

MAY 2018

ISSUE 1

D2E

DOWN TO EARTH MAGAZINE NEW ZEALAND

- » NEW ULTRA LOW-EMISSION MINI EXCAVATORS
- » QUICK KOMTRAX RECOVERY OF STOLEN DIGGER
- » LATEST APPOINTMENT GIVES KNZ MORE AUTONOMY



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COMMENTS

Hi there,

Welcome to Komatsu New Zealand's first digital edition of our customer magazine Down To Earth – popularly known as D2E.

This publication will focus on interesting Komatsu customer stories, new products and events within NZ, as well as looking at the activities of our Komatsu family in Oceania and globally.

Komatsu New Zealand (KNZ) has been growing significantly over the past couple of years and we felt that this publication would further assist our customers by sharing information through this channel, as well as other media.

As part of the Komatsu Oceania restructuring to integrate the Joy Global mining equipment business, our NZ operations will be led by myself in the new role of Managing Director. This role is designed to continue the focused development of solutions for this market.

In the next couple of months, KNZ will launch our own dedicated website to provide customers throughout New Zealand with a valuable resource covering a very wide range of valuable information on our products, services, technology and people.

But above all else, it will focus on ways we at KNZ can help our customers – our mission at all times is to be "Driven by your Success".

Later this year, we will deliver an online portal so customers can directly order parts, uniquely referenced to their machines' serial numbers. Most importantly for you, this will include a same-day/next-day delivery option for those most commonly used parts.

As part of the Oceania group of Komatsu companies, KNZ is currently enjoying a period of significant innovation and expansion.

We are now well advanced with the rollout of our SMARTCONSTRUCTION technology and our iMC range of semi-automated integrated 3D machine control technology, offering end-to-end solutions for our customers.

In addition, over the past few months, we have been re-engineering our end-to-end parts supply chain in order to significantly improve our in-country availability and thereby our capability to better support the requirements of customers

I hope you find this publication interesting read for you, and illustrates the capabilities and directions in which KNZ and our customers are heading.

Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have ideas on how we can improve on this, our first edition!

Phil Pritchard
Managing Director
Komatsu New Zealand

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[Click here to read more.](#)



Dash 8 Wheel Loaders – Higher Productivity, Lower Operating Cost
[Click here to read more.](#)



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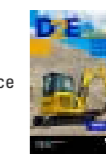
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FRONT COVER
The New MR-5 Mini Excavator range - Komatsu's PC55MR-5
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PROFILE:

Phil Pritchard MD, Komatsu NZ

New appointment establishes autonomous operation in New Zealand

In a significant move that establishes Komatsu New Zealand as a far more autonomous operation – with full authority to make decisions that affect local customers—Phil Pritchard has been appointed Managing Director, Komatsu NZ.

Formerly Komatsu's Regional General Manager NZ, Phil's promotion is designed to ensure the company is far more agile and responsive in its ability to respond to the needs and demands of New Zealand customers – at a time that the business is rapidly growing.

He now reports directly to Sean Taylor, Managing Director of Komatsu Australia.

"With this development, we are really looking at a step change in the way we manage our New Zealand operations," said Phil.

"We have a strong management team and talented staff in New Zealand which means we have more ownership in how we work with our customers; over the past few years, we've seen some significant growth in New Zealand, not only in machine sales, but also in our aftermarket business.

"And my new role now lets us make the decisions here that affect our Kiwi customers, without having to refer them back to Sydney," he said.

"Over the past few years, we've really grown a good rapport with our customers we are listening to them, and the feedback we are getting indicates that our customers are enjoying working with us.

"We now want to be even more agile, so we can move quickly when we need to and ensure our customers get prompt responses."

Phil acknowledged that until recently, there had been fairly strong dissatisfaction around Komatsu's parts availability in the country – something that the company has moved to address.

