

**NS KOMATSU NEWSLETTER**

## “Quality & Reliability” in the new century

In April this year, Komatsu Limited started implementing its “G”2000 Midrange Management Strategy. This defines “Quality and Reliability” as the most important fundamentals to address in the 21st century.

“Quality and Reliability” is a principal concept that should be embraced by all employees who identify with Komatsu, and this of course gives an opportunity for NS Komatsu to follow.

Not only do we intend to provide our customers with fully satisfying products and services, we also should focus on the quality and reliability of our people, organisation and operations, striving for this throughout the whole company.

Recognising “Quality and Reliability” as the top priority, Komatsu Limited has identified five guidelines to be followed:

- 1) Consistently provide customers with innovative products and services, which leads to customer satisfaction.
- 2) Constantly pursue innovation of management, based on innovation of technology.
- 3) Promote consolidated management from a global perspective.
- 4) Contribute to communities as a corporate citizen.
- 5) Provide employees with opportunities for challenge and creativity.



▲ Melbourne, our feature branch in this issue. Photo shows Flinders Street Station, one of Melbourne's most famous landmarks

Although these five guidelines are prepared for Komatsu's global operation, it is useful to understand the spirit and fundamental philosophy, for our own company.

As we move towards the next century, let's try our very best to adopt these concepts of quality and reliability. The test of our success is the satisfaction of our customers.

- Tom Hirano,  
Managing Director

## Who is NS Komatsu?

Some more of our people who have long experience on our products. If you have been involved with one of our products for ten years or so and haven't had your name mentioned yet, please tell your Regional Contact, so we can print it. The Regional Contacts are listed in the yellow table on page 2.

<b>Head Office Fairfield:</b>	
Graeme Reid	10 yrs
Peter Dokmanovic	15 yrs
<b>Fairfield Region:</b>	
Roy Burgess	16 yrs
Heather Coombes	10 yrs

<b>Mackay:</b>	
Steve Thompson	15 yrs
<b>Townsville:</b>	
Kevin Munro	15 yrs
<b>Perth:</b>	
Danny Symonds	10 yrs
Sue Bouchaert	10 yrs
Amanda Smith	10 yrs
Danny Symonds	10 yrs

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## Editor's Comment

**T**wo people have retired from NS Komatsu - Albert Tein, Shipping Manager, Head Office Parts Department, and Terry English, Field Service Supervisor, Fairfield Service Department. Best wishes to you both for a happy retirement.

It is a good sign for an organisation when employees reach retirement. Through their years of working for the company, a wealth of experience is continually being passed on to younger employees, who will in turn eventually reach retirement age themselves - and so the cycle is repeated.



▲ MD Tom Hirano with Alan Jones at the Melbourne Grand Prix in front of the Team Komatsu car. The F1 Rothmans Williams car is in the background.

## Team Komatsu

NS Komatsu's involvement in motor sport has taken off in 1997 with the Team Komatsu Alan Jones racing Ford holding down 3rd place in the touring car championship after the early months of the series.

Mr Tom Hirano attended the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on the 9th March, when AJ thrilled the crowd. The F1 Rothmans Williams team sponsored by Komatsu featured strongly with Jacques Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen setting a blistering pace.

NS Komatsu's customers from around Australia attended the Grand Prix which included a number of functions where customers intermingled with NS Komatsu personnel and celebrities.

Our customers appreciated the opportunity not only to be entertained but to network with other key players in the Australian Construction & Mining Industry.

*Rick Farrar*

Your attention is drawn to the article "Is 99% Quality Near Enough?" on page 3 of this issue, for this reason.

Other employees will be influenced by our individual "quality mind" and our attitude to the job, so we should always strive for 100% quality, and never accept mediocrity as being good enough.

Dave Field, who prepares our Celebrity Guessing Game, reported that a lot of people told him they think they know who last issue's celebrity was, but they didn't submit an entry. We would like to encourage everyone who thinks they know who the celebrity is, to send an entry to Dave Field in Melbourne.

Submitting an entry does several things. Firstly, it gives you a chance to win a prize; you will get your name in the magazine if it is a correct entry; and it provides encouragement to Dave to dig



▲ Wreckair GM Max Williams, Rick Farrar NS Komatsu National Manager I-R Construction Products, Mrs Farrar, Bob Harrison GM I-R (Australia), Tom Hirano MD NS Komatsu and Mrs Williams, at the Construction Contractors' Federation dinner, held to coincide with the Melbourne Grand Prix.

even deeper in his quest for never-before heard secrets about the chosen "celebrity".

Please have a go and join in the spirit of fun - send an entry to Dave Field in Melbourne.

## Ingersoll-Rand Construction & Mining Group Asia-Pacific conference - Focus '97

**T**his conference was held in Queensland's Sunshine Coast at the end of April and was attended by Ingersoll-Rand management from Asia-Pacific headquarters in Hong Kong, together with senior management from each Product Division.

Distributor personnel came from all over the Asia Pacific area including Japan, South Korea, China, Philippines, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, Fiji and of course Australia. There was a total of around 140 delegates from Ingersoll-Rand and distributors plus around 40 accompanying people. Participants from NS Komatsu included Tom Hirano, Charles Foo, Ron Wilson, all Regional General Managers, John Reid, Rick Farrar and Andrew Gale.



▲ I-R Asia Pacific senior management and NS Komatsu personnel celebrating the Asia-Pacific Distributor of the Year award.

The conference is held every two years, designed to develop better communication between I-R Product Divisions and Distributors. It also gives distributors the opportunity to discuss matters of common interest with each other and to swap ideas on how to solve problems and improve distributor performance.

The conference began with presentations by the Vice President in charge of each Product Division on the strategy they were adopting for 1997 and beyond, with particular emphasis on the theme of the conference, FOCUS

'97. They outlined exactly what their focus would be in regard to product development and distribution.

The next two days followed with breakout sessions for each Product Division and individual Distributors. Each distributor discussed in some depth their strategy for the future with the senior management of each Product Division. The meetings gave all NS Komatsu participants the opportunity to outline areas of concern and to agree on specific actions to improve future performance.

The awards dinner on the final evening was particularly beneficial for NS Komatsu. Not only did we win the award for Outstanding Achievement in Rotary Drill sales for 1996 but the company won the very prestigious award of Asia-Pacific Distributor of the year for 1996, in recognition of our outstanding achievement in Construction & Mining Group sales. To add further kudos it was announced that as well as being No.1 distributor in Asia-Pacific we were No.1 distributor in the world in 1996 for CMG sales.

This is an outstanding achievement for NS Komatsu as we have only been national distributors for Ingersoll-Rand Rotary Drills since early 1994, adding crawler drills in late 1995 and road machinery/portable compressors in late 1996. All staff involved in the Ingersoll-Rand business, whether they be sales or product support, are commended for

their efforts in achieving the world's top position in such a short period.

The Focus '97 conference ended on a very high note for NS Komatsu with all participants looking at ways in which we can maintain our No. 1 position in the coming years. Overall, the conference was successful, extremely well organised and indicated to all concerned the importance of the Ingersoll-Rand business to NS Komatsu.

