

# TORQUE

## INDUSTRIES



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# WASTE NOT WANT NOT

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*Torque Industries first saw the light of day in 1985 in Adelaide, when a company called Torque Hydraulics was established to supply parts and components to industry. The business evolved and diversified to include complete motion and control system design, build, supply, installation, commission, maintenance and repair, both in-house and on site.*

Written by John Boley

In 2008 Torque Hydraulics acquired Hydra-Pac Waste Systems, a specialist designer and manufacturer of vertical and horizontal baling equipment with over 30 years industry experience, and changed its name to the current Torque Industries to reflect its diversification. Director Tony Neef told us more about Hydra-Pac and the other divisions of the group.

Hydra-Pac encourages customers to change the way they think about waste disposal and recycling. "We facilitate



waste recycling cells," Tony explains. "A new development which we are currently undertaking is a containerised recycling cell which comprises a small baling facility, an oil filter press, and a glass crusher. In this way all the client's hub recycling goods can be taken to one location on a mine site and processed before storing for transportation at a later date.

**"There are two aspects to waste recycling – first, doing the right thing and secondly, cost recovery."**

"We are considering putting in a cable stripper for electrical recovery. These are customised units and we can actually develop a recycling strategy around a client's pit waste or hard stands. This kind of equipment is usually scattered around a site but we are bringing it into a central area and grouping the waste handling facilities in a single location for greater ease and efficiency."

Tony suggests that mine site auditing of waste is somewhat uneven and clients are driven less by regulations than by



the need to show themselves as being good corporate citizens, taking care of the environment around the site. "There are two aspects – first, doing the right thing and secondly, cost recovery, quickly recouping the costs."

Clients are receptive to the hub concept. "We have a couple of large baling plants in quite large mining facilities such as Olympic Dam," and these tend to be used for disposal of waste cardboard, plastic and aluminium, and other light products. "Up in Fiji we have installed a lot of 44-litre drum crushers, although these are not so popular here in Australia. There is a requirement for drum

crushing but we have not yet been able to really 'unlock' the demand."

That is likely to change as the 'hub' concept catches on as part of the drive for people to clean up their waste. The hub is the industry's equivalent of a one-stop shop; Tony explains, "There is no one we are familiar with that can offer a range of devices to suit the recycling environment in a hub format. We are custom-building the hubs to suit the type of waste a client has to deal with – for example we can put a small chipper into the facility if a client has a lot of pallets he needs to dispose of."

The hub is a localised and centralised

area for the destruction and re-use of the waste products. The beauty of it, says Tony, is that the set-up cost is quite small. "The procedure is that we build the hub here (in Adelaide) at our site. It arrives on the client's site in a 20- or 40-foot container depending on its configuration, and then it is basically just plugged into a power supply that will power each of the machines." For the mine site manager it means creating a 50-amp supply and starting to recycle – there is no need for a whole range of power points to be provided, just turn up and plug it in.

These facilities can be made to suit an ►►







► individual application (anything from a supermarket to a sausage maker as well as mining and resource operations) and Hydra-Pac has external consultants who can advise on just what is required for any specific application. There are agents in most states and they take care of general service and repairs, although when it comes to commissioning, Tony says, “we take care of everything from the Adelaide factory.”

Hydra-Pac machinery is designed and built in Australia with nothing imported. It is something of a tough space, to continue making equipment locally, but Tony says the manufacturing processes have been aligned with the price point and “we don’t apologise for being a slightly higher-priced product in the marketplace because we do meet Australian occupational health and safety legislation, Australian guarding and electrical safety standards, and you cannot buy a machine from overseas that meets all the criteria required by miners and achieves the right result.” He adds that the cost of a component failure in an imported machine, with perhaps the need to fly in a technician, will far outweigh the few cents extra on buying the domestically produced version.

The equipment is also designed to minimise the need for maintenance and servicing. “The robustness of the equipment is very good, the electronic controls are always to Australian standards – not like an imported machine where the standards may be different – and can be easily worked on by Australian technicians. We offer two options – either we supply all the documentation and the client can do their own routine maintenance, or we have a service contract.”

Hydra-Pac does not get involved in the actual distribution but leaves it to others. However, “we are looking at

some new technologies such as glass-to-sand so we can grind glass back to an aggregate that can be used in road bases.” The sand could also be used in concrete. Recycled wood can be used to make chip pallets that are used in garden spaces. The advantage is that because waste is reduced to a dense mass, it has a much reduced fire hazard. It is less combustible and can safely be stored for quite some time until there is a sufficient volume for a contractor to come and remove it in bulk – again with the advantage of the hub concept in that all the disposal and transportation is done from one place on the site.

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Acquired by Torque Industries in 2012, IPS Automation (which began life in 1980 as Industrial Pneumatic Services) is another of the group’s strengths, specialising in gas production – namely nitrogen and hydrogen generation, compressed air transfer solutions and allied services. In the mining environ-



ment, for example, there is a real requirement for nitrogen gas to refill vehicle tyres, especially in underground applications where a tyre fire could otherwise be a risk. “We offer solutions of producing – re-bottling – nitrogen in high-pressure vessels,” Tony explains. “People don’t really want to be handling gas bottles any more – lugging them around is not occupational health and safety-friendly.”

IPS Automation is also active in the automotive industry in particular, making jigs and fixtures, moulding processes and other systems needed in car production. There is also something of a speciality in automated gluing systems – not the glues themselves but the applicators, which need to be extremely precise in their delivery of adhesive – in partnership with a US company, Sealant Equipment & Engineering Inc.

The Torque Industries group, with its two relatively new acquisitions, offers “much more diversity across the platforms so we can expand our customer reach to cover more requirements including occupational health and safety and site requirements.” There are no silos and staff handle all the brands under a single umbrella. “Our business is to improve other people’s business and that is what we focus on – a total solution idea.”

The group remains ever on the lookout for opportunities to further extend the scope of its product offer, within or even beyond its current four pillar activities: engineering and automation; hydraulics; pneumatics; and filtration. However, before any further dramatic expansion, first a little consolidation would go down well, with the likely merging of two plants in Adelaide around five kilometres apart into a single headquarters facility. That, says Tony, would make things a lot more convenient and put everything under one roof. ■



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