

Longveld – a story of growth and success

Stainless steel transport and plant fabricators Longveld grew from small beginnings to become a powerhouse in the market – taking one quality-led step at a time and getting the right crew in the waka both played their part.

Small beginnings

Longveld owners Les and Pam grew up in the Waikato.

Les embarked on a fitter turner apprenticeship with Stewart & Cavalier in Te Awamutu, then started a small stainless steel fabrication partnership, servicing the local dairy sector.

Pam studied science and chemical technology, entering the dairy industry graduate training programme – spending time in dairy factories learning about product manufacturing.

As fate would have it, she worked at Anchor Products Te Awamutu where Les was contracted to do a fabrication job for her project.

Time passed and the pair went into partnership – marital partnership, that is – and what followed was a dynamic business pairing, as well, with the couple naming their company Longveld, a combination of their names.

Step by step expansion

Around this time, Les had developed a reputation for his stainless fabrication skills and project management, and as a result a customer offered Longveld its first job, fabricating small scale containerised dairy processing plants for the NZ Dairy Board to export.

A few employees and contractors were engaged and soon Longveld was providing crews for site installations on dairy factory builds around the North Island – the team grew by working on site projects for NZ Dairy Group, Kiwi Co-op Dairies, Nu-Con and Kinleith.

Then Longveld took on its own small office and workshop base, shifting towards specialising in workshop fabrication. A move to a larger site base and capacity soon followed – to take on the milk tanker retrofit contract for NZ Dairy Group, now of course Fonterra.

Servicing Fonterra for 24 years

This has resulted in Longveld holding the contract for all stainless fabrication on Fonterra's milk trucks for the past 24 years.

Another key step along its small-to-substantial business journey, was Longveld winning export work for baking industry giants AB Mauri – leading to a diversification beyond the dairy industry towards Industry 4.0, future food and emerging technologies.

Cut to today – a powerhouse fabricator

Today Longveld employs 75 people – from fabricators and designers to admin – and occupies a one hectare site with 4,000 sqm of workshop space, located in Hamilton.

The versatile team boasts technical skills across many disciplines including fabrication, welding, mechanical fitting – supported by an in-house engineering and design team.

Shining accolade

In 2021, Longveld became New Zealand's first specialist stainless steel fabricator to achieve International Institute of Welding AS/NZS ISO 3834.2 certification through HERA Cert.

“We joined 45 structural steel fabricators in NZ in meeting this high standard of quality requirements for fusion welding of metallic materials,” Pam says.

The company works in 304L, 316L, and duplex grades.

Up-to-the-minute technologies

Longveld’s workshops include the latest technologies – vertical decoiling, automated welding, and



LONGVELD'S HSG LASER CUTTER IN THEIR PROFILE CENTRE

co-bot polishing while the engineering and design team uses 3D modelling and 3D prototyping extensively.

The company’s client base is world-wide, but primarily Australasia and China.

Core competencies

Longveld’s core business today is still fabrication of stainless steel transport and processing equipment for the dairy, food and beverage sectors such as tanks, silos, cyclones, liquid transport trucks and trailers.

The company’s tank and truck builds are run through a production line process that uses lean practices and automation to keep building productivity competitive in terms of both costs and lead times.



LONGVELD/ TRT 5-AXLE REAR STEER TRAILER BEING TESTED AT HAMPTON DOWNS BY FONTERRA

Plus, Longveld is now designing and selling its own products, such as a recent collaboration with TRT on a 5-axle rear-steer liquid transport trailer, and Oceanlift davits (or cranes).

Diversified opportunities

The company has established a modern profile cutting centre and as a result has diversified into the marine sector with the addition of aluminium cutting and the purchase of the Oceanlift brand.

The cutting centre has had another benefit, too – expanding services for the design and fabrication of custom metal public art sculpture. Recent projects have included working with artists such as Eugene Kara, Fred Graham, Brett Graham and Joe Citizen on sculptures along the Waikato Expressway and Waikato River.



*WAKA MAUMAHARA BY FRED GRAHAM ON THE
WAIKATO EXPRESSWAY FABRICATED FOR CITY
EDGE ALLIANCE BY LONGVELD.*

Further diversification into water infrastructure is bringing Longveld back to its original on-site installation roots.

The right team in the waka

However along with an impressive skill-set, Pam and Les consider their team's most important quality is the ability to collaborate – with each other and with customers and suppliers – so that ideas are shared, evolved and improved.

Relating to this, another big deal for the company was winning Waikato Business of the Year, and being named by Human Rights Commission as one of 12 New Zealand companies role-modelling fairness at work – accolades Pam and Les are particularly proud of.

So, why do you love stainless steel?

"It's a versatile, strong, permanent, recyclable, food-safe material. It is also a beautiful material for use in art," says Pam.

Where do you see our industry heading?

"Longveld sees the stainless fabrication industry increasingly shifting to more demand for aquaculture, precision fermentation and cultured meat, and less for dairy – it's the way the world is heading," she says.

"Plus there will be a big increase in automation with ever greater focus on weld quality.