

# Simply climbing higher

Gold Coast firm Lasco Cranes has battled for a long time to gain recognition for founder Ron Laczko's revolutionary crane designed to operate on the slab on medium- and high-rise buildings.

Laczko's design stripped a crane to its essentials: a boom, a winch, a counterweight and a power source. However, because the alternative was a tower crane or a truck crane of substantial capacity placed some distance from the lift area, the building industry found it difficult to comprehend for some time that such a minimalist crane could perform the same work.

Laczko's years of experience in the building industry led him to design a crane which was light enough to be supported by the floor slab of a high-rise building, rather than by a separate tower. It was of modular design, so that it could be broken down into components small enough to be transported by commonly used building lifts, moved by a pallet-jack and manhandled for positioning and assembly.

The crane is designed to complement tower cranes, handling the regular lighter lifts bringing building materials onto the floor for placement, and allowing the tower crane to be used for major lifts, and lifts where reach and slewing capacity is required.

When a job is designed to fully use the capabilities of a Lasco crane, the tower crane can be dismantled up to six weeks earlier, using the Lasco crane if necessary, and the Lasco crane can handle materials for cladding the building and fitting it out.

Because it can be broken down into small components, the Lasco crane does not cause problems in dismantling after work is completed.

Persistence in continuing to develop and market the crane over many years paid off recently when French company Potain, the largest maker of building cranes in the world, signed an agreement to market the Lasco-manufactured crane in its colours in all markets except Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, where Lasco Cranes retains the marketing rights.

Laczko has continued to develop the crane concept, and is in the advanced stages of development of a rubber track system which allows the crane to be moved under its own power.

A further development is underway to allow the crane to be used in conjunction with high-rise material loading platforms which have proved popular on many building sites in Australia and overseas.

While the major use for the Lasco crane is expected to lie in medium- and high-rise building construction and refurbishment, other areas where the Lasco could be used include marinas (where they can be used for lifting motors out of vessels), and on building or piling slipforms, where they can handle general craneage and concrete kibbles or concrete pump hoses.

A new and unrelated development for which a prototype is nearing completion is a bullbar crane suitable for large 4x4 and utility vehicles, and light trucks.

**Construction Contractor - February 2000**