*John Reid*

## Is "Near Enough" good enough?

**W**e live in a quality world. Every day we see advertisements in newspapers, or delivery vehicles on the road etc., that various companies are accredited for Quality Assurance.

But what does it mean? Does this accreditation automatically ensure quality? Of course not! What is necessary, is for every one of us to develop a quality mind, and to aim at doing whatever we do 100% right all the time.

"100% all the time!", I hear you exclaim. "No-one can achieve that. Surely 99% is near enough." WRONG. Read on.

99% sound great, but would give results like this across the world.

- At least 54,000 wrong drug prescriptions each year.
- More than 40,500 babies dropped by nurses or doctors each year.
- No telephone or TV for nearly 27 minutes a week.
- Nearly 1,350 incorrect surgical operations each week.
- 54,000 lost mail articles per hour. Imagine - you could be the one who goes to hospital for gall stones - and come out with a vasectomy!

Well then, how about 99.9% quality? No good! If the control tower at Mascot relied on this acceptance rate, at least 63 of the jets taking off would be involved in some form of collision.

OK, 99.99% quality should be enough? If Australian made tyres met this level of quality, at least 500 lives would be at risk each year due to blowouts.

What is acceptable quality? While we may never reach 100%, that is what we should strive for in our job. Will a customer be happy if you make a mistake, even if it only happens occasionally?

Quality is not only having a certificate on the wall. It is also doing it right all the time, every time. That is what makes happy customers, and they are the real measure of quality.

**Never** accept mediocrity!  
*Barry Potter*

## Melbourne Branch

**M**elbourne Branch, our special feature for this issue of "Down to Earth", has the longest continual history of operation on one site. Going back to the late 60's, Melbourne Branch has been home to the distributor of Komatsu machines, through the time of Wabco, Forcepower, ANI Komatsu and now, NS Komatsu.

Melbourne Branch has a dual function providing sales, parts and service support for our range of equipment in all of Victoria and the Riverina area of NSW, and it is also Southern Region



▲ Peter Killey, General Manager Southern Region.

headquarters, with overall management responsibility for Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. Southern Region has seven branches, the largest number in any of our regions. Melbourne is the logical choice for the regional office, as Victorian sales make up about half the total business for Southern Region, serving a market of around 450 machines per year.

Peter Killey, General Manager, Southern Region, spent some time to explain Melbourne Branch's operation to "Down to Earth". "Unlike all the

other regions, we have very little mining industry", said Peter. "Almost all of our customers run owner/operator businesses, with smaller to medium sized contractor machines, up to PC300 excavators, for example.

"Therefore, our emphasis has to be on providing the very best service. Our customers usually don't have their own mechanics, but we have to compete with other service businesses and provide the best value for money. To provide the local service and quick response our customers demand, in addition to our Victorian branches in Melbourne, Gippsland and Wodonga, we have established parts and service dealerships in Swan Hill and Bairnsdale. We also have resident mechanics in Geelong, Ballarat and Mount Gambier".

Peter went on to explain "While there is a logging industry in East Gippsland and Mt. Gambier, this has been a depressed market in the last few years. Therefore, most of our customers are in construction housing, road building and maintenance, or in quarrying. We sell a wide range of models; for example in the same month, we sold a D375A-3 bulldozer to Blue Circle, and a D21A-7 to L.G.P. Services. This wide variety presents us with unique difficulties; stocking parts and ensuring our people have correct knowledge on a wide range, is a real challenge."

The long term plan is to remain on the



▲ NS Komatsu Melbourne Branch

same site, as the location on Sydney Road Campbellfield is ideal. Peter hopes to build new two storey offices, in front of the existing office block, which will be demolished to allow necessary extensions and renovations to the workshop facilities. "Investment in branch facilities is very worthwhile", Peter told us. "In Adelaide, we purchased the new branch, which has increased its profitability. Customer perception is the most important factor - we need to show that we are growing, and expanding our facilities to support the customers' machines."

Melbourne has a lot of road and city developments planned, which will keep the construction machinery market stable in future. Currently under construction is the Citylink Project, which includes a tunnel under the Royal Botanic Gardens and the Yarra River. After that, a major development called the Docklands Project will get under way. Both of these and other projects present potential machine sales for Melbourne Branch.

In addition to machine and parts sales, Melbourne Branch has a large number of machines on service contract. About 100 machines are maintained and repaired by NS Komatsu, providing a solid base for the Branch's cash flow, and requiring a



▲ Terry Green, Parts Supervisor, "at your service".



▲ Colin Lin, Track Press Operator overhauling a set of track chains.

field service staff of fourteen or fifteen. There are usually between two and five NS Komatsu service people working in Cook's Construction's workshop in Dandenong, an arrangement which works well for both companies.

*"Down to Earth" congratulates the management and staff of Melbourne Branch, for their performance in the operation of the branch, and for the enthusiasm and support in the preparation of this article.*

## Darren Attard

**H**aving been employed by the company for 21 years, I am one of the longest serving people in Melbourne Branch. In that time I have seen many changes and a lot of people have come and gone. The company was originally owned by Wabco, then Forcepower, ANI Komatsu and now NS Komatsu.

I commenced work as a storeman, then moved to the front counter as a parts interpreter, where I shortly became a supervisor. I was next invited to join the Sales Department as Sales Co-ordinator by the General Manager at the time, Ian Olivieri, then I moved to my current position Sales Administrator.

My job includes assisting the sales team in ensuring the necessary paperwork and finance is handled on machine orders so as the representatives can do their job with minimum of fuss. I often deal directly with clients and am responsible for



▲ Darren Attard, Sales Administrator.

arranging various functions throughout the year. I feel we have a strong sales team and together we can accomplish our goals and achieve results.

NS Komatsu has grown and we have taken on many new products. This makes it important that we improve our standardisation and maintain our direction. For example, if all the Sales Administrators had an annual meeting, we would be able to review and develop standard controls and procedures, rather than duplicating efforts in each Region.

Melbourne is the regional office in charge of the whole Southern Region, which includes Tasmania and South Australia as well as Victoria. We assist our other branches with machine pricing, stock control and availability.

I am also President of our Social Club, and along with my faithful sidekick, Edwina Fortuin, several functions are arranged throughout the year, such as day trips, dinners, trivia nights and even go-karting and rock-climbing - to name a few. We always end the year with a big Christmas bash, which is enjoyed by all.

Outside of work my hobbies include dining out with friends and going to the movies. I am also a member of the Porsche Club and enjoy attending monthly events such as sprints and hill climbs. I have a white Porsche 911 and every year enter it in the "Dutton" Grand Prix Rally which is a lot of fun. Next year I am hoping to enter the "Indy Rally" for a new challenge. In the evenings I am happier to tinker with my car than watch television (and avoid doing the dishes...)

I live in Pascoe Vale South with my longtime girlfriend Janene, and our King Charles dog, Porscha (and, no, she was named after my car I am not that obsessed). We are hoping to one day move out of the city on a few acres where it is nice and quiet.

## Sharyne Andrews

**M**y job is Accounts Payable, which I have held for three years. I have been employed by the company for almost ten years now, having started as a part-time Receptionist, and then on to Data Entry, before my current job.