"In late 2017 we created a distribution centre here in Auckland that aggregates parts from Komatsu facilities from around the world, so that we now have the commonly used parts in country— and based on our local machine population – all in the one place.

"That not only saves us time and money, but it increases parts availability to our customers because we now stock exactly what we need to support them."

Phil joined Komatsu in 2006, initially as Regional GM for New Zealand and New Caledonia, then moving to GM Customer Support for Komatsu Australasia's aftermarket operations, before returning to NZ as Regional GM in early 2016.

His time as GM responsible for customer support has given him an appreciation of the importance of the company's aftermarket business in driving its long-term success.

"While we've seen Komatsu new equipment sales grow by 60% over the past two years in NZ, we've also seen our aftermarket business grow by around the same amount – and that's really exciting for us.

"We recognise that a strong performance in aftermarket is the key to our business; it's what keeps our customers coming back to us, because they are getting the parts, service and support that they need, when they need it," he said.

Phil sponsored the introduction of Komatsu's Dynamics aftermarket program, which has been one of the key drivers in the success in the expansion of the customer offerings.

These include the KOMTRAX remote monitoring system and the telemetry technology behind that, or its Fix It First Time program which aims to minimise downtime by ensuring technicians know the source of a problem and have the tools and parts to fix it before they leave for the customer's machine.

"We are really seeing the benefits of our Dynamics implementation, and our customers are seeing it too, in how we are able to be so much more responsive, or alert them to a potential machine issue before they are even aware of it."

Phil is also enthusiastic about the new technology offerings now available from Komatsu, whether its Hybrid excavators, intelligent Machine Control (iMC) or its groundbreaking SMARTCONSTRUCTION, with its potential to completely reconfigure the way projects are designed, managed and constructed.

"In particular, we're very excited by our iMC technology, which we've had a great response to here in NZ – and mainly through word of mouth.

"We offer some iMC machines – both excavators and dozers – in our rental fleet, and customers love it, they quickly see the potential," he said.

Phil will also be overseeing the roll out in New Zealand of Komatsu's new enhanced surface and underground mining equipment offerings through its acquisition of Joy Mining to form Komatsu Mining Corporation.

"While we don't see much demand in New Zealand for the very large surface mining products that operate in Australia, we can see opportunities in underground mining, and the opportunity now to talk to mining

companies about our capabilities in that space is exciting".

A fairly small, but very significant, development in Komatsu's new position as a more autonomous operation in NZ will be the launch of its own dedicated website in the next couple of months.

"Rather than being just a part of the Komatsu Australia website, our new website is very Kiwi-centric, and talks directly to our customers here," said Phil.

"For us, it's an important step in communicating to our NZ customers that we know and understand their challenges and requirements, and that we have the solutions that are directly relevant to them.

"We'll also be using the Komatsu NZ website with a B2B channel for far more of our interactions with our Kiwi customers."

In conclusion, Phil said there were a number of key takeouts as a result of his appointment as MD for New Zealand.

"OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, WE'VE REALLY GROWN A GOOD RAPPORT WITH OUR CUSTOMERS WE ARE LISTENING TO THEM, AND THE FEEDBACK WE ARE GETTING INDICATES THAT OUR CUSTOMERS ARE ENJOYING WORKING WITH US."

"Firstly, I want to emphasise that the business here is growing quickly, and my appointment can be seen as a licence for us to continue to grow.

"At the same time, we are supporting

that with a whole range of new initiatives, including continually improving our workplace safety strategy, setting up our local distribution centre, and developing our forthcoming website, as well as constantly training our staff to resource the expansion of our equipment sales, service and support operations throughout the country.

"A fundamental part of this is creating a great place to work for our people with fantastic career opportunities, not locally but also through our global Komatsu network," he said.

"And for our customers here, all these developments, plus that increased autonomy for our operations, will see us be much more responsive, and better able to quickly address their needs."

