



LEFT: The new undercover drafting complex at CQLX Gracemere is one of many changes being undertaken as part of a nine-stage process of redevelopment at the site.

The main aim was to deal with chronic animal welfare and occupational health and safety issues because there had been minimal upgrades undertaken under council ownership.

CQLX takes step with ...

More than just a facelift

By MELISSA MARTIN

HOW do you redevelop a 5000-head capacity saleyards while still continuing to operate a packed sale schedule with minimal disruption?

That's the challenge the operators of Central Queensland Livestock Exchange (CQLX) Gracemere and the stockyard design and manufacturing team at Thompson Longhorn have taken on over the past 18 months as they work to transform the site into a highly efficient piece of infrastructure.

Creating a site that also ticks all the boxes in addressing animal welfare and occupational health and safety issues has been the key focus of the redevelopment, with the benefits to ultimately flow through to increased throughput. Regional Infrastructure Pty Ltd (RIPL), who act on behalf of Palisade Investment Partners, officially took over operation of the site from Rockhampton Regional Council in January 2010, and since then has set about its complete redevelopment through a nine-stage process, estimated to cost in excess of \$18 million.

Stage one, two and three have been completed and include the establishment of a new sex draft and mousing crush; new undercover drafting complex complete with 600 square metre roof; and the establishment of semi-portable yards under the Austadium arena to temporarily hold stock while the redevelopment is under

way. But even bigger changes are afoot, with new dip holding yards currently under construction, plans finalised for a new public walkway linking the main selling complex to the yards, and a new scale complex to be built under a 1100sq m roof featuring a 27sq m bulk way and an automated single weigh station and nine-way draft.

New buyers/delivery yards, 66 new selling pens, and new quarantine feed yards are also in the pipeline.

All new cattle-handling equipment such as the drafts are fully automated via pneumatics (air powered), while the yards are being constructed using Australian-made steel.

Nigel Ferguson, who is RIPL's project supervisor for the CQLX redevelopment and Livestock Link's Queensland operations manager, said they had worked closely with Thompson Longhorn designers to create what will ultimately be a world-class facility.

"The main aim was to deal with chronic animal welfare and occupational health and safety issues because there had been minimal upgrades undertaken under council ownership," Mr Ferguson said.

RIGHT: Nigel Ferguson, RIPL's project supervisor for the CQLX redevelopment and Livestock Link's Queensland operations manager, under the new drafting complex.



"What we're doing is improving the position of facilities like the drafting complex and scale complex within the site to improve efficiencies and throughput, while also improving animal welfare and OH&S issues.

"All these factors complement each other and we're trying to implement efficiencies which will ultimately lead to benefits for the vendors."

The CQLX redevelopment is not the first time Thompson Longhorn has worked with RIPL. Past joint projects have included the construction of the state-of-the-art Central Tablelands Livestock Exchange (CTLX) between Blayney and Carcoar in Central NSW.

Thompson Longhorn managing director Byron Wolff said a key to making the CQLX redevelopment work while allowing the saleyards to remain operational was the use of pre-

fabrication at the company's Allora site.

"We extensively use our three-dimensional drawing software so we know every detail, and that allows us to extensively prefabricate in our factory and reduce installation times, which is one of the keys to being able to successfully deliver a solution while you're on an operating site," Mr Wolff said.

"All of the design work we do for RIPL sites is always a joint effort between our design team and the customer. No two sites are the same because of different operating requirements and location."

With animal welfare and OH&S the basic keys to all its design work, Mr Wolff said the company also helps clients develop operating procedures to assist them in development of their own safe-work practices once a completed site is handed over.

VIRTUAL WORLD:

Turning a 2D sketch into a 3D experience

IF you thought stockyard design had reached its technical zenith, then hold on to your hats, because it has now entered the virtual world with avatars.

Using cutting-edge programs, the design team at Thompson Longhorn can transform a plan into a three-dimensional experience to allow clients to virtually walk through a set of yards before construction.

Not everyone can easily visualise a set of stockyards from a two-dimensional sketch, but with rendered images and animations, clients can experience the sensation of being inside the design before it becomes a reality.

Thompson Longhorn managing director Byron Wolff said the company had spent four years of system design and development to create the virtual experience.

"We have the ability to take two-dimensional layouts and transform them into three-dimensional designs, and that gives us the ability to walk through the virtual yard with our client," Mr Wolff said.

"If we do a design for a client and we're at the point of the final design stage, we can transform that design into a fully three-dimensional experience.

"We give the client a log in and invite them into our virtual meeting room where they select an avatar on the way in, and we meet them in the yard as our own avatar and we will virtually walk through the yards and talk together.

"As far as we know, we're the only stockyard company in the world that can do this." – Story: MELISSA MARTIN.



Using cutting-edge programs, the design team at Thompson Longhorn can transform a plan into a three-dimensional experience.

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