I look after all creditor invoices, reconcile accounts, arrange all cheques and process all expense forms, for the whole Southern Region, which includes seven branches.

This is a very busy job, as each month I receive between 1,300 to 1,500 invoices, and prepare 800 to 900 cheques. There is a lot of filing work as well, as we have to keep proper track of all these documents.

The busiest time of my month is at the end, as all freight companies have to be paid by the last working day. The next busiest period is the first week of the month, when we have to have all the creditor invoice and payment details entered in the mainframe computer. I also find time to relieve on the switchboard, when our receptionist is away from the desk, and I am the Fire Warden for our front office.

However, my most important duty of all, is to get John Halantas his lunch every day. Especially on Tuesday, which is Red Rooster day!

I enjoy my job, because the day goes by very quickly and it's gone before I realise. I have learnt a lot about dealing with people, to do with payment of cheques. This has really helped me to develop in confidence. I was away from the workforce for



▲ Sharyne Andrews, Accounts Payable Clerk.

twelve years while raising my family, and felt I had got out of touch in that period.

A lot of our suppliers come in here and I have got to know them well, I have been to one's country property as a guest.

I enjoy the work I do, but as I was originally trained as a typist, I would like an opportunity to do more real typing. I get great satisfaction from getting things done and meeting deadlines.

When I first joined the company, women were barely noticed. Nowadays, due to our Affirmative Action policy, we are recognised for our efforts. We now have more opportunity to climb up on our machines and learn about them, which helps in our jobs. Affirmative Action provides benefits for both sides, and we become better employees and ambassadors for the company. I believe NS Komatsu is much better known in the general community, as a result. We could expand our image even more, by promoting our name, selling our own brand name sports clothing etc, as a commercial business.

I designed my own home, and built it, together with my brother in law, who is a builder. It is at Diamond Creek, about half an hour's drive from work. I have three children, Brent (24) who is a gardener, Briony who recently graduated as a Bachelor of Legal Studies and Chelsea, who used to work part-time for NS Komatsu and now works as Accounts Officer in the Institute of Animal Science. Briony and Chelsea are twins, aged 21.

My life is very full. I am a life member of Diamond Valley Twins Club, and was on the National, State and local committees. This is a self-help group and we lobbied together with handicapped groups, to get the aisles in supermarkets widened. I am membership Secretary of Parents Without Partners and we have a house party at someone's house every Saturday, and two dances every month. I play netball and indoor cricket, and have just started line dancing. With all my activities, there is only one night a week I don't go out. I am absolutely happy, doing so many things. When I can, I love science fiction shows such as "X-Files" on TV, and "Startrek Revisited" at the movies.



▲ Brian Morham, Field Service Fitter.

## Brian Morham

I started with the company just on 10½ years ago as an Apprentice Motor Mechanic. My first year of field service was on the lube truck doing major 1,000 and 2,000 hour services and minor repairs of up to one day's duration. This took me all over Melbourne and Victorian country areas, with about 100 machines on maintenance contract."

Then I went on to Field Service, the first year driving a four wheel drive, then a Falcon panel van. The panel van is much more suitable for metropolitan jobs, as it is faster and more manoeuvrable. Bigger wheels would be good for better traction in muddy conditions.

I also worked for fourteen or fifteen months in Cook's Construction's workshop in Dandenong, working on all kinds of equipment. NS Komatsu usually has at least two people working for Cooks, and up to five in busy periods.

For six months I worked as Leading Hand in the Melbourne Branch workshop, but decided to go back to Field Service, as I enjoy it more. On Field Service, we have to use our initiative to get the job done, in all sorts of conditions. This could be fitting a set of tracks in the rain, or lifting out a pump under a tree.

Field Service people have interesting experiences, on the job. Once, a dredger broke a track chain and I worked all through the night to repair it. Then I had to collect the cheque from the customer, as it was a COD job. Another time, no accommodation was available, so I slept on the floor at

the customer's house. His wife kindly cooked dinner and breakfast and the next morning, the customer asked me to do another repair job, on a Hitachi machine. There was one time when all I had to do was collect some parts at the airport, then deliver them to Wagga. So the work of Field Service is many and varied, and always interesting.

NS Komatsu's product range has grown a lot since taking on Dresser, Haulpak, Ingersoll-Rand and Demag, and as we have grown, we now need to expand to continue to properly support our range of equipment. We also need more training on all these new machines.

My wife Karen and I have been married for three and a half years. We have twin boys aged fourteen months, and another baby is due any day. The twins are quite different in appearance and nature. Rhys has blond hair, a fair complexion and hazel eyes. He is the bigger of the two, and tends to be a bit of a bully. Aaron has brown hair, olive skin and brown eyes. He has a gentle nature, and loves a cuddle. Karen was a twin and there are also twins on my side of the family.

I used to play a lot of sport; football, cricket, basketball, swimming, fun-runs, bicycle and motor bike riding. Work commitments have taken over now, and I don't get time for sport, but I enjoy watching sport on TV and reading about it in the paper each night. I also enjoy watching documentaries on TV.

I was raised in a family environment, as my father has a pig farm. Now I enjoy working on my father's farm as often as possible. Last year I had too many holidays due to me and had to take seven week's leave. During this time I rebuilt my father's tractor, put up a new picket fence and generally helped around the place with repairs to the sheds.

My long term goal is to have a farm of my own probably diverse. Many people may not know that pigs are really very clean animals. A one-man farm could manage up to approximately 1,000 to 1,500 pigs.

Seen on a notice board in Melbourne Branch:

*"Never lose sight of the bigger picture."*

*"Never lose sight of what you set out to achieve."*



▲ Melbourne by night.

## Melbourne

**M**elbourne, the home of our Melbourne Branch featured in this issue, is the second largest city in Australia and the capital of Victoria. It has a population of 3.2 million, a multicultural city of over 170 different ethnic groups.

While Melbourne is not our oldest city, it does have a very rich and colourful history. The area was inhabited by four aboriginal nations for 1,600 generations, or around 40,000 years. European settlers arrived only six generations ago.

British ships first visited Port Phillip in 1802, when local exploration found the Yarra River was a source of fresh drinking water. In 1835, John Batman, representing a syndicate of pastoralists from Tasmania, arrived, looking to found a sheep station, which began on the western shores of Port Phillip. History records John Batman as being the founder of Melbourne, although he did not do this. Later in 1835, another group of Tasmanians arrived, under the captaincy of John Lancey. A turf hut was built in August 1835 beside the Yarra River, pinpointing the beginnings of what is now Melbourne. From this time, pastoralists continued to arrive, taking over the aboriginal hunting grounds and soon there were more sheep than people.

The entire eastern coast of Australia was then under the authority of the government of NSW. It was illegal for anyone to settle beyond a certain radius from Sydney, so technically, the Port Phillip settlers of 1835 were law breakers, and were denounced by the Sydney government. Finally, Governor Bourke authorised the Port Phillip settlement on 14 September 1936, which is the official establishment date of the settlement. It remained under the Sydney government for the next 15 years. Sydney police magistrate,

William Lonsdale, was sent with constables to Melbourne, to maintain law and order.