CUSTOMER PROFILE:
Teri Merrilees,
Operator, C&R Developments



Pictured: Teri Merrilees in the cab of a brand-new Komatsu PC1250SP-8R excavator

About two years ago, when she was just 17, Teri Merrilees' dad told her to jump in a digger that needed moving a few hundred metres, then have a play around with it in some piles of sand.

Her dad, a truck driver for the company that owned the digger, showed her which levers did what, and left her to it. As soon as she jumped in that machine, she knew this was what she wanted to do the rest of her working life.

A week later, the owner of the machine offered her a job, and put her to work on small earthmoving and excavation projects, trimming housepads, digging out driveways and the like.

"I'd always been an outdoors type of girl, but I was more thinking about a farming job," said Teri (who turns 20 in September 2018). "But I knew as soon as I jumped in that digger that it was what I wanted to do."

Unfortunately, some of Teri's workmates weren't so positive, and she copped a lot of sexist comments, and was denigrated for being a young female working in a male-dominated industry.

So she started looking around for somewhere else to work; an online friend recommended Cambridge-based C&R Developments as a family owned civil contractor with a progressive attitude, one that hired on merit, not gender.

She approached Simon Ross, who along with his brothers Mike, Tony and Tim, own and manage the company.

"Simon eventually agreed to meet me after I chased him for weeks," said Teri. "After we met, I heard nothing for about three months, then one of his supervisors, Selwyn Hull, mentioned he was looking to bring in a young operator for a project.

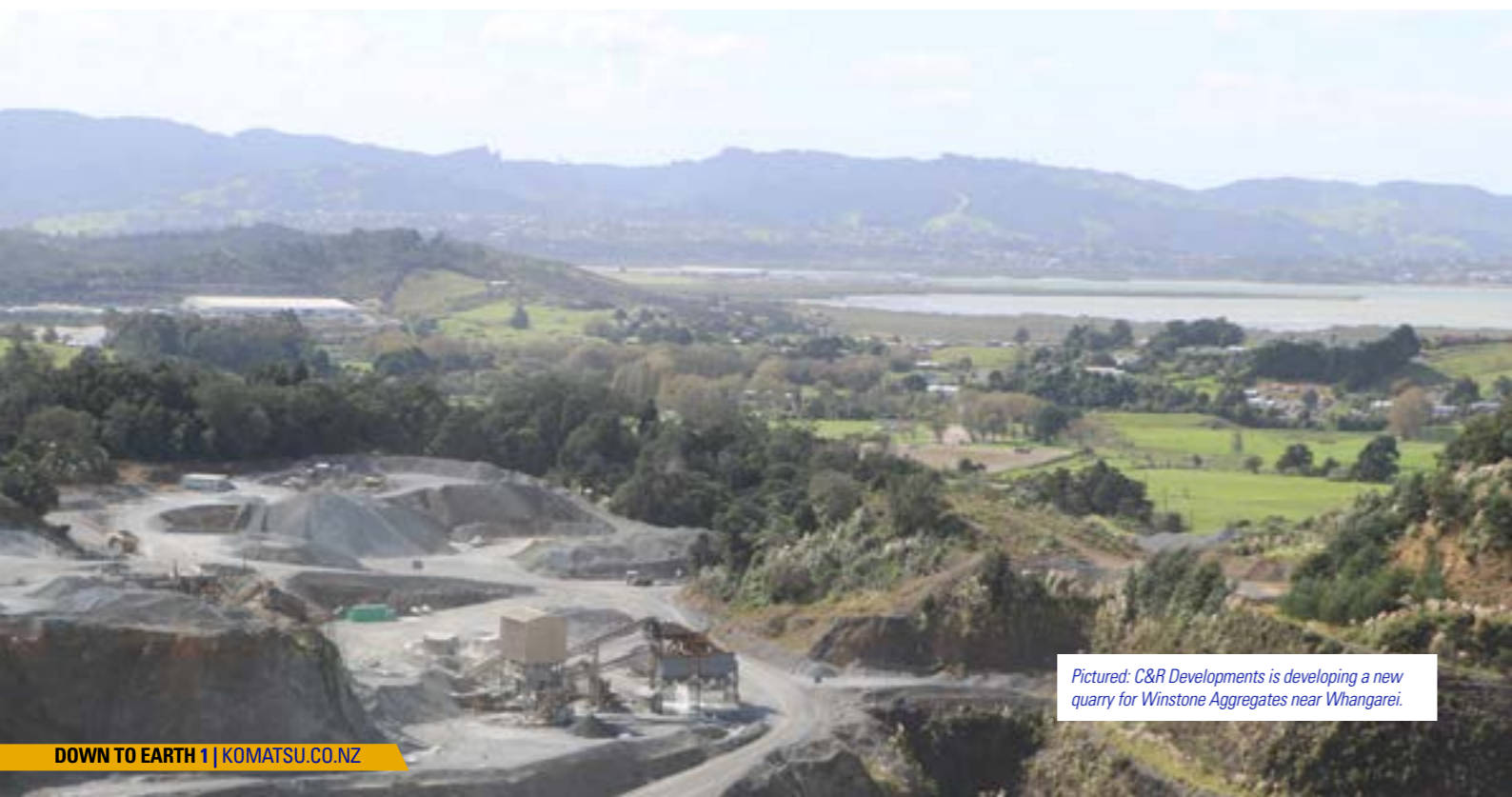
"Simon told him to give me a call."

