

Belanger® Tunnels Help Australian Car Washes 'Zoom' Into The Future



Zoom's tunnels beat hand washing, hands down

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA – If you think car wash labor expenses are high in the U.S., trying doing business in Australia. “The Australian minimum wage is \$15 per hour,” notes Brad Woodrow of Zoom Carwash. “That’s more than double the U.S. minimum.” Woodrow says the high labor rate, combined with the Aussie preference for hand car washing, creates a ‘double whammy’ for many Australian operators.

“Car wash owners in Australia are under a lot of pressure,” Woodrow comments. “Many Australian motorists still believe hand washing is the best – and providing that service is an expensive proposition.” He says it’s common for a ‘basic’ hand wash to be priced at \$20 – which causes drivers to wash less frequently. “It’s a vicious cycle for operators,” he says. “Less wash volume combined with high expenses.”

Woodrow speaks from personal experience. “We opened our first location with a touchless tunnel wash,” he says. “It was an attempt to avoid the high labor costs of hand washing, and it worked.” Woodrow jokes “Unfortunately we also avoided a lot of wash volume.” He explains that the touchless format proved inadequate for the area’s severely dirty cars, some of which get washed “maybe once a year.”

Woodrow then converted the site to a hand wash – with a predictable outcome. “We definitely got the cars cleaner than the touchless wash,” he remarks. “But our increased expenses outpaced the growth in volume.” Woodrow also had other concerns. “Hand washing delivers inconsistent results,” he notes. “And we wanted to do more than participate in the market – we wanted to take car washing to the next level.”

“The QuickFires clean the front, sides and backs of cars like nothing else I’ve seen. Combined with our other Belanger equipment, they’ve delivered the wash performance that’s helped us grow from one location to three.”

— Brad Woodrow, Zoom Carwash

Searching for an answer, Woodrow found one at the bi-annual Australian Car Wash Association show. “We met Jim Ferguson from Belanger,” Woodrow recalls. “Jim was extremely knowledgeable and helpful, and visited us on-site to give his advice.” Woodrow says that Ferguson showed Zoom how a soft-touch tunnel could dramatically lower labor expenses while delivering consistently clean cars.

“We were sold on the soft-touch tunnel concept,” Woodrow recalls. “And after comparing Belanger to other manufacturers, we were sold on Belanger as our equipment of choice.” He remarks “With its lube-free pivot points and structural aluminum framework, it was clearly superior engineering.” He adds “We were also convinced of the equipment’s superior cleaning power, from the QuickFire wraps to the Quad Mitters.”

Woodrow says the QuickFire® wraps are integral to Zoom’s wash performance. “The QuickFires clean the front, sides and backs of cars like nothing else I’ve seen,” he marvels. “Combined with our other Belanger equipment, they’ve delivered the wash performance that’s helped us grow from one location to three.” He notes that the tunnels also feature Wave Low Side Washers™, Quad Wave™ and Wave Across™ Mitters, AirCannon™ and AirBlade® Dryers, and various Belanger arches.

Woodrow observes that the lower operational cost enables Zoom to offer a basic exterior wash for just \$10 – half the cost of a basic hand wash. “That gets folks in the door more often,” Woodrow says. He notes that 40% then buy the \$23 top wash, including triple foam, drying agent and Rain-X. According to Woodrow, Zoom’s new Web site at www.zoomcarwash.com.au is a big draw, and a valuable tool for educating his customers about soft-touch washing. “People are seeing that washing cars our way is faster, cheaper and better,” Woodrow remarks. “In a word, Zoom!”