the Diversified Products Division.

"It's the first time we've recognised and addressed the division in this manner," said Nathan.

"The course provided an opportunity to present our plans for wheels and rims, Bridgestone rubber tracks, Firestone ATUs for skidsteers, backhoes and forestry applications and the Sealzit product.

"With on-going training, we expect this division to grow, while through increased awareness of the product range among our sales staff, we can see great opportunities.

"Bridgestone has a marked advantage over most of our competition, because we are able to offer our customers a truly nationwide distribution and support network," he said.

"This, combined with a sales force educated in the needs and requirements of the civil construction industry, means we believe we have a package that's second to none."

The information provided throughout the course was positively received with all participants acknowledging that the two days had been really beneficial.

# BRIDGESTONE

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