

DOWN TO EARTH

MAY 2015

ISSUE 65

- » KOMATSU AUSTRALIA UNVEILS
NEW RENTAL BUSINESS
- » APPRENTICE REBUILT HISTORIC
DOZER-SHOVEL
- » KOMATSU & GE TO OFFER
'BIG DATA'



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COMMENTS

Welcome to the first edition for 2015 and thank you for taking time to read this issue of Down to Earth.

This year is a very special year for us as we celebrate 50 years in Australia when Komatsu released their first dozers, the D60-1 and D80-1 in August, 1965. As part of our celebration we are acknowledging our original customers throughout this year. In this edition we profile Bruce Leer, who was the first Komatsu dozer owner in Australia of the D60-1 and also Ivan Casson, who was involved in purchasing Komatsu machinery in Australia in the late 1960's.

Globally Komatsu has been around for nearly 100 years and its longevity and strength has been due to quality and reliability of the equipment, commitment to R&D development, and always releasing unique and unrivalled products across the world.

Our new INSITE Fleet Management Centre is part of Komatsu's technological focus and gives Komatsu the capability to gather data from a wide range of sources which includes telemetry, machine health and service monitoring systems. This information enables us serve and support our customers in achieving their goals – please read more about INSITE on page 12.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our customers who took the time to participate in the recent Customer Satisfaction Survey. This is one of the most important leading indicators of Komatsu Australia's long term success in the market place and it gives us first hand information on how you feel about our products and services. This year, we achieved our highest ever response rate and an increase in our Net Promoter Score (NPS) across all areas. Thank you for your business.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Down to Earth and we look forward to being of service.

Sean Taylor
Managing Director & CEO



CONTENT

KOMATSU FEATURE

Komatsu Australia unveils new rental business

4-5

KOMATSU NEWS

Komatsu & GE to offer "Big Data" analysis for mining customers

6-7

Apprentice rebuilt historic Dozer-Shovel takes pride of place in New Komatsu HQ

8-9

Komatsu commemorating 50 years in Australia

10-11

INSITE Fleet Management Centre takes pride of place in Komatsu New HQ

12-13

Komatsu lights up with Hella

14

New Komatsu Forklift line offers cost-saving innovations & features

15

Karratha Plant Hirer gets 40% fuel saving bonus with 35 tonne Komatsu Hybrid

16-17

Komatsu Excavators remotely controlled

18-19

Grand theft earthmover

20-21

Perfect service and support earns HiQuality Group's loyalty

22-23

Profile: Aaron Marsh

24

Bob Jones Retires

24

Profile: Richard Feehely

25

KOMATSU CUSTOMER

Long-term relationship earns Stuart Buckby's trust

26

Komatsu Rental Solution gives Scott the best of both worlds

27

Gardening with Digger: The little Komatsu that changed Richard's & Fiona's lives

28

Mountain Movers with Loadex Hire

29

Unbreakable! One Steel's PC400-5HD

30

Komatsu offers unbeatable package for Brad Scott

31

Loyal Komatsu customer Shane Wight is delighted with his latest machines

32

Keeping Australia's food bowl full

33

KOMTRAX gets it back

34

KOMATSU KIDS

Kids Corner

35

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FRONT COVER

Komatsu Rental unveiled

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KOMATSU AUSTRALIA UNVEILS NEW RENTAL BUSINESS

Komatsu Australia unveils its new Rental Business in Australia and New Zealand.

Focusing on the eastern seaboard of Australia plus New Zealand, Komatsu Rental commenced initially in mid 2013 with a relatively small rental fleet across Komatsu's construction equipment range and a rental team of three people, according to Geoff Pisani, Komatsu Rental's National Rental Manager.

"Our new rental team has grown considerably in all regions," he said.

"As of March 2015, we now have 11 people on board, along with 200 machines in the Komatsu Rental fleet, with our operation aiming to build its inventory substantially over the next few years.

"The equipment rental business has tremendous growth potential for Komatsu – as the only nationally backed OEM in this sector – and we see it growing very strongly over the next few years."

Geoff said Australia and New Zealand were on track to follow major overseas markets, including the US, Japan and Britain, which have seen sales to the construction equipment rental sector grow rapidly over the past 15-20 years.

"Komatsu Rental is determined to be a key player in this growing market segment, which is reflecting some significant changes happening in the industry.

"Much of the demand for Komatsu Rental equipment is coming from our loyal Komatsu customers, who are keen to rent the latest quality, low-hour equipment from us, and to receive the full service and technical support that we offer all our customers," he said.

"Previously, if a Komatsu customer needed a machine to rent for a short-term project, they were forced to rent from another supplier.

"Now, Komatsu Rental can offer them a rental solution with quality low-hour Komatsu equipment.

"However, demand is not just coming from our existing customers; many other contractors and plant hire companies today have limited access to capital, so the rental option is very attractive to them.

"There is also the changing demands of the major project environment, where the major contractors no longer own all of their equipment, instead engaging plant hirers and subcontractors – who in turn can see the advantages of renting quality low-hour equipment during the term of their project," Geoff said.

"We do see many opportunities supporting plant hire companies – many of whom are also our customers – who need to supplement their fleets to meet ever-changing project demands.

"Some customers see us in that role, others see us as an opportunity to grow their businesses with no capital outlays, so they get the latest equipment technology without any maintenance or upfront costs."

Geoff said this also gave them the flexibility to balance their fleet profile with the right machine as and when they need it, while retaining their clients' business.

"These days, major customers are preserving their capital for fixed plant and infrastructure and are increasingly looking to rental as a flexible solution to supplement their existing mobile fleet, especially during periods of increased production."

According to Geoff, Komatsu Rental offered a number of advantages compared with other players in the market.

"This is not just another finance solution with ownership responsibilities and balloon payments at the end of a lease period," he said.

"And as the only national OEM-backed rental operator, Komatsu Rental customers get all the advantages of Komatsu machine owners including access to our KOMTRAX and Komatsu Oil Wear Analysis (KOWA) machine management reporting systems, and complete integration with our technical and service operations.

"That means Komatsu Rental customers are able to enjoy the same level of support and peace of mind that is available to a Komatsu machine owner," said Geoff.

"Our KOMTRAX and KOWA services ensure that every machine is in top operating condition, and we can quickly advise our rental customers of any potential issues that may impact on production and machine availability.

"We have also optimised our rental fleet, by offering machines that are the latest model, low-hour new or near-new machines.

"This ensures increased fleet utilisation, eliminating down time and maintenance costs associated with older rental equipment.

"As well, Komatsu Rental machines will be recycled out regularly, so we can then offer these units to our customers as Komatsu Premium Used Equipment, fully serviced and maintained – and owned by Komatsu since new."





Komatsu Rental operations in Australia are primarily based in the Eastern States, with dedicated Rental branch locations in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. Komatsu Rental has also started operation in New Zealand, from its Auckland Branch.

Local supply and servicing will be available through Komatsu Australia's network of 44 branches throughout Australia and New Zealand.

"We have also appointed a new team of Rental Business Development Managers in all four regions, all with specialist backgrounds in Equipment Rental, providing a vast amount of experience in rental," said Geoff.

"Our newest branch, in south western Sydney, is located at Ingleburn, and was the first to start rental operations.

"Sydney, with all its infrastructure work currently under way, is the strongest we've seen it in many years – certainly since the Olympics.

"And we believe it's only going to get better – although it is of course a highly competitive market," he said.

Komatsu Rental's product line-up includes the following equipment:

- » Excavators from 5.5 to 85 tonnes, including Hybrid excavators – and soon to include Komatsu-branded hydraulic breakers, as well as a full range of attachments.
- » Wheel Loaders from WA250PZ-6 to WA600-6
- » Rigid Dump Trucks from HD405-7 to HD605-7EO
- » Articulated dump trucks from HM300-2 to HM400-2
- » Dozers from D51EX-22 to D275A-5
- » Graders GD555-5 and GD655-5.
- » Backhoes

All dozers and graders are "machine control ready" able to take a range of 2D and 3D machine control, GPS systems.

Overseeing Komatsu Australia's move into the rental business is the company's Deputy Managing

Director Mr Hal Tanaka, who recently headed up Komatsu America's rental operations in the USA.

Geoff, along with Roger Beddard, Komatsu Australia's National Remarketing Manager, report directly to Mr Tanaka.

"Hal has a lot of experience in the rental business, in particular dealing with the challenges of moving into a new sector from start up, and he is able to give us the benefit of his knowledge and experience," said Geoff.

"Rental is a dynamic new business for Komatsu and our customers, who are always looking for new solutions and options every day.

"It's an exciting, challenging and rewarding opportunity to be involved in developing the rental business for Komatsu Australia and building our new Komatsu Rental team from the ground up," he said.

Meet the Komatsu Rental team

The Komatsu Rental management, sales and support team currently consists of 11 people. Team members as of late March 2015 are:

Geoff Pisani National Rental Manager

Mario Giarratano National Rental Administration Manager

Aleks Spasovic Commercial Manager, Rental

Lynda Maas Regional Rental Administrator, Queensland /New Zealand

Alison Hamlett Regional Rental Administrator NSW/Victoria/South Australia/Tasmania

Tyson Williams NSW Rental Business Development Manager (BDM)

Garry Rogerson Queensland Rental BDM

John Looker Southern Region Rental BDM (Victoria/South Australia/Tasmania)

Peter Groube NZ Rental BDM

Brette Creighton Rental Service Supervisor, Ingleburn (NSW)

Steve De Gabriel Rental Service Supervisor, Sherwood (Queensland)

KOMATSU AND GE TO OFFER “BIG-DATA” ANALYSIS FOR MINING CUSTOMERS

***“GE MINING HAS LONG SUPPLIED ELECTRIC DRIVE SYSTEMS
TO KOMATSU, WHICH IS THE WORLD’S MARKET LEADER IN
ELECTRIC-DRIVE DUMP TRUCKS”***





Komatsu Ltd has announced a partnership with General Electric (GE) to provide “big-data” analysis services for mining customers, using “Internet of Things” technology to boost efficiency in mining operations.

This follows an earlier agreement in February 2014, when Komatsu and GE Transportation announced a joint venture – Komatsu GE Mining Systems LLC – to develop a new generation of underground mining equipment.

The “Internet of Things” (IoT) refers to a growing global network of physical objects or “things” – including machines – embedded with electronics, software, sensors and connectivity.

This enables them to achieve greater value and service by exchanging data with manufacturers, operators, other machines and other connected devices.

Each thing is uniquely identifiable through its embedded computing system, but is able to interoperate within the existing Internet infrastructure.

GE is a global leader in this field, for example, using IoT technology to constantly monitor critical equipment such as aircraft engines and gas turbines.

“GE Mining has long supplied electric drive systems to Komatsu, which is the world’s market leader in electric-drive dump trucks,” he said.

“Australia was the first market in the world to commercialise Komatsu’s Autonomous Haulage System for driverless trucks, and is the first country to market the 35-tonne Hybrid Excavator,” Sean said.

“We are also the industry’s pacesetter in Information Communication Technology (ICT) applications, including our KOMTRAX and KOMTRAX Plus remote monitoring systems, and our new line of Intelligent Dozers.

“Now we want to start offering data analysis services to mining and resources companies in the near future, including iron ore and coal mines in Australia and New Zealand as well as other mining regions.

“With the current downward pressures on commodity prices, mining companies are looking for innovative ways to reduce their operating and running costs, while optimising productivity and machine performance,” he said.

“Over the past 90 years, our approach to engineering has delivered a range of breakthrough technologies and this latest collaboration between Komatsu and

as well as speed and braking requirements based on the terrain and site conditions.

Additional control equipment can also be installed to increase fuel efficiency.