In 1837, surveyors laid out the township of Melbourne and the first land auctions were held. In 1838 land speculators started a boom, and the population mushroomed.

Banks opened, and in 1840, Melbourne had three newspapers.

In 1842 Melbourne Town Council was established and in 1848 Melbourne was upgraded from a town to a city. In 1851 it became the capital of the new colony of Victoria, the same year that gold was discovered and the Victorian gold rush began. By 1854 the population had trebled in three years, to more than 76,000 people.

By 1861, Melbourne was the financial and commercial centre of Australia, and was the largest metropolis for the next 40 years. After Federation in 1901, Melbourne was Australia's capital, and the Commonwealth Parliament met in Melbourne until 1927, when it moved to Canberra.

Melbourne of today is an exciting and vibrant city. Having been planned by surveyors, it has been able to grow, while retaining much of its rich heritage, such as wide avenues, solid stone buildings, the head offices of many financial and commercial enterprises, and many beautiful parks and gardens.

For many years Melbourne has also been known as the "Paris of the South", and it is one of the world's sophisticated cities. Australia's arts, entertainment, shopping and dining capital, it has been voted one of three of the world's most livable cities.

Melbourne has retained the tram, a public transport system of yesteryear, but which is regarded as an icon of Melbourne. Modern versions of the tram are fast, quiet,

comfortable and efficient. Residents of Melbourne believe they have the envy of other Australian cities, with this distinctive transport.

## "Ted's Trouble Shooters" milestone

**T**ed's Troubleshooters", the Melbourne Branch Problem Solving Team, passed a milestone in NS Komatsu's history. It is the first team to go through the formal process of selecting a problem, analysing it to find the true cause and to propose a solution to management, to overcome the problem.

"Teds", as it is affectionately called in Melbourne, started as a trial in December 1996. The team is a group of volunteers from Melbourne Branch workshop and they have been meeting on a weekly basis (with a break over Christmas), to solve the problem they selected.

The basis of Problem Solving Teams is that people in a given work area are the experts. They are the ones who experience a problem and they are the best ones to find a solution.

Ted's decided that reducing costs, improving customer satisfaction, improving safety, involving all members, reducing property and equipment damage, and continually re-occurring, were important and so chose a problem which will achieve all these benefits, when it is solved.

Ted's decided to work on the branch's oil storage and handling procedures and facilities, because the members realised that there is time lost and therefore efficiencies to be gained, by improving these.



▲ "Ted's Trouble Shooters" L-R members (seated) Rob Gardner, Shane Riley, Rick Alexander, Jason Panlook, Warwick Thompson, and (standing L-R) Team Leader John Silvester, Service Manager Bruce Auld, GM Southern Region Peter Killey, Accountant Southern Region John Halantas.

Studying the problem, gathering data and analysing it, they found that there were in fact five major causes which when solved would have a significant improvement effect. The team found these items for improvement:

- Stocking quantity and storage of 205 litre drums.
- Colour coding identification of equipment for each oil type.
- Regular inspection & maintenance programme for oil pumps & equipment.
- Purchase additional drum pumps.
- Improved facility for transferring waste oil to the underground waste oil tank.

While there would be some costs involved in implementing the solutions, the team were able to show management that the savings to be gained in reduction in lost time would pay for the costs in about four weeks. From then on, the benefits would continue to flow - to the company and to the customer.

Along the way in the project, the team found a few "quick fix" items, relating to pressure gauges. These were easily corrected, adding to the positive result and making the workshop a more pleasant and safer place to work for the team members and their workmates.

Ted's presented their proposal to Melbourne Branch management, who gave approval to implement the solutions. Team leader John Silvester said that the concept is very worthwhile, because all the team members have "ownership" of the problem and the solution, and will take pride in seeing their proposals implemented.

Peter Killey, Southern Region General Manager, congratulated the team and said that a future team may be formed, combining Service and Sales personnel, who could work on improvements in preparing machines for delivery to customers.

NS Komatsu is keen for the Problem Solving Team concept to grow and expand to other branches. If you are interested, or would like more information, please contact Barry Potter at Head Office.

"Down to Earth" congratulates all "Ted's Troubleshooters" members for their enthusiasm and achievement.

*Barry Potter*

## Trainee Engineer Programme

**I**ntroduced in our last issue of "Down to Earth", our two trainee engineers, Amber Rickard and Brennan Garbutt, have completed their first assignments and have just been transferred to their new position for the next six months.

"Down to Earth" spent some time with Amber and Brennan, to reflect on their experiences in the first six months and to review the benefits to trainee and company from the Trainee Engineer Programme.

### Amber Rickard

**I** started with NS Komatsu last September, working in Training and Materials Department. As the idea is to fully understand the workings of each department, initially I worked by assisting with reproducing the training and sales materials and distributing them to our branches. Next, I helped with reorganising our central materials library, which has grown a lot since taking on our new products such as Ingersoll-Rand, and Demag.

I then updated the Audio Visual Material Catalogue, created a mini-excavator sales presentation kit and a basic NS Komatsu company product knowledge training programme on computer disk using Power Point. This helped me with my own product knowledge, and will be very useful for all new employees, to learn about NS Komatsu and its products.

The most recent project for me was to write a complete computer programme, based on Access, for control and distribution of all our materials. Every video and printed material will be listed and as it is a very user friendly programme, will

make it much easier to control and distribute our materials, as well as providing accurate records of who received what materials, and allowing us to update our Audio Visual Catalogue.

When I started with NS Komatsu, I had completed 1½ years of the Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering Degree, with the University of Technology of Sydney. Now, the course has changed to a Bachelor of Engineering, where students can specialise in the fields that interest them most, and a more diverse range of subjects are offered. I am studying part time at uni, and when I will finish depends on how many units I can manage on a part time basis. At present I expect to graduate by the end of year 2000.

At uni I am still doing core subjects and am just getting into more detailed work. My time with Training and Materials Department has assisted in the development of my computing skills. Initially, I had never used a database programme like Access and now I have learned to write a complete programme.

Since Year 10 at school, I have worked part time, so I had no problem starting a job and continuing my education at the same time. I have one day off work to attend uni and also attend night classes as well. There is an advantage over full time university study, as I am continuously working in a real - world industrial environment. This is much better than "work experience", which full time students have to do. NS Komatsu is a good place to work. Right from the start I felt welcome, everyone had a genuine interest in



▲ Amber Rickard, reorganising the central materials library.

me and what I do. I have always been able to talk to people about uni work and have readily received help with my assignments.



Before coming here, I didn't know who NS Komatsu was, or very much about our industry. I have now learnt a lot about our machines, which I find very interesting. I had an opportunity to go to the Hunter Valley, and saw how our machines are used. Visiting jobsites is a very valuable experience, to see and understand what our machines can do, and what are the conditions of operation.

By coincidence, my grandfather used to work at the same address as NS Komatsu, when the property was previously owned by ANI Engineering. He remembers that the construction and mining machinery industry was male dominated, and was surprised that I could get or even wanted an engineering position. I would never like to get a job simply because I am a female it should always be because I am best at the job. Since I joined NS Komatsu, I have never found anything negative due to my being female. Everyone is accepted on equal terms for the job they do. Last October, I was very pleased to be able to join the self defence classes arranged by the company. This showed me that NS Komatsu is concerned about employees' welfare, even outside our working hours.

