

BUSINESS SOUTH-EAST

Needs based is the solution

By CASEY NEILL

THE Shotton Group is breaking ground, spending \$2.5 million on machines which have never before been used in the southern hemisphere.

The Journal toured the Dandenong South manufacturing plant last Wednesday, 29 October, with Technology Minister Gordon Rich-Phillips and Industry Capability Network (ICN) staff.

Managing director Lloyd Shotton's father Roy Martin Shotton started the sheetmetal business in Braeside in 1977.

"He passed away in 1999 and left me the business," Lloyd said.

"I had no idea what I was doing. I decided to grow the business."

And grow it he has - from a \$2 million business to \$16.5 million.

He realised that work going offshore to low-cost regions was a threat to Shotton, so he set the company up to meet customer needs from the beginning to the end of a project.

"We tailor what we do to exactly what customers need," he said.

"We tell everyone we're their solution."

Shotton thrives on intricate, high-accuracy tasks and small-run work.

"It's all about fast turnaround," he said.

"The biggest part of our business for the last 12 years has been biomedical."



Shotton Group managing director Lloyd Shotton with the company's new equipment.

This includes body storage and transportation devices for mortuaries, science laboratories and universities.

Shotton also makes food trolleys for jails, heating and cooling systems and anti-tamper screws.

"We stayed away from cars," Lloyd said.

"We did what others didn't want to do."

This year he changed the compa-

ny name from P and R Sheetmetal to Shotton Manufacturing.

"This change recognised the capabilities of the business had evolved, through customer demand, into an innovative and solutions-driven manufacturer," he said.

Lloyd also introduced different divisions - Shotton Lifts for residential and commercial lifts for homes and businesses; Shotton Parmed for mortuary fit-outs for hospitals, universities, forensics centres and funeral homes;

and Shotton Materials Handling for food processing, packaging and bulk material processing.

"The \$2.5 million we spent on equipment recently was tailored for the work that was left in Australia," he said.

"It took us three years to decide on the equipment we'd purchase."

The new machines arrived in January and February and were the first of their kind in Australia.

All the machine programming is done offline. An operator scans a barcode and the machine springs into action.

Lloyd said it previously took workers 20 minutes to set machines by hand.

"A big set-up here now takes about three minutes," he said.

"You press the button and it's got all the tooling already installed and you've got four robots that just change all the tooling for you."

"All the short run stuff, where it wasn't competitive, now it's competitive."

Lloyd said the machines didn't take away any jobs.

"The staff are being used in a different way," he said.

"We still keep the skilled people, we still keep the old technology."

"There's just some things you can't do on here."

Shotton has four sites in Greens Road. "Our landlord keeps offering us more buildings," Lloyd said.

"In the next five years we'll hopefully more than double in size."

He wants to move the business onto one site, but remain in the region.

General manager Adrian Maloney said the business employed more than 85 people.

"The equipment and training have been funded by the business owners with no assistance from the state or federal governments," he said.

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