

The new Komatsu FH series forklift that SKM has purchased.

SKM builds bulletproof fleet

By Jan Arreza

SKM has always had its eye firmly fixed on the future, making plans to further improve on its efficiencies. With this in mind, the company has heavily invested in upgrades to its fleet of forklifts, turning to Komatsu Forklift Australia for the latest FH series.

SKM's recycling plant manager Jeff Bunting says its previous fleet was not operating at optimum due to issues with the motors, transmissions, as well as general wear and tear due to the harsh environment at a material recovery facility (MRF).

"They just won't keep up. We had a variety of forklifts and we were always

blowing up motors and transmissions so Komatsu Forklift Australia suggested their hydrostatic forklifts, which they said had been designed for the harshest of environments," Bunting said.

"And they've been right. We've had no major issues with any of the units, apart from the damage that we've done ourselves. They are basically bulletproof as far as I'm concerned.

"We've got close to 26 units now across the whole business and the first one of them is still going strong today. They've been a great acquisition for the business as far as reliability and minimising business interruptions go."

With Komatsu's hydrostatic drive system, diesel Tier 4 Interim engine, standard wet disc brakes, and closed-centre load sensing hydraulic system (CLSS), the FH series of forklifts achieves significantly reduced maintenance and operating costs.

Additional features such as speed limiting, auto engine shut down, ramp control and the anti-restart function are all standard.

Komatsu Forklift Australia's national marketing and product support manager Jack Socratous says the new hydrostatic range is designed for truly harsh and high duty cycle applications, and achieves its durability and low costs of ownership from its rugged designs and field proven components.

"We stand by the quality and reliability of our products which is why we offer an industry-leading five-year or 10,000-hour warranty on all Komatsu Forklifts," Socratous said.

"In applications where there are constant forward and backward movements, torque converter forklifts will generally overheat or suffer significant wear and tear on the transmission, while the FH is designed

to handle a lot more of that constant forward and backward movement through its hydrostatic drive.

"A hydrostatic motor is driven by a hydraulic pump at the back of the engine, so there's no direct link to the engine and the wheels, giving a lot more cushioning and fewer shocks when operating."

The FH series is most suited to applications involving constant repetitive work such as timber industries, loading shipping containers or stacking waste paper and scrap steel.

The oil cooled, sealed wet multi-disc brake system provides excellent braking performance in all operating conditions; providing protection from dust, dirt and debris, as well as higher degrees reliability, fade and water resistance.

The FH series also comes standard with KOMTRAX – a remote equipment and fleet monitoring system with wireless technology and a secure, user-friendly web-based application for improved fleet utilisation, reduced downtime, and lower owning and operating costs.









"Due to the success of the FH range, Komatsu is going to be expanding its model line-up next year. At the moment, the range includes four-tonne, 4.5-tonne, and five-tonne capacity," Socratous said.

"Next year we'll see the seven-tonne and eight-tonne hydrostatic drive forklifts. We'll still have our standard range with torque converter transmissions for normal applications. But for the really harsh applications where most forklifts just get destroyed, we'll have the parallel FH series forklifts with hydrostatic drives."

SKM first turned to Komatsu in 2014 and the company intends to purchase a few more machines in the coming years to replace the older fleet with the FH series.



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