## Brennan Garbutt

I joined NS Komatsu at the beginning of December last year, after completing my first year in my Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering degree, which was full time at Sydney University. However, I decided that doing a traineeship and part time uni is better, and obtained the trainee position with NS Komatsu. There was no part time study available at Sydney University, so I transferred to



▲ Brennan Garbutt, updating the Service Policy and Procedures Manual.

Wollongong University, where I now go every Monday evening and all day on Wednesdays. I expect to complete my degree by the end of year 2001, by which time I will have used a lot of petrol!

My first assignment was in the Head Office Service Department, assisting Robert Wilson and Jeff Warton with development of our maintenance contract and machine maintenance costs per hour calculations, and Patrick Wong with problem solving work and computer data processing methods for our warranty procedures.

I have also updated our Service Policy and Procedures Manual, and have prepared summary descriptions of the eight or nine different types of service vehicles NS Komatsu runs. This will help the Regional Service Managers in their selection of the most appropriate service vehicles for their requirements.

Since working in the Service Department, I have become quite proficient at Microsoft Excel and other software, and I was able to write computer codes to automate updating and data entry of Excel applications. I have also gained a good understanding of the various warranty terms and conditions of all our franchises.

Working and attending part time uni seems to work well, although my days are very full. I haven't had any problems fitting in at NS Komatsu. Because I have always worked part time since I was about 14 or 15, including a regular part time job at a butcher shop, the discipline of working was not new. However, it has been a new experience for me to wear a collar and tie!

I think NS Komatsu has some way to go with its general community awareness, as not a lot of people outside our industry know who we are. I come from a mining family, so they of course knew about Komatsu.

I always wanted to be a Mechanical Engineer and I feel that NS Komatsu is a company offering excellent opportunities for someone doing a traineeship. It is important to get hands – on experience with actual machine applications and I am looking forward to these opportunities.

## Parts interpreting today

In the early days of NS Komatsu our prime product was Komatsu, with a broad range of quality earthmoving machines which were and still are well supported by a variety of publications, encompassing sales, service and spare parts. We then added the Haulpak, Dresser and Galion product range to our business and although the Dresser and Galion products were similar to



▲ Tony Holloway, Senior Coordinator, KAI products, working on a Haulpak parts enquiry.

the Komatsu product, the Haulpak trucks were individually tailored with their own specific parts books and shop manuals. No general books applied. The Haulpak truck range is also further enhanced, due to the variety of major components which can be tailored to meet customer needs. For example, engines can vary, as well as the alternator and wheel motor specs etc.

Such a variety of tailoring of the components places greater emphasis on the required skills of parts interpreters, especially in tracking serial numbers and, more importantly, in ensuring that customers advise any changes in specs, if components are rebuilt or replaced at a later date.

The arrival of the Ingersoll-Rand equipment to our business gave parts interpreters the greatest

challenges. I-R equipment came with a great reputation for reliability and performance but with a challenge to the NS Komatsu branches to lift product support in terms of parts availability and service.

The parts challenge was immense, as the I-R product was a global supply situation with manufacturing taking place in several locations in the USA as well as Japan (Rock Drills), Germany (Compaction Equipment) France and England.

Add to this the fact that some products are ordered through a Switzerland Central Office, yet shipped direct from the production site. So it is easy to see that our parts people had much work to do to achieve NS Komatsu's desired availability targets. Setting up a system to order parts and forward direct to NS Komatsu Branches was the initial challenge, but assisting all branches to "interpret" customer requirements and establish stocks to support customers was the greatest task.

It was obvious that NS Komatsu Branches would need to appoint a Parts Interpreter to specialise in the I-R product, as was the case with the Haulpak Truck. However, in the case of Haulpak, we only have one source of supply to contend with, whereas the I-R product range has many.

Some I-R sites allow orders to be communicated on line via modem dial up and the balance accept orders transmitted by facsimile.

The on line (modem dial up) connection to those I-R supply sources required special software and training so branch parts personnel could utilise the facility. This was a radical change from a permanent on line (via satellite) hook up, which is the Komatsu system. Parts Interpreting has certainly moved into the state-of-the-art technological age and is not simply a matter of interpreting customers' requirements by means of searching through the pages of a parts publication.

*Graeme Reid*

*"Use what talent you possess:  
the woods would be very  
silent if no birds sang except  
those that sang best"*

*Henry Van Dyke*

## Celebrity guessing game - Who am I ?

**D**ave Field, Southern Region's Training Manager has continued true to form and has selected another unsuspecting subject for this competition. Can you guess who this is? If you think you know, send your written entry to Dave at Melbourne Branch, for your chance to win a novelty prize.

- I completed an apprenticeship as a motor mechanic.
- I am fifty years old in October 1997.
- I think that I am a "Pretty Average Golfer".
- I am a bit of a "sweet tooth" when the lolly jar is in sight.
- I worked for a reputable earthmoving company that Komatsu now owns and we sell their products.
- My favourite Aussie Rules Footy Team is Footscray (now the "Western Bulldogs") & I do very well in the annual tipping competitions.
- My home town is Casterton in Victoria.
- I am on the committees of the Institute of Quarrying and the AAED.
- I have a home in the same suburb as Sammy Newman ("Bri-i-ighton") & have a holiday house in McCrae. However, I tend to live out of a suitcase.
- Since joining Komatsu I have worked in Product Support, Training, Corporate Sales and am now "The Gooroo" in my region.

## Results from Issue 9 "Who Am I?"

**L**ast issue's celebrity was none other than Ike Murata, Product Support Manager Komatsu, in Head Office Service Department.

Only two correct entries were received, and we decided to award a prize to each:

Richard Locke - Hobart  
Jeff Warton - H/Office  
Congratulations Richard and Jeff.

- Editor



▲ Ike Murata, Product Support Manager, Komatsu, our Celebrity from last issue.

## Head Office Training re- organisation

**E**ffective 1 April this year, Managing Director Tom Hirano announced a change in our overall training organisation.

In recent years, NS Komatsu has taken on new product lines including Haulpak, Ingersoll-Rand, FKI, Moxy and Demag, with the result that the total number of models we are selling has increased greatly. At the same time, the number of employees has also increased dramatically, as the company has grown.

Mr Hirano recognised this and the Head Office training personnel have moved out of Service and now operate under the Administration Department. This allows training to be planned more objectively, recognising the needs of all departments, with a sharper focus on supporting sales training through the creation and distribution of improved materials.

Training which is conducted by the Regional trainers will continue in the same manner as at present. With stronger support from Head Office with material preparation, we expect the volume and effectiveness of training to increase.

- Barry Potter

## A Tradition of Excellence

It was in February 1942 when a fresh faced young kid was ushered by his mother into Al Losch's office for a job interview.

He wanted to be an electrical engineer and his family were keen for him to get a position at the LeTourneau factory.

He received a letter a couple of weeks later advising him the only position available for an apprentice was in fitting and machining. It was not the trade he wanted but he decided to accept the job.

