

DOWN TO EARTH

ISSUE 51



May 2009 Issue 51

- » Komatsu Customer Service Excellence
- » Komatsu Tailor Made Finance
- » Release 8 Tonne Mini Excavator

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KOMATSU



Bill Pike, President
Komatsu Australia Pty Ltd

Komatsu Australia has begun an important new phase in its long term plan for enhanced Customer Support. The appointment of seasoned customer support expert Scott Grant to the management team is a clear indication of the direction taken by Komatsu Australia.

The newly opened NCSC (National Customer Support Centre) at Fairfield will provide industry leading business systems and technology designed to enhance the ownership experience. Accessing Komatsu's globally renowned Komtrax system, our team can quickly assist customers with a range of enquiries and problems.

This centre will become the lynch pin for our Customer Support activities. Further enhancements to our parts system have recently been installed and we are soon to upgrade our warehousing and logistics capability, but more of that in our next edition!

On top of this extensive activity, Komatsu has expanded its product line up with a number of new models now available. Even though credit availability has now become an issue within the industry, through our affiliate company Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance (KACF), Komatsu is well placed to assist customers in securing the necessary credit to finalise the purchase of Komatsu product.

The latest financial results of Komatsu Australia suggest the business is in good shape with a strong presence assured in the Australian and New Zealand markets. Although some players in the market are struggling at present here at Komatsu Australia

(KAL), we are still planning the expansion of our coverage and reviewing our growth plans.

Given the good diversity within our customer base, we are confident that our business model is robust enough to weather the current economic downturn. In tough times, you need to know your suppliers are strong and have the capability of working with you, KAL fits this description to a tee. KAL is well placed with the right balance of good people, good product, good inventory management and a commitment to customer service excellence.

We here at KAL would be delighted to work with you on your next project.

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Front Cover

Komatsu Customer Service Excellence



BUILDING A CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Komatsu Australia has opened a customer service centre of excellence, based at its Fairfield premises, which will become the cornerstone of its product support and customer support operations.



ABOVE. Scott Grant, Group General Manager Customer Support and Business Development.

Overseeing the new centre is Scott Grant, Komatsu Australia's group general manager, customer support and business development.

"This new centre will be the central point for all our customer service operations, from parts through to repairing and maintaining Komatsu equipment," Scott said.

"We have some great people, some really experienced and passionate people that go all-out for the customer.

"Our aim with this centre is to leverage the best of our people in support and service roles, and then roll out that expertise and commitment to customer service to everyone throughout Komatsu Australia, and from there to our customers.

"We are consolidating our customer service offerings, capturing the know-how, preserving the intellectual property so we can deliver a consistent and ever improving service to our customers.

Currently we have a lot of things we can offer in terms of customer service, but we recognise that they are not all as well-integrated as they should be.

We are aiming to get a lot more synergy across all our customer service operations; rather than having them all operating vertically, we want to get them working together.

"Our aim is to create a better - and more importantly, more consistent level of customer service experiences. This is part of further building up and developing the Komatsu brand," he said.

"Our aim is to build these levels of commitment up right across the company, and really get some momentum behind the Komatsu brand.

"We want to leverage what our best people know, deliver that to everyone throughout the company, identify our strengths - and our weaknesses - and keep developing the business," he said.

"Komatsu rolled out its new customer service centre of excellence at the end of March, and from this point on, plans to extend it incrementally," said Scott.

"For us, it will be a never-ending journey to meet and exceed our customers' expectations."

He said that Komatsu was able to offer some key points of differentiation that separated it from its competitors in the market. These included:

- » Technical support, with equipment and engineering specialists in Australia who had direct links back to Komatsu factories and design centres around the world.
- » Komatsu Condition Monitoring Service, with its ability to accurately monitor and report on a whole host of machine component and parts condition.

» Integrated technologies, such as R&M care, VHMS and KOMTRAX, Komatsu's remote monitoring system

"Today, we can provide our customers with near-total visibility of the working characteristics of their equipment, and we can use that to improve the quality of what we offer our customers," Scott said.

"We understand equipment and components better than anyone else in the industry - and because we understand it better, we can maintain it better, we can help our customers operate it better, and we can lower their overall costs.

"We have a whole new range of technologies now available to us - and our customers - that were not previously available to us, or in fact the industry as a whole, which dramatically increases the visibility of the Komatsu equipment internals.

"Our aim is to develop a 'Komatsu touch': something that we do better than anyone else," Scott said.

"We all recognise that things do go wrong with equipment on occasion, but we are looking at systems and process's that will minimise the risk and improve our speed and accuracy of response.

"The true test of what we achieve will be our customers' experience in their day of need," he said.

Komatsu Australia's new Customer Service Centre of Excellence follows the introduction of its Customer Support Charter (as outlined in Edition 50 of Down to Earth) in October last year.

This charter formally outlines just what customers can expect from Komatsu and measures how well it is delivering its service and support offerings. ■



Komatsu Oil Analysis



Genuine Parts



Customer Support



“Our aim is to create a better and more importantly, a consistent level of customer service experiences.”

SCOTT GRANT



KOMTRAX IS A MAJOR ADVANCE FOR QUEENSLAND



Queensland-based pipeline specialist Pipe and Civil Constructions is finding the KOMTRAX remote monitoring system on its latest Komatsu excavators is delivering major benefits in terms of ease of maintenance and on-site safety.



ABOVE/RIGHT. Victoria's Sugarloaf Pipeline Project.

Formed in 2005, the company has been involved in some major pipeline and infrastructure projects in South East Queensland, and is currently working on Victoria's Sugarloaf Pipeline Project, part of the Victorian government's plan to drought proof and provide adequate future water supplies for Melbourne.

Komatsu equipment owned by the company includes two PC850SE-8 excavators, two PC450LC-8s, six PC300LC-8s, a PC50MR-2, a PC138US-3 and a WA480-6 wheel loader.

Both the company's workshop personnel and its HSE team have commented positively on the impact KOMTRAX has had on its operations.

"We find the Komatsu machines fitted with the KOMTRAX system make it very easy to track problems," said plant manager Sam Everingham.

"This system alerts us via the Internet in the office if any warnings have been activated, and the machine can be shut down externally in the event of the operator not knowing there is a fault.

"Provably the best feature of KOMTRAX is the way it provides us with all the up-to-date data we need to keep the machines maintained," said Sam. Also very impressed with KOMTRAX has been Debbie Monaghan, Pipe and Civil's HSE manager.

"The KOMTRAX system has some great security features like the time lockout and the GPS grid you can set up so the machine won't run outside of set areas," said Debbie.

"Also it will alert the office if the machines are being used incorrectly or overloaded by the operator."

Debbie said, from an overall safety point of view, the safety department was very impressed with Komatsu equipment.



"I have worked on pipelines in remote Queensland with Komatsu machines in the past and was very impressed by this service. Keep up the great product!"

MARTIN NOONAN

"They all have great access to the cab and to all areas of the machine, and there is excellent vision from the cab.

"On the excavators, the auto safety pin on the quick hitch is very impressive, because it means that buckets and attachments can be safely changed from the cab of the machine".

"This is a real step forward in pipeline safety, it is a pleasure to have these machines on our sites" said Debbie.

Victoria's Sugarloaf project is a \$750 million, 70 km pipeline with associated infrastructure to link the Goulburn River near Yea to the Sugarloaf Reservoir in Melbourne's north-east.

According to director Brenton Euler, Pipe and Civil opted to use its Komatsu equipment on this time-critical project to minimise downtime.

"We went with Komatsu over other brands because of a number of different reasons," he said.

"Firstly from a cost point of view, the Komatsu excavators were considerably cheaper to run per hour than other brands we were considering.

"Also, Komatsu machines hold their value better than any other make we looked at – all combining to bring down the long-term holding costs of these machines," said Brenton.

In terms of product support for the company's equipment away from its home base, Komatsu has been very good to deal with, according to Martin Noonan - Pipe and Civil.

"Komatsu has been great to deal with when it comes to service down in Melbourne," he said.

"In the rare event of needing warranty, a fitter is usually on site within a couple of hours, a feature we rely on heavily with our line of work – and particularly on the Sugarloaf project".

"We also find the Komatsu products easy to work on with great access to filters, hoses and so on".

"We have a lot of jobs in remote areas and usually have strict deadlines for them to be completed by, so good backup service is extremely important to us," said Martin.

"I have worked on pipelines in remote Queensland with Komatsu machines in the past and was very impressed by this service. Keep up the great product!"

The final word comes from one of Pipe and Civil's operators, Nicky Murphy, who operates a PC450LC-8 and is currently working on the Sugarloaf project.

"The Komatsu is a fine machine. It is very quick and easy to operate, has plenty of digging power and has been very reliable so far.

"Find the cab is quite comfortable and quiet, the tracks are very smooth and all the pins and bushes haven't any movement at all," said Nicky. ■

RELIABILITY AND OPERATOR PREFERENCE PROMPT SWITCH TO KOMATSU ADT'S

Moorvale Earthmoving, based in the central Queensland coal region west of Mackay, has recently converted its fleet of articulated dump trucks to Komatsu HM300-2s due to operator preference, lower hourly running costs and increased reliability.

Owned by the Deguara family, and named after their Moorvale cattle property (and also the site of the Moorvale mine), Moorvale Earthmoving is run by Aaron Deguara, and carries out civil works for the central Queensland mining sector.

Formed around six years ago, Moorvale Earthmoving employs around 50 people, and currently has two major civil earthworks projects on mine sites, along with civil works for an overland conveyor and also for a new wash plant.

Most of its works are at the Vale-owned Carborough Downs Mine, but it also carries out works at Vale's Broadlea mine, and Macarthur Coal's Moorvale and Coppabella mines.

Included in the company's equipment fleet are four HM300-2 ADTs, a PC300-7 excavator, a PC200-8 excavator and a WB97R-2 backhoe, along with other brands of dozers, graders, excavators, water carts and compactors. It also has additional Komatsu dump trucks and excavators on hire on its projects.

Aaron said that Moorvale Earthmoving has been running Komatsu equipment for about three years, following its purchase of the Komatsu backhoe – a machine it bought used.

"While it wasn't a high use sort of machine, we found it to be pretty well liked by our operators," he said.

"Then we hired a couple of Komatsu articulated dump trucks for a while and the operators quite liked them and they were pretty competitively priced, reliable trucks.

"We've now got four HM300s - two we bought in March last year, and two more just before Christmas, plus the PC300 which was also late last year, and the PC200 that we have just picked up.

