

Sarens is supplying CCs to both Chevron's Gorgon and Wheatstone projects.

# From strength to strength

With contracts on large-scale Australian developments including Chevron's Gorgon and Wheatstone projects, **Sheryl Lafferty** spoke to Sarens Australia about the company's growth over the past four years and its plans for the future.

Established in Australia in 2002 through local partnerships with smaller Australian crane companies, Sarens Australia was launched as an independent company in 2009. In just four years, the business has experienced significant growth, today enjoying annual turnover four times higher than in 2011 and 20 times higher than 2009.

A 100%-owned subsidiary of the Sarens Group, headquartered in Belgium, Sarens Australia is backed by more than 60 years experience in the heavy lifting and transport industry – a fact Sarens Australia country manager Gert Hendrickx cites as essential to its success.

"In January 2011 we had 33 cranes and 30 staff in the company. Now we have 160 cranes and 120 staff in the organisation," he told *Cranes and Lifting*.

Sarens Australia has offices in Brisbane, Gladstone, Newcastle, Perth and Karratha, offering customers a full range of industry equipment including 20-tonne to 1250t cranes, 160 axle lines self-propelled modular trailers, jacking and tower lifting equipment and an in-house engineering department.

Combined with professional and locally maintained 24/7 service fleet support, Hendrickx attributed these key factors to the company's good fortune in Australia – yet he admitted that the business' rapid growth had surprised even Sarens.

"Sarens Australia's growth over the last two years definitely exceeded expectations," he confirmed.

Recently recommended for ISO 9001:2008 certification in quality management by the International Organisation for Standardisation, Sarens' focus remains firmly fixed on continued development.

The company's largest operational facility in Australia, based in Maddington, Western Australia, is undergoing extensive renovation and expansion works. As part of a plan to enlarge Sarens' mobile crane activities across the state, Maddington yard works have included the construction of wash bay and quarantine facilities necessary for the company's contracts on Chevron's Gorgon project, as well as new parking areas for cranes and work vehicles, a 1500 square metre concrete hard stand with workshop facilities and hosting zones for fully equipped utes and sprinters for site support maintenance.

"When we bought this yard three years ago it was clear this was not suitable for our heavy lift activities so, since then, we invested about \$1 million to make the yard more suitable for our needs," Hendrickx explained.

"For the coming weeks and months, we're planning to invest in our workshop to make it a state-of-the-art maintenance facility."

Yet the Maddington facility is not the only



(Top) Sarens offers clients a range of heavy lifting and transport equipment including SPMTs. (Above) Sarens' mobile crane division is in the process of being expanded.

large-scale Sarens yard in use or under development across Australia.

"We are now also operating from our 5000 square metre yard in Karratha," Hendrickx said.

"This yard will help us expand our Pilbara activities, but also support projects including Wheatstone and Burrup (technical ammonium nitrate plant) up north.

"Darwin is next on our expansion list."

With such a commitment to growth and progress across markets that are experiencing an undeniable slowdown, *Cranes and Lifting* asked Hendrickx: what is the vision for Sarens Australia over the next five years?

"Taking into consideration the slowdown in the oil/gas/mining market, the focus will be on keeping our fleet on long-term projects across different market segments that need a variety of Sarens technologies and other resources," he explained.

"Let's hope, of course, that the market will pick up again in the coming months, stimulated by the new elected government now in place."

## SARENS AUSTRALIA: CURRENT CONTRACTS

### Gorgon project

The world's largest natural gas project and Australia's largest single resource development, Sarens has two contracts on Chevron's Gorgon project – one with CBI Constructors for tanks and one with the CBI and Kentz Joint Venture for mechanical equipment installation works.

Together, both contracts are utilising close to 80 Sarens cranes onshore and offshore, ranging from 20t Franna cranes through to 250t crawler and all terrain cranes.

The average rental period of the cranes onsite sits between 24 and 36 months.

### Wheatstone Onslow LNG

With two contracts secured to date, Sarens is supplying 20 long-term rental cranes for work on the development's jetty and material offloading facility projects, ranging from 20t Frannas up to 400t crawler cranes.

### Gladstone LNG projects

Sarens is renting 25 cranes to Bechtel Equipment Services for use across three LNG projects in Gladstone. Operating under a long-term rental agreement, the cranes onsite comprise 50t rough terrain through to 1250t crawler cranes.