The kid's name was Allan Pitt and on March 24, 1942 he became the first apprentice and the fifty third person to be employed by LeTourneau Australia.

Like the fifty two who entered that factory before him and the many hundreds who followed through those front doors over the next forty years, he was immediately impressed by what he saw.

That day in February was not the first visit to the LeTourneau factory by young Allan. His first job after leaving school was as a counter jumper at Murray Brothers, a general store in Parramatta. Part of his job was to make deliveries of orders to customers. One day an urgent order came in for a four gallon drum of kerosene to be delivered to a factory in South Street Rydalmere. Allan was given the drum

and told to get it to Rydalmere as quickly as possible. It was about four miles from Parramatta to Rydalmere and the only means of transport was by the local bus, so off he went with the drum of kerosene in search of a factory he had never heard of in a suburb he didn't know.

The bus let him off about half a mile from the factory and all he could see was scrub and a dirt road which appeared to go further into the bush. He finally found the factory and although worn out from lugging that heavy drum was pleased with his effort.

That was not the last time Allan was to walk along South Street. His first job every morning was to take the billy can from the ice chest and walk about half a mile to the dairy farm to collect the milk so the employees would have fresh milk for their tea and coffee.

The factory in 1942 was similar to all other LeTourneau factories, it consisted of a large concrete slab, four walls and no roof. All the machines were in place and working to capacity. The machines in the factory consisted of lathes, welding machines, profile cutter, hydraulic press and a Tournamatic lathe, which was another R.G. LeTourneau development. Like all other R.G. LeTourneau designed machinery, the Tournamatic lathe was developed because of frustration with lathes available from other manufacturers. Although called a lathe, it was much more than that. It was a borer, grinder, knurling machine and milling machine all in one. The bed was



▲ Al Losch in his Rydalmere office. Circa mid 1950's.

a large surface-ground solid steel plate with several tapped holes, which would allow any number of tool slides to be mounted in any position, allowing multiple machining operations to be performed at the same time.

Late in 1942 a second apprentice was employed. His name was Jack Taylor and along with Allan Pitt they spent their days machining parts on the lathes.

In those days they attended tech in their own time at night. The college decided it would be better to have them attend half a day each week. Both Allan and Jack were not sure how Al Losch would react when told they would be away from work for half a day each week.

Allan, who was the senior apprentice, approached Al Losch to tell him of the change. He finally plucked up enough courage and was surprised when Al replied, "that is OK, as long as you continue to learn something".

Al Losch was a firm but approachable man who took control of the Rydalmere plant from day one and had the respect of all who worked there. He would spend part of every day in the factory, knew every employee and would often stop and talk to them as they were working. He would not allow the factory to be untidy and everything had to be in its place. The story goes that at one time he was injured and could not walk so he drove his car through the factory to check on production. The factory manager had to make sure the walkways were clear and tidy because if there was a scratch on



▲ The Rydalmere factory of R.G. LeTourneau, in December 1961.

the car from something being in the wrong place he was in trouble.

Today we receive emergency orders for large mining trucks that have broken a gear or shaft at the bottom of a pit and cannot be moved until the part is replaced. We do whatever we can to get the part to the customer with the minimum delay. That appears to be the way things have been from the very beginning.

One day in December 1942 the Rydalmere factory received a call from the Army, for a pinion to replace a broken one in a machine being used by the troops somewhere in the Pacific. There was a plane sitting at Mascot waiting to take the pinion to the stricken machine. Unfortunately there were none in stock. Al Losch issued instructions to do whatever was necessary to get the pinion out that day. It was completed about midnight and on its way.

Production at the Rydalmere plant continued to increase and extensions to the factory were necessary to meet the demand. At the same time it was decided to expand the office building. This was necessary because of the extra employees in accounts, production and engineering. The original office, about 30 feet long, was increased to 60 feet. When the extensions were complete it was decided to hold a party for all the employees. A piano was bought in and everyone had a great time.

Things were moving along in the factory. Les Hemsworth had been appointed Plant Superintendent, Dave Brambrick was in charge of gear cutting, Kelly Brogan was in charge of manufacturing and Allan Pitt was chasing Connie Apps down South Street each afternoon as she herded the cows to the dairy.

- Tony Holloway



▲ Maureen Clarke at work in her office.

## No glass ceilings at NS Komatsu

**I**n Australia in the 1990's there is a breaking down of stereotype male or female roles. Not too long ago, the only tellers in the bank were men, kindergarten teachers and nurses were women and trucks and tractors were strictly 'for the boys'.

Maureen Clarke of Fairfield Branch needs little introduction. She has a long history of involvement our industry and is well known to contractors as a source of knowledge and assistance with their machinery requirements. Maureen was Sales Administration Manager since 1992 and was promoted to Sales Support Manager in 1996.

"My role is to set up the machine price listing and to oversee the preparation of tenders and quotes, to ensure that all the client's requirements are met", Maureen said. "When we win a tender or successfully negotiate a sale, it is my responsibility to process the final order through the workshop. I make sure that NS Komatsu meets all the customer's and our own quality requirements and that the machine is being fitted up to schedule, ready for delivery in the agreed time frame.

"Usually I don't get to actually meet clients until after the sales reps have closed the deal and the machine is sold. More often than not, contact is by phone and fax. In most cases, the customer knows what specifications he wants and the options available.

Before coming to work for NS Komatsu, Maureen worked for an international machinery company that

was launching new products into Australia's earthmoving and forestry industries, becoming their National Administration Manager.

"After seventeen years of working for that company, I made the decision to retire. However, after only one year of being at home, I was

looking for a new challenge. When the position was advertised with NS Komatsu, it took me only a very short time to decide that perhaps retirement was not for me.

"At NS Komatsu I have had a lot of help and been given opportunities to drive machines and learn as much as possible about our products. Generally speaking, it was a steep learning curve, getting to know about different machines, such as excavators, dozers and so forth. Although my background in administration, matched with machinery knowledge makes it easier to attend to customer relations, attention to detail and delivery timing is essential", Maureen said.

On being accepted into a male dominated scenario, Maureen said that she has had little difficulty. Maureen feels quite strongly that there is place for women in jobs similar to hers throughout the machinery supply industry. She belongs to an organisation of "Women in Construction" and through that group she discovered that she is not alone in her role. Furthermore, many contractors have their wives as partners in the business and more often than not they are involved in the final decisions.

"I have been to visit a number of customers' operations in NSW. I find the industry is fascinating and the people in it are often very innovative and real achievers who have to make a living against the elements and competitors."

Working with Australian and Japanese men has not presented any problems to Maureen. She said that just occasionally when she appears with a group of men a stranger will speak to her thinking she is the secretary but mostly she has no problems.

From asking around the industry, we have had comments like "Maureen knows what she is about" "She is a very big player up there - you can't put anything over Maureen". "I tell you what, Maureen will understand what you're looking for". "Everyone knows Maureen".

With her efficient style and warm manner, NS Komatsu is confident that our customers are in good hands, with Maureen in charge of Fairfield's sales support.

## Region News

As mentioned in last issue, we have decided only to print "special" birthdays, such as 21, 30, 40, 50, etc. Please be sure to mention any special birthdays to your Regional Contact, so they can be printed in "Down To Earth".