"The trucks are doing our civil works on these contracts and carting material as well as doing rejects works in some of the mines and drain planning jobs.

"We've found their performance has been excellent," said Aaron.

"We had another brand of trucks here, but we got rid of them and went all Komatsu.

"Our operators really love the Komatsu trucks and the running costs per hour are better."

"They are lower capital-cost machines, the reliability is pretty good, and we believe they have a better brake system, with Komatsu's fully sealed wet disk brakes," he said. ■



ABOVE. Aaron Degura, Moorvale Earthmoving.

"Our operators really love the Komatsu trucks and the running costs per hour are better"

AARON DEGUARA

HUON CARVES OUT A NICHE IN CHALLENGING PROJECTS

Canberra-based contractor Huon Management Services has carved out a niche for itself carrying out challenging or difficult projects that many other contractors find unattractive.

"We like to try our hand at more difficult projects," said director Martin Boyd.

These include projects that require a high degree of risk management, such as roadworks on highly trafficked roads, batter works in steep areas, stabilising steep hillsides and work in environmentally sensitive areas.

Through its plant hire subsidiary Huon Equipment, the company has recently purchased a Komatsu PC228US-3 zero-swing excavator for carrying out road upgrading and maintenance works on Canberra's main roads, and which allows it to safely carry out work within a traffic lane while minimising the risk of affecting passing traffic.

Huon was formed six years ago, offering a range of construction-related services, including:

- » Civil engineering construction, specialising in complex projects
- » Project management
- » Development management

"Our construction activities cover the whole range of civil engineering works," said Martin.

"We have found that because of the high level of professional engineering expertise within the company we have naturally tended towards the more complex projects."

Huon's areas of expertise include:

- » Roadworks and subdivisions
- » Major hydraulics
- » Risk minimisation works and batter protection
- » Civil works on building sites
- » Works in environmentally sensitive areas.

The company is named after Tasmania's famous Huon Pine, one of the longest-living species on the planet. Living specimens over 3000 years old have been found on the west coast of Tasmania.

The timber is both stable and durable and easy to work with – distinctive traits of this natural Australian icon symbolising what the company is trying to achieve.

Huon has been using Komatsu excavators for about the past six years, when it assisted a subcontractor in purchasing a PC270-7 and then subsequently bought it from him when he retired.

In mid-2006, it bought a PC78MR-6, and then the PC228US-3 in July 2008.

Martin's senior supervisor and a director of Huon Equipment, Pat O'Hagan said that the company's latest PC228US-3 was ideal for its road maintenance and upgrading projects.

"We do a lot of excavation work inside concrete barriers, and a bigger machine just can't work in the confines of one lane width," Pat said.

"We did a job recently along Canberra's Pialligo Avenue, which is a very busy road serving the

Canberra Airport precinct, and it was very good for that. A standard counterweight machine couldn't have done it."

Pat said he opted for Komatsu excavators because he had been impressed with their performance and reliability over many years in the industry.

"We've only been running Huon for the past six years, but I've always liked the reliability and performance of Komatsu.

"Certainly with the three machines we have, we haven't been let down. We've been very happy with their reliability.

"They do all we ever ask of them, and the operators really like them.

"The support we get from Komatsu has been very good. Paul Brownlie has been a very good representative for the company since he came on the scene," said Pat.

"And we are now converting him into a Brumbies supporter!" added Martin. ■



ABOVE. Komatsu's PC228US-3 excavator carries out road upgrading maintenance work.

HI-QUALITY GROUP FOCUS

Sydney-based Hi-Quality Group, which operates quarrying, waste management & resource recovery facilities in NSW & Victoria, is taking head-on some of the challenges it sees facing this industry sector over the next few years.



According to managing director Pat Hallinan, two big issues confronting the quarrying and construction materials sector include availability of resources close to key markets, and the forthcoming introduction of some form of carbon trading or carbon tax system.

The two issues are closely intertwined: the closer resources are to major markets – such as Sydney or Melbourne, the lower the carbon costs involved in bringing them to customers.

In the past few yrs, Hi-Quality Group has built up a strategic network of quarries, waste management and resource recovery facilities located close to Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne – and has now started investing in low-emission, low-fuel consumption equipment to extract those resources.

In February, Hi-Quality Group took delivery of six brand-new Komatsu WA470-6 wheel loaders – fitted with its ecot3 low-emission engines and KOMTRAX remote monitoring systems – five for use in its quarrying operations to the south and southwest of Sydney, and one for use at its Melbourne operations.

At the same time, it has purchased three items of low-hour used Komatsu equipment: a PC200-8 and PC450-8 excavator and a D375A-5 dozer.

According to Pat, a key factor in the company's decision to opt for Komatsu equipment included the low emissions from its ecot-3 new generation engines and low fuel consumption – with a close eye on the likely impact of a carbon emissions trading regime in the next few years.

“We are developing a ‘carbon-conscious’ business model, with an overall objective of reducing our company's carbon footprint as much as possible,” he said.

“One of our means of achieving this is by purchasing ‘carbon-effective’ equipment such as our latest Komatsu machines.

“These purchases are the first stage in the Hi-Quality Group's plans to change over to ecot3 low-emission, low fuel consumption engines.”

Pat said an important strategy had been to ensure the transportation costs are as low as possible.

“This will ultimately limit the production of carbon emissions through reduced haulage distances, which we see as a significant cost facing the construction industry in the future,” he said.

The company's network of quarrying, recycling and landfill operations in NSW and Victoria is integrated with its own large transport fleet to service its customers.

“Our facilities are all strategically located within close proximity to the Sydney, Goulburn, Canberra and Melbourne areas – making us ideally placed to service these key markets with long-term, quality resources at a time when availability from other nearby sources is becoming increasingly restricted,” Pat said.

“We’ve had satellite tracking on our road trucks for about four years now, & we’ve found it’s been a good tool to develop our businesses”

PAT HALLINAN

Hi-Quality's resources include more than 80 million tonnes of material throughout NSW and Victoria – with over 40 million tonnes of approved sand and sandstone quarry materials available to the construction market within the Sydney Basin.

“The proximity and reserves of these sites also have the potential to provide future resources for the waste industry, with increasing demand on landfills and growing populations in these cities,” he said.

As well as its quarrying operations, Hi-Quality operates within the waste management industry, with several approved landfills operations across NSW and Victoria. It also operates recycling operations in both states, processing building and demolition wastes & other waste-derived materials.

Products supplied by the company to customers in NSW and Victoria include both naturally quarried materials and a full range of recycled

products, as well as soils, gravels, aggregates and roadbase materials.

In Sydney, Hi-Quality is affiliated with Brandown Pty Ltd and between them, the two companies own and operate more than 120 items of heavy mobile plant and equipment.

Hi-Quality's latest WA470-6 loaders replace a fleet of WA470-3 loaders purchased new around 10 years ago, and which have now logged up to 20,000 hours.

“We’ve had an excellent performance from those machines, they’ve been very reliable and the operators have liked them, plus we’ve had excellent service and support from Komatsu over the years,” said Pat.

“We tend to buy a mix of new and low-hour quality used equipment, and we get good advice from Chris Tweedie in used equipment on what best suits our needs, and which led to the sale of new equipment, assisted by Knox Walmsley, Komatsu's sales representative for this area.

“The support we get from them on the sales side, plus from the Komatsu Finance people – who we’ve used for 10 years now – have really helped us develop and grow the business over the past seven or eight years,” he said.

“They understand where we are coming from, they have an understanding of where the business is and the footprint that our business has got in the industry.” For Pat, an important feature of the new wheel loaders is the fitted KOMTRAX remote monitoring system.

“We’ve had satellite tracking on our road trucks for about four years now, and we’ve found it’s been a good tool

to develop our businesses. “It means we always know where our trucks are & what they are doing, so we’ve always known what speeds they were doing and any problem areas,” he said.

“Now with KOMTRAX on the loaders, it will give us benefits such as which loaders are doing what job, their performance and the sorts of fuel savings we are getting”.

“And if we see some operators using more fuel, or taking longer to perform certain tasks, then we’ll be able to see that perhaps an operator might need more training.

“It will let us gauge the performance of the drivers – and also let them gauge their own performance compared with others; if they want to develop in the company, we can tell them ‘this is the best way to drive this machine and this is the way to operate so you save fuel’ – because doing all those things will save money,” said Pat.

“It’s important that everyone works together to get the benefit out of the business, so it will be great to know that of the six drivers out there driving the loaders, three could be very good, and perhaps the others need additional training.”

In addition to the six new WA470-6 loaders, Hi-Quality purchased a low-hr D375A-5 dozer for ripping virgin rock and pushing blasted rock in its four Sydney sandstone quarries.

According to Pat, the D375A-5, which has been on site since the beginning of January 2009, is proving nearly as productive as a D475A-3 the company previously had in on hire.

“We brought this machine in because we’ve got a lot of ripping to do; we’d been getting a bit behind with our rock, and needed to boost production.

“In terms of fuel consumption, we’re averaging about 450 litres/day, working 10-11 hours a day, which is very good. In comparison with other makes of dozer this size, it’s heaps better.

“It’s also definitely better at ripping, because the ripper is further out from the back of the tractor, combined with the very slow track speed, giving us very good production and performance,” he said. ■

FAMILY OWNED OPERATION "FANATICAL" ABOUT THEIR KOMATSU GEAR

Wreys Bush Concrete was founded by Don and Duncan McGregor in 1955, and is still run by them today.

The company's fleet of equipment includes Komatsu WA120-1, WA 320-3, WA380-5 and WA380-6 wheel loaders and a PC130-7 and PC200-6, along with six concrete mixer trucks, plus three truck and trailer units for delivery of crushed aggregates.

Its excavators are used for aggregate extraction from the river operation, while its loaders carry out loading, material handling and stockpile work around the concrete plant and crushing and screening operation.

Wreys Bush Concrete bought its first Komatsu machine, a PC120-3 excavator, in about 1985, and has been buying Komatsu ever since, according to Grant McGregor, Gravel operations manager, and son of Don McGregor.

A family-owned alluvial aggregates extraction operation and concrete plant based in Southland has been buying Komatsu equipment since the mid-1980s, and is "fanatical" about the quality, performance and reliability of the product.

"We've been buying Komatsu ever since," he said. "These days we don't buy anything but Komatsu machines.

"They are good quality machines, reliable and comfortable, so why would we buy anything else? The machines never let us down, which is why we've stayed with them.

"Our operators like the gear; they're pretty die-hard Komatsu operators and we're all pretty fanatical about the product, because of the comfort and how easy and productive it is to operate," he said.