“Existing data analysis capabilities already available through Komatsu allow fuel efficiency to be improved by 5% through more efficient truck scheduling and haul road management,” said Sean.

“Now by harnessing IoT technology, combined with GE’s big-data analysis capabilities, we can lift that figure to significantly greater than 10%, potentially saving millions of dollars a year per mine in fuel and other costs,” he said.

“There will also be flow-on benefits in terms of optimising production, reducing equipment wear and tear, and maximising machine uptime.

“By giving our mining customers access to such detailed operating information, Komatsu and GE together will provide opportunities for customers to reduce fuel and power usage, as well as optimising shipments between mines and ports.

“We believe we can also help lower costs by reducing the stockpile volumes and holding times.

“OVER THE PAST 90 YEARS, OUR APPROACH TO ENGINEERING HAS DELIVERED A RANGE OF BREAKTHROUGH TECHNOLOGIES”

Komatsu also makes use of remote monitoring technology through its KOMTRAX and KOMTRAX Plus offerings to track the position and status of its mining and construction machinery.

Now under Komatsu’s partnership with GE, it is looking to offer big-data analysis to mining industry customers.

Komatsu Australia’s Managing Director Sean Taylor said this latest partnership had been built on the strengths of both companies – and would have significant benefits for Australian and New Zealand mining companies.

GE will bring breakthrough benefits to the mining sector as a whole.”

Komatsu and GE have successfully trialled the concept over the past year at a copper mine in South America.

Under the new partnership, Komatsu will send operational data collected from sensors attached to its mining dump trucks to a GE data centre in the US, where it will be processed using GE’s big-data analysis capabilities.

Applications for the resulting information including recommending optimal truck routes and positioning,

“This partnership is an example of the ways in which Komatsu is working with key partners to develop innovative cost-saving solutions for our customers,” Sean said.

APPRENTICE-REBUILT HISTORIC DOZER-SHOVEL TAKES PRIDE OF PLACE IN NEW KOMATSU HQ

To mark Komatsu Australia's move to its new Fairfield headquarters – and as a celebration of its 50th anniversary in Australia this year – a team of Komatsu apprentices recently completely restored a 1980 D10S-2 dozer-shovel.

“The dozer-shovel – which was initially located on e-Bay – had certainly seen better days and was much the worse for wear when it arrived at the Fairfield workshop on August 6, 2014,” said Komatsu Fairfield’s Branch Manager, Matthew Tosolini.

“Having spent many years out in the Australian weather, the machine was in very poor condition, with a badly corroded bucket, lots of rust on panels, numerous missing and damaged ancillary components, leaking hydraulics, and a seat that had just about fallen apart,” he said.

“However, mechanically the machine itself was in very sound condition, and has now been brought back to as-new condition for its new home as a centre piece in the foyer of Komatsu Australia’s headquarters in Fairfield NSW.”

Andrew Grenfell, Komatsu Australia’s Technical Support Manager – Wheel Loaders, explained how Komatsu’s Awazu Plant in Japan where the machine had been manufactured in May 1980, were contacted and asked for assistance in the restoration efforts that helped rebuild the D10S-2.

Awazu Plant also has a restored centre piece in the form of a 1940 G40 Tractor and was excited to be involved.

At the time the D10S-2 was revolutionary in design, a unit mass under 2 tonne made it easily transportable on widely used small body trucks, Komatsu design engineers went as far as weighing everything down to the bolts and washers to ensure this target weight.

A well balanced and compact frame meant challenges laying out hydraulic piping and components, integration of a new steering clutch system meant ease of manoeuvrability for operators, and an optional rear backhoe attachment rounded off the D10S-2 operational capabilities to see it take on tasks including land clearing, road building and hard to access civil works.

Even in 1980 Komatsu was striving for reduced emissions, with the D10S-2 94 series engine using new diesel technology and producing class leading power.



The restoration project was carried out by a team of four Komatsu apprentices selected by ballot; the team consisted of:

- » Brad Schofield, third-year apprentice and team leader
- » Hamish Rowe, first-year apprentice
- » Jason Brook, third-year apprentice
- » Michael De Angelis, third-year apprentice.

The restoration tasks included:

- » Stripping, inspecting and resealing all hydraulic components
- » Replacing hydraulic hoses and ensuring all seals work
- » Repairing the bucket and backhoe attachments; in fact the bucket was in such poor condition, it ended up being replaced with a new unit fabricated following the original factory drawings
- » Repairing powertrain components where necessary, including the engine, transmission and final drives
- » Complete inspection, repair and overhaul of all undercarriage components
- » Replacing the operator’s seat
- » Repairs, including stripping, inspecting and repainting, of all panels and covers
- » Fabrication, following the original factory drawings, of missing elements, including engine air filter housing, muffler and engine bonnet skin
- » New paintwork and decals in the original factory colour and designs.

Andrew Setterfield, Komatsu Fairfield’s Workshop Supervisor, detailed how an incredible amount of research went into the restoration project, with some parts and components sourced from like Komatsu machines if the originals were not available.

“These included replacing control lever ends from existing stock, as well as original bucket teeth still held by Komatsu Australia, and even sourcing three new genuine D10S-1 steel operator’s lamp assemblies from Komatsu America – the last three in the world!

“Other parts had to be fabricated from scratch using original factory drawings, and even photos in some instances.

“An example of this was the decision to build a new operator’s seat from scratch, as the original had deteriorated so much from being out in the weather!”

A complete new operator’s seat was manufactured with assistance from drawings supplied by Awazu Plant. This included manufacturing and painting a new seat base and rear frame, with padding and a vinyl cover provided by a local automotive trim contractor.

“A very pleasant surprise during the project – given the age and wear and tear on the machine – was the excellent condition of the dozer’s main frame, undercarriage, loader frame and backhoe arm and components,” said Andrew.

The general condition of the machine was very good. We found no cracks in any of the frames once we had sandblasted them down to bare metal, allowing the team to proceed quickly to undercoating and then painting.



From left: Michael De Angelis, Hamish Rowe and Brad Schofield.

Above: D10S-2 restored dozer shovel at Fairfield Head Quarters

"Other key components, including the fuel tank, hydraulic oil tank, gear box and bevel cases were also found to be in very good condition – with no rust or scale, or any metal contamination showing up in a Komatsu Oil Wear Analysis (KOWA) test."

Once stripped down and re-assembled, the engine started readily following some minor tuning of the fuel pump and shut-off mechanism.

"The completely rebuilt machine was then test-operated, with all functions, controls, components and systems working as they should have," Andrew said.

"Then it was off to the paint shop for final painting, including re-undercoating any areas scratched during assembly, smoothing any rough surfaces with light filler, applying two top coats of Komatsu yellow paint, followed by two final protective coats of clear lacquer."

Branch Manager Matthew Tosolini said that in order to avoid damaging the freshly painted tracks,

or the brand new floor of Komatsu's foyer the dozer-shovel could not be driven into its final display area.

Instead it was moved to the foyer by forklift, then on mobile wheels placed under the machine for the final manual move into the display area.

"The final deadline for the machine completion was Friday, December 5 at 4 pm; we had the finished machine in the display area at 3.52 pm on that day! It was a very hot day and very hard work," said Matthew.

"The finished restoration is a credit to our apprentices, as well as the quality and durability built into every Komatsu machine.

"And it's a fascinating look back at our history – and to reflect just how far machine design and features have come in just a few decades!" he said.

Komatsu Australia would like to acknowledge the following for their assistance in restoring this D10S-2:

- » The Apprentice Team, Supervisors and Workshop Management.
- » Mr Yukio Kikuchi and the Working Gear Group, Komatsu Awazu Plant.
- » Paul Rapp and Co. Pty Ltd
- » Pirtek
- » Salmon Buckets and Attachments Pty Ltd
- » Boltens Motor Trimmers
- » Beno's Metal Fabrications
- » Western Mufflers



Above: Ivan Casson in the early 1970's with a Komatsu D155 dozer and (above right) Bruce Leer with the first Komatsu D60 dozer

KOMATSU COMMEMORATING 50 YEARS IN AUSTRALIA

Komatsu has been in Australia for 50 years and recently we have been asking for our early customers to help us celebrate this momentous occasion.

In this edition of Down to Earth we will profile Bruce Leer, who purchased the first Komatsu dozer in Australia in 1965 and Ivan Casson who was involved with some of the first Komatsu dozers in the late 1960's.

A special thank you to Bruce and Ivan for taking part in our 50 years commemoration and we will be profiling more Komatsu customers in the next edition of Down to Earth.

Bruce Leer, 77 years old, AE & BA Leer, Sydney, bought first Komatsu dozers in Australia.

We became the first owner of a Komatsu dozer in Australia, when we bought a D60-1 in about 1965.

We have a letter from Wabco, written by Peter White, who was the boss there at the time, congratulating us on buying this first Komatsu dozer in the country.

We went for the Komatsu after having a terrible experience with another brand of machine. We had an order in for a replacement machine of the same brand, but my father didn't want to wait, so when we were offered a D60-1, we became the first buyer.

We had that machine for a number of years, before trading it back to Wabco for a newer D60-6.

As it turned out, not only were we the first D60-1 buyer in Australia, we were also the first D60-6 dozer buyer – and that was a fantastic machine – and also the first buyer of the D55 track loader.

At one time, we had the biggest fleet of Komatsu machines in the Sydney metropolitan area: two D60 and two D85 dozers, and three D55 track loaders.

We also did a bit of work to help out Wabco. In the late 1960s, we demonstrated a D60-1 and a D80-1 on the Westmead Hospital building site at Parramatta.

Some years later, we also demonstrated the first D155-1 dozer in Australia, at Centennial Park.

In the early 1970s, two of us drove two 40 tonne dump trucks all the way down the highway from Sydney to Melbourne!

The family company still owns Komatsu equipment today. In the late 1990s, we bought a PC120, and we traded it in for a PC150-5 in 2001.

It's the best excavator we've ever owned; so far we have notched up 10,500 hours on it, and all it's had done is a new water pump and a replacement top dipper arm seal. Apart from that, we've done nothing to it. It's a fantastic machine.

Our family company has been going for 70 years this year.

My father Alfred started the company in 1945, and I came in when I left school, when it was called AE & BA Leer, and my son Gavin has since taken over – and it's now trading as B & G Leer.

We celebrated our 50th anniversary in 1995, so this year we'll have done 70 years in business.

“AT ONE TIME, WE HAD THE BIGGEST FLEET OF KOMATSU MACHINES IN THE SYDNEY METROPOLITAN AREA”



Left: Bruce Leer, and son Gavin. Bruce purchased the first Komatsu dozer in Australia 50 years ago

“WE BUILT LONG STREET, SMITHFIELD – INCLUDING CHASING CATTLE OFF THE FARM THAT USED TO BE THERE!”

It was a D8-sized machine, it had hydraulic rippers, and everything was right about it.

We got to about 13,000 hours with it before we sold it. We'd use it for all sorts of work: ripping rock, out west chaining down for log clearing in tandem with another dozer, land clearing, road building, you name it.

During the 1970s, we also had two D85s and a D65; one of these was a swamp dozer we used to build the canals at Sussex Inlet on the South Coast. Now that was a wonderful machine.

In 1977, Lucas and Tait announced they were selling the business, and so I bought out their earthmoving equipment and set up my own business, Casson Equipment. This included the D155, the two D85s and the D65, and I kept them until I retired in 1990.

I did a lot of civil construction in the Western Suburbs and Blue Mountains.

We did all the roads in Werrington, we built Long Street, Smithfield – including chasing cattle off the farm that used to be there! – as well as subdivisions in Wollongong and the Blue Mountains.

