

'Thinking outside the circle' brings new crane idea

by Greg Keane

Perhaps Ron Laczko's thinking in designing the Lasco crane was that you don't need a sledgehammer to crack a walnut. Whatever the reason, the crane's load chart defies its modest dimensions and strips a crane to its essentials: a boom, a winch, a counterweight and a power source.

The minimalist thinking was that, if the crane was simple and light enough, it could be supported by, say, the floor slab of a building rather than by a separate tower. And, because it is modular, it can be broken down into small enough components to be transported by ordinary lifts, moved by pallet jack and manhandled for positioning and assembly.

Laczko has developed the crane over several years, based on extensive experience in the rigging industry. The crane has been used widely in Asia, and has also been used on a number of projects in Australia, including a 100m-high chimney at Gove alumina where the alternative was a 140t all-terrain crane.

It is only recently that Ron Laczko has acquired production facilities on the Gold Coast, and has had a unit available to demonstrate the Lasco crane's capabilities to potential clients.

His aim is to have a unit available for hire in

Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, as well as a unit in New Zealand, so that the machine's potential can be readily demonstrated to the market.

He believes it is necessary for project managers to think "outside the circle" to take full advantage of the Lasco crane, and to do so they need to have the opportunity to see the crane in action.

He sees major projects using a large construction-type crane on core lifts, with the Lasco crane used for peripheral lifts for tasks such as handling scaffolding.

On many sites, large mobile cranes have access problems and restricted hours of operation - something which does not trouble the Lasco. These benefits translate from new construction work to refurbishment and demolition, where in many circumstances the Lasco could be the only crane required permanently on site.

The Lasco crane could also be used to advantage where a project is falling behind schedule, through weather or other factors. It is quick to set up, and does not restrict access to other equipment.

Use of a Lasco crane in such circumstances could overcome the threat of large liquidated damages for projects running late. *Reprinted from AM's sister publication, Construction Contractor.*

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