



Launch of the new steel hull in 2015

## Building a framework for success

Bowhill Engineering in the Murraylands has proved that you can strut the national stage without giving up your small-town quality of life.

The family-owned company has worked on some of South Australia's major structural steel projects and is helping to connect people along the River Murray after building the steel hull for the new river ferry that left the dockyard in November.

Another steel hull is under construction, and Bowhill Engineering managing director Jeremy Hawkes said the delivery of the first for fit-out in mid-2015 was an emotional moment.

"Bowhill has never built anything like this before, and to launch one here with everyone watching is so special," he said.

The company won the State Government contract in 2014 to build the steel hulls for the new ferries, as part of a \$6 million government commitment.

Mr Hawkes said a recent State Government move to specify increased local content in major projects was already delivering benefits for local firms.

"It's made a massive impact on the way construction companies are

engaging with local suppliers," he said.

Bowhill Engineering employs about 20 people and specialises in finding solutions for engineering challenges.

It delivers about \$5 million worth of structural steel projects each year for the government infrastructure, mining, water, defence and commercial building sectors.

Above all, there is a determination to remain in Bowhill.

"We are passionate country people; we love where we live and we've never considered moving elsewhere," Mr Hawkes said.

"I think we've done a good thing and I'd like to be an example to others to show you don't have to leave your region to be successful."

In addition to winning major contracts, Bowhill has garnered numerous awards, including being named Small Employer of the Year at the 2015 SA Training Awards and taking out the Regional Business Award at the 2014 Telstra Business Awards.

The company started as a mechanical repair workshop in the 1970s when Jeremy's father Brendon needed to repair his farm machinery. He soon took on other farmers' equipment while continuing to farm near Karoonda, until his older son Simon refocused the company on structural steel engineering.

Jeremy took over after Simon's sudden death in a car accident in 2002.

"It took a lot of effort and our clients took some time to trust that we could do it without Simon," he said.

But after the company delivered its next major project, \$1.2 million of work on SA Water's River Murray locks for York Civil, the tide turned.

"York Civil were very impressed with what our team was able to do, and that gave us the belief we could do it," Mr Hawkes said.

"We are known for specialising in helping our clients visualise and collaborate to bring their dreams to life. We engage with the client and their other consultants in the process, and what we end up with is a well-balanced and

smart design. We love being the underdog and surprising people with what we can do."

The results of Bowhill's work can be seen in a number of Australian states, and in Adelaide people have been crossing its Riverbank precinct pedestrian bridge for a decade. The company also contributed to the transport frame that enabled the 1860s-built clipper, City of Adelaide, to be brought from Scotland in 2014 for restoration.

Other projects have included a floating access system for the Dolphin Explorer at Port Adelaide, pedestrian bridges and gantries for major overhead signs on the Southern Expressway, a pedestrian overpass at Wayville train station and major road bridges.