- Editor

### HEAD OFFICE AND FAIRFIELD BRANCH

## Head Office/ Fairfield

### PERSONNEL NEWS

#### Farewell to:

At the end of April, Albert Tein retired from the Head Office role of Shipping Manager Parts Department.

Albert served 14½ years as the Parts Dept. Shipping Manager, commencing with the old Komatsu Australia operation at Botany and moving with NSK to the current Fairfield site.

Under Albert's direction, many changes were implemented within the Parts Operation, including the centralisation of customs clearance, reconciliation of forwarders and the reduction of container handling times through the Port of Sydney.

Albert was renowned for his meticulous document control (although at times his desk was invisible under mountains of documents) and he was likewise somewhat famous for his freight rate negotiating skills.

Albert leaves NSK in good shape and although the Fairfield dining facility may suffer a drop in sales, we will no doubt meet with Albert for conversations at his favourite eating place "The Mandarin Club".

In April we said goodbye to Terry English (Field Service Supervisor) who retired after a total of 25 years experience in the earthmoving industry. Terry will be greatly missed and we hope he enjoys his well-earned retirement.

Wayne Williamson accepted an internal promotion to the role of Field

Service Supervisor from that of Field Serviceman. We wish Wayne well in his new position.

#### Congratulations to:

Margaret Fittler in her new role as Personal Assistant to the General Manager/Central Region.

Craig & Donna Harper on the birth of their son in March.

Steve and Rebecca Wolanyk on the birth of their daughter in March.

Heather Coombes Service Dept. Secretary has now been here 10 years - she definitely joins the ranks of the "totally insane."

#### Welcome Back:

As most in Fairfield would have noticed by now, Tomi Hovatta had a serious eye problem and an operation four weeks ago, to repair a detached retina in his eye. This is a major eye operation and it is good to hear that he is expected to make a full recovery, although it will take some time. Tomi is back at work now, but only on a part-time basis until his eye is completely healed.

GREAT TO HAVE YOU BACK TOMI,  
WE ALL MISSED YOU.....

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank all NSK personnel for their kind wishes, phone calls, cards and gifts. These were all very uplifting and appreciated. Thanks heaps.*

Tomi.

#### Welcome to:

Ondra Challenger, Credit Assistant who commenced recently. Also goodbye to Peter Waddell, our long standing temporary in Accounts.

#### Special Birthdays:

Andrew Gale, Product Support Mgr. I-R celebrated the big "40", on 17 May.

Renee Portelli celebrated her 21st birthday with a fancy dress party to mark the occasion.

Charles Foo turned 50 on 8th March and celebrated with a luncheon



▲ Charles Foo, celebrating his 50th birthday.

attended by Head Office and some NSW Branch personnel.

Happy birthday to Margaret Fittler who will celebrate her birthday on 4th June.

### SOCIAL CLUB NEWS

Our raffle for the State of Origin jersey signed by Andrew Ettingshausen was won by Mike Davis of Alto Ford.

When presented with the jersey by Ian MacCowan, Mike donated it back to the Social Club.

The night at "Dirty Dicks" was rather boisterous with a large number of "Hen's Parties" on the night, but everyone enjoyed themselves.



▲ Mike Davis of Alto Ford (L), re-donating the ET jersey to Fairfield Social Club, with Ian MacCowan, GM Central Region.

You all have a note advising coming events and we look forward to you joining us. Please join in the fun.



**HUNTER VALLEY****ALL CENTRAL REGION  
BRANCHES NOW QUALITY  
ASSURED**

This was achieved when Mt. Thorley and Muswellbrook branches successfully passed their certification compliance audit, carried out by Bureau Veritas Quality International (BVQI), on the 9th and 10th April.

Congratulations to all personnel at both places. It was a just reward for the hard work that went into achieving it. All can be especially proud, as only 4 minor (and they were minor) non conformance in total for both branches were identified during the two days of auditing. This is very low for a certification audit.

Most people were very nervous prior to the audit, but all rose to the occasion. We are even reliably informed that Service Manager Pat Clavin's hair is starting to grow back!

**EMPLOYEE NEWS****Congratulations to:**

Geoff & Kelly Pittman on the birth of their son.

Richard & Carmel Gibson and John & Mandy Thompson on the birth of their daughters.

All were April babies.

**Special Birthdays:**

Mike Murphy turns 50 on 20 August.

**NORTH QUEENSLAND****Mackay Branch****PERSONNEL NEWS****Congratulations to:**

John Wishart whose wife has had a baby boy - Sam.

We have a new Haulpak Technical Services Representative, James Arena replacing John Laidsaar.

**Special Announcement:**

Pauline Hyde, North Queensland Regional Accountant, went on maternity leave as of the 30th May 1997. We wish her well!!

Annalie Thompson is replacing her while she is away.

**BUSINESS NEWS**

The last 830E truck for Ernest Henry Mining is now commissioned and in operation.

**SOCIAL CLUB NEWS****First Function for 1997:**

Mackay Branch's first Social Club Function for 1997 was held on Sunday 20th April 1997. We decided to have a Ski Day at Kinchant Dam 25km west of Mackay. A BBQ and drinks were supplied by the Social Club as well as hire of some water sporting equipment. The day was a great success, with everyone involved having a top day.



▲ (L-R) Bob Townsend Workshop Leading Hand and Peter Franklin (Leanne Sutton's fiance), enjoying the thrill of the ride (before the crash!).



▲ Dave Sykes Field Service Fitter, and Michael Toms (Workshop Fitter) do the honorary job of Chef.

**Townsville****PERSONNEL NEWS**

NS Komatsu has seen some changes within the office, with Tim Callaghan, our Field Service Supervisor becoming our Product Support Representative. Rick Skennar who was our Workshop Leading Hand is now our Field Service

Supervisor. Anthony Sands who was one of our Field Fitters is now our Workshop Leading Hand.

Pauline Langan has joined our happy little family as our one and only Parts Clerk.

Speaking of Parts Dept, our own baldy one (Kevin Munro) has reached the milestone of 15 years with NS Komatsu.

We would also like to welcome Don Shaw to our branch.

**SOCIAL CLUB NEWS:**

Socially, we have been pretty quiet with the odd occasional BBQ. Although our Social Club Volleyball Team which plays on Tuesday nights is in the running for the playoffs, we mainly win because of forfeits and byes!!! We had a Mothers' Day/ housewarming BBQ on Sunday 11 May at Don and Carol Shaw's new place.

**SOUTHERN  
REGION****Campbellfield**

Melbourne was "all geared up" for the 1997 Australian Grand Prix held at Albert Park on 6 March through to the big day on Sunday 9 March. NS Komatsu and Ingersoll-Rand co-hosted a corporate marquee at the site. Peter Killely did a magnificent job of giving our major customers the opportunity to visit the paddock/pit area of the William's team - it is rumoured he may be taken on by the William's team as a professional tour guide!