"The service we get from Komatsu is also very good.

It's really come of age in the past couple of years, and the operation in Invercargill has really moved with the region to provide good year-round levels of support for us."

Wreys Bush Concrete operates throughout Central, Western Southland and Fiordland, supplying quality readymix concrete, aggregates & other alluvial products throughout the region.

Concrete products range from large orders of ready-mix concrete through to patterned and textured concretes, as well as special mixes to customer specifications, while its aggregates include many different types and grades of screened and crushed product.

Its customers include major roading contractors, local councils, farmers and domestic users.

The company's concrete plant gained New Zealand Ready Mixed Concrete Association plant audit and certified status in 2005, ensuring all its concrete complies with NZS 3104-2003.

Being an alluvial operation, its sand and aggregate supplies are regularly replenished whenever the Aparima River upon which the plant is situated floods. It's a typical alluvial river operation that is mountain fed. Whenever it floods, it moves stone down the river," said McGregor. ■



ABOVE. Komatsu WA380-6 outside Wreys Bush Concrete.



"The service we get from Komatsu is also very good"

GRANT MCGREGOR



ABOVE. John Magee, Perth—with the first PC30MR-3 mini excavator in Australia.

“The previous Dash 2 machine was very economical on fuel, but this machine is better again”

JOHN MAGEE

KOMTRAX GIVES PEACE OF MIND TO PERTH OPERATOR

Perth owner-operator John Magee took delivery of the first 3rd generation Komatsu PC30MR-3 mini excavator delivered in Australia in December, which incorporates Komatsu’s KOMTRAX remote monitoring system so he knows exactly where the machine is at all times.

John carries out the excavation work for the underground power network at Perth’s international and domestic airport for the WA Airports Corporation — a contract he’s had for the past two-and-a-half years, and which he expects to continue for several more years.

He also carries out a lot of cable laying work for power utility Western Power in the metro area of Perth W.A.

John purchased his new PC30MR-3, his fifth Komatsu mini excavator in December last yr, trading it in on a PC30MR-2 that he’d had for almost 18 months, which had logged 1800 hrs “I like to trade my machines in with fairly low hours for newer models from Komatsu” he said. “I always get good exchange value and it ensures I can offer my clients peak reliability and service.”

John has found the KOMTRAX system on the new machine a real asset to his business.

“As a security system, it gives me peace of mind,” he said. “From my computer at home, I can ensure that it’s not in use out of hours or by anyone unauthorised to operate it. If this does happen, I can shut it down almost immediately.

“And in addition to that, I get all the machine condition reports emailed to me regularly, so I receive regular updates.”

“The previous Dash 2 machine was very economical on fuel, but this machine is better again. It is also very good in terms of comfort, with plenty of comfort and leg room.

“There were a couple of minor issues with the machine when I first purchased it, but I was very pleased with the efficiency of the Komatsu support and service team.”

John financed his latest purchase through Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance (KACF), following his experience with using KACF when purchasing his previous PC30MR.

“Komatsu were very professional to deal with as they have been in the past, and they have a good understanding of my business requirements,” he said. ■

AWARD-WINNING CANBERRA CONCRETE SUPPLIER GOES FOR KOMATSU

Elvin Group Pty Ltd, concrete pre-mix supplier in the ACT, has recently taken delivery of a WA200PT-6 wheel loader for handling and mixing materials at its Mitchell Concrete Batch Plant.

Elvin Group – which won Supplier of the Year in the 2008 Master Builders Association/Boral Awards for the levels of quality of product, reliability and punctuality it provided to its customers – took delivery of the new loader late last year.

According to the Elvin Group's General Manager, Chris Rutledge, the company decided on a Komatsu loader due to its reputation and his past experience with Komatsu.

"I've always thought Komatsu machinery was of high quality, and I've always liked them", he said.

"Since we've taken delivery, we've been very pleased with the loader; its performance is excellent.

"In the terms of fuel consumption, it's comparatively good – certainly it's very economical compared with the other loaders we have in past. Our operators also like it," said Chris.

The loader is working in and around the plant, loading trucks, filling material bins and cleaning out waste pits. Operator Chris Riddle commented the loader was very easy to operate.

"It's a delight to drive," he said.

"The hydrostatic transmission is really good, and it's a lot quicker around the stockpiles, with a good power response. It's also a very quiet machine to operate."

The new loader is fitted with Komatsu's KOMTRAX remote monitoring system, which the company uses to track any issues.

"We've had two reports so far, and we find it very useful in machine management," said Chris Rutledge.

"It gives us a good indication of what's going on inside the machine, and if there are any issues likely to arise that we need to deal with."

The Elvin Group of companies was born from humble beginnings, being started by the late Tom Elvin and his wife Leonie in 1970 as a garden and landscaping business.

During the last 30 years, through hard work and perseverance, the Elvin Group has grown to the point where

today it operates two fixed concrete mix plants. Vic and Craig Elvin, sons of Tom and Leonie, have been involved with the business since 1990.

The Elvin Group is amongst the most respected and successful independent ready mix concrete suppliers in the Canberra region, and Vic and Craig are ready to take the company to the next levels.

Elvin Group's Mitchell concrete batch plant was built in 1985 and was upgraded to a wet batch plant in 1990, with a further upgrade to a dry batch plant in 2008 – enabling the plant to dispatch approximately 150 cubic metres per hour, handling 100,000-130,000 tonnes of aggregates and a similar volume of sand every year.

All water on the site is entirely recycled – an innovation by Tom Elvin at the time of its construction in 1990, and one of the first concrete batch plants to recycle all its water, according to Chris.

Elvin Group's concrete plants supply concrete throughout the ACT and surrounding areas in NSW.

It is currently supplying materials to major Canberra building projects, including the 20-storey Acton project in Civic and the Equinox project in Deakin. Both projects will be supplied with around 17,000 cubic metres of concrete during their construction.

Elvin Group also offers concrete boom pumps for placing concrete and operates a concreter's warehouse offering a range of products to the concrete industry, including various concrete products, stencils, additives, tools, expansion joints and steel mesh.

"At Elvin Group we pride ourselves on delivering old-fashioned service to our valuable customers, and supporting charitable organisations within the Canberra community," said Chris Rutledge. ■

BELOW. Chris Rutledge, Elvin Group's General Manager.



KOMATSU HELPS FAMILY INTO A NEW BUSINESS AND A BETTER LIFESTYLE

When Simon and Vicki Tymmons moved from Sydney to the far north coast of NSW for lifestyle reasons and to start a family, they spotted an opportunity to set up a plant hire company – and decided to standardise on Komatsu equipment.

When Simon and Vicki Tymmons moved from Sydney to the far north coast of NSW for lifestyle reasons and to start a family, they spotted an opportunity to set up a plant hire company – and decided to standardise on Komatsu equipment.

Today their company, Simple Plant Hire, owns a fleet of three Komatsu PC50MR-2 excavators, a just-delivered PC18MR-2 - all purchased new - plus a PC200-7 bought used, and are about to buy a new PC45MR-3.

In addition, Simon and Vicki have two children born since the move to Ballina: two-and-a-half year old Toby and 16-month-old Molly.

Simple Plant Hire hires out its machines to customers throughout the Northern NSW region, primarily on a dry hire basis – although it will wet hire (with operators) if required.

Before the move from Sydney to Ballina in December 2005, Simon had been in the building game for over 20 years, while Vicki was a sales rep.

Looking to make a change in lifestyle and career, Simon began working for his late uncle John Morgan of J & R Morgan Earthworks.

“It was thanks to John’s knowledge and guidance that we found there was a market for dry hiring mini excavators in this area,” said Vicki.

“With a phone call to our local Komatsu rep Ron Moodie, we were on our way to purchasing our first brand new PC50MR-2 mini excavator in April 2007.

“When we first looked at this machine, we were so impressed with it that it pretty much sold itself,” she said.

“We followed it up two months later with another new PC50MR-2.

“We’ve since bought a third PC50MR-2, and also a PC200-7 which we bought through Ron, and which had previously been owned by another local contractor. This machine had been very well maintained and is in very good condition”.

“Our latest new mini is a 1.8 tonne PC18MR-3, which our clients find is ideal for those hard to get to places. Its moveable tracks mean this has been a great asset.

“We are now looking at the purchase of our sixth machine with Ron - a new PC45MR-3.

“All of our machines are in constant demand, & we have found with the reliability of Komatsu - we hardly have any mechanical problems,” said Vicki.



ABOVE. Simon & Vicki Tymmons with children Toby & Molly 16 months.

“Our clients are always telling us how impressed they are with the machines’ performance, and how easy they are to operate.

“We really find it an advantage being able to promote ourselves as only using Komatsu machines, and in fact we use this and the Komatsu logo in all our advertising and promotion.”

Simon and Vicki have also become very friendly with Ron and his family.

“We have found his knowledge very helpful and our family has built a close relationship with Ron and his wife Michelle.

“Ron knows the business very well, and really looks after us. The service and support we’ve had through Komatsu and Ron has always been excellent; they’ve always been right on top of things, and if any warranty issues arise they are sorted out very quickly.”

Financing for the equipment has been through Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance, which Vicki has always found to be very knowledgeable and competitive.

“Again, the Komatsu people are good to deal with, because they know the nature of our business. When we are getting finance, I always check with our bank, but I find the Komatsu rates are unbeatable.

“Currently we have chattel mortgage finance on our machines,” said Vicki.

“Moving to Ballina has been a fantastic experience for us; it’s nice and relaxing, with a laid back lifestyle,” said Vicki. “Our two children Toby and Molly were born here and we’ve started up a business.

In terms of running the business, Simon looks after the machines and Vicki answers all enquiries and does the book work.

In this, they are assisted by Toby who just loves to be around the machines, his favourite being the PC18, which he calls “My Baby Digger”.

“Molly is not far behind, following Toby in climbing all over the machines and getting all excited when they see them,” said Vicki.

“It has been a great family business for us, with Simon on site while I do all the organising of machinery, hire contracts and servicing – with Molly constantly around my feet in the office!

“Toby is more than happy to help move machinery around and wash the diggers on Saturday mornings with Dad, so it is a very happy environment for us all,” said Vicki. ■

9500-HOUR BACKHOE KEEPS EARNING FOR BRISBANE OWNER-OPERATOR

Brisbane-based owner operator Anard Kamur finds his Komatsu WB97R-2 backhoe, which he purchased used in 2004, is still performing reliably and productively despite getting close to 10,000 hours on the clock, and will keep him going for a few more years yet.