Teri met with Selwyn one weekend at his home in Hamilton; two of Selwyn's daughters were there at the time. After they'd talked, and Teri had left, one of his daughters turned to him: "I think that's your digger operator."

Two weeks later, in October 2017, Teri started work at the Flat Top Quarry at Kaukapakapa, north of Auckland, where C&R Developments had a contract, working under Selwyn's supervision.



Pictured: Teri with C&R Developments' PC1250SP-8R excavator working on a three-month quarry development contract for Winstone Aggregates.



Pictured: C&R Developments is developing a new quarry for Winstone Aggregates near Whangarei.

In early March, C&R Developments began work on a new quarry development for Winstone Aggregates near Whangarei, shifting vegetation and 180,000 cu m of overburden to reach the papa rock (a grey mudstone found in the region) resource material, under a three-month contract.

To carry out this project, C&R bought a new Komatsu PC1250SP-8R excavator – with Teri as the operator, and Selwyn again as site supervisor.

The Komatsu digger is loading the excavated overburden into three Komatsu dump trucks, two HD605-7EOs and an HD465-7EO.

"This new digger is quite a jump up from the one I was on previously," said Teri. "The previous one was a bit too slow for my liking, but I just worked my way into it.

"The new Komatsu is amazing; I'm so impressed with it, how smooth it is, all the different switches that let you set the speed of things like the slew motors, all that sort of thing.

"For me, it's a real step up, putting me to work on a brand new state-of-the-art machine," she said.

"And Selwyn is bloody good, always checking up on me, making sure I'm not having any problems, he's very helpful with his advice, so I'm always learning as I go with him."

And there's none of the unpleasantness of Teri's previous job.

"The others here are wicked, eh. They see no difference in me; whether it's a male or a female, they always treat everyone the same."

For his part, Selwyn is full of praise for Teri's operating skills, as well as her work attitude.

"She swings that machine beautifully, she's dealing with it really well. The only thing I have over her is 39 years' experience," he said.

"The other thing that is absolutely incredible is that she checks the machine the same way every morning, she's very methodical.

"And Teri's a real team player, she has the potential to be a supervisor," said Selwyn.

"She also has a great sense of humour. For example, she gets her nails done professionally every three weeks – and she's got beautiful long nails. But she

points out that she uses her hands to operate the machine, not her nails!

"We're very happy with Teri, she's an amazing kid. And she definitely has the respect of the others on site, very much so. Everything is like water off a duck's back to her; nothing fazes her," he said.