Lots of people went broke in the Blue Mountains in the 1970s and early 1980s due to the contract conditions, but I weathered the storm and worked there for many years until I retired.

The service we got from Komatsu was always good. We never had any problems with that; they'd send out a service man to fix anything we thought wasn't right.

Ivan Casson, Sydney, involved with some of first Komatsu dozers sold in Australia

I was working for Lucas and Tait, part of the Degotardis, for 19 years until 1977. We bought our first Komatsu, a D120, through Wabco, the Komatsu distributor at the time, around 1968 or 1969.

In 1970, I had the privilege of visiting Komatsu factories – including the town of Komatsu – as part of a tour to Conexpo 1970, with about 17 owners. That was a real experience and an eye-opener for me.

We ended up trading in the D120, and we bought a D150. That really was a great machine; we never had any sign of trouble with it.



Above: Ivan Casson with the D10S-2 dozer shovel at Fairfield's Head Quarters in Sydney



Bruce Leer and Ivan Casson at a recent meeting in the Fairfield Branch

INSITE FLEET MANAGEMENT CENTRE TAKES PRIDE OF PLACE IN KOMATSU'S NEW HQ

Taking centre stage at Komatsu Australia's new Sydney headquarters, the company's new INSITE Fleet Management Centre has been designed – and located – to make a strong statement about the company's customer-focused priorities in the 21st century.

Once past reception, everyone who works in Komatsu's Fairfield headquarters can't miss the prominent bank of 10 large-screen monitors showing selected machine and operational data, manned by INSITE Centre staff.

These 10 monitors show constantly updated data covering key machine, fleet, production and industry parameters across all Komatsu mining, construction and utility machines operating throughout Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia (see below for a rundown of what each monitor displays).

The range of displays within the Centre run the gamut from "big picture" global and economy-wide data (such as stocks and share prices, commodity prices and production trends), through to utilisation levels across industry sectors (for example, coal mining or iron ore), then drilling right down to individual machine data and potential component issues.

According to Todd Connolly, Komatsu Australia's Head of Fleet Management & ICT, the INSITE Fleet Management Centre pulls in data from a wide range of sources, including all the company's various telemetry, machine health and service monitoring systems, and presents them in one place.

"What we are doing from our INSITE Centre is front and centre of what we do as a company; it's a suite of products across telematics, machine monitoring, machine health, fleet management, service and support.

"And by having this facility located right in the heart of our Australian headquarters, we are really sending the message out to everyone at Komatsu about how important this whole process is to the company," he said.

However, the INSITE Centre is not just a bank of screens; in front of the screens sit the people responsible for running the KOMTRAX and KOMTRAX Plus remote monitoring systems throughout the region – a decision driven by Komatsu Australia's Managing Director and CEO.

"Rather than have this team working away in a back office, we've deliberately chosen to have them working at the forefront of our business," said Sean.

"We want to everyone within Komatsu is aware of what a critical and important role they all play in supporting our customers, and how our customers contribute to the long-term success of our business.

"This ties in with the philosophy behind our INSITE Centre: to make all this information across all our business areas visible to everyone within Komatsu, so that as a company we plan and react accordingly.

"At the same time, all this information is also being made available to our engineers and our technical service people, so they can also assist in better managing fleets for our customers.

"It's all about helping our customers achieve their goals, including lower costs per tonne, managing machine health and achieving higher productivity," Sean said.

INSITE Fleet Management Centre: what's on display

The first thing visitors and staff walking up the stairs at Komatsu's Fairfield HQ in Western Sydney is a large "tickertape" display constantly updating commodity prices, currency movements, resource stocks prices and more – reflecting the impact these constant "real world" changes have on the company's business.

In front of the row of desks where the KOMTRAX and KOMTRAX Plus team is based is a bank of 10 large-screen monitors, covering all aspects of Komatsu machines in the region, from "big picture" equipment and industry utilisation trends, down to the minutest detail of a single machine's operating parameters.

Here's a rundown of what's on display.

Screen 1: Utilisation Trends

This screen highlights utilisation trends by segment and region, showing the monthly hours that machines are working. The graphs also highlight

seasonal factors, and can be used as a forward indicator of demand for replacement equipment, parts consumption and service.

Screen 2: PDI & Reman Commissioning

Komatsu's fulfilment of demand for new equipment and reman components is tracked across the country to ensure that delivery schedules are in line with its customer's expectations

Screen 3: Condition Monitoring

This screen highlights the two most critical levels of condition monitoring results from the KOWA (Komatsu Oil Wear Analysis) service. Information is updated in real time directly from the Komatsu's three KOWA labs in Newcastle, Perth and Brisbane, and is displayed by customer, by model and by component. Komatsu technicians use this information to take the required actions with customers to ensure machine health.

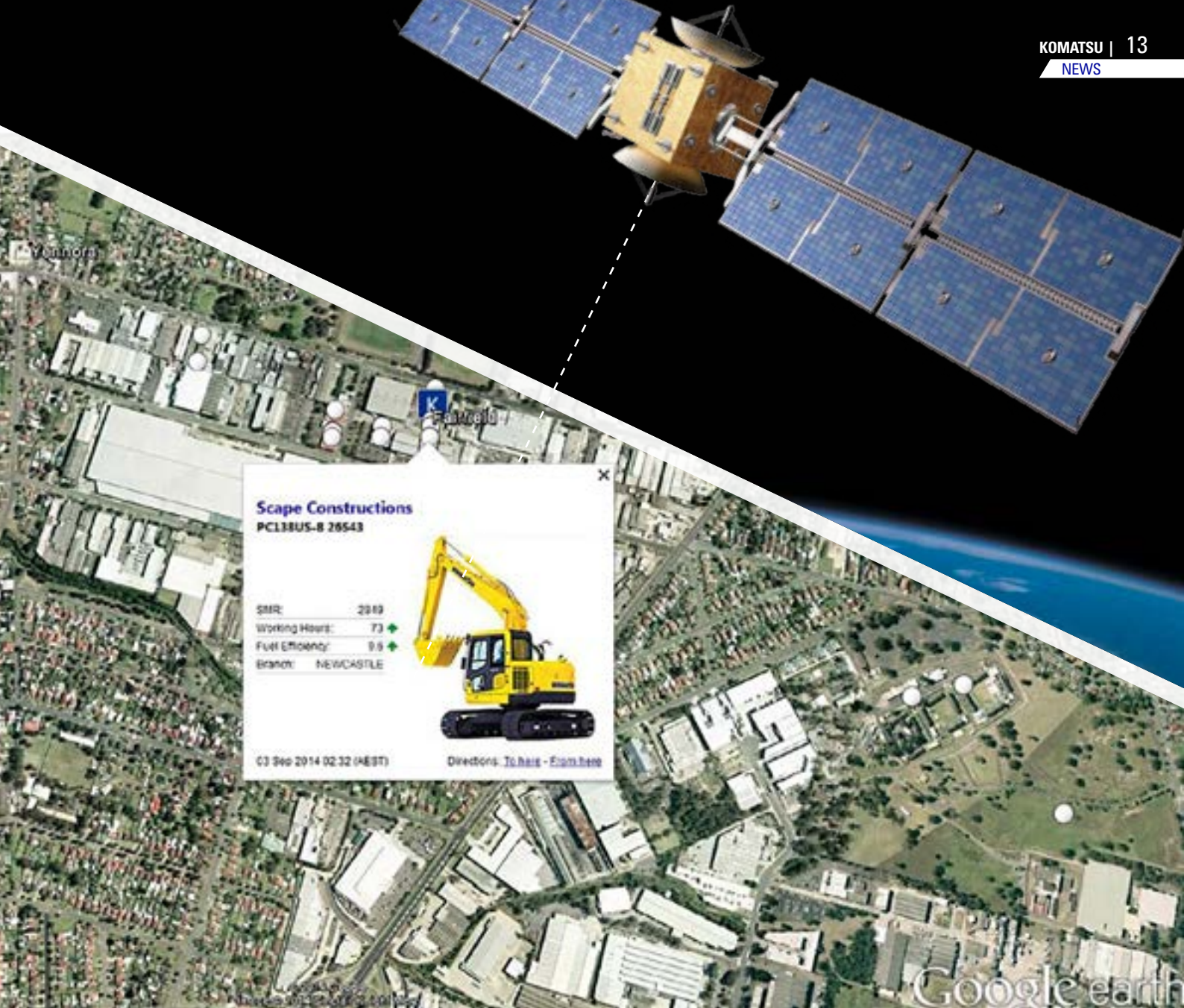
Screen 4: Service and Overhaul programs

This screen uses information from EQP Care and R&M Care to highlight upcoming services, ensuring that Komatsu's service teams are planning for these events, and engaging the customer at the right time.

Screen 5: Fleet Visualisation

This screen displays selected data on Komatsu's machine population in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia, and includes information on machine health, machine productivity and mine site details such as Production and Total Material Moved (TMM).

This information is designed to increase Komatsu staff's awareness of machine populations and customers' operations, so they can be aware of the real situation before a customer visit. Machine information for this display is sourced from KOMTRAX and KOMTRAX Plus and is updated daily.



Screen 6: Machine Health for Fleet under Maintenance Contracts

This screen uses standard metrics from R&M Care to report on machine health for Komatsu's population covered by maintenance contracts in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia. This information is used at the site level to optimise uptime of the fleet.

Screen 7: Machine Health - Mining Fleet

This screen shows the machine health status of Komatsu's region-wide mining fleet by model and location, using information sourced from KOMTRAX Plus on a daily basis. This information is used by branches and sites each day to prioritise activities on the fleet to ensure optimum uptime. In addition, Komatsu's Reliability Engineering division uses this information to prioritise high-level incident responses.

Screen 8: Machine Health - Construction & Utility

This screen shows the machine health of Komatsu's construction and utility region-wide equipment fleet

by customer, model and location, using KOMTRAX. Cautions and abnormalities are highlighted, and used by Komatsu's Tech Services and branches to prioritise action. Information for this comes from KOMTRAX and is updated based on the latest satellite communication.

Screen 9: Mine Care (Real Time Telemetry)

This screen shows a real-time feed of machine telemetry using Modular Mining Systems' Mine Care, information which can be used to help diagnose machine health as well as visualise productivity trends. This process is also how Komatsu's largest mining customers view their fleets and operations.

Screen 10: Machine Productivity Dashboard

This screen shows the productivity of Komatsu's top mining customers' fleets, including information from the Payload Management System (PLM) and KOMTRAX Plus.

This information is also used by Reliability Engineering to optimise the operation of equipment

and contribute to an enhanced Total Cost of Ownership (TOC) position.

This dashboard has been designed to provide insights for Komatsu's Key Accounts Managers, allowing them to have informed discussions with customers by comparing fleet performance against national average benchmarks. In turn, this can be used to drive Komatsu's Continuous Improvement initiatives, designed to help its customers achieve their goals.

KOMATSU LIGHTS UP WITH HELLA

Komatsu Australia Pty Ltd has announced HELLA Australia Pty Ltd as its national lighting supplier.

The agreement will see HELLA Australia provide lighting equipment to Komatsu branches in Australia and New Zealand.

The full aftermarket portfolio of HELLA products will be available through Komatsu, with aftermarket lighting solutions available and ready to be tailored to suit customer requirements.

Komatsu Australia's National OEM Product Manager – Aftermarket, Stuart Moffitt, believes that the supply agreement with HELLA is an ideal alignment given both businesses' reputation for quality.

"HELLA Australia is part of a global company with a footprint in over 35 countries. It is one of the top automotive lighting suppliers in the world, and HELLA Australia has a 55-year local manufacturing legacy and a reputation for product excellence," Stuart said.