Anard operates through his own company, Shorts Plant Hire, which he has run for the past 12-13 years, providing services throughout the Brisbane metropolitan area.

Most of his work is on housing development projects, installing and upgrading stormwater, sewerage and water mains pipes for drainage contractors, councils and councils.

His WB97R-2 is fitted an extending dipper, 4:1 bucket and pallet forks.

"I bought it from Komatsu in 2004 as a low-hour used machine with about 4000 hours on it; today it has around 9500 hours," said Anard.

"It's been a pretty good machine, very reliable. I had another make of backhoe before this one, and when I was offered the Komatsu I took it.

"Its performance is very good, it digs well, and when the time comes for me to buy another backhoe, it will certainly be a Komatsu," he said.

"It's still a very tight machine, with no oil leaks, and all the bucket and backhoe links very firm and clean.

"I think I will stick with this machine for a few more years yet; it's got a lot more life left in it, especially if I keep operating it myself and looking after it," Anard said. ■

"When the time comes for me to buy another backhoe, it will certainly be a Komatsu,"

ANARD KAMUR



NELSON-BASED BRIAN STANAWAY ROADING RETURNS TO KOMATSU



Nelson-based forest roading contractor Brian Stanaway purchased his first Komatsu machine in 20 years, a D85EX-15 fitted with U-blade and rippers in January 2008 for work in steep forest country around the Nelson region.



Brian, who'd been a fan of the Komatsu product for many years – owning almost exclusively Komatsu from when he started in business in 1972 until the mid 1980s – shifted to another brand after issues with the previous New Zealand distributor.

“However, I've always really liked Komatsu machines, and now with the new Komatsu NZ operation, and its completely different attitude to service and support, I've started buying Komatsu again,” he said.



“Dave and Lois Gibson from Gibson Equipment Repairs – our local Komatsu Service Partner – have played a significant part in restoring our confidence in the product support of the Komatsu product.

“Their team should be commended for their commitment to the Komatsu product,” said Brian.

“We bought the D85EX-15 in early 2008, and it's put in a great performance. We're replacing a couple of our excavators next year (2009) and we'll be buying Komatsu now there is a great support network in place.

Brian started in the forest roading business in the early 1970s, when he first went out on his own, around the Rotorua/Bay of Plenty region.

Five years ago, he moved his operation to Nelson – his excellent reputation in roading and his health and safety record was well received in the Nelson region – and in 2007, sold his North Island operations.

Incidentally, Guy Gaddan, Brian's operations manager, and who was very proactive in setting up all the company's OH&S procedures has remained with the Rotorua/Bay of Plenty operation – since renamed SEGAR – and now owned and operated by Derek and Janie Maisey.

“We're now expanding our Nelson operations, working for Nelson Forests Ltd and other forest owners,” said Brian.

“We like the challenges of working in high country forest roading – which is almost 100% of our work, plus just a bit of farm development work.”

In addition to his Komatsu D85EX-15, Brian operates two other dozers, plus around 10 excavators, ranging from 12 to 30 tonnes. This includes a wheeled excavator which he plans to replace with a Komatsu.

The D85 is being used in an area of forest that was previously logged 28 years ago, building new and upgrading existing skid sites, together with associated forest roading in preparation for harvesting.

“Since we got the dozer in January, it's put in a great performance and has been very reliable,” he said.

“By the end of the year, it'll be up to around 1900 hours.

“The operator who's on it - we've had the one guy on it since we bought it - loves it; he finds it's quiet, very easy to operate and good to service.

“For our sort of work, we prefer the conventional dozer drive; there's less wear in the tracks, and the stability is great, it's tops.”

In terms of support from Komatsu NZ, Brian said he has found his local rep Ian Gardiner to be very good.

“Ian is very approachable and helpful, always keeping his integrity and delivering what he promises, he's a great guy. He's helped us with the financing, and looked after all that for me,” he said.

“We financed the dozer through Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance (KACF), and Mike Gray at KACF gave us a great interest rate, and showed he really understands our business. We were able to do the whole deal over the phone with Ian's and Mike's help, and it went through no trouble at all.”

As with other Komatsu construction equipment, the D85EX-15 comes standard with Komatsu's KOMTrax remote monitoring system.

“It's been working well,” said Brian.

“Ian has helped us with it to make sure it works for us - and already it's alerted us to a minor hydraulic issue before it became a major problem.

“It's been great to get back with Komatsu. It's good gear, good on fuel consumption - and these days as a supplier, there's a much better attitude and all-round better service,” he said. ■

ABOVE. Brian Stanaway.

“Since we got the dozer in January, it's put in a great performance and has been very reliable,”

BRIAN STANAWAY

KOMATSU AGAIN FOR SRWRA AFTER OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE



ABOVE. The D155AX-6 Dozer and WA200PT-5 toolcarrier loader at the SRWRA site.

An Adelaide landfill operation has recently purchased two replacement Komatsu machines for landfill compaction and cell construction and processing following outstanding performance and reliability from two earlier machines.

The Southern Region Waste Resource Authority (SRWRA), a regional subsidiary established by the Cities of Onkaparinga, Marion and Holdfast Bay – and which has featured in previous editions of Down to Earth magazine – operates a landfill at McLaren Vale, in the southern outskirts of Adelaide.

This site is one of the major waste disposal sites in Metropolitan Adelaide, receiving in excess of 200,000 tonnes of waste annually.

It has recently taken delivery of a low-hour used Komatsu D155AX-6 dozer, replacing a 1996 D155AX-3 with around 17,000 hours, and a

new WF550T-3 landfill compactor, replacing a 2000 model of the same machine, also with about 17,000 hours.

It owns four other pieces of Komatsu equipment, a WA380-6 loader, a WA200PT-5 toolcarrier loader and a PC200-8 excavator delivered in 2006, and a WF450T-3 compactor purchased used about 18 months ago as a backup for the larger machine.

According to SRWRA's landfill manager, Colin McArdle, the performance of the previous two machines was a big factor in the decision to purchase replacement Komatsu units.

"The D155 is an ideal machine for our operation, in terms of size and what it can do.

"Our previous dozer had done 17,000 hours before we had to replace anything on it, so we were very pleased with its performance," he said.

"That experience guided us to go with a low-hour upgraded replacement, which we sourced through Komatsu South Australia's used equipment division."

SRWRA's replacement dozer, which was delivered in mid February and had around 1000 hours on it, is used for general earthworks around the landfill site, including ripping and pushing rock for cell construction, as well as constructing and maintaining roads around and into the site.

In the case of the new WF550T-3 landfill compactor – delivered at the beginning of July – Colin said it was

an easy decision to opt for the same machine given the performance and reliability of its predecessor.

"Our previous WF550T-3 was the first of these in Australia, and we had an extremely good run with it over the past eight years," he said.

"We had a few minor issues, but the amount of downtime was quite minimal. In 17,000 hours, we never had to touch the engine, transmission, final drives or diffs."

One thing Colin is looking forward to is the ability to tap into Komatsu's KOMTRAX remote monitoring system, which comes with the dozer.

"I think that will be a very handy tool, particularly when budgeting and looking at where our costs are," he said.

"We'll be able to keep a good eye on critical equipment information, & it will replace lots of pieces of paper." ■

NATIONAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT PURCHASES NEW KOMATSU TRUCK AND EXCAVATOR FLEET

Newcastle-based National Plant & Equipment, which offers a substantial dry hire fleet of heavy mining and earthmoving equipment around Australia, has recently purchased six new Komatsu HD785-7 dump trucks and a PC2000-8 backhoe excavator.

Four of the trucks and the excavator have gone to a mine in the northern Bowen Basin region of Queensland, with the other two trucks going to another mine nearby.

According to National Plant & Equipment's owner Mark Ackroyd, the new machines are giving excellent fuel consumption and operator acceptance.

"Fuel consumption is superb; all the new ones are an improvement on the old ones and that's very good for us," he said.

"And operator acceptance has been very good. They really appreciate the new machines; they are really comfortable to work in," said Mark.

Both fleets are engaged in overburden removal and coal extraction.

In addition, two of the trucks are fitted with DT bodies. These have a lighter weight than conventional truck bodies, allowing the trucks to carry larger loads.

National Plant & Equipment was formed in 1997, and today operates a fleet of over 125 items of heavy equipment, including excavators up to 350 tonnes, mining haul trucks, mining dozers, large wheel loaders, graders, water carts and service trucks.

It also operates specialised equipment, such as tyre handlers on some of its loaders.

Approximately 50% of its fleet is Komatsu equipment, which it has had in its fleet from the start.

In addition to its latest purchases, other Komatsu equipment in National Plant & Equipment's fleet includes D275A, D375A and D475A-5 dozers, WA500, WA600-6, WA700-3 and WA900-3 loaders, PC300-8, PC850-8 and PC1250SP-7 excavators and 12 HD785-5 dump trucks.

"We've had good long-term performance and durability from our Komatsu equipment," said Mark.

"We've been very happy with the reliability & productivity of this equipment."

As well as the company's Newcastle headquarters, it has an office in Mackay, Queensland.

"We operate in Queensland, NSW and Western Australia – predominantly in the mining industry, but also the construction and quarry industry, and we basically operate on a dry hire basis," he said.

"In addition, all our equipment is MDG15-compliant, which is something you have to have today to work in the mining industry." ■

"We've had good long-term performance and durability from our Komatsu equipment,"

MARK ACKROYD



TOPCON 3D-MC2 REVOLUTIONISES AUSTRALIAN JOB SITES

Topcon Positioning Systems' just-released 3D-MC2 dozer control system is delivering major productivity and cost-saving benefits to Queensland-based contractor BulkEarth, which has adopted the technology for use on its recently delivered D155AX-6 dozer.



The new system allows dozers to carry out final trim work at speeds two to three times faster than dozers fitted with conventional machine control systems.

Typically, dozer final trim is carried out in first gear, at up to 4 km/h.

Topcon's 3D-MC2 – which combines advanced high-precision hydraulic control software, the latest in inertial sensor technology and the industry's leading multi-constellation GNSS receivers to provide more than 100 blade position checks per second – allows final trim to be carried out using a dozer working at 12 km/h or more.

BulkEarth's Komatsu D155AX-6, fitted with Topcon's 3D-MC2 system, is working on a subcontract basis for Golding Contractors, on the Gold Coast University Hospital project.

Operations manager Paul Morrison said that having the Topcon 3D-MC2 system on the dozer made his operations a lot more efficient – up to 20% more efficient when final trimming on pads.