We'll leave the last word to Teri: "I feel this job is me for the rest of my life. My aim is to do what Selwyn is doing, become a supervisor, have my own crew, eventually teach them what Selwyn is teaching me."

Komatsu truck braking system improves safety, efficiency at Belmont Quarry

The automatic engine braking system on Komatsu HD325-7 dump trucks is helping a Wellington quarry safely and efficiently handle some of the steepest downhill haul roads in the business – even when fully loaded.

GBC Winstone's Belmont Quarry, near Lower Hutt, supplies high-grade aggregates for roading and construction throughout the wider Wellington region.

Unlike most quarries, which win material from a pit, Belmont is currently extracting its material from the top of a hill, then carting it downhill to the crushing and processing plant.

According to Belmont Quarry Manager Shane Hagai, this downhill haul road is one of the steepest in the business.

"We've got two inclines, one of around 8% and the other 10-12%, so good braking on the trucks is key to our process," he said.

The haul distance is 1.4 km, with around a 15-minute turnaround time.

About three years ago, Belmont Quarry opted to replace its previous haul trucks with two Komatsu HD325-7 trucks – based primarily on their unique braking capabilities.

The HD325-7s – along with others in Komatsu's mechanical dump truck range – feature an Auto Retard Speed Control (ARSC) system, that give unrivalled braking power when travelling downhill, even when fully loaded.

ARSC allows the operator to simply set the downhill travel speed and go down slopes at a constant speed, allowing the operator to concentrate on steering.

Speeds can be set at increments of 1 km/h, to match the optimum speed for the slope.

In addition, since the retarder cooling oil temperature is always monitored, speed is automatically lowered if the oil gets too hot.

"With that built-in engine braking, the trucks handle our inclines really well, absolutely without a doubt," said Shane.

"The operators just select the maximum travel speed to come down the hill safely, and they'll come down at that precise speed. When I'm following them down the hill, the brake lights never even come on; the guys and girls only need to touch the brakes when approaching the bins to tip off."

In addition to the two HD325-7s, Belmont also runs a Komatsu HM400-3 articulated dump truck, which Shane brought in from GBC Winstone's Otaki quarry – where he'd previously been manager – in late 2016.

"The HM400 has an auto retarder system, and that works fine here."

Komatsu's auto retarder system on the HM400 works off the accelerator pedal so when the operator takes pressure off the accelerator pedal, the auto retarder works immediately to slow the truck, no matter what speed it's doing.

Retardation is cancelled simply by applying pressure back on the accelerator pedal, so that operators often only need to use the gas pedal for retarding.

"We'd had that truck at Otaki when I was managing it, but I could see the need for it here at Belmont, based on its braking power," Shane said.

"We've had many articulated trucks here at Belmont over the years, but we found they just weren't safe for our conditions, even with exhaust brakes. But there's no concerns with the HM400.

"WITH THAT BUILT-IN ENGINE BRAKING, THE TRUCKS HANDLE OUR INCLINES REALLY WELL, ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT A DOUBT."

"While the articulated truck is mainly helping with carting from the main pit, it also gives us good opportunities for stockpile work, with its manoeuvrability and ability to climb stockpiles."

For the past few years, Shane has worked closely with Komatsu and its Wellington region service agent, Machinery Specialists.

"We have a very close relationship with Machinery Specialists, originally in Palmerston North, and now down in Wellington. Rob Myers and his team there are very good," he said.

"We're still getting very good reliability with the trucks here; if anything comes up, it's just little things, nothing major. And if we need something, Machinery Specialists' and Komatsu's Porirua branch is only about 40 minutes away with a phone call, so that works out really well."

Shane and his operational team at Belmont also find the KOMTRAX remote monitoring system useful, not only for preventive maintenance, but also to assist with operating efficiency.