"Komatsu's customers in Australia and New Zealand will now be able purchase HELLA's entire lighting product range at competitive prices from their nearest Komatsu branch.

Stuart said HELLA offers an aftermarket lighting solution that can be tailored to a variety of sites and machine lighting requirements.

"HELLA will work with Komatsu to design a lighting package to achieve optimum vision for the operator and maximum machine visibility on site. Komatsu will be able to create a site specific lighting plan from light selection to light fitment.

"The National Lighting Supplier agreement with HELLA reflects Komatsu's dedication to reliability, quality, and above all, superior customer service," Stuart said.

HELLA Australia's main operations are the design and manufacture of automotive lighting equipment for aftermarket sectors, including the automotive, mining, construction, commercial transport, agriculture and marine industries.

HELLA employs more than 360 people in its manufacturing and distribution divisions, servicing customers through a network of state-dedicated sales and technical staff across Australian and New Zealand.

HELLA Australia is part of the worldwide group HELLA KGaA Hueck & Co., Lippstadt. HELLA is a global, independent family-owned company with more than 29,000 employees at 100 locations in more than 35 countries.

Contact your nearest Komatsu branch for further information.



K-CLASS WINNERS

Komatsu Australia launched its K-Class initiative in November 2014 in order to provide our customers with confidence that we will ensure that Komatsu Genuine Parts are readily available at their local branch.

As part of this program all Australian and New Zealand branches have been stocked with K-Class classified parts for all Komatsu models that are listed within their branches region, that are 10 years or younger.

Winner of the customer incentive campaign

To kick-off this initiative, from 1st November 2014 to the 31st January 2015, we ran a customer incentive campaign.

During the campaign period, in the event that a K-Class part was out of stock at the nominated branch, Komatsu was to provide the part to the customer as soon as possible at 50% off the published list price. Additionally, all customers who registered went into the draw to win either a visit from the Redbull Race Team to their worksite or 2 x tickets plus all expenses to watch their nearest V8 race.

The winners are:

- Dave White** - WHITES PTY LTD (NSW)
- John Brosnan** - Brosnans Earthmoving P/L (QLD)
- Ross Wilkinson** - Coral Bank Excavations (VIC)
- Gary Woodman** - Tracc Civil Pty Ltd (WA)
- Blair Symons** - Doug Symons Contracting (NZ)

Congratulations to our winners and we hope they enjoy their prizes!

HELLA IS ONE OF THE TOP AUTOMOTIVE LIGHTING SUPPLIERS IN THE WORLD

	Signal Lamps		
Driving Lamps		Work Lamps	
			
	Lighting Accessories		



Pictured from left: Owen Paisley (Resident Technician) congratulating customer Ray Smith (Tom Jung Quarries)

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY WINNERS

In order to continually meet our customers' needs, in February 2015 we invited customers to participate in our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey's.

We had a fantastic response, with over 550 customers providing their feedback.

As an added incentive to participate, any customer who completed either the Customer Support (Parts and Service) or New Equipment Construction Survey went into the draw to win \$1000 cash each.

This year's competition winners are:

» New Equipment Survey:

Paul Paullorand - MONTY PLANT HIRE / MONNIF P/L

» Parts and Service Survey:

Ray Smith - TOM JUNG QUARRIES



NEW KOMATSU FORKLIFT LINE OFFERS COST-SAVING INNOVATIONS & FEATURES

Komatsu Forklift Australia has released a new hydrostatic drive FH series diesel powered pneumatic tyre forklift featuring many of the innovations introduced on Komatsu's class-leading construction equipment – and the potential to greatly reduce owning and operating costs.

Available in capacities of 4, 4.5 and 5 tonnes, the new FH series forklifts feature Komatsu's exclusive HST hydrostatic drive system, advanced CLSS closed-centre load sensing hydraulic system and the KOMTRAX remote monitoring and tracking system.

Power comes from a Komatsu SAA4D95LE-5 turbocharged diesel rated at 50.8 kW, that is Interim Tier 4 and EU Stage 3A emissions certified, without sacrificing power or productivity.

According to Jack Socratous, Komatsu Forklifts Australia's National Product & Marketing Manager, the FH series has been designed around the highly reliable, field-proven drive and control components used for many years in Komatsu construction equipment.

"The FH series' electronically controlled HST drive system has a proven record of quality and reliability over years of use in Komatsu construction equipment including wheel loaders and dozers," he said.

"And the hydraulic system uses Komatsu's CLSS variable displacement pump technology, again a proven and highly efficient hydraulic system, used in Komatsu's hydraulic excavators, graders and other equipment."

All FH Series models are powered by a Komatsu designed and manufactured diesel engine, featuring advanced engine technologies to achieve superior fuel economy, reduced environmental impact, and outstanding controllability.

"Combined, all these new features on our new FH series forklifts will dramatically reduce overall operational costs," said Jack.

"The HST and CLSS systems, together with the Komatsu SAA4D95LE-5 diesel work in harmony to achieve significant fuel economy, especially in tough, high-cycle operations where fast-paced loading, unloading, and directional changes are demanded by operators."

Other features of Komatsu's new FH series forklifts include:

- » Spacious operator compartment with full suspension seat
- » Tilting and telescoping steering console with a small diameter steering wheel and spinner knob
- » Fully hydrostatic power steering
- » Airtight wet disc brake system, for exceptional overall durability and low operational costs
- » Adjustable auto engine shutdown system, eliminating needless idling – saving fuel and operational costs
- » Adjustable 'Turtle' control switch with four different control speed settings for precise speed control in tight working situations.

"Komatsu's new FH series offers a perfect blend of power, performance, efficiency and operator comforts, allowing the operator to handle the toughest applications while maximising efficiency and productivity," Jack said.

"With excellent controllability and handling ease, we believe the FH series forklift is the best possible choice for the most difficult and demanding applications.

"And the tougher the application, the greater the cost savings generated by the efficiency and operational excellence of this new line.

"It offers the potential to have a dramatic effect for users looking to reduce their overall operational costs," he said.

KARRATHA PLANT HIRER GETS 40% FUEL-SAVING BONUS WITH 35 TONNE KOMATSU HYBRID



When north Western Australia-based plant hirer and contractor Natham Newbey of Monty's Plant Hire put his first 35 tonne Komatsu HB335-1 Hybrid excavator into service in May last year, he was expecting to see around a 20% fuel saving compared with his conventional 30 tonne Komatsu PC300-8s.

Instead, he's consistently getting twice that fuel efficiency, with savings of close to 40% compared with similar sized machines.

As a result, he purchased a second HB335-1 in September last year.

Monty's Plant Hire, based at Karratha, in the Pilbara region of north Western Australia, started out in 2007 as a family-owned business started by Neville, Helen & Natham Newbey (Neville & Helen, being Natham's parents).

The name of their business Monty's Plant Hire comes from his mum's nickname of "Monty", from her maiden name Montague.

Initially, the company had just a couple of water carts and excavators on dry hire, but has quickly grown the business to the point where today it owns nearly 135 items of equipment.

It offers wet and dry hire services to civil contractors, as well as doing its own smaller civil jobs, plus it runs a transport division with side tippers, end tippers, drop deck and flat top trailers.

Its earthmoving equipment fleet, which is primarily Komatsu, consists of seven excavators from a PC78UU-6 to the two new HB335-1s and four wheel loaders from a WA250PZ-6 to two WA380-6s, along with dozers, dump trucks and graders.

Natham has been impressed with the Komatsu Hybrid excavator concept since first taking delivery.

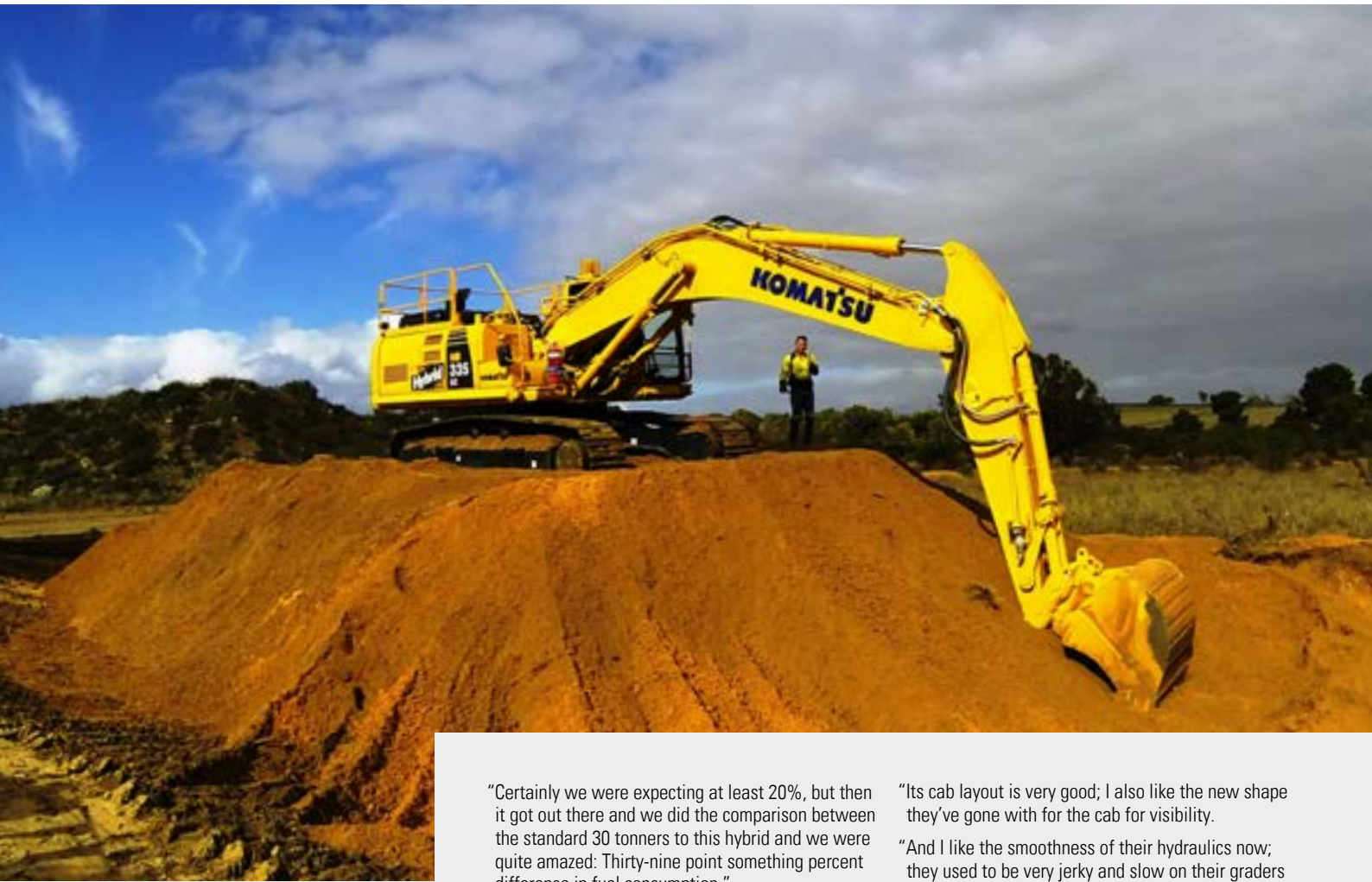
"As I come from an operating background, to first hop in and use it was very strange, just because of the no-noise factor when you slew," he said.

"It seems like the machine is going to turn off on you, but once you get past that, it's just the same as any other Komatsu excavator."

But it was the fuel consumption of the Hybrid that was the big surprise.

"To be honest, we were expecting maybe a 20% savings with the Hybrid; we purchased three PC300s, and our first Hybrid all at the same time for a large project we had," said Natham.

