



Boys from Brookvale can sure use a lift

John Morcombe

A BROOKVALE company that supplies and fits lifts for disabled people has won the contract to supply wheelchair lifts on a fleet of catamaran ferries destined for the Middle East.

The Platform Lift Co is having the lifts made in Italy and then fitting them inside four high-speed ferries being built in Western Australia.

Normally the company fits disabled lifts in buildings, so the installation of the lifts into ferries indicates what managing director Clive Hammond says is the potential for his company to attain a global reach for its products.

The Platform Lift Co was formed by Mr Hammond and Andrew Skelton at Brookvale in 2006.

"The company has been operating in the United Kingdom since 2000 and is owned and run by a good friend of mine," Mr Hammond says.

"Our company is Australian-owned and operated but we work closely with the UK company.

"We looked at the market here about 18 months ago and found Australia a bit behind Europe and the UK in the implementation of disabled access products.

"There has been legislation here since the early 1990s but it has never really been pushed, although that's starting to happen now.

"The products have come a long way in 10 years and we've got that UK experience which we can use

here. We see the disabled access market in Australia continuing to grow because builders and developer can't get away with not providing disabled access any more.

"The legislation is there and they have to comply with it."

Mr Hammond says the market for his company's products will never be as large as Europe's because of the difference in population size, which is why the lifts being installed in the four ferries are made in Italy.

"All this disabled access legislation has been in place in Europe since the 1980s and the best manufacturers are in Italy, Sweden, Denmark and Spain," he says.

"With our UK experience we've found the best manufacturer is a 70 million-euro-a-year company in Italy. It's just not economic to do it in Australia.

"All of our lifts are built to order. We do a site survey, measure it and then get it made to fit. There was a lot of engineering to make them fit in the ferries but our experience allowed us to do it."

Supplying the disabled lifts is not the company's first foray into the Middle East – and it won't be its last.

"The Platform Lift Co is finding opportunities for our services in both our own backyard and around the world," Mr Hammond said.

"The contract with Austral Ships demonstrates the high quality and potential global reach for our solutions for all publicly-accessible buildings and workplaces."