"Certainly we use KOMTRAX for monitoring the trucks operating data and component health, but we also get the emails showing us how we are going from an efficiency point of view.

"We use these in our toolbox talks, and have a bit of banter about who's got the greatest idle times, and that sort of thing," said Shane.



Pictured: Two Komatsu HD325-7 dump trucks make for safe, easy and efficient operation at Winstone Aggregates' Belmont Quarry near Lower Hutt.



Dedicated Komatsu NZ website, social media adds to our localisation strategy

By mid-year, Komatsu NZ will launch a completely new, dedicated website, part of our localisation strategy that we believe will make it far easier for our Kiwi customers to do business with us.

In addition to this new website, we now have this NZ edition of Down To Earth, as well as our new Facebook page, and Twitter and Instagram accounts bringing you news about Komatsu NZ developments and opportunities, as well as stories about our Kiwi customers.

We're also delighted to announce that we now offer a Komatsu NZ retail merchandise portal (that you can also access through our Facebook page, by clicking the Buy button).

This lets you buy local Komatsu NZ merchandise, in \$NZ, stocked here in New Zealand, and delivered locally.

And later this year, we'll be offering a B2B e-commerce portal that will let you directly order parts and other aftermarket products online. We'll have more details on this closer to launch.

"For us, these are all important steps in communicating to our NZ customers that we know and understand their challenges and requirements, and that we have the solutions that are directly relevant to them," says Phil Pritchard, Komatsu NZ's newly appointed managing director.

How genuine Komatsu hydraulic filters lower your operating costs

Conventional wisdom has it that “non-genuine” consumables and parts are generally significantly cheaper than genuine items – something that is demonstrably NOT the case with Komatsu genuine hydraulic filters, as Barry Millar, Komatsu New Zealand’s National Customer Support Manager reports.

First up, here’s the good news: Using genuine Komatsu hydraulic oil filters can lower your combined costs of filters and hydraulic oils to as much as one-third the cost of using non-genuine filters.

It’s a standard misconception in the industry that non-genuine consumables are always cheaper than genuine products. Not only is that not necessarily the case – and certainly not in the case of Komatsu hydraulic filters! – but our rigorous (and unrivalled) manufacturing specifications ensure that your total operating costs over thousands of hours will be significantly lower using our genuine filters.

Here’s why.

Komatsu’s factory recommendation is that for the great majority of Komatsu machines, when using genuine Komatsu hydraulic filters, the filter should be changed every 1000 hours, and the hydraulic oil every 5000 hours (this is subject to operating conditions).

However, if a non-genuine aftermarket filter – even a recognised “quality” brand – is used, Komatsu recommends the filter be changed every 500 hours, and the oil every 2000 hours (again subject to operating conditions).

The reason for this is that in a genuine Komatsu hydraulic filter the micron ratings, plus the type and volume of filter media are far superior to any aftermarket filter available.

Micron ratings refer to the size of particles that can be trapped by the filtration system; because the micron rating is so fine in Komatsu filters, combined with the additional filter media volume, a far greater amount of dirt and contaminants is collected – therefore significantly extending oil life.

This quality and capacity of Komatsu filters allows them to have a significantly longer service life

between changes – typically twice that of non-genuine aftermarket filters.

The coarser micron rating and lower filter media of non-genuine filters means the filter and oil have to be changed more frequently to ensure that critical hydraulic components are properly protected.

In the accompanying example, we have taken a PC200-8 excavator and compared hydraulic filter and oil costs over 6000 hours (which covers three oil changes in the case of a non-genuine filter). Our example covers two reputable non-genuine filter brands, and the genuine Komatsu hydraulic filter.

The attached table shows cumulative filter and oil costs at 500-hour increments, up to 6000 hours; these costs are divided by 6000 to give the per-hour cost of each option.

At the end of this period, using the non-genuine filter results in an hourly cost for hydraulic oil and hydraulic filters of \$NZ0.56-0.67 (depending on filter brand) per hour, compared with just \$NZ0.25 per hour using genuine Komatsu hydraulic filters.