"Instead, we found on average it was saving nearly 40% compared with the other machines of the same size.



Above: Komatsu's HB335LC-1 achieving 40% fuel saving for Monty's Plant Hire

“THE OPERATOR COMFORT IS GOOD INSIDE THE MACHINE, AND JUST ITS POWER – I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW MUCH I COULD ACTUALLY PICK UP AND PUSH WITH IT.”

“Certainly we were expecting at least 20%, but then it got out there and we did the comparison between the standard 30 tonners to this hybrid and we were quite amazed: Thirty-nine point something percent difference in fuel consumption.”

Natham's had exactly the same result with Monty's Plant Hire's second Komatsu Hybrid.

“The main role for all the machines out there was final trim work, pulling batters, trimming pads and other intricate final trim works.

“They did do a bit of bulk work in the early stages of the job, but the fuel consumption then wasn't much different,” he said.

“We are extremely happy with them.”

As of early April, Natham is also about to order a new Komatsu GD655-5 grader following a demonstration at Komatsu Australia's Boots On event in the NSW Hunter Valley late last year.

It's an interesting story, as previously he'd said he'd never drive another Komatsu grader following his experiences in an earlier model seven or eight years ago.

“I operated a Komatsu grader back in 2007, out at a mine site and it just put me off them. I swore I'd never go near one ever again.

“Then Jonesy [Dean Jones, Komatsu Business Development Manager in Perth] harped on and on and on about the latest model, and said ‘you've got to try one, you've got to try one, you've got to try one’.

“So I said, ‘all right, I'll give it a go’ when we were at Boots On,” said Natham.

“So we took it for a spin out when we were out there and I was very, very impressed.

“Its cab layout is very good; I also like the new shape they've gone with for the cab for visibility.

“And I like the smoothness of their hydraulics now; they used to be very jerky and slow on their graders – which is very unlike Komatsu – but they were.

“Now they're like every other Komatsu machine I've ever been in: very smooth, very responsive to your hands, so that's another good thing.

“The operator comfort is good inside the machine, and just its power – I couldn't believe how much I could actually pick up and push with it.

“I went in the triple 5 (GD555A-5) the baby version out there, but I had my blade full and was rilling it out past my front tire. That's a pretty impressive thing.

“My existing grader is a good machine, and I've thoroughly enjoyed having it, but after actually operating this new Komatsu grader, the difference is just too big now,” said Natham.

Monty's

PLANT HIRE | TRUCK & EARTHMOVING REPAIRS | TRANSPORT SERVICES



NZ CONTRACTOR REMOTE CONTROLS KOMATSU EXCAVATORS FOR EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS DEMOLITION WORKS

In what may well be a world first, New Zealand demolition contractor Protranz has set up three Komatsu excavators for remote control operation, allowing them to demolish badly damaged houses close to dangerously unstable cliffs, as a result of Christchurch's devastating February 2011 earthquake.

So dangerous are the cliffs – which are liable to collapse at any time with no warning – that people are prohibited from entering the demolition zones, requiring local demolition contractors to brainstorm a range of innovative ideas to deal with the problems.

Gerard Daldry, owner of Protranz, came up with his solution as a result of his experiences with remote control equipment in Christchurch in the 1980s and 1990s.

Other ideas that have been suggested have included using cranes, incineration and even helicopters to carry out the demolition – but none has proven as effective as the remote-controlled excavators.

Gerard established Protranz in 1997, initially carting agricultural products around the North Island, before moving back to Christchurch in 2002 and taking over a demolition company that had gone broke.

Until the earthquake, he had just run three trucks and a couple of excavators – and had never demolished anything bigger than a two-storey house.

However, since the disaster, his business has grown to around 20 diggers and over 50 trucks.

Gerard currently has three Komatsu excavators set up for remote control: a PC270LC-8, a PC138US-8 and a PC88MR-8.

In setting up his excavators for remote control operation, Gerard wanted to partner with a supplier in whom he could have full confidence.

“When it came time to choose from what we deemed as the top three, we chose Komatsu and they weren’t cheapest, but in our eyes, they were the equivalent of the best, if not better,” he said.

“There was one specific person, Marty Rupp in Komatsu’s workshop, and of course Wayne Hawtin, our territory sales manager, who really gave us the confidence that we would have a partnership in line with the knowledge that we sourced from overseas.”

The first excavator to be remote controlled was the PC270.

“We thought its balance would be a lot better than another size excavator, being a 30 tonne track frame with a PC220 top on it,” said Gerard.

In setting up the remote control operation, Gerard worked with an overseas supplier he’d had experience with many years earlier, to come up with solutions that would allow his operators

to safely and reliably control the excavators inside the danger zones.

This process has taken four years of tests and trial and error, but he now has a solution that allows the excavators to go between conventional manual operation and remote control with the flick of a switch.

In most instances, the cliff-side remote operations involve the PC270 operator controlling the larger machine from inside its cab, as well as remotely controlling one of the two smaller excavators as required.

The larger machine carries out the bulk demolition work, then one of the smaller machines comes in and loads out the demolished material to a “safe” zone within reach of the PC270, which then picks up the material and loads it onto trucks.

“The operator sitting in the PC270 has a separate set of controls for the machine he’s remotely controlling, and it’s a mirror image of the joysticks in the digger itself.

“When he needs to operate the machine in the danger zone, he just picks up the controls and operates it normally.”

Gerard has also taken steps to minimise the chances of the machines working in the danger zones of breaking down and being very difficult, if not impossible, to retrieve.



Above: Protranz's PC270 used at a demolition site in Christchurch NZ.

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KOMATSU AND
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IF NOT BETTER”**

“We’re in the unique situation where if anything goes wrong with our machine out on the edge of the cliff, we cannot send a mechanic out there to fix it, so we have to monitor it all the time.

“We have a separate person constantly monitoring the machines in the danger zone: fuel levels, oil pressures, temperatures, everything.

“That person on the site usually has a visual of the remote excavators, where they’re working, monitoring everything live, and he’s in radio contact with the operator.

“He can tell them if anything starts to look a little bit strange or a little bit out of kilter.

“Then, they’ll bring the digger back in and try and get to the bottom of what’s going on.

“And every two hours maximum, we bring the machines back to a safe zone and we survey them to make sure there’s no potential failures before we send them back out again,” he said.

The remote control machines have also been set up so that in the event of a hydraulic failure, the risk of them being unable to extricate themselves from the danger area is minimised.

“We have radio controlled valving on the machine, where if it blows a pilot hose, it will immediately shut down all the hydraulic system, leave the motor running.

“Then, we can open up enough systems from it to get the machine back to where it needs to be to be safe to be worked on without losing all its oil.

“The remote controlling of the machine is in fact a very small part of what we had to achieve to be

able to be safe and secure out on the edge of the cliffs,” said Gerard.

In setting up the remote control excavators, Protranz carried out large numbers of demolitions remotely in “safe” areas to ensure that its procedures and methodologies were right.

“We’ve done hundreds of demolitions with the remote machines, while absolute criticals – where no one can go up there – we’ve probably over 30 now,” he said.

Gerard can see multiple applications for this technology, including landmine fields, ammunition dumps, damaged nuclear reactors and mine rescue operations.

And while he believes most makes of excavator could be remote controlled, he went with Komatsu because of his relationship with the company’s Christchurch branch.

“We chose Komatsu because of Wayne, our local territory sales manager, because of Marty and because of the workshop here,” he said.

“We were very confident in what we could achieve because Marty was on board with us, and anything that we needed to know. He’s always been on hand to help us, to give us advice, to brainstorm what to do, all that sort of stuff.

“In terms of fitting a remote control system, we didn’t see a great deal of difference between the three major brands, but we had confidence in Komatsu,” said Gerard.

“**GENERALLY, ONCE
IT'S GONE IT'S GONE.**”

GRAND THEFT EARTHMOVER

Plant and equipment theft remains a growing concern in the construction, mining and associated industries. Rebirthing is common and recoveries are rare.

To a plant or equipment owner, the theft of a machine carries serious commercial implications.

Beyond significant inconvenience, time wasted and money lost, there is potential for long term damage to reputations and a business' bottom line.

Parked in publicly visible places, often with limited night and weekend security, the presence of a large brightly coloured piece of equipment at a job site, on the street or outside a house is hard to miss.

Research and analysis performed over 10 years by the Comprehensive Auto-theft Research System (CARS) and the National Motor Vehicle Theft Reduction Council (NVMTRC) found that between 2004 and 2014 Australian motor vehicle thefts declined by 38 per cent.

In the same period, heavy vehicle thefts increased by 23 per cent, a rise driven by a jarring 45 per cent surge in stolen plant and equipment.

A median estimate of \$27,920,000 worth of plant and equipment theft was recorded in 2014 with 682 thefts, compared with 482 thefts in 2004.

NVMTRC executive director Ray Carroll believes the continued growth of thefts is attributable to plant equipment's high visibility, increased profitability and ease of rebirth and resale.

"Cars have become more difficult to steal and to make a profit from," Ray says.

"The vast majority of equipment isn't registered for the road, so there is no permanent record of ownership.

"There is no universal VIN system like on a car, and being able to identify stolen machinery is a real problem.

"They are very easy to sell in the second-hand market. If you take one interstate and sell it the potential buyer would never know it was stolen," he says.

"An excavator being loaded onto the back of a truck by men in fluoro vests is a common sight and it is

almost impossible for the average citizen to identify it as theft, unlike someone breaking the window of a sedan.

"Earthmoving equipment can be stolen in plain sight, with few citizens having reason to call 000," Ray said.

Inconsistencies in crime reporting also mean that reported figures might not account for the actual rate of criminal activity in the industry.

"It depends on how police are recording the crime," explains Ray. "Plant and equipment thefts are often simply incorrectly recorded as general property thefts, which can distort the real numbers significantly.

"The real figure might be a couple of hundred more than recorded."

Thieves focus their attention on newer vehicles, with 43 per cent of plant and equipment stolen being less than nine years old.

Nearly 42 per cent of plant and equipment thefts were from businesses, followed closely by thefts from residences at 14 per cent and 10 per cent nabbed from the street.

Unsurprisingly, CARS and NVMTRC data found the motivation for plant and equipment theft is profit, while short term plant and equipment thefts are often used for joyrides, or to play a role in other crimes.

In late 2014 an excavator believed stolen from a West Australian council depot was used to forcibly remove an ATM from a wall. Domestic and

Below: Komatsu's new INSITE Fleet Management Centre takes centre stage at Komatsu's Head Office.



international news archives reveal a number of similar ATM thefts in recent years.

Rising thefts have come with a rise in the number of machines that are not recovered.

Currently only 38 per cent of plant and equipment stolen is returned to its rightful owner, with a reported recovery not necessarily indicating the machine will be in useable condition upon its return.

This is another figure that may be subject to variance by reporting inaccuracies.

"Generally, once it's gone it's gone. The recovery rate for equipment that is stolen by professionals is very low," explains Ray.

"Most of the equipment that is recorded as recovered is likely to have been stolen out of the yard, driven through the fence and abandoned a couple of hundred metres down the road. The motivation in these thefts is more likely to be vandalism rather than profit."

If a professional thief has stolen equipment in order to sell or break it up for parts, it is very unlikely to be found. However, NSW Police in particular are saying that GPS systems are starting to pay dividends.

Some of the more sophisticated thieves are stealing equipment, leaving it for a few days in an out of the way area and waiting to see if it is recovered. If it's not recovered they come back and take it again.



KOMTRAX RECOVERY

Komatsu machines equipped with KOMTRAX satellite monitoring had a recovery rate of 72 per cent in 2014, well above the current 38 per cent average.

