

Self - erecting cranes continue to fly

THE market for self-erecting cranes continues to grow rapidly in an otherwise slow market, writes **Greg Keane**. Though widely used in Europe and Asia these cranes have generated little interest until recently.

Their recent acceptance may owe something to a campaign to educate builders about the advantages of self-erecting cranes in the appropriate applications - major advantages being cost savings and availability to work as required.

As numbers of these cranes grow they will no doubt cut into the market previously served by other types of crane - particularly truck cranes. This will no doubt cause some crane owners to rethink fleet numbers and composition - as has been the case with telescopic handlers, access platforms and other classes of lifting and access equipment in the past.

This is one of the great challenges of business - to offer the goods and services that offer greatest benefits to the customer. The market is increasingly international - international trade magazines, the internet, and overseas trips to trade shows all educate the local market in what is being used in other parts of the world. Immigration also brings substantial numbers of people to Australia who are familiar with working using different methods and equipment to those used locally.



To survive and thrive businesses need to be aware of methods and equipment used elsewhere, know the business of their clients, and offer methods and equipment that best many the recent success of the self-erecting crane has come out of left field - yet these cranes have been widely used in many parts of the world for the same purposes as they are now being used in Australia. They are a class of crane in themselves, rather than a variation of some other type of crane, and have their own benefits and limitations. They obviously have a lot to offer to the low- and medium-rise building market, and there will be an increasing demand for them, not just in the Sydney market where they have met with greatest success, but in other parts of Australia.

The question for the future will

be who embraces the opportunities presented by this trend. They are not a solution for all lifting problems, but for many crane owners there must be a question over whether there is a place in their fleet for a self-erecting crane.

Each class of crane has its own set of capital and operating costs, and its own strengths and weaknesses in its load chart. Self-erecting cranes have modest capital and operating costs, modest maximum capacity at short radius and good capacity at long radius.

They are relatively quick to set up, and require a relatively small footprint in which to work. They operate from a fixed position, but with their long booms they give good site coverage. They have limitations on the height they can reach. They are relatively simple to operate, and quiet.

These features are attractive to a significant section of the market.