"It's capable of trimming within 20 to 30 mm at high speeds in second gear, so with a good operator behind the controls, we're able to eliminate the need for a grader on large scale pads," he said.

The company is also able to charge a higher rate for having the 3D-MC2 system on its machine, because of the higher productivity it achieves.

"Part of our package rate includes an hourly rate on the 3D-MC2 system, so it's an advantage to us and to Goldings," Paul said. ■

KOMATSU SUPPORT REMAINS "INVALUABLE" FOR BEACON

Last year a busy and productive year for the Beacon Foundation, with the support provided by Komatsu remaining invaluable to Beacon's work and its impact on youth unemployment around Australia.

Komatsu employee involvement during 2008 included activities throughout Australia.

Queensland - Komatsu's Business Champion sponsorship of \$1500 for Loganlea High School has resulted in the school holding a Peer Power Day for the school's entire year 10. This event included team building and leadership activities, as well as sessions on mental and physical health.



ABOVE. Jake Burton (Rutherford Tech) at the Komatsu Mt Thorley plant, Hunter Valley.

Komatsu has also made a commitment to be Champion Business Sponsor for Beerwah and Clontarf Beacon State High Schools in 2009.

New South Wales - Beacon representatives met with Komatsu's Mary Huxtable to develop a plan for company involvement with Beacon schools in several regions of NSW.

Komatsu Newcastle hosted teacher induction sessions for Central Coast, Hunter Valley and Port Stephens schools. In addition, a work-experience model has been agreed to for 2009 and a Year 8 open day has been scheduled for early in Term 2. Komatsu's Mt Thorley branch will also be involved with these arrangements.

Victoria - Komatsu's Oliver Walther participated in Buddy-Up mentoring program at Dandenong High School (Doveton Campus).

Tasmania - Komatsu committed to engage with northern No Dole schools for individual workplace mentoring throughout 2009.

Western Australia - Students from Armadale Senior High School and Yule Brook College completed an onsite visit to the Komatsu factory in Welshpool, and the branch's Neville

Warwick attended a business event hosted by Yule Brook College.

Komatsu employees have been actively involved in mentoring year 10 students across Yule Brook College, Swan View, Governor Stirling and Balga Senior High Schools in the Plan-It Youth Program.

A school-based indigenous trainee from Midland Indigenous Youth Project (MIYP) has completed his year at Komatsu, and another MIYP participant is keen to apply once a position becomes available, due to the level of support given by Komatsu people.

Northern Territory - Beacon representatives met with Komatsu's Darwin Branch Manager Colin Brindle to discuss future engagement.

The branch also hosted a work experience student, along with holding site visits for students from Palmerston High School. ■

KOMATSU PC88-8 REPLACES POPULAR 8 TONNER & INCORPORATES KOMTRAX

Komatsu Australia has released the PC88MR-8 excavator, an 8.4 tonne machine replacing its popular PC78MR-6, & incorporating Komatsu's KOMTRAX remote monitoring system & an interim-Tier 4 low emission engine.

Other features include a significantly larger cab than on its predecessor - the same size as on the 13 tonne PC130-8 excavator - a full-size LCD monitor, and full climate-control air conditioning.

Operating weight of the standard machine is 8.42 tonnes and it is powered by a Komatsu SAA4D95LE-5 engine rated at 49 kW.

According to Carl Grundy, Komatsu Australia's national sales manager, utility, the new PC88MR-8 excavator is a major advance over its predecessor.

"The PC78 was one of our most popular machines, being a reliable, economic and productive machine in the 7-8 tonne class," he said.

"With the new machine, Komatsu has brought all the advances introduced in the Dash-8 construction line, into a compact sub-10 tonne excavator.

"These include auxiliary hydraulics - including hammer piping - as standard, five working modes, and automatic two-speed travel."

The five working modes are power, economy, lifting, attachments and hammers. Two track options are available: steel or Roadliners.

"The operator's cab is equivalent in space and comfort to our larger excavators and with a noise level of 71 dBA is one of the quietest available in the industry, while all major maintenance points can be accessed from ground level," said Carl.

Service & maintenance features include:

- » Wide opening engine cover and side covers
- » Side-by-side radiator and oil cooler for easy inspection
- » Extended lubrication intervals
- » Ground level maintenance
- » Easy access to engine oil filter, engine main fuel filter & fuel drain valve.

"These easy maintenance features are complemented by having our KOMTRAX remote monitoring system supplied as standard on this machine," Carl said.

"This allows us to work closely with machine owners - whether fleet owners, contractors or owner-operators - to ensure that their machines remain in optimum operating condition at all times, with early warning of any potential issues or component failures.

"We are able to alert owners, plant managers or operators to any unusual occurrences, allowing them to carry out preventive maintenance before unscheduled downtime occurs.

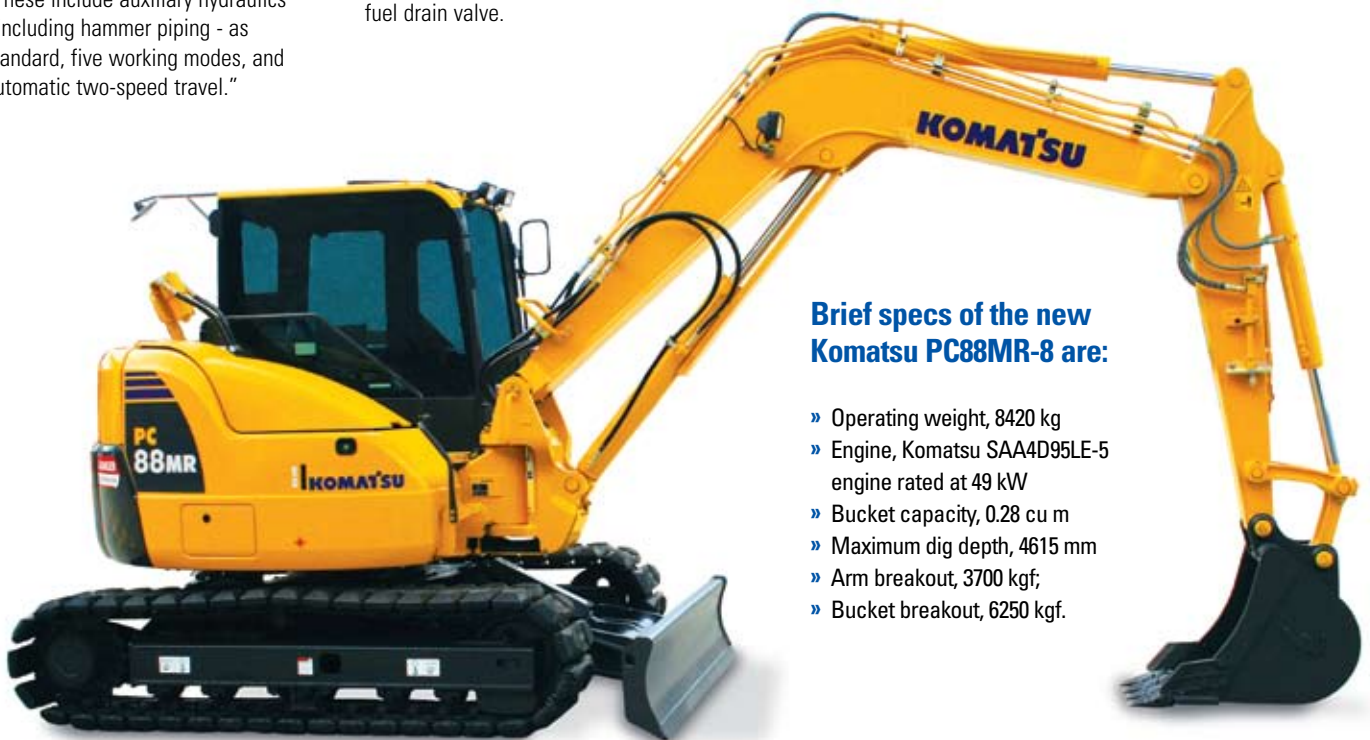
"And the other great advantage of KOMTRAX is that it makes these machines virtually theft-proof, as we are able to track the location of all

KOMTRAX-fitted equipment, and prevent it being started or used if it is reported stolen.

"For owner-operators, for whom a single machine can be responsible for their entire livelihood, we see this as being a major advantage, while for plant hirers and fleet owners, it can be a major weapon against unauthorised use or theft in poorly secured worksites," he said.

"As with all products in our range, all components in our MR-8 range have been designed and manufactured by Komatsu to work together as an integrated whole.

"This ensures they work efficiently together, providing optimum performance, reliability & durability," said Carl. ■



Brief specs of the new Komatsu PC88MR-8 are:

- » Operating weight, 8420 kg
- » Engine, Komatsu SAA4D95LE-5 engine rated at 49 kW
- » Bucket capacity, 0.28 cu m
- » Maximum dig depth, 4615 mm
- » Arm breakout, 3700 kgf;
- » Bucket breakout, 6250 kgf.

KOMATSU OPEN NEW CMS CENTRE IN NEWCASTLE

Komatsu Australia opened its third Condition Monitoring Services (CMS) centre in Australia in early March.

The new CMS centre, located in the Thornton Industrial Estate in Newcastle, adds to Komatsu's national condition monitoring capabilities, working in conjunction with its two existing centres located in Perth and Brisbane.

It will serve Newcastle and the Hunter Valley region, as well as NSW generally.

Services available through the Newcastle CMS centre will include oil analysis, coolant and grease analysis, metallurgical testing and evaluation.

According to John Hardy, Komatsu Australia's National Condition Monitoring Manager, the new centre will meet demand from clients in Australia's south-eastern and southern regions and the Hunter Valley, as well providing additional national capacity for CMS around Australia.

"There is considerable demand in Newcastle and the Hunter Valley for the sophisticated, high-level and diversified condition monitoring services we are able to offer," said John.

"However, for us to be able to cater for this demand, we need to have a local CMS centre to meet turnaround, service and reliability requirements, and so that our own technicians can carry out on-site testing and inspections, as well as providing direct customer support.

"This covers not only mobile plant, such as earthmoving and mining equipment, but also fixed plant, including mining crushing and conveying equipment, as well as coal and bulk-handling equipment at the Port of Newcastle – which is the world's largest and busiest coal-handling port."

He said that currently 45% of Komatsu's CMS business in Australia covered non-Komatsu mobile and fixed plant and that this was set to grow with the opening of the Newcastle centre.

"Already we are working with major clients in Newcastle, providing CMS-related consulting and advisory services."