In 2014 eight KOMTRAX-equipped machines were targeted and taken in Australia and New Zealand.

Of those eight, seven were returned, in full working order, to their rightful owners.

Fitted as standard on Komatsu Tier 3 Construction machines and provided free of charge, KOMTRAX is designed to monitor performance and assist with fleet management, rather than as a tool in theft recovery. As a side benefit to its initial purpose, KOMTRAX provides up to date location and security data on Komatsu equipment.

Communicating between GPS satellites, the KOMTRAX unit and the KOMTRAX data centre, Komatsu is able to provide accurate location data to owners and police.

Echoing CARS and NMVTRC data, Komatsu owner reports also indicate the most common intention for theft was rebirth and resale to an unwitting third party.

Owner of West Australian hire business Stretch Industries, James Stretch's Komatsu PC18MR-3 was stolen from an operator's house in WA.

James explains that the company felt the impact of the theft from the second the machine was noticed missing in action.

"My immediate thought was obviously about that days' work," he said.

"Then I considered the flow on from that as well. It had the potential to have a huge, adverse impact on our business, and I knew I needed to track it down straight away.

"Excavators and utility machines are our business' life-blood. Without the machines Stretch Industries wouldn't exist," he said.

After contacting Mary-Jo O'Donovan from the KOMTRAX department a trail was noticed and leads were quickly provided to police.

"We repossessed the excavator on a Thursday and had it back at work on Monday. I can't thank the KOMTRAX department enough for the service they provided; we wouldn't have found it without them."

Ray believes rates of theft would be reduced if more suppliers and operators adopted GPS systems.

"The best way forward at the moment would be if the industry had wider adoption of GPS tracking technology. Being able to identify the location of missing plant and equipment quickly significantly increases the chance of effective recovery."

“WE REPOSSESSED THE EXCAVATOR ON A THURSDAY AND HAD IT BACK AT WORK ON MONDAY”

PERFECT SERVICE AND SUPPORT EARNS HIQUALITY GROUP'S LOYALTY

"Perfect" service and support from Komatsu Australia has earned the long-standing loyalty of leading Sydney-based waste management, quarrying, resource recovery and civil contracting company Hi-Quality Group.

Hi-Quality Group operates a strategic network of quarries, waste management and resource recovery facilities located close to Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne – integrated with its own large transport fleet – as well as a civil contracting division, allowing it to best service its customers.

The family-owned company, which has been in business for over 40 years, has been a loyal Komatsu customer for much of that time, owning a significant fleet of Komatsu loaders, excavators, dump trucks, graders, dozers and soil recyclers.

Its most recent purchase has been of a PC138US-8, two PC200LC-8MOs and a PC270LC-8 excavator, brought in to help cope with the increasing volumes of work Hi-Quality Group is getting.

According to Adam Hallinan, a director of the company, the two PC200s have gone into its recycling operations, while the other two have gone into civil construction applications.

"Komatsu really is our preferred supplier for this sort of equipment, because their service and support is pretty much perfect," Adam said.

"I would include the whole package in that: the service, support, backup, obviously the equipment reliability and the people.

"I really wouldn't have any complaints about the service and support we get from Komatsu," said Adam.

"In addition to that, our operators prefer the Komatsu equipment over other brands."

In terms of the Komatsu people Hi-Quality Group deals with, Adam highlighted Paul Chenery and Rueben Newnham on the sales side, along with customer support sales representative Miles Garner, plus branch manager Matt Tosolini and Paul Rasho in spare parts.

"They all provide us a great level of service and support, and they have a good understanding of our company's needs and our industry," he said.



**“OUR OPERATORS PREFER THE KOMATSU
EQUIPMENT OVER OTHER BRANDS”**

*Below: Hi-Quality's new Komatsu Excavators recently
purchased to cope with the increasing workload.*



AARON MARSH



“FOR OUR CUSTOMERS, THINGS LIKE EFFICIENCY, RELIABILITY, COST SAVINGS AND PRODUCTIVITY ARE GENERALLY FRONT OF MIND”

Down To Earth catches up with Komatsu Australia National Operator Training Supervisor –Construction Division, Aaron Marsh.

Aaron Marsh joined Komatsu Australia in 2006 as Southern Region Operator Trainer, a significant career change after 10 years of military service with the Australian Army.

Excelling in the role and advancing to Construction Divisions National Operator Training Supervisor in mid-2011, Aaron has been a driving force in educating the market about Komatsu's products.

Charged with familiarising sales representatives with Komatsu utility and construction products up to 100 tonnes, the job also involves conducting operator training for key account customers, with brand management across Australia and New Zealand.

Training for the cutting-edge Intelligent Machine Control (IMC) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems has also recently fallen into Aaron's remit.

Extensive travel is involved in educating the market about Komatsu's unique and unrivalled new technologies, like the roll out of hybrid technology in 2013 and more recently introducing staff and customers to the paradigm-shifting D61PXi-23 dozer.

In the lead up to the 2014 Boots On event, Aaron travelled across both the USA and Japan to learn

the nuances and intricacies of the D61PXi-23's game-changing IMC system, working with the foremost experts in the field and in hands-on customer demonstrations to ensure he was able to deliver on every detail when he returned.

At its core, Aaron's position is aimed at connecting staff, customers and stakeholders with Komatsu products, something he says is simple when you are connecting them with the best gear available.

"The job is easy when the product that we have is better than anything else on the market," he says.

"The key driver for connecting with customers and staff is to ensure that any education is made as relevant as possible to the things the audience cares about. Understanding your audiences' needs is the key when engaging with them.

"For our customers, things like efficiency, reliability, cost savings and productivity are generally front of mind."

The difference that a superior product in the hands of an educated operator can make is one of the most satisfying aspects of Aaron's position.

"It's great seeing the benefit that new machines have to help our customers get more productivity, better fuel economy, better CO2 emissions and just more reliability in the product. It's easy to pass on to customers."

VICTORIA'S BOB JONES RETIRES AFTER 20 YEARS WITH KOMATSU

In early March, Bob Jones, Komatsu Australia's Victorian Major Accounts Manager retired after 20 years with the company.

He joined the company in March 1995, from Ingersoll Rand as our Key Accounts Manager.

Tim Greenham, Komatsu's Victorian Sales Manager said that Bob epitomised what selling in this industry is all about.

"He understood relationship selling and was a master at networking; whenever I attended an industry function with Bob he would disappear within minutes as he circled the room and spoke to everyone ensuring that he had a joke or a chat with anyone he knew," said Tim.

"When I came to Victoria just over eight years ago; he was an essential part of our team.

"I particularly remember he had a favourite saying when describing the articulation point of our wheel loaders; when referring to the strength and design he would say: 'imagine holding a broom handle in two hands, do you get more strength and control if your hands are further apart or close together?'

"Further apart was of course the correct answer, and that is why the articulation joint on Komatsu loaders is designed this way, Bob would explain; every young sales rep would then incorporate a version of this in their machine walkarounds."

Tim said that another piece of advice that Bob would offer the team was to always look in and around agricultural or industrial sheds – because in every shed there would have to be a loader of some description to move the goods around, whether fertiliser, grain, hay, fruit or whatever.

"When starting off with Komatsu, our reps were given exercises to cold call on industrial units – this resulted in many successful used loader sales," Tim said.

Bob said for him it had been a "fabulous 20 years with Komatsu" as part of a 45-year working career.

"I thank all those that have been kind enough to put their trust in the products I have promoted over the years, and I hope no one is left disappointed," he said.

"In the future, I look forward to meeting the many friends I've made in the industry over the past 20 years at the many industry functions I plan to continue attending," said Bob.

Everyone at Komatsu would like to wish Bob a long and happy retirement!

RICHARD FEEHELY

National Business Manager – Quarries



**KOMATSU'S EQUIPMENT IS BY FAR
THE INDUSTRY STANDARD IN MY OPINION**

**Down To Earth shines a spotlight on
Komatsu Australia National Business
Manager – Quarries and Construction
Division, Richard Feehely.**

Relatively new to the Komatsu business, Richard Feehely has been entrenched in the earthmoving equipment industry for over 10 years.

At 29 years of age he brings fresh energy and genuine enthusiasm to the position, coupled with significant experience in the sector.

Managing Komatsu's quarry and construction business across Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia, Richard's remit encompasses top and bottom line responsibility for sales of Komatsu's range of rigid dump trucks, articulated dump trucks and wheel loaders.

Richard manages stock levels and specifying for builds for several domestic markets to ensure there are sufficient machines on the ground, and in the country, to deliver to customers and get out to work.

Also falling into Richard's care is product development and the preparation and implementation of local marketing plans, customer agreements and policy. With full oversight of market intelligence and price positioning, he also directs internal and customer-facing product training.

"Straight out of school I was onto the tools," Richard says. "I worked in sales and then parts and service, before moving into the marketing and plant manager role here at Komatsu.

"It's a great job; Komatsu is a great company to work for. I enjoy the product, and I am passionate about

the earth moving and construction industry, and about the gear itself, so the experience so far has been really good.

"Komatsu's equipment is by far the industry standard in my opinion," Richard says.

In late 2014, Richard led the roll-out of the HM400-3 articulated dump truck.

As an earthmoving equipment enthusiast Richard is particularly passionate about its unrivalled ability to cut customer fuel costs while delivering increased productivity.

"It's a true 40-tonne truck, so we deliver more capacity, but though the modular Dantotsu Komatsu Traction Control System we have reduced fuel consumption, so it has a big impact on our customers' day to day business," Richard says.



LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP EARNS STUART BUCKBY'S TRUST

A long-term relationship with Grant Menhennett, Komatsu's WA Business Development Manager, has seen Perth-based Buckby Contracting continue purchasing Komatsu equipment since it started operations in early 2004.

Buckby Contracting is a civil construction contractor established by Stuart Buckby to provide specialist services in the installation of underground services throughout the Perth metropolitan area.

Today it employs over 50 people, building a strong reputation in the Perth civil construction sector and working closely with key players in the local industry.

Over the past 11 years, Buckby Contracting has played an integral role in many of Perth's housing subdivisions, road works, and other public projects.

Its fleet includes 12 Komatsu excavators, from a PC40MR-2 up to a PC450LC-8 – and including a just-delivered PC200LC-8MO – and six Komatsu wheel loaders, three WA250PZ-6s – with the latest delivered in March, two WA320PZ-6s and a WA380-6.

According to Stuart, pride of the company's fleet is its recently delivered PC450LC-8, which is being used for rock and bulk excavation work in primarily greenfield housing development sites.

"We bought it for work we're doing in Perth's northern corridor, up in Yanchep in particular, as well as down in Karnup to the south, where there's a couple of big housing development sites, and it's perfect for that," he said.

"It's big enough that it can handle the material without the need for a rock breaker.

"In addition, for one of our 30 tonners, we've bought a rock-wheel, which has allowed us to move away from rock breakers, which are the old 'bang-bang-bang-bang' and shake the living daylights out of everyone," said Stuart.

"We're finding that's a better solution these days, not only for the operator, but also those working and living nearby to the works."

Buckby Contracting started purchasing Komatsu equipment pretty much from the day it started.

"Our first machine was a Komatsu, and we had a great run out of that, and we've never looked back from buying them," he said.

"The product is a good one, and the service that we get from Grant is fantastic; he's the main reason I've stuck with them all these years.

"He can't do enough for you as a salesperson; he's really good to deal with."

Stuart's relationship with Grant goes back before he went out on his own to start Buckby Contracting.

"We dealt with Grant in my previous employment, when he supplied machines way back then, so I've probably known him for 20 years.

In addition to his relationship with Grant, the performance, reliability and resale value of Komatsu keeps Stuart coming back.

