



From L-R: Mr PV Balasubramaniam, Dr Jamshed J Irani, Mr Sudhir Deoras and Mark Boon.

Tata's big plans for York

SINCE ITS ACQUISITION OF **YORK TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT** NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO, **THE TATA GROUP** IS HOPING TO MAKE THE RUNNING GEAR COMPANY A GLOBAL LEADER IN ITS FIELD, AT THE SAME TIME AS REFOCUSING ITS ATTENTION BACK ON THE AUSTRALIAN MARKET. *TRAILER MAGAZINE* SPOKE TO SOME OF THE COMPANY'S KEY PLAYERS IN THIS HUGE STORY TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT LIES BEHIND THE PLANS.

The Queensland Truck and Machinery Show hosted some big names from the Tata Group. Director of Tata Sons Ltd. Dr Jamshed J Irani, who is renowned throughout the Iron and Steel industry and was CEO of the Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd for nearly a decade, before retiring in 2001; Director and CEO of York Transport Equipment (Asia) Pte Ltd Mr PV Balasubramaniam; and Managing Director of TRF Limited and Chairman of York Mr Sudhir Deoras all flew in from India and Singapore to be in Brisbane. Tata's history stems as far back as 1868 and

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today it has 27 publicly listed enterprises, all of which are run independently with their own board of directors. Based in India, Tata has companies in operation in international markets worldwide, strongly focused on transportation. One of its enterprises – TRF Limited India – acquired York Transport and Equipment (Asia) Pte Ltd in October 2007. York began its operations in Australia

in 1985 as a supplier of imported trailer axles from its UK facility to the Australian Transport Industry. The strong demand for trailer components across the nation saw the company evolving into one of Australia's leading manufacturers of trailer axles – and Tata is doing what it can to make York the market leader, all by turning a great deal of focus back on its Australian roots.

The vision

Over the past six years or so, the Tata Group has expanded its range of heavy commercial vehicles to also include trailers and tipping trailers, as part of its fully built business marketed along with its range of prime movers. Confidence remains high because while the current worldwide recession has certainly slowed India's double-digit growth, like Australia it has not been hit as hard as some other parts of the world.

"In India, many highways and roads are being built, so we can expect to see a lot of trailer movement now and in the coming years," Mr Balasubramaniam said.

"The Trailer Industry is in its early stages of development and there is enormous scope for York both to supply this developing market from its current range of products, while developing new ones especially suited to the Indian market.

"Many of these products could also be used in other markets similar to India. With our new manufacturing capacity in India, York is well equipped to supply quality axles across the globe in a more cost-effective manner." Mr Balasubramaniam explained that when considering the full extent of the potential growth offered by the Transport Industry, York in particular stood out, thanks in no small part to its reputation for producing advanced componentry.

"We believe that York has quality products. We are now supporting the brand through

an improved parts and service network across the country, easy availability and closer customer interactions. There is an enormous amount of work going on in terms of engineering new products and improving the current range of products," he said.

"I have been coming to Australia every quarter and interacting with York's customers. What we see is that they want York to get back to what it was three or four years ago. Product quality needs to be of the highest order and everyone knows that there is an enormous amount of engineering skill in Australia.

"In the last seven or eight months alone, York has added several experts in the engineering and technology fields and has developed a new range of products. We have a vision for York in the Asia Pacific region to be the preferred partner of choice for the supply of all trailer equipment and accessories."

The product

At this year's show, York launched its brand new Maintenance Free Long Life Axle (MFL), purposely engineered to suit the Australian market (see box). Soon to follow is York's new 25 tonne suspension and 25 tonne axle.

"We are launching new products that suit the Australian mining segment. Most of our customers in the mining sector have been

after our running gear that exactly suits their requirements," Mark Boon from York said. York is currently in the process of setting up service centres across Australia as well as a parts division. It currently has two manufacturing facilities in Singapore, one in India and an assembling facility in Australia, all part of the Tata Group's plans for York to be the equal of any product, anywhere in the world.



Maintenance Free Long Life Axle (MFL)

The MFL has been developed with drum and disc brake variants specifically for the Australian market to suit regional requirements. It is a variant of the existing MFL axle product line and has an 11 tonne capacity.

The product has been designed to give longer operating hours, easy assembly and maintenance, and has a controlled assembly process for consistent performance.

It features:

- 5" round high tensile seamless steel tube, hubs and brake system that doesn't need to be greased or serviced throughout its lifetime.
- Pre-packaged bearing pairs to prevent contamination and improve performance.
- Double-sealed configuration for protection from water, dust and external contamination – even in high dust environments such as mines.
- ADR approved 420 mm x 180 mm drum brake or 17" disc Wabco twin calliper disc brake (PAN22 model).

