

Transport Seating

Queensland's marine seating frontrunners celebrate 50 years

The times have certainly changed for Stapylton's Transport Seating, which has grown from humble beginnings in 1963 to celebrating 50 years of success in the marine and vehicle transport seating industry in 2013.

Founder Rod Ferguson began his apprenticeship as a motor trimmer with Humphries Motor Body Works in 1963, located on a block behind his family home in the riverside Brisbane suburb of New Farm. Today, Mr Ferguson is the proud managing director of a family-owned Australian business – one that is widely recognised as a front-runner in its field.

"Transport Seating has an unchallenged reputation for innovation, quality and outstanding customer service, which has resulted in longevity in a tough business environment," said Mr Ferguson.

"My secret is working exceptionally hard and creating something to be really proud of; fortunately my team share this attitude and between us we continue to build on this philosophy."

Mr Ferguson's early days involved working on cars such as Jaguars, Alfas and MGs. But after a year into his apprenticeship, he began a second job with Admac building seats for Denning coaches.

Though undertaking these two jobs at such an early age was "hard work", it didn't take him long to realise that his real passion was making seats: "I simply loved it and it is a passion that has never diminished; in fact it has increased as the years move on."

Mr Ferguson re-entered the world of seating in 1979 when Kevin Johnston started the coach building company Motor Coach. It was around this time there was an "air of

excitement" beginning to build in the Australian marine industry, which was steadily developing out of its infancy.

"I had been quietly observing the opportunities that obviously existed in marine for specialised seating," Mr Ferguson explained. "Therefore, the natural progression was for me to become involved and grow with marine as it developed into the significant industry in Australia it is today."

In 1996, Mr Ferguson started Transport Seating Technology, a company with the purpose of specialist seating for the marine, bus, coach and motor home industries. The name was changed to Transport Seating in 2010.

A lesson learned by Mr Ferguson from an early stage was the importance of safety: "regardless of everything else the safety of people was and is paramount."

"For our marine seats we have our own in-house research and development department where we carry out, amongst other tests, a 'static test' to IMO-HSC code. For other tests such as the 'dynamic test', we use the Sydney Crash Lab."

Research and development takes a high priority at Transport Seating, with new and improved designs continuously developed to improve safety, comfort, strength and value. Recent developments for marine seats include elastomeric fabric suspension technology, no-weld aluminium frames, marine seats with total weights of only 7.75 kilograms per passenger, and seats tested to 12 g-forces. According to Mr Ferguson, "there is much more planned in 2013."

In 2006, Transport Seating successfully tested and certified the company's range of marine seats to IMO-HSC code. This code is the internationally recognised standard for

Founder and managing director of Transport Seating Rod Ferguson



marine passenger seating, and is conducted under rigorous controlled testing to examine the materials, structure, design criteria and strength.

Recently completed client projects include the 400-pax 'Catalina' and 'Mandalay', Riverside Marine's 24 metre 246-pax 'Avalon' and an 84-pax vessel for Cairns. The company has also launched a new lightweight indoor/outdoor marine seat, featuring elastomeric fabric suspension technology that offer "huge weight and fuel savings without the huge price tag". The company has also developed a weldable tracking system for significant time savings when installing or removing seats.

With 2012 a highly successful year for Transport Seating, notching up passenger seat sales in excess of 11,000 units, the company has been moving from strength to strength. A number of contractual supply and licence agreements are in place, and Rod Ferguson's team brings considerable expertise and knowledge in producing seating solutions for Australian conditions, whether on land or in water.

"My personal belief is that the best is yet to come and I am looking forward with anticipation to an exciting future, however, whatever happens my passion and desire to create the best in seating will never lessen."

For further information contact:
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Riverside Marine's 24 metre catamaran ferry can carry up to 246 passengers on marine seats provided by Transport Seating