"You pay more for Komatsu up-front, but you get what you pay for, I'm a firm believer in that. We run Toyota vehicles and Komatsu equipment for that reason.

"It's reliable and well-regarded in the industry – and I won't be straying from that," he said.

**“OUR FIRST MACHINE
WAS A KOMATSU,
AND WE HAD A
GREAT RUN OUT OF
THAT, AND WE’VE
NEVER LOOKED
BACK FROM
BUYING THEM”**



Left: Stuart Buckby with his new PC450LC-8 Komatsu excavator.



KOMATSU RENTAL SOLUTION GIVES SCOTT THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

When client demand meant Bowen Basin-based contractor Scott Coleman, of CWE Contracting – a loyal Komatsu customer since he started on his own in 2007 – needed two more machines, the option to rent them on long-term hire from Komatsu Rental was the perfect alternative in these uncertain times for anyone working in the mining industry.

Scott specialises in providing civil works for mining companies in the Bowen basin, which can cover anything from cleaning out drains, to building and maintaining haul roads, along with general infrastructure construction and maintenance.

He started his business in Brisbane in 2007 – initially with a used Komatsu PC200-6 excavator, which he traded on a new PC200-8 about 18 months later – working on major infrastructure projects around the city.

In 2010, he relocated his business to the Bowen Basin, and since then has purchased two more Komatsu excavators: a second PC200-8 and a PC350-8.

Then last year, Scott needed another two excavators to service his clients, a third PC200-8 and a PC450-8. With Komatsu able to offer both a purchase and a rental option, he carefully considered both.

"The industry, as you're probably well aware, is very up and down at the moment," he said.

"I did look at both options and I was offered a very good deal through Komatsu for a brand new PC450 and a brand new PC200, but the way the industry is at the moment, it's still quite unstable.

"I was also offered a very good deal for a long-term rental through Garry Rogerson [Komatsu Rental's Queensland Business Development Manager].

"That meant if it all was to turn bad overnight, I've got the opportunity to turn that tap off and not be stuck with the usual finance loan repayments," said Scott.

"It also helps the relationship; if I can put through a couple of rentals up here, help Komatsu get some gear on the ground as well, that's what it's all about for me – and it also does me a favour as well.

"The price I'm paying for the rental is fair and I can still achieve acceptable margins on hiring them out to my customers – plus the backup service with the rental machines is brilliant."

When first establishing his business, Scott did his research on the best machines in the marketplace, and decided to go with Komatsu.

"I've always been a bit cautious in business, so I wanted a brand that I'd believe I could get good resale value on.

"I find with the Komatsu excavators, even when they start getting a few hours on them, there's always a market for resale. If you need to clear your debts, there's always a very good chance that you can unload a machine if you have to, and come out square," he said.

The other major reason for Scott opting for Komatsu was the feedback from others in the market.

"When I went to buy my first one, I did a fair bit of homework on Komatsu and the other brands.

"What I like about the Komatsu machines is they're well known, they're well tried.

"They also run a six-cylinder motor, as opposed to the other brands that are running four-cylinder engines these days – I don't like that," he said.

"And since I've started buying Komatsu, I've found the service and backup I get from them is second to none.

"I have a very good relationship with John Frater out of Mackay and also Garry Rogerson, the Komatsu Rental BDM, and if there's ever any dramas, I can just make a call and, whether it be parts or service backup, it will be sorted out."

Scott also uses Komatsu's KOMTRAX remote monitoring system to keep an eye on his machines.

"Because I don't have a lot of machines, I just look at the monthly report from KOMTRAX.

"The main thing I focus on with the KOMTRAX report is the idle hours and the walk hours.

"I don't like our machines walking too far, that's why I bought my own low-loaders, so we can move them around and limit the walking.

In the early days, one of our machines did a lot of walking, and we had a whole lot of undercarriage problems and all sorts of dramas directly related to walking too far for too long.

"So the main use for KOMTRAX for me now is to look at my idle hours and walk hours," said Scott.

"But as far as repair goes, I find Komatsu machines just bulletproof. We have very, very little trouble with them.

"I'm more than happy with them and I'll continue to stay with Komatsu for forever and a day while I'm in business," he said.



GARDENING WITH DIGGER: THE LITTLE KOMATSU THAT CHANGED RICHARD'S AND FIONA'S LIVES



10 years ago, Hobart-based Richard Sorbian and Fiona Ferguson started a landscaping business with the purchase of a Komatsu PC30MR-2 from Doug Fulton in 2004. After 10 years, 4000 hours, and some life-affirming experiences, they recently traded the machine on a new PC30MR-3. Fiona has written a beautiful short story on "Gardening With Digger", and the impact the little machine – and a companion Komatsu SK820-5SF – had on their lives and the community around them. This is an excerpt from this story; the full account can be read on the Komatsu Australia website at www.komatsu.com.au.

So many things that happen in our lives are side effects or flow on effects and it is so with business too.

Richard (my then boyfriend) started a one-man (and his trusty assistant girlfriend) business 10 years ago.

It began as an absolute 'sea-change' caused by circumstances beyond our control. Redundancy combined with being over 50 years of age equals you are on your own.

So the man decided enough of the suit and out with the machines and bought himself an excavator...

It wasn't long before Richard and his machines were able to create all sorts of wonders together. And he had fun.

The little neighbourhood opened up to us and over time there were ... mountains of rock and boulders, soil and mulch, compost and bark, gravel and sand, timber and plants were moved in, moved up, moved down and around.

One Hundred and One Things to do with an Excavator – a coffee table book in the making.

Apart from the myriad capabilities of man and machine, the imagination and creativity allowed and the need to earn a living there was an interesting side effect.

As we worked on a little job here a big job there our lives were branching out from our home into the neighbourhood and beyond.

Each person passed us on to someone else and over the years we never advertised...

Then there were the people we worked for.

They were young, middle and old aged. There were singles, couples, families, widows and widowers.

As we spent time with these people, transforming their gardens, it gave us a peek into their work and lives.

Some were rich, some were poor, most in that in-between where each dollar is earned and spent with great consideration...

So from little things big things grow. Not only did the scope of where we worked branch out, but our capabilities and skills branched out as we took on jobs.

We were not trained or knowledgeable in so many things and learned along the way...

So we come to today when we look at the excavator – a bit worn out now – as we are, and sad as it is, we have to replace her.

Ten years is a long time and has certainly given us many adventures. I would never have imagined that so many experiences could have come out of that one purchase.

The need to commemorate is due to changing over the old excavator for a new one. I feel there is a new chapter coming and not sure I want to let go of the old...

We clean and polish the old machine. It looks pretty good considering all it has been through. It has a few battle scars, scratches and bits missing, tracks with cracks and rubber torn. I know I will miss this.

Now for the next ten years with our second brand-new excavator.

MOUNTAIN MOVERS

Setting the bar for plant and equipment rentals, Loadex Hire has grown with the confidence from offering quality Komatsu equipment.

“WE HAVE NEVER HAD A COMPLAINT ABOUT OUR KOMATSU MACHINES”

The company was founded in 1996 in Western Australia as Break West Hire to address an absence of equipment hire suppliers meeting the diverse needs of contractors. The business quickly found a loyal customer base and moved beyond WA's borders, opening as Loadex Hire in Adelaide in 2008, before the WA branch changed its trading name to Loadex Hire in 2012.

A genuine success story, the business has grown and expanded year on year, with a unique dedication to service and striving to offer customers the best.

Loadex offers a wide range of plant and equipment capable of performing both large and small tasks. Hire is on anything from a daily to a long term basis. The team at Loadex takes great pride in partnering with clients to understand their requirements and assist them in achieving their needs.

The independently owned company aims to break away from the norms of the plant and equipment hire industry and offer an up-to-date range of plant and equipment, and an alternative to the common brands that tend to dominate the hire marketplace. The company's founders boast 38 years of combined experience in the construction, earthmoving and agricultural industries.

Loadex Hire currently owns and offers a variety of Komatsu Wheel Loaders, Skid-Steer Loaders, Graders and Backhoes for hire.

John Szczypiorski, manager of Loadex's South Australia branch, explained Loadex's secret: coupling the best gear with better service.

“We very much focus on giving our customers the best products,” he said. “We try and deliver a quality service. We deliberately went into the marketplace as an independent brand because the market was dominated by a few suppliers in the hire industry. We set ourselves up intentionally as an alternative to those brands.

“Customer acceptance is critical. We can have the most reliable machines, but if they're not the machines that the customer wants then we've got a problem.

“Our clients are looking for a variety of features, with a particular focus on operating costs, fuel savings and reliability. Obviously the operator wants to have a machine that's good to operate and doesn't give them health issues,, or one that has good features and is reliable.

“We'll hire almost anywhere, within reason obviously. Local government, mining, landscaping ... whatever it may be. We don't have any aversion to our machines doing any type of work.”

Loadex recently supplied Komatsu loaders to the SA Civil Contractors branch for operator training and assessment.

“Their range was very old and so the Loadex directors approached them with a proposal to provide some up-to-date training equipment, and obviously we keep Komatsu as one of those cutting-edge brands.”

Loadex has had an overwhelmingly positive experience with Komatsu equipment.

“We have never had a complaint about our Komatsu machines. We bought one of the Komatsu GD555-5 prototypes and put it into the marketplace when we started in South Australia in 2008.

“The local grader hire market was dominated by other brands and people thought we might struggle, but the market acceptance was great and it became the machine of choice for many operators. That made us very comfortable, and offering another brand to the marketplace became our point of difference.”





**“IT’S CERTAINLY
GOING STRONG,
AND WE DON’T
HAVE ANY PLANS
TO GET RID OF IT”**



UNBREAKABLE

A PC400-5HD at a Victorian metal recycling yard has clocked up a striking number of heavy duty hours, showing no signs of slowing.

There are many factors that can affect an excavator's longevity, including heat, operator use, exposure to the elements, maintenance and constant heavy workloads.

OneSteel's Komatsu PC400-5HD has been through it all, and refuses to miss a beat.

Leased by Smorgon Steel in 1995, purchased in 2000 and given hell since day one, the Laverton-based metal recycling yard excavator has had a long, hard life.

Smorgon was acquired by OneSteel in 2007, meaning the excavator has survived two businesses, two decades of different operators and tough conditions. Despite these challenges the excavator has logged an astounding 35,000 hours – equivalent to over 1,458 full days, or nearly four years, of non-stop operation.

Exposed to the elements in the metal recycling yard of OneSteel's Laverton steel works, the excavator has spent 20 years cementing Komatsu's reputation for reliability and versatility. With the exception of faded paint, the machine remains in perfect working order.

Laverton has a reputation for summer heat. Despite only being 17km from the city centre, it and neighbouring Altona regularly record the hottest temperatures in Melbourne.

Maintained internally, with major tasks performed by Komatsu technicians, the recycling yard makes harsh demands of plant equipment. Few of the scrap yard's jobs fall outside the wide remit of the excavator.

Depending on the day, the adaptable excavator can be seen moving steel while fitted with a grab, or a magnet with a secondary diesel motor, and occasionally a sieving bucket or flip screen. At other times it will be severing steel with its rail snapper, chopping steel reinforcement with the deformed bar cutter, or moving loads with its dirt bucket.

Operations Manager for Onesteel Recycling Laverton Terry Nicholls leased the PC400 for the Laverton Steel Mill Recycling business in 1995. It is one of a number of Komatsu machines in his fleet.

“Some gear doesn't have the same longevity. The difference is that it's still here, where others have come and gone. It's been going flat strap since 1995,” Mr Nicholls says.

