

Quick, Easy and Safe Container Loading

Rondo uses the *revolutionary SLC* to reduce damage and freight costs.

Rondo Building Services Pty Ltd (Rondo) is a joint venture company between CSR and Boral created approximately 30 years ago with its head office and manufacturing facility located in the Sydney suburb of St. Marys. Rondo is the leading domestic manufacturer of steel frames for suspended ceilings and steel frame wall studs and is the largest user of light gauge steel in Australia.

Need for an Alternative

Rondo's product is bundled together in packs with lengths of up to seven metres. The product is difficult to pack into shipping containers and excessive time was needed to load and unload. Scarce equipment such as Flat Rack and Open Top containers and cranes were required and often involved surcharges because of the difficulties common in the loading and unloading processes. The packs would shift during transportation resulting in damage to the product and supply shortages.

It was for these reasons that Rondo had been anxious to explore alternative methods of loading containers. The answer came in the form of the patented ***Seafreight Loading Chassis*** (SLCtm) designed by Container Loading Solutions International Pty Ltd (CLS), and introduced by the Melbourne based freight forwarding firm Superfreighters Pty Ltd. With over 20 years experience in the forwarding of cargo via sea freight Superfreighters was quick to recognise that the solution to Rondo's problem was the SLC.

What are SLCs?

SLCs (Seafreight Loading Chassis) are steel chasses with rollers that provides quick and easy roll in, roll out loading and unloading of shipping containers. The chasses are built in 10ft, 20ft, or 40ft configurations with chequer plate floors and are capable of carrying up to 26 tonnes of freight per 20ft SLC.



20 Foot SLC with cavities for return of bearers

Rondo now loads its product on to 20ft SLCs, securing the product with load binders that are fitted on the SLCs, and then uses a 2.5 tonne forklift to push two, 11 tonne loads up a two metre container ramp directly into each 40ft container. The two 20ft SLCs are firmly secured with a patented locking system, which ensures minimal product movement during transit. Once in position the loading of two SLCs inside a container can be completed in minutes.

The SLC loading system is often described as a hybrid between a General Purpose (GP) and a Flat Rack container. It is a solution that provides the cost advantages and product safety associated with a GP container and the loading flexibility and convenience of Flat Racks or Open Top containers.



Stacked 20foot SLC's

Health and Safety

The SLC system also has significant occupational and health and safety benefits because the product is preloaded on the chassis, which is then easily pushed into the container. Thus the freight is loaded and secured without the need for personnel to enter the container.



Benefits & Cost Savings

- The main advantage of SLCs is their ability to be used on site, thereby eliminating the need for products to be transported to a third party for specialised loading or unloading.
- Rondo has also found that the SLC system enables it to pre load and thus reduce yard congestion and transport charges.
- The container and sidelifter trucks only need to be on site for a short time due to the quick loading of the SLCs into the containers. Rondo also found that by switching from Flat Racks to Hi Cube containers, it was now able to load higher and increase the payload and container utilisation thus reducing freight costs.
- Having the Rondo product packed on site by its own experienced staff means that when the product arrives at its destination it is in excellent condition and is easy to unload thus saving on time and damage.



Mr Daryll McAuley and Mr Keith Patterson

Mr Keith Patterson the National Logistics Manager for Rondo Building Services says, "Because of the nature of our product we had little alternative other than to use Flat Racks to transport our material to New Zealand. As Flat Racks are classified as special equipment they attract a premium and shipping lines often diverted available equipment to more lucrative destinations. This led to us regularly having no Flat Racks and getting the dubious distinction of being named by one of our New Zealand customers as their worst supplier. We had been looking at alternative methods of transporting our material, but until we trialed SLC's found nothing suitable. The use of SLC's has given us the opportunity to redeem the situation and provide a reliable delivery service with no damage to stock. With the availability of rail containers also becoming tight Rondo will commence sea shipments to WA with the added bonus of considerable freight saving being generated."

Rondo is using the SLCs to Perth, Auckland and Christchurch. Using the SLCs to Perth has had the added benefit of allowing Rondo to move from rail to sea. This has resulted in significant reduction in freight charges.

Once a month Rondo is required to load a twenty foot GP container with an assortment of accessory products. These products are outside the high volume steel stud and frame product group and as a result Rondo are required to hand load the container. In the past this has proven to be a major task. The load (pictured below) is 19.2 tonne and is comprised of hundreds of pieces of all different sizes. Typically a job like this could take

Rondo's staff 16 man hours to load the container. Rondo's customer was also then required to invest a similar amount of time to hand unload the container at its destination. Using one 20ft SLC one man was able to complete the container loading in three hours, an 80% productivity improvement.



The most obvious benefit of the SLC in this case is the reduction in labour charges at both ends by approximately 26 man hours, but as well as that Rondo claim that its the productivity benefit of not tying up labour for extend time which has a major benefit. Skilled labour can move on to other more productive tasks instead of loading containers. Of further benefit is the removal of the OH&S risks associated with hand loading such heavy and awkward products for both Rondo and their customer.



Further Innovation that Reduces Costs

The SLCs neatly stack on each other so that 13 will stack into one 20ft GP container, making the return of the SLCs relatively inexpensive. Rondo also worked with Superfreighters and CLS to help improve and customise the initial SLC design to Rondo's particular needs. These improvements resulted in cavities being added for returning empty bearers inside the SLC as well all SLC's now having greased ground and guide rollers that allow for easier loading and unloading as well as less strain on their standard 2.5 tonne forklifts. Superfreighters can now use the SLCs for return cargo from Perth thereby reducing the total cost of the system, including eliminating the cost of returning the SLCs to Rondo in NSW.

Demonstrating their confidence and enthusiasm in the new system Rondo has recently increased its order of SLCs and is now committed to a long term contract for transporting both its New Zealand and Perth freight.