IT'S A STANDARD MISCONCEPTION IN THE INDUSTRY THAT NON-GENUINE CONSUMABLES ARE ALWAYS CHEAPER THAN GENUINE PRODUCTS.

Hydraulic Replacement Oil & Filtration: Komatsu genuine filters vs aftermarket brand (6000 hours cumulative)

	Filter/oil (litres) per change	Price per filter/litre of oil	Total per change	0 hours	500 hours	1000 hours	1500 hours	2000 hours	2500 hours	3000 hours	3500 hours	4000 hours	4500 hours	5000 hours	5500 hours	6000 hours	Total	Total filter/oil cost Per Hour
Non-genuine "Brand A" Filter Typical AM filter costs	1	\$89.89	\$89.89		\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$1,078.68	
Hydraulic oil costs	135	\$5.70	\$769.50					\$769.50				\$769.50				\$769.50	\$2,308.50	
Filter + oil costs					\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$859.39	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$859.39	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$89.89	\$859.39	\$3,387.18	\$0.56
Non-genuine "Brand B" Filter Typical AM filter costs	1	\$141.40	\$141.40		\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$1,696.80	
Hydraulic oil costs	135	\$5.70	\$769.50					\$769.50				\$769.50				\$769.50	\$2,308.50	
Filter + oil costs					\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$910.90	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$910.90	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$141.40	\$910.90	\$4,005.30	\$0.67
Komatsu Filter part# 207-60-71182 costs	1	\$95.24	\$95.24			\$95.24		\$95.24		\$95.24		\$95.24		\$95.24		\$95.24	\$571.44	
Hydraulic oil costs	135	\$5.70	\$769.50											\$769.50		\$153.90	\$923.40	
Filter + oil costs					\$0.00	\$95.24	\$0.00	\$95.24	\$0.00	\$95.24	\$0.00	\$95.24	\$0.00	\$864.74	\$0.00	\$249.14	\$1,494.84	\$0.25

NOTES Machine type: PC200-8. Prices quoted are in NZ\$, as of November 2017. Both non-genuine filter examples are regarded as "quality" brands. Komatsu factory guidelines require non genuine Komatsu hydraulic oil filters + oil to be changed every 500 hours. Komatsu factory guidelines require genuine Komatsu hydraulic oil filters + oil to be changed every 1000 hours. Filter (non-genuine and genuine) replacement and oil change requirements may be more frequent in certain operating conditions (eg, hydraulic breaker work); however genuine Komatsu filter replacement times will always be longer. Oil costs at 6000 hours for genuine Komatsu filters have been "pro-rata'd" for fair comparison purposes.