John said that the Newcastle facility would offer the same range of services as were available in Brisbane and Perth, but with additional instrumentation, testing suites and specialised support to cater for the large amount of fixed plant in the region.

Services offered through Komatsu's condition monitoring centres include:

- » Oil analysis, for all types of equipment including earthmoving, mining, forestry, utility, marine and on-highway vehicles, along with fixed plant, such as conveyors, crushers, screens, coal loaders and other bulk-handling equipment.
- » Coolant analysis for cooling system maintenance and troubleshooting.
- » Grease analysis.
- » Metallurgical inspections (surface crack detection, ultrasonic testing, NDT and failure analysis)
- » Vibration analysis
- » Thermal imaging.
- » Particle imaging.
- » Failure analysis programs.

Oil analysis, which has been an important element of Komatsu's product support program for many years, uses regular analysis of oil to identify and predict potential problems in key components in both mobile and fixed equipment.

This includes:

- » Spectroscopic and infra-red analysis
- » Viscosity and neutralisation number
- » Fuel and water detection
- » Particle analysis (microscopy)
- » Grease and fuel analysis
- » A wide range of physical tests.

Today, CMS also plays a significant role in managing Komatsu Australia's risk exposure in major contracts and agreements by providing key data for parts and maintenance planning.

Komatsu's Newcastle CMS facility is based at Unit 2/49 Sandringham Avenue, Thornton, NSW 2322.

Contact details are phone (02) 4028 5855, fax (02) 4028 5855, email cms@komatsu.com.au ■

KOMATSU OPENS NEW WELLINGTON BRANCH



Komatsu New Zealand has opened a full-service branch for the Wellington region, offering sales, spare parts, service and customer support, at a dedicated facility in Lower Hutt.

ABOVE. New Wellington Branch.

The new branch is at 228 Gracefield Road, Lower Hutt, ph (04) 586 8267.

According to Mike Colbert, Komatsu NZ's Service Partner Manager, the new branch has been opened to service Komatsu's growing customer base in the Wellington region.

"In the past 12 months, we've put a PC450-8 and PC600-8 into the Horokiwi Quarry, plus we have an increasing customer base throughout the region which we believe we will be able to better support with our own branch," he said.

The new branch, which opened on December 1, incorporates a parts warehouse, a complete drive-through workshop bay capable of taking machines up to PC300 size, plus a separate workshop capable of handling major component rebuilds.

Personnel at the branch include Komatsu's Wellington region Customer Support Representative Steve Armstrong, who has been based in the region for the past 18 months; territory Sales Manager Neil May and two field service technicians with fully equipped mobile workshops.

"We've got plenty of room for expansion with this facility. We envisage this operation will grow rapidly as our customer base in the region builds up." said Mike. ■

GOVERNMENT TAX ALLOWANCES GREAT NEWS FOR CONTRACTORS



ABOVE. Sean Taylor, Komatsu General Manager Construction

“No other supplier of earthmoving and construction equipment in Australia can offer a nationwide customer service & support network to match this”

SEAN TAYLOR

The Federal Government’s recently announced business tax breaks mean that purchases of earthmoving and construction equipment vital to rebuilding the nation’s infrastructure have become significantly more affordable, according to Sean Taylor, general manager construction of Komatsu Australia.

Latest changes announced in the May 2009 budget provide even more incentives for small businesses (those with a turnover of less than \$2 million).

In February, the government’s \$42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan included an investment tax break for all Australian businesses, designed to help boost business investment, bolster economic activity and support jobs.

Under the February plan, businesses – such as civil contractors, quarries, plant hirers and owner-operators – are able to claim a bonus deduction of 30% for eligible assets – including earthmoving and construction and other capital equipment – costing \$10,000 or more.

Then in the May 2009 Federal Budget, the bonus deduction was increased to 50% for businesses with an annual turnover of less than \$2 million.

To be eligible for the 30% investment allowance, businesses must

- » acquire or start to hold the equipment under a contract entered into between December 13 2008 and the end of June 2009 and
- » have it installed ready for use by the end of June 2010.

For eligible assets purchased between July 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009, the bonus deduction drops to 10%.

These deductions are on top of the usual capital allowance deduction claimable for the asset as part of a business’s income tax return.

The latest 50% investment allowance for small business applies to equipment costing \$1000 or more, and purchased between December 2008 and the end of this year.

As an example, under the latest 50% business tax break, a piece of equipment costing \$200,000 will be eligible to claim a deduction of 50% of that \$200,000 – or \$100,000. At the standard company tax rate of 30%, that would equate to a reduction in tax for the 2008-09 financial year of \$30,000 as well as normal depreciation (although all companies should check with their accountants or financial advisors before making any commitments, to ensure they are eligible).

“When announced, the Federal Government’s 30% business tax break presented an excellent opportunity for contractors, plant hirers and quarry operators to purchase equipment, and gain significant reductions in their tax for this current financial year,” said Sean.

“We are delighted to see it has been expanded to a 50% deduction for our smaller customers – such as owner operators and smaller contractors – and extended until the end of the year.

“These measures present a very good stimulus for the industry at a much-needed time.

“In addition, through Komatsu Australia, we are able to provide flexible finance and total support services to deliver to our customers additional security and peace of mind as they operate in these challenging times.

“Through Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance, we can advise businesses on the best way to tailor their equipment finance to optimise this tax break and maximise productivity,” he said.

“And because we offer the most comprehensive customer service and support network in Australia, Komatsu owners have the security of knowing that their equipment will be fully serviced and supported, no matter where they may have to go in order to obtain work.

“No other supplier of earthmoving and construction equipment in Australia can offer a nationwide customer service and support network to match this.

“As other elements of the government’s stimulus package work their way through the economy – including promised increased infrastructure expenditure, we and our customers would be hopeful of seeing additional civil construction work rolled out in the months and years ahead.

“Therefore, customers who are looking to tender for infrastructure-related work in the coming months would be well-advised to look closely at these ‘one-off’, short-term opportunities to purchase equipment and obtain significant tax deductions,” said Sean.

Komatsu Australia is the Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonian distributor for Komatsu construction, utility and mining equipment.

Further information (AUSTRALIA): Komatsu Australia, ph 1300 KOMATSU (1300 566 287), website www.komatsu.com.au, e-mail info@komatsu.com.au. ■

EQUIPMENT FINANCE "BUSINESS AS USUAL" FOR SOME SOURCES

Despite the well-publicised issues occurring as part the global financial crisis, including the reduced availability of finance, for some sources of finance for construction and earthmoving equipment, it is "business as usual".

KOMATSUFINANCE.COM.AU

TAILOR MADE FINANCE.

MINING, CONSTRUCTION AND UTILITY FINANCE SOLUTIONS.

KOMATSU
CORPORATE FINANCE

ABOVE. KACF's new advertising campaign - Tailor Made Finance.

One of these is Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance (KACF), which works alongside Komatsu Australia providing finance to Komatsu customers in Australia and New Zealand.

According to Simon Rawther, KACF's general manager construction finance, the company's funding budget for 2009 is the same as it has been in previous years.

"As far as funding goes, our 2009 budget is basically the same as prior years with only minimal changes – unlike many other financiers, even large ones, who are having funding difficulties which will severely hamper their 2009 lending abilities," he said.

"We are in the fortunate position of being owned by two very large, very well-funded Japanese parent entities who have a huge global presence.

"Because of this, we are not going to pull out of the Australian market, as has been happening with many other foreign-owned institutions lately - particularly some of the high-profile US ones."

However, Simon said there was a considerable amount of misinformation and a lack of understanding of what recent interest rate changes meant to finance costs.

"As everyone would know, over the past few months, the Reserve Cash Rate set by Australia's Reserve Bank has dropped considerably, to the lowest levels in many years.

"Unfortunately, commercial finance costs have not dropped to the same extent as customers may have expected," he said.

"This is because the actual cost of funds to financiers has increased significantly over the past 12 months, due to the overall levels of uncertainty in global financial markets.

"This is confusing some clients as we keep hearing the Reserve is dropping rates – which is flowing through to lower swap rates – but the cost of funds has also increased at the same time, offsetting some of the Reserve rate decrease.

"Interest rates on equipment finance have come down to a certain extent, but not to the degree which people may have expected."

Simon also said that in these challenging economic times, prospective purchasers should be on the lookout for finance packages claiming "zero interest" rates.

"You never get anything for nothing, and this applies to finance just as much as anything else," he said.

"Headline claims of 'zero interest' appear to be used often to try to clear out older stock or when a manufacturer is in trouble – for example, some US-owned manufacturers trying to move stock to obtain quick cash.

"Customers generally pay for such 'zero interest' rates through an inflated purchase price anyway, so it can be quite misleading, with any savings over the life of the finance package are offset by the higher price.

"It's also important to read the small print in any such finance agreements to look for any hidden extras and other charges that will inflate the true cost to customers.

"At Komatsu Finance, we never offer this type of financing; rather we prefer to simply offer true market interest rates, in which everything is transparent and up-front," he said.

"And because of our in-house relationship with Komatsu Australia we are able to provide a seamless 'one-stop-shop' package to customers.

"Customers see this as a big advantage in saving time and hassles, allowing the entire purchase, negotiations and finance to be kept with a single supplier, eliminating the need for outside parties to fund the machines.

"Our staff are based within the major Komatsu branches throughout Australia and New Zealand, ensuring we are always on site to assist customers with their financing needs whenever they come into a branch," said Simon. ■

Finance packages available through Komatsu Australia include:

- » Finance leases
- » Operating leases
- » Power by the Hour™
- » Hire purchase
- » Chattel mortgage

SCOTT GRANT APPOINTED KOMATSU'S GROUP GM, CUSTOMER SUPPORT AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Komatsu has appointed Scott Grant as group general manager, customer support and business development, taking over from Chris Cassettari, who has been appointed Komatsu's director of Corporate Services



ABOVE. Scott Grant, Group General Manager Customer Support and Business Development.

In this role, Scott is responsible for establishing and managing a Komatsu Australia customer service centre of excellence, based at the company's Fairfield premises (see accompanying article).

"Our aim is to create better, and importantly, more consistent levels of customer service experiences for Komatsu Australia customers, wherever they may be," he said.

Scott's previous experience was in the automotive industry, including 20 yrs with Toyota in parts, service, aftermarket support and senior marketing roles-including 4 yrs in the US as Toyota's corporate manager, marketing for North America.

On his return to Australia, he was appointed divisional general manager for Lexus, then in 2006 joined Holden Special Vehicles, a position he held for 14 months.

