

CASE STUDY

SUREWELD



CATEGORY:
Manufacturing

LOCATION:
Wangaratta, VIC

PRODUCT:
ALUMINIUM

From Strength to Strength

These are exciting times for Sureweld. The manufacturer of lightweight portable loading ramps and plant trailers, made using aluminium materials supplied by BlueScope Distribution, is expanding and looking stronger than ever.

Sureweld was founded in Melbourne in 1976. Originally a small welding and fabrication business, the company introduced the concept of aluminium loading ramps to Australia in the early 1980s. "In 2004, the previous owners decided they would like to move to the country and brought the business with them to Wangaratta," explained one of the owners of Sureweld, Gareth Hanson.

Still based in Wangaratta, today the family-owned company has 16 employees and, after five years of sustained growth, has outgrown its current leased premises and is moving once again.

Sureweld manufactures plant trailers as well as portable ramps, which are designed for loading machinery onto (and off) trucks.

The key feature of these products is that they are made out of aluminium. This means they are significantly lighter than most competitors' products.

"Sureweld's ramps are actually so much lighter than steel alternatives that they only require one, not two people to carry them," said Gareth.

“ This is the great thing about our relationship. We know we can rely on them (BlueScope Distribution). They hold stock for us, which means we can minimise the stock levels we have to hold here on the floor ”

- Gareth Hanson, Owner, Sureweld

Despite their lighter weight, the ramps can still carry some significant weights. “In our standard off-the-shelf range, we have ramps that can handle loads from 450 kg up to 11.5 tonnes. We also custom build models that can handle up to 22 tonnes,” said Gareth.

FAST LEAD TIMES

While Sureweld has been making these ramps for 40 years, the company only started sourcing aluminium from BlueScope Distribution in 2012.

Gareth is very happy with this arrangement. “They’ve been fantastic. They have a distribution plant that is just 50 minutes up the road, so we can always call on them. They’re great on backup support if we need something urgently or require technical assistance.”

Because of the weights involved, manufacturing the ramps requires an extremely strong alloy that is no longer extruded in Australia. Despite this fact, BlueScope Distribution is able to guarantee Sureweld quick lead times after order placement.

This is made possible by the fact that BlueScope Distribution has a robust B2B stock management system in place for all aluminium requirements. Therefore, Sureweld has the visibility of the stocked items they hold in their Albury warehouse, along with what is on order within the supply chain.

BlueScope Distribution Account Manager, Brian Dowling is proactive in ensuring there is enough product to



draw on that meets the forecast work schedule for themselves and their clients. Weekly deliveries also ensure neither is ever short of the product required for the week ahead.

“This is the great thing about our relationship. We know we can rely on them. They hold stock for us, which means we can minimise the stock levels we have to hold here on the floor,” said Gareth.

The immediate future is looking bright for Sureweld. Before the end of 2018 the company is moving to a new, purpose built facility that is almost twice the size of our current premises.

“We will have significantly increased production capabilities to ensure we can meet our customers’ expectations. On top of that, Sureweld is committed to employ an extra 10 full-time staff over the next three to five years.

We believe this will assist in much needed growth for the region,” said Gareth.

This optimism extends to the company’s ongoing relationship with BlueScope Distribution. “Once we get into our new facility, we will probably be able to handle three times our current production. Hopefully we will also begin to do a fair bit more with BlueScope Distribution when we get there,” said Gareth.

That will surely be music to the ears of the people of Wangaratta, Australian manufacturing and everyone else.

For more information visit
www.sureweld.com.au



www.bluescopedistribution.com.au

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