

FOR ROAD TRANSPORT & COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PROFESSIONALS

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TODAY

Star Struck



A versatile Western Star is proving to be better than anticipated for this Tasmanian operator. Howard Shanks reports.





There was a large booming crack, as the primary jaw crusher bit into a large bolder at Boral's Mowbray quarry in the northern outskirts of Launceston. Within half an hour the remains of that bolder, now sized into various aggregates, would be heading to a nearby concrete plant in the back of Steve Targett's 4900 Western Star.

A gush of air discharged from the spring brake's chambers and was the only signal over the ambience of a working quarry that Steve Targett had arrived at the entrance. He climbed from the cabin and headed towards the weighbridge office to collect the paperwork for his next load.

Based at Scottsdale, 60 or so kilometers to the east of Launceston, it is the largest major township in the mountains between Launceston and the east coast.

Predominantly a timber town, it is from here that early each morning Steve winds his way up over the picturesque Sideling mountain range and that's where the brute strength of the 550 Cat under the hood really shines. It is that performance, economy, durability with a tried and tested after-sales service which were some of the features that caught Steve Targett's attention when he specified this Western Star for his bulk tipper business.

Steve makes the trek to the big smoke of Launceston early each morning with a load of local product from Scottsdale then makes deliveries for Boral during the day



before he returns home with a load of product from the city each night.

Those that know Steve describe a man who takes meticulous care of his equipment. The service he extends his customers is equally meticulous and being prepared to go the extra mile is often cited as being one of his most laudable qualities.

Steve believes that Western Star's dealer Weststar share his ideals when it comes to quality of service, and that

underscored his confidence in deciding to purchase the 4964FX Western Star.

This is Steve's second Western Star, and he's more than confident this Star will deliver the same reliability and performance as the first.

"It's the fact that Western Star are able to listen to you and build a truck to suit your needs that I initially looked at them," Steve volunteered. "When I left my father's business and went out on my own it was big step. I knew I could do



the job and had good contracts, what I needed was a truck that wouldn't let me down."

It was the performance, reliability and back up services he enjoyed with that initial Western Star that instilled the confidence to look no further when it came time to update the truck.

Steve Targett's 4964 Western Star is spec'ed to suit a variety of applications and that's something he cites as one of the truck's best attributes.

"I needed a truck with a pretty heavy duty spec," Steve explained. "The country is very steep in places here in the north east of the State and when we're delivering to road construction sites, often they can be second class dirt tracks.

It's pretty versatile too, I set it up so that I can remove the semi tipper and turntable and put on a ten meter rigid tipping body then connect to my dog trailer. For road construction, these semi tippers are too unstable, where as rigid and dog combination is a far more flexible combination in the bush where maneuverability and stability are most needed. And, the bodies don't get tangled in branches."

"Even so, Steve adds, "you still need to watch the trees."

Powered by Cat's tenacious C-15 engine set at 550 horsepower that develops 1850 lbs ft torque, it is driven through Eaton's RTLO-20918B 18-speed double overdrive transmission to Meritor RT46-160 GP final drives, with full cross locks on both axles, and rides on Western Star's heavy duty AirLiner suspension.

"The AirLiner system was designed to virtually eliminate any servicing or maintenance," Allan Orr, Western Star's International Sales Manager explained. "The use of elastomer bushings negates the need for regular lubrication

and results in a greatly extended life cycle."

Western Star's AirLiner suspension achieves a relatively constant spring rate by using a premium rotary valve that ensures correct height control. "That rotary valve replaces traditional rubber-seat valves that deteriorate with age and alter spring rate and driveline angle, both of which cause a reduction in driveline life.

"The AirLiner 46K unit fitted on Targett's 4900 Western Star has a ground rating of 20,860 kg and a GCM up to 90 tonnes in a Roadtrain application," Allan Orr, continued. "It uses formed steel cross members and has iron main suspension brackets instead of the aluminum ones as used on the AirLiner 40K model."

"I can't fault it; the ride, comfort and road handling are absolutely fabulous," Steve volunteered. "The AirLiner suspension simply gets the power to the ground far more smoothly."

Even more surprising though, is the turning circle, Steve enthused. "It is exceptional for such a long bonneted truck. I can turn the 4900 Western Star in half the distance compared to some other marques that haul for the quarry and that's important in our game."

The list of standard equipment on this truck reads like an optional extras brochure and includes such items as dual Hadley air horns, exterior sun visor, two-spoke leather-wrapped steering wheel and chrome finish door handles.

Steve adds that the power of the Cat engine makes a huge difference as well.

We took delivery of the 4964 Western Star in October last year and so far it has clocked over 50,000 kilometres trouble free, Steve concluded. The teething problems that often come with new trucks simply haven't. 🚛