The first few months of the year have seen many "big occasion" birthdays celebrated here in Southern Region:

**Special Birthdays:**

5 Feb S. Yyantis 30 yrs  
A few weeks after Sema's 30th birthday she announced she is expecting her second child!!!

22 Feb S. Ippolito 40 yrs  
03 Apr D. Norman 50 yrs  
12 Apr B. Jones 50 yrs  
05 May D. Beall 50 yrs

**Staff Changes:**

Judy Comb has joined NS Komatsu Campbellfield branch as the "Afternoon Receptionist". Judy has taken over from Chelsea Andrews who started working with us on a casual basis after completing her HSC, then over 18 months ago took on the role of "Afternoon Receptionist". We wish Chelsea well in her new career and extend a warm welcome to Judy.

Craig Hahnel has been appointed Sales Representative for Gippsland area. Craig's territory covers a wide area, taking in our Gippsland branch, Lakes Entrance, Orbost, all of which are logging/forestry areas, right up to the Victorian/New South Wales border. Hence, Craig has been given the eminent title of "Log Boy".

**SOCIAL CLUB NEWS:**

After a suggestion by one of our social club members, it was decided to have a "get-together after work at La Porchetta Pizza Restaurant" Thursday 24 April 1997. Approximately twenty social club members enjoyed the night.

**Rally Drivers**

NS Komatsu Campbellfield has two staff members who participate in car rallies in their spare time.

On the weekend of 26 and 27 April, Doug Norman our representative for Western/Metro area took part in the "WIN TV Rally in the Valley" which is a round of the Australian and Victorian Rally Championship. This rally commenced at the Latrobe Valley Airport Traralgon and included surrounding forest areas, over approximately 300 km special stages.

Doug's Peugeot 404 has been developed as a purpose built rally car over the last few years and during this rally carried a NS Komatsu logo. This



▲ Doug Norman in his Peugeot 404, competing in the "WIN TV Rally in the Valley".

event is heavily supported by the locals, many of them NS Komatsu customers. Doug (and his car) finished 26th outright in a field of 49 and won his class in 47 seconds.

In the lead up to the 1997 Grand Prix, Darren Attard, our Sales Administrator for the Southern Region, entered his most prized possession, his Porsche 911 into the Dutton Grand Prix Rally.

The rally was conducted on a 'Monte Carlo' format with three starting points Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. The three fields came together at Albury following a series of navigation exercises. The combined field then proceeded to the finish in Melbourne via a series of exciting performance events.

The rally concluded in Melbourne on Wednesday 5 March preceding the commencement of the 1997 Grand Prix. During the Friday and Saturday, rally cars were invited to lap the fabulous Albert Park Grand Prix circuit (a red-headed female was also sighted in Darren's car during this lap of honour!). Darren and his co-driver Charlie Galea finished 127th out of a field of 350.

**Gippsland****BUSINESS NEWS****Another WA320 for Australian Char**

Australian Char Pty Ltd has operated a char and associated products manufacturing plant at Morwell in the Gippsland area for the past twenty five years. Their plant operates a twenty four hour, seven day a week roster, requiring two wheel loaders to be operational during peak periods and most other times.



▲ Australian Char's two WA 320 loaders, with (L-R) Operators, Laurie Membrey, Bill Galea, Les Lawrence, Charlie Reid, Purchasing Manager Ian Campbell, NS Komatsu Gippsland Service Manager Peter Vansittart and Field Technician Paul Medd.

Three years ago a CAT 936 was replaced by a WA320-1. This was the first Komatsu owned by the company. Operating under a Service Contract, the WA320-1 has shown exceptional availability during its 10,600 hours to date.

After extended sales negotiations and stiff competition, Australian Char decided to replace its remaining CAT 936 with a WA320-3. A competitive sales package, including a servicing component, sealed the deal for our then salesman Paul Cass (Paul has since moved to another company and the new salesman in the Gippsland Region is Craig Hahnel).

The WA320-3 has been very well received by the operators, who enjoy the best in comfort and operation in an abrasive and dusty work environment.

NS Komatsu Gippsland has chalked up 12 months free of lost time injury (LTI) operations at Loy Yang Power.

The milestone was reached on 7 March, the first time the achievement has been recorded. A lunch was held at NS Komatsu's office for the twenty two staff, in recognition of the



▲ Darren Attard (L), with navigator and driver Charlie Galea and Darren's Porsche 911 at Mangalore Airport, midway through the Dutton Grand Prix Rally.



▲ NS Komatsu Gippsland Branch staff.

achievement of obtaining a record 52,384 hours LTI free.

NS Komatsu's primary role at Loy Yang Power is to maintain plant equipment. Workshop Supervisor Brian Jackson believes reaching twelve months without a Lost Time Injury is a "great achievement considering the type of work we do."

Already setting their sights on reaching another record, their next goal is to double their recent achievement and operate for another twelve months without a LTI.

### Launceston The Dream Team

At the recent National Sales conference held in the Hunter Valley. Director - Sales and Marketing, Charles Foo, presented a plaque to Branch Manager John Alps and Sales

Representatives Leigh Hollingsworth and Shane Stevens, for achieving highest market share in Tasmania for 1996 in both Hydraulic Excavators (33.3%) and Wheel Loaders (38%). As part of the reward they visited Komatsu plants throughout the USA in May.

### WESTERN REGION

#### Perth Branch

#### PERSONNEL NEWS

Grant Menhennett (Sales) recently took his car in to get a quote for minor body touch-ups. In his haste, Grant backed into a pole, wiping out the left hand back end and found himself having to pay a considerable amount more than he originally anticipated! Onya!

#### Congratulations to:

Brian Pearce (Resident Serviceman, Bunbury) and wife Wendy who celebrated the birth of Cherie coming into the world at 7 pounds, 14 ounces. Cherie is their 2nd child, sister to Anthony.

Brian Firth (Sales) and wife Donna gave birth to a baby boy, Daniel

Nicholas on the 3rd April. Daniel is the 2nd child to Brian and Donna, the first being daughter Olivia.

Craig Maynard (Field Service) tied the knot on the 9th March to fiancée Natasha. The wedding and reception was held at Olive Farm. After the happy event, the couple headed off to Europe for the perfect honeymoon - although Craig was complaining about how he now has to work long hours because of all the money his new wife spent in Europe. Craig, you sound like the typical hubby already!

If you see Amanda Smith (Product Support) and you think she's getting a bit on the large side, you're right. Amanda has fallen victim to the "I'll respect you in the morning" line and as such, she and husband Brian are expecting their second child in October.

### SOCIAL CLUB NEWS

On Sunday 20th April, Social Club members and their families headed off to Fraser's Restaurant in Kings Park for a Sunday breakfast. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended.

### BUSINESS NEWS

It's full steam ahead with the revamping of the Perth Branch. With only a few departments left to move, most of us here in the West are now situated in our new and upgraded workstations. A big thanks to all staff whose efforts have helped make the moving process quick and tolerable; and to those who are involved in the monstrous job of moving the parts store, good luck!

### Pipe down!

*A plumber's apprentice was complaining to his boss about being pushed too hard on the job.*

*"Listen son," said the old timer, "when I was your age and first started plumbing, the boss laid the first two lengths of pipe to show us how it was done. Then he turned on the water and we had to stay ahead of it!"*



▲ "Dream Team" (L-R) Leigh Hollingsworth, John Alps and Shane Stevens.