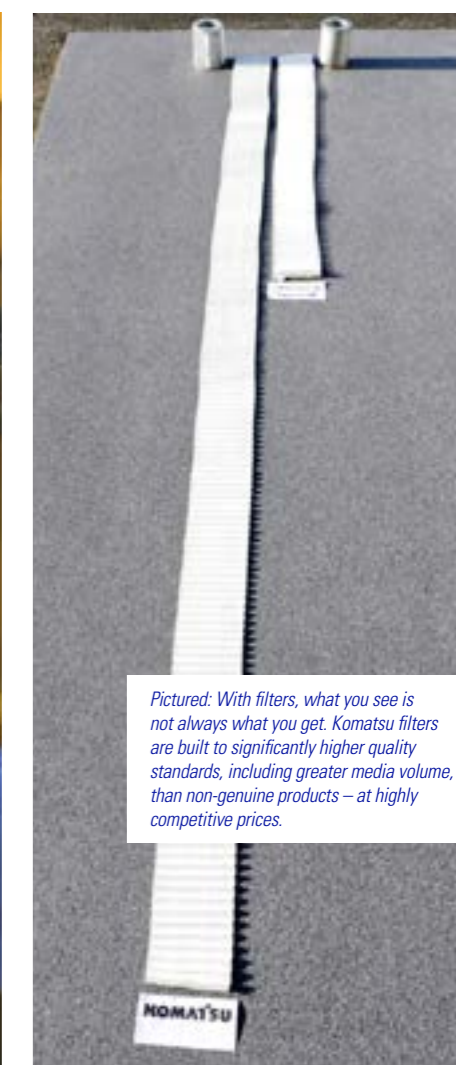


Komatsu Filter Kits

500 hours service filter kit which includes:
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PC88MR-8	\$106.33 + GST
PC130-8	\$101.28 + GST
PC200-8	\$71.37 + GST
PC138US-8	\$101.28 + GST



Pictured: With filters, what you see is not always what you get. Komatsu filters are built to significantly higher quality standards, including greater media volume, than non-genuine products – at highly competitive prices.

BG Contracting's big gains with NZ's first iMC excavator

The contractor using New Zealand's first Komatsu iMC (Intelligent Machine Control) excavator is finding its fully integrated system is delivering significant productivity, safety and cost-saving benefits – even when compared with existing “bolt-on” GPS- based excavator indicate systems.

Komatsu's newly released PC210LCi-10 iMC excavator was purchased by Dunedin-based Clarke Machine Hire – One of the country's largest Komatsu owners with around 300 Komatsu machines in its fleet – in early April, and sent out to work on long-term hire with client BG Contracting.

BG Contracting is a civil contractor based in Canterbury, and has been in operation for about 30 years. It offers a full range of civil construction services, including greenfield subdivision projects, as well as pump station installation and drainage works.

The company is a significant owner of Komatsu equipment in its own right, owning half of its fleet, and hiring in the other half – pretty much all Komatsu – from Clarke Machine Hire. Its total machine fleet based on its current work levels is around 34 machines.

According to Mike McNeil, BG Contracting's Operations Manager, the new PC210LCi-10 – which he described as “absolutely great” – has been at work every day since it was delivered to the company.

“We've been running conventional ‘bolt on’ machine control systems for a few years now, and we have two dozers, two graders, and five excavators – all using Topcon machine control,” said Mike.

“Paul Clarke gave us the heads up that this new excavator technology was in the country and was going to be on display at THE Expo at Mystery Creek Hamilton in March, so we flew up there to have a look.

“We were very impressed with what we saw, and told Paul we would definitely use it,” said Mike.

“In the 12 weeks since we've had the iMC PC210LCi-10 on site, we've found it's a really big step forward compared with conventional GPS-based excavator indicate systems.”

Mike said the Komatsu iMC excavator was more productive, improved site safety, and meant substantial potential savings in materials costs.

“Because you can set up the machine so it won't over-dig; as soon as it gets to the required level, it won't dig any further.

“That means you are not wasting time and effort digging out material you don't have to – and you don't need to fill over-dug sections with valuable aggregates or other fill material.

“We do a lot of undercuts as part of our road construction activities, and for every 50 mm extra you take out, you have to replace it with metal – and that gets expensive.

“Sure, with a conventional machine control operation, you can set a subgrade, but in undercut work, it comes down to operator skills to avoid over-digging. It's easy to over-dig if you do it wrong – and if you don't get it right, it can cost the business a lot of money.

“Because we can set the depths we want to cut, you can never over-dig, which is great from a QA and business point of view,” said Mike.

Improved site safety is another advantage BG Contracting has found with the iMC machine.



Pictured from left: BG Contracting's Kane Spinks, PC210LCi-10 machine operator and Mike McNeil, Operations Manager.

“We have to do a fair bit of work under overhead powerlines, and that's a risk for the operator and those around the machine.

“With the iMC excavator, we can set a safe work height within the design so that the machine alarms the operator a certain distance from the powerlines; that's safer for the operator, and it's peace of mind for