"Coming from the automotive business, I know how important customer service is, particularly with luxury brands where people have made considerable financial investments in their vehicles," he said.

"For me, this job is about translating much of what I've done in the auto industry over the past 21 years into the customer service aspects of Komatsu's business, because when you get down to it, there's a lot of similarities.

The passion of Komatsu customers for their equipment is very similar to that of people who drive a certain type of car; they have a passionate relationship with their cars.

"Our customers often have a similar one with their earthmoving equipment: they rely on it for their livelihood, these products drive their business, and their success depends on it.

"There's an opportunity to build much deeper relationships with our customers," said Scott. ■

KOMATSU FINANCE OPTIONS: CHATTEL MORTGAGE

Warwick Matthews, Komatsu Australia Corporate Finance's Business Development Manager NSW ACT, looks at chattel mortgage, and how it can be used to finance equipment.



ABOVE. Warwick Matthews, KACF's Business Development Manager.

Chattel Mortgage can be used to finance up to 100% of an item of equipment's value (including GST).

If the borrower has surplus cash, this can be used as equity in the equipment to reduce the amount financed by the lender (KACF), and thus reduce the borrower's repayment commitments.

Under a Chattel Mortgage contract, the borrower is the legal owner of the equipment while KACF has a loan secured against the specific item of equipment being financed.

The loan is secured by a registered mortgage or charge over the equipment with Komatsu Corporate Finance noted as mortgagee/chargee and the borrower noted as mortgagor/chargor. The term "chattel" is a legal reference to "goods".

The accounting and taxation treatment of a Chattel Mortgage contract can be summarised as follows:

Question. Is it on or off the borrower's balance sheet?

Answer. On balance sheet

Question. What portion of the instalments are expensed for Australian Accounting Standard purposes?

Answer. The interest component of each instalment is expensed.

Question. What proportion of the instalment is tax deductible?

Answer. The interest component of each instalment will generally be tax deductible. However, the borrower can also claim depreciation deductions on the equipment

Question. Are up-front deposits now allowable?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Must there be a residual value?

Answer. No. Generally, chattel mortgages would amortise to zero, but a residual amount might be structured as the last payment.

Question. What about GST?

Answer. A customer who is registered for GST can claim the GST contained in the asset price as an input credit on their next Business Activity Statement (BAS). ■

KOMATSU'S CUTTING EDGE APPRENTICE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Komatsu Australia has established a new Apprentice Development System that is being piloted at its Hunter Valley Branches. "The new System builds on the extensive arrangements that Komatsu already has in place for developing apprentices" Komatsu's General Manager Human Resources, Anthony Crowley said.



ABOVE. The successful apprentice applicants.

"As part of Komatsu's commitment to continuous improvement the company designed a new system for developing apprentices to maximise skills acquisition, career pathways and future growth and sustainability of the business" said Anthony.

This initiative further adds to Komatsu's significant commitment to apprentices, with more than 120 apprentices in development across Australia and New Zealand.

The new Apprentice Development System lifts the learning methods and competency outcomes for apprentices to new standards in terms of technical and business skills.

The new Apprentice Development System started in January this year with 13 locally recruited apprentices, including 12 Plant Mechanics and 1 Auto Electrician. The apprentices were directly employed by Komatsu following a rigorous recruitment process that began last September.

The successful applicants are an even mix of mature age people, Year 12 and Year 10 school leavers.

Following advertisements in Hunter Valley newspapers the company received 270 applications for the apprenticeship positions. High schools students who had undertaken work experience with Komatsu's Newcastle Branch were also invited to apply. The screening process included assessment of the applications, trade aptitude testing with TAFE and behavioural interviewing by Komatsu managers.

A feature of the new Apprentice Development System is the establishment of an education alliance between Komatsu and the Hunter Institute of TAFE. Kurri Kurri Campus, the main centre for the Heavy Vehicle Mobile Equipment Certificate III program in the Hunter, worked closely with Komatsu's Hunter Valley managers to tailor the program to Komatsu's needs.

"Families and friends of the new apprentices were invited to an Orientation Day and barbeque last November to inspect Komatsu's facilities and learn about the company and the new Apprentice Development System" said Komatsu's Mt. Thorley Branch Manager, Reg Rogers. "It is important that we engage the apprentices and their support networks, this is an important part of our approach to apprentice development" said Reg

Each of the apprentices received a 200 piece tool kit and trolley cabinet as part of the week long induction program at the Mt. Thorley Branch. The induction week included training on safety, environment, policies, procedures and access to Komatsu's new online induction program 'The Komatsu Challenge'.

The induction week was followed by a 3 week intensive mechanical hand skills and tools utilisation and care program delivered by TAFE as a

dedicated Komatsu course designed and developed by Komatsu managers and TAFE teachers. Through this program apprentices were able to demonstrate safe working practices, manufacture metal devices, learn about basic first aid, undertake green card training and complete practical tests and basic servicing on Komatsu equipment. Komatsu staff and trainers were also involved in the program including the delivery of one of Komatsu's customer service programs, 'The Face of Komatsu'.

Gavin Manning, Komatsu's Newcastle Service Manager says "The advantage of this approach is that apprentices arrive at the workplace ready to contribute from day one". "Gavin played a significant role in the development of this program and has been the primary interface to TAFE" says program sponsor and Komatsu's General Manager Central Region, Ian Mc Cowan.

“Apprentices will also be provided with **Komatsu in-house Technical Training programs geared to their development stages & undertake skills development in Presentations, Communications, Customer Service & Business Processes”**

PAUL RICHARDSON

Komatsu’s Gladstone Branch Manager, Kirk Duffy also sent his new apprentice Kody House to the 3 week intensive program, Kirk said “She (Kody) has come back to us with increased knowledge and definitely got a lot of value out of it so it was really worthwhile”

Brad Hackett, Komatsu’s Operations Manager NSW says “Gavin; Newcastle Branch Manager, Cristian Dumar; Newcastle REMAN (Remanufacturing) Manager, Robert Uhl, and Mt. Thorley Branch Manager, Reg Rogers, are responsible for getting this new system for developing apprentices off the ground. It is their passion and enthusiasm for this approach that has made the difference”.

The new apprentices will complete three, four month rotational assignments each year at Newcastle Branch, Newcastle REMAN and Mt. Thorley Branch. When not at work the apprentices will attend seven, one week blocks at Kurri Kurri TAFE, per year for three years completing the Certificate III. At Komatsu’s request, TAFE have established a dedicated Komatsu class for the apprentices, so they are all able to attend at the same time “This improves our ability to plan workflows, review performance and learning and prepare for the next set of rotational assignments” Newcastle REMAN Manager, Robert Uhl said.

The apprentices will be trained to the National Competency Standards as well as Komatsu’s unique enterprise Technical Competency Standards.

Newcastle Branch Manager, Christian Dumar says “The Kurri Kurri Campus has excellent teachers & learning facilities, an added advantage - of the Campus is the availability of individual on-site self contained accommodation for the apprentices whilst on block release”.

“Komatsu has established extensive and structured Learning and Experience Plans (LEP’s) for each department and section the apprentices work in” said Cristian. The LEP’s detail the required learning outcomes for each assignment and the activities and experience necessary to achieve those outcomes. The LEP’s provide supervisors with a view of the apprentices’ achievements and experiences to date and informs the apprentice about the work they will undertake, performance criteria and assessment methods to determine when competency is achieved.

Under the new Apprentice Development System apprentices complete a daily Learning and Experience Record (LER). “This will become a valuable document which will be of considerable

assistance as evidence leading to competency achievement, as a learning reinforcement tool, as a reference to review apprentices’ training, as an aide to developing communications skills and later when apprentices are applying for promotional positions” Komatsu’s Organisational Development Manager, Paul Richardson said.

“Apprentices will also be provided with Komatsu in-house Technical Training programs geared to their development stages and undertake skills development in Presentations, Communications, Customer Service and Business Processes” says Paul.

Apprentices’ progress will be monitored on a monthly basis and feedback from supervisors supplied to ensure skills development is occurring according to the LEP’s. Mt. Thorley Branch Manager, Reg Rogers says “At the end of each assignment each apprentice will provide a presentation to the other apprentices, supervisors and trades people highlighting their experiences and achievements.”

“The new Apprentice Development System has very much been a team effort with all of the Hunter Valley Branches working together and the National Organisational Development group based in Sydney providing learning design and support” says Reg.

BELOW. Gavin Manning, Newcastle’s service manager addressing Komatsu apprentices and their families during the orientation day.



Once each part of the new Apprentice Development System is implemented, tested and reviewed, the system will be implemented at other Komatsu locations.

“We are very excited about this initiative and I am keen to see it working at other Komatsu sites” Komatsu’s General Manager Central Region, Ian Mc Cowan said. “The effort our Hunter Valley people have applied to this is commendable and I am pleased our Human Resources Division provided their support” says Ian. ■

KOMATSU LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE INDUCTION PROGRAM

Komatsu Australia has developed an Online Induction Program called “The Komatsu Challenge”, which can be accessed by all employees.

Komatsu Australia’s President Bill Pike decided that KAL needed a fresh approach to inductions and he announced that all existing employees must complete the new induction program.

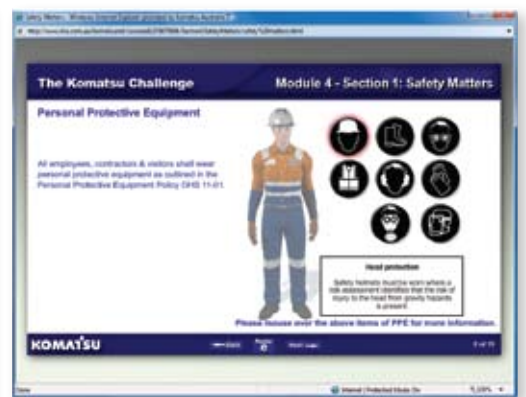
The Komatsu Challenge provides a highly interactive online learning experience, that enables Komatsu people to learn about important aspects of the Komatsu business, emphasising the need to know what the company is about and what it stands for. This is done at their own pace, at any time, from any location.

The new program was rolled out over the past few months and is accessible via any suitable computer with an Internet connection.

“This is a significant initiative in further developing our people and the first Online Learning Program developed by Komatsu Australia”, says Anthony Crowley, Komatsu Australia’s General Manager Human Resources.

“As well as equipping Komatsu people with technical and business skills to meet the needs of our customers, it is essential that every employee understands the workings of the business, our values, our policies, compliance and our commitment to safety and the environment. The Komatsu Challenge achieves this.” He said.