“It looks a little worse for wear paint-wise. We have purchased newer equipment as the need arose, but the Komatsu has found its niche. It's built like a fair dinkum scrap machine, it's got a wide body, and it's high and has good clearance.

“Others haven't had the grunt or the wherewithal – it's the right machine for the job. It's been a good news story as far as we're concerned.”

While heat, dust and heavy work are a challenge for any machine, Mr. Nicholls says the rotation of operators is the excavator's biggest challenge.

“It's used by different operators day in, day out, which gives it a bit of a test to tell you the truth. If you get somebody who treats it as though they own the machine then it assures a long life. Having different operators using it though, the machine has stood up to the task extremely well”.

Despite the PC400-5HD's age, there are no plans to replace the excavator at this stage.

“It's certainly going strong, and we don't have any plans to get rid of it, that's for sure.” Says Mr. Nicholls.

Komatsu Australia Account Manager Geoff Killury said while he isn't shocked at the longevity of the PC400, he is impressed by the integrity of the machine.

“Komatsu machines are built right the first time. They are engineered to last, and they do. The boys at the Laverton scrap yard have put this machine to the test. I am trying to encourage Terry to go for a hundred thousand hours. With the proper maintenance and servicing there is no reason it won't go the distance.”

KOMATSU OFFERS UNBEATABLE PACKAGE FOR BRAD SCOTT



I'VE HAD A REALLY GOOD RUN OUT OF ALL MY KOMATSU MACHINES, AND PARTICULARLY THE PC55'S

Above: Brad Scott with his son and his third PC55 Komatsu excavator.

Gippsland-based civil contractor Brad Scott has recently taken delivery of his third Komatsu PC55 excavator, because he finds he can't beat the backup, the resale values and the reliability of his Komatsu machines.

His new PC55MR-3 replaces a PC55MR-3 he'd had for four years, and which had logged around 1500 hours, and which itself had replaced a PC50MR-2.

In addition to his 5 tonner, Brad also runs a PC18MR-3 and a PC138US-8 excavator, plus a CK25-1 crawler skid steer – all of which he operates himself.

His company, Brad Scott Excavations, carries out civil and general contracting throughout Victoria, including foundation and concreting works on building sites.

"I've had a really good run out of all my Komatsu machines, and particularly the PC55s; they haven't let me down once," said Brad.

"I really love this machine; it's basic, it's simple, nothing ever goes wrong, so I don't have to touch it – and it's got heaps of room in the cab."

To maximise his machines' versatility and attractiveness to clients, Brad offers a large number of attachments.

"My PC55MR-3 has about 18 attachments I can use with it: tilt hitch buckets, augers, four-in-one buckets, log grabs – a whole range."

He also prides himself on really looking after his equipment.

"When I sold my last machine, it was still in mint condition; everyone thought it was the new machine, it was in that good a nick," he said.

"Keeping my machines in top condition is my advertising; I keep them clean, I wash and service them each time they come off a job, there's no scratches on them.

"In fact, when I bought this new one, a lot of people didn't even realise I had a new machine, because I look after them all so much," he said.

"And I never had to put a spanner on it, which was great. I've had a great run out of my Komatsu machines, which is the main reason I went back for another one."

Brad also finds it useful being able to work with his local Komatsu branch via the KOMTRAX remote monitoring system.

"I find it very handy," he said.

"I can ring the branch anytime and see if anything is happening, plus they can see you've done the servicing and track it all to see how it's going.

"That means if I have an issue, they can see how many hours I've done that month, and we can look at what may be causing that.

"That's a very useful service to be able to have," Brad said.

LOYAL KOMATSU CUSTOMER SHANE WIGHT IS DELIGHTED WITH HIS LATEST MACHINES

“MY TWO LATEST MACHINES ARE UNBELIEVABLE!”



Above: Shane Wight in his new PC138US-8 short tail Komatsu excavator.

Despite being a long-term loyal Komatsu customer who knows the company's products very well, Sydney earthmoving contractor Shane Wight has been amazed and delighted with his latest excavator purchases, describing the machines as "unbelievable" in their features and performance.

Shane has recently bought a 13.8 tonne PC138US-8 short-tail excavator and a 1.8 tonne PC18MR-3, adding to his two existing PC55MR-3 excavators and a PC120-6 excavator.

Working mainly in the Northern Beaches area of metropolitan Sydney, Shane's work includes drainage, both domestic and commercial, as well as swimming pools, demolition, and general site preparation.

"My two latest machines are unbelievable!" he said.

"One of my operators has actually been on the PC138 for the past few months, but for the past week or so, I've needed it for a job I've been on. Now I like it so much, I don't want to give it back!

"It's the whole package: the cabin comfort, the air conditioning, the response in the hydraulics and – with the 13 tonner – the blade.

"Having the blade gives me so many options; we can use the excavator for everything from precision excavation, trenching and pipework, through to final trim and clean up.

"It's just a really flexible machine – and the zero-swing gives us maximum flexibility on jobs," he said.

In fact, Shane is a big fan of zero-swing excavators, with all but one of his excavators being the short-tail variants.

"They really allow us to use the machines in a much wider range of jobs," he said.

Time constraints, plus the increasing trend for builders to insist that even machines used in metropolitan applications meet mine-spec standards, mean Shane also gets all his servicing done through Komatsu.

"All our machines are mine spec'd; some jobs you can't get on if you don't have that – plus you never know where your next job is going to be and who is going to ring you.

"Because of this, we are under service contracts with Komatsu for all our machines, so every 250 hours, they come out and do a field service," he said.

"This has worked out really well for us; it's been great because I just don't get the time now.

"I used to service them a bit myself, but you need the service records now for the jobs you want to go on," said Shane.

"And having Komatsu doing all my servicing takes a huge problem away from me; with five machines, I haven't got time any more.



Above: Murray Irrigation's Komatsu excavator and (above right) the Komatsu grader have been reliable and essential in the operation work for the organisation.

KEEPING AUSTRALIA'S FOOD BOWL FULL

In a region of Australia known for both its value in domestic food production and its susceptibility to drought, Murray Irrigation relies on Komatsu to help keep the water flowing and crops growing.

Murray Irrigation is the largest privately owned irrigation company in Australia.

In a country that is reliant on farmers and their produce, but often starved of rainfall, irrigated land is without doubt a critical part of Australia's economic strength.

Providing irrigation water to over 2,300 farms in southern NSW, Murray Irrigation's area of operation is enormous. Stretching across the state from Mulwala in the east, to Moulamein and Swan Hill in the west, over 748,000 hectares of farmland north of the Murray River is taken in by the irrigation operators.

"Murray Irrigation services a mixture of businesses, from grain production to horticulture. Rice growers are our main customers but we also work with dairy farmers, and a lot of cattle and sheep farmers. The farms we service would be considered part of the Murray food bowl," says Murray Irrigation Fleet Manager Peter O'Toole.

"Irrigation is important because of the low rainfall levels in this part of the world. Despite that it's a very productive area.

"It's an ex-flood plain so the soil is very good, and even with no water in the dams the farmers here are still able to grow things they normally wouldn't be able to. For example, they couldn't grow rice without irrigation, and we have a lot of farmers using irrigation to help grow pasture for their animals."

Murray Irrigation's service is essential to Australia's ability to feed itself, and rice growing

stakeholders are among the most efficient users of water per tonne in the world.

"If the area we service was dry land farming, it could not be half as productive as it is," Peter said.

Dedicated to water efficiency, the company is a crucial part of the Private Irrigation Infrastructure Operators Program (PIIOP).

"PIIOP is a government program Murray Irrigation is in partnership with, where we are creating efficiencies in the use of water delivery through our main channels and also on farms. Any water that is saved is actually delivered back to the government to use for environmental purposes.

"It's moving along quite well; the technology we are using is certainly delivering efficiencies and making things a lot simpler.

"Mostly, it is about replacing Dethridge wheels on farms. Dethridge wheels are great big wheels with fins on them that spin around. They have been around since 1907 and are not the most efficient way to measure water flow," Peter said.

"Now, we are moving to a series of systems like slip meters which are very accurate in terms of measuring the water that's delivered, and delivering larger volumes faster, and can be remotely controlled rather than having someone run around and physically monitor them."

Murray Irrigation operates a number of Komatsu excavators that they use primarily to maintain and de-silt the irrigation channel system – essential work in providing consistent and fast water flow.

"We operate six two-tonne excavators, two wheel loaders, a 16-tonne excavator, and three twenty-tonne excavators. All of them are Komatsu," said Peter.

"The machinery gets worked hard. During winter, our guys are running the machines six days a week. It can get down to minus two degrees and in the summer its 45 degrees."

In spite of the harsh working conditions, Murray Irrigation has never had any issues with its Komatsu equipment.

"Our equipment servicing is done by Komatsu on a scheduled servicing plan. Komatsu has definitely been the best in the excavators, not only in terms of the finish quality but also in the servicing and sales support," Peter said.

"Compared with arrangements we have had with other operators in the past, Komatsu's service and support is far superior."

In the irrigation business, reliability is depended on by the company and its clients.

"Machine reliability is essential to Murray Irrigation's operations. The Komatsu machines have been extremely reliable and we are very happy with them," Peter said.

"Australians rely on farmers in the districts we service to produce food in the volumes they are used to. Farmers rely on us to keep their properties adequately irrigated and running as efficiently as possible.

"In turn, we rely on Komatsu to ensure our fleet of excavators and loaders are always there when we need them. Komatsu's service and support gives us the confidence we need to keep this region as viable as ever."

KOMTRAX GETS IT BACK

Komatsu's KOMTRAX theft-prevention and recovery system has once again stymied criminals and proven a critical factor in the quick recovery of a stolen excavator.

The would-be-thieves demonstrated new levels of boldness in a recent attempt to steal an eight-tonne Komatsu PC88MR-8 excavator from a western Sydney construction company.

When Plant and Operations Manager Michael Bellino and his crew finished work at a Seven Hills building site on a Friday afternoon in late July, they secured the machine and the site for the weekend before cleaning up and heading home.

Evidently watching the machine over the weekend, the thieves seized their moment on a quiet Sunday night, breaking in and loading the excavator onto the back of a truck.

When Mr Bellino arrived on Monday morning, something was clearly amiss.

"You definitely notice when a big yellow excavator is missing from a building site. I had trouble believing it was gone when I first turned up," Mr Bellino said.

"We use the excavator every day; it is essential to our daily operations. Every moment that the equipment is not working it is costing us money."

Mr Bellino immediately phoned the police and his Komatsu account manager Matt Watton, who referred the case to the KOMTRAX team.

KOMTRAX monitors equipment day and night, with remote monitoring, geofencing and travel alarms designed to detect theft and expedite recovery for Komatsu customers.

After reviewing the logs from recent communications with the excavator's monitoring system, the KOMTRAX team found a 7:30pm scan had shown the excavator to be exactly where it was supposed to be.

The next scan, at 8:20pm, showed the machine in a different location, around half an hour's drive away.

Later that day the excavator was recovered, dusted for finger prints by the police and returned to its owners.

In their short time with the machine, the criminals had filed off the serial numbers. Mr Bellino believes their intention was to quickly resell the excavator, either domestically or packed into a container and shipped to an overseas buyer.

"It's the first time something like this has ever happened to me, but you never know when it could happen again," said Mr Bellino.

With recovery on non-tracking equipped utility equipment thefts very low, and the loss of a machine a major setback for operators, KOMTRAX ensures that no machine goes unaccounted for.

"I was worried as we depend on our machines, but we got the excavator back the same day and we got back to work – in the end we didn't lose more than a few hours' time. I rate KOMTRAX 100 per cent," said Mr Bellino.

"The confidence of knowing we will never be down a machine gives me the peace of mind that helps us to grow our business."



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