The Komatsu Challenge will ensure that all employees, through an interactive, standardised and structured learning experience, are able to learn consistent and authorised material about the business regardless of their location or position within the company.



General Induction

Module 1: Getting Started – An introduction to using the program, workstation ergonomics and how eLearning Online systems work.

Module 2: Komatsu Today – An introduction to Komatsu, our people policies and compliance.

Occupational Health & Safety Induction

Module 3: Risk Management, Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, Take 5, Job Safety Analysis.

Module 4: Safety Matters, KALSAFE, PPE, Safety Signs.

Module 5: Isolation and Tagging, Manual Handling.

All new and existing employees have received access to the Komatsu Challenge and will have completed the program by the end of March this year. Existing employees will undertake Komatsu Challenge Refresher programs every two years.

Komatsu has a deep commitment to people development. The Komatsu Challenge adds to the extensive suite of classroom and online learning and development programs available to Komatsu people in the areas: Technical Training, Business Skills Training, Computer Applications Training, Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Training, Product Training, Sale Training and Manager/Leader Development.

The Komatsu Challenge is a high quality online learning tool consisting of animations, still and video graphics as well as text and audio. The first two Modules of The Komatsu Challenge include an introduction and welcome to the company from Komatsu Australia's President, Bill Pike, where Bill provides an overview about the company and highlights the importance of Komatsu's Values.

"It is important that the company engages new staff from day 1. This introduction from Bill along with information about our organisational structure and history and the induction as a whole all helps to make people feel like they belong.

A positive induction experience reinforces their decision to join us and helps them to settle in quicker" Anthony said.

Paul Richardson, Komatsu Australia's Organisational Development Manager says, "The Komatsu Challenge was developed by the national Organisational Development, and Occupational Health Safety and Environment Teams in consultation with many other work groups. This included rigorous User Acceptance Testing with numerous people across the organisation".

Paul said "The program is designed in modular form to provide flexibility for our people when undertaking the training. The Komatsu Challenge consists of 5 Modules that must be completed in sequence."

"A feature of the design of the program is the inclusion of "Challenge Points" or assessment questions in each Module, that not only adds to the interactivity of the program but also helps people test their understanding and learning", he says.

"Because it is important that we measure the success of the learning through the assessment steps, the program is designed so that it is not possible to move to the next Module until the present Module "Challenge Points" have been correctly answered to a set minimum standard. The concept is one of mastering the learning material and applying it in the workplace", Paul said.

Mark Sproull, Komatsu Australia's Occupational Health Safety & Environment Manager, says "Komatsu has a genuine commitment and dedication to the safety of our people and protection of the environment. The Komatsu Challenge enables us to emphasise and reinforce these principles with both new and existing staff whenever and wherever that is needed, it's a great tool."

"With The Komatsu Challenge induction program we are able to ensure that all new employees have completed the material to the required standard within the first week of starting work", Mark said.

"By using an online solution and focusing on sound instructional design principles we have been able to develop The Komatsu Challenge to a high standard of educational integrity and to a level that meets the programs learning outcomes,

"It is important that the company engages new staff from day 1. This introduction from Bill along with information about our organisational structure and history and the induction as a whole all helps to make people feel like they belong"

ANTHONY CROWLEY

"The online solution means we were able to provide the same content and quality of training to around 1800 people across more than 70 sites in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia in the space of 3-4 months"

PAUL RICHARDSON

maintains the learner's interest and assesses the success of the learning", says Paul Richardson.

"The online solution means we were able to provide the same content and quality of training to around 1800 people across more than 70 sites in Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia in the space of 3-4 months. A classroom solution could not have achieved this level of rollout in the timeframe or ensured consistent standards of quality or met cost effectiveness criteria", Paul said.

Kristy Mc Worthy, Komatsu Australia's Executive Assistant to the General Manager of Customer Support and Business Development, who has completed The Komatsu Challenge and was also part of the User Acceptance Testing (UAT) group says, "My overall impression is that it is very good. It is interesting to watch.

The narrator speaks very clearly and is very easy to understand. I like the idea of text and voiceover, so that you can re-read all the information again if you miss what was said."

In line with Komatsu's practise of Continuous Improvement, The Komatsu Challenge will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it continues to be a valuable development tool for Komatsu employees.

Komatsu's Organisational Development team would be pleased to share their experiences of developing The Komatsu Challenge, with any of Komatsu's customers who may be contemplating a similar approach to the induction of their own staff. ■

TEAMVODAFONE MOMENTUM CONTINUES WITH LOWNDES TAKING WINTON DOUBLE

This article is based on Team Vodafone's press release dated 3 May 2009

TeamVodafone has won its sixth consecutive round of the 2009 V8 Supercar Championship Series with Craig Lowndes comfortably winning his second race of the weekend at Winton Motor Raceway today.

While teammate Jamie Whincup took pole position for the 200km race, Lowndes, who started from the second row of the grid got an early edge, electing to start the race on his used soft compound tyres from yesterday.

A safety car on Lap 20 of the race saw the team call both cars in for their compulsory pitstop. Lowndes was the first car in and was able to exit his pit bay ahead of rival Mark Winterbottom but Whincup was forced to wait in the queue, losing a substantial amount of time and positions.

A jubilant Lowndes who has jumped eleven places in the championship order following his clean sweep of the weekends races acknowledged it was nice to be back in the winner's circle and for the team to start understanding the strategies that will evolve with the soft tyre option.

"We had good speed all day today but the last 15 laps the tyres had definitely gone off and there was not a lot of rear bar left either," Lowndes explained.

"The pitstop congestion was certainly chaotic and I feel disappointed for Jamie who clearly had a quick car but was caught up in the safety car queue."

"The soft tyre brings in a new variable, particularly in relation to closing speed. I would be keen to see the tyre used as our permanent tyre as it gives great grip, particularly mid corner and drivers are clearly gaining a lot of confidence from it."



ABOVE. V8 Supercar. Below. Craig Lowndes.



"Today feels like payday, it is nice to be back," he concluded.

It was the other end of the scale for Whincup who came through from 28th to 13th battling with a mixture of soft and normal tyre competitors mid fleet.

"That was the worst race I have done for a long time," said a bitterly disappointed Whincup.

"It has upset our momentum and has cost me some valuable points.

Thankfully there is still a long way to go in this championship."

"On a positive note the team seem to have a better handle on strategy with these sprint races that have the soft tyre option," he added.

The next event on the V8 Supercar calendar will see the teams head to Tasmania's Symmons Plains Raceway for the Falken Tasmania Challenge May 29 - 31. ■

Top Ten V8 Supercar Round 6 Results

01. Craig Lowndes, 150pts
02. Mark Winterbottom, 138pts
03. Garth Tander, 129pts
04. Paul Dumbrell, 120pts
05. Will Davison, 111pts
06. James Courtney, 102pts
07. Rick Kelly, 96pts
08. David Reynolds, 90pts
09. Marcus Marshall, 84pts
10. Jason Bargwanna, 78pts
13. Jamie Whincup, 66pts

Top Five V8 Supercar Championship Standings

01. Jamie Whincup, 804pts
02. Will Davison, 690pts
03. Steve Johnson, 573pts
04. Lee Holdsworth, 534pts
05. Rick Kelly, 531pts
06. Garth Tander, 504pts
07. Craig Lowndes, 501pts
08. Shane Van Gisbergen, 453pts
09. Jason Richards, 417pts
10. Fabian Coulthard, 414pts



Cooking with Kim



You'll need grownups to help you make these yummy fruit kebabs!

FRUIT KEBABS with chocolate dipping sauce

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Mini bambo skewers
- Saucepan
- Small serving bowl

INGREDIENTS

- Small pieces of banana, strawberry and orange
- 300ml pouring cream
- 1 tsp grated orange rind
- 1 tbs orange juice
- 250g block milk chocolate broken into squares

METHOD

Thread small pieces of banana, strawberry and orange on to mini bamboo skewers. In a small saucepan, combine 300ml pouring cream, 1 tsp grated orange rind and 1 tbs orange juice. Bring just to the boil, then add a 250g block milk chocolate broken into squares.

Remove pan from heat, stand for a few minutes until chocolate is melted, then stir until smooth. Pour the warm sauce into a bowl. Serve immediately.

TIPS

If you don't feel like chocolate, you can choose your favourite yougurt as a dipping sauce.



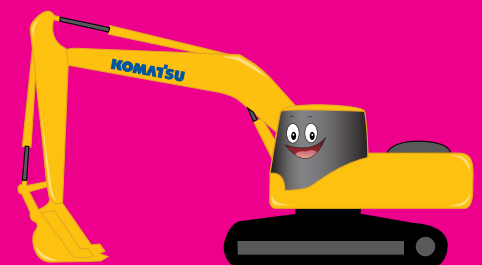
THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ENTERED THE COMPETITION TO NAME OUR EXCAVATOR FRIEND.
OUR WINNING NAME IS: "PERCY"

Because Komatsu Excavators begin with the letters PC. (E.g. PC200)
Congratulations to Natalie O'Connor, Age 7 of Townsville, QLD, for her winning name!

THE OTHER FOUR WINNING NAMES WERE:

- "Exy", Nathan Bush, Age 11, Gisborne South, VIC
- "Claudie" - His bucket looks like a claw. Kyle Ormsby, Age 7, Te Kauwhata, NZ
- "Digger", Joyce Ruparanganda, Age 9, Darwin, NT
- "Digga", Matthew Gasiorowski, Age 9, Kingsley, WA

Congratulations to all winners!





TAILOR MADE FINANCE.

MINING, CONSTRUCTION AND UTILITY FINANCE SOLUTIONS.

As a Komatsu-owned finance company, closely connected to the construction industry and working directly with Komatsu Australia, we understand your business better than other financiers. This allows us to tailor a financial solution to best suit your needs.

The advantages of using Komatsu Corporate Finance include competitive rates and flexible repayment structures such as seasonal, structured or hourly rates. In addition, we can tailor solutions to meet your cashflow, currency, taxation, interest rate outlook and balance sheet requirements. By diversifying your funding sources, this means your bank facilities are free to support your other working capital requirements. You can also transfer your equipment resale risk and maintenance responsibilities to us.

Services provided by Komatsu Corporate Finance include:

- ✓ Finance Lease
- ✓ Operating Lease
- ✓ Commercial Hire Purchase
- ✓ Chattel Mortgage
(loan secured by a mortgage over the equipment)
- ✓ Power by the Hour™

For more information talk to your local Komatsu Sales Representative or call the following contacts at Komatsu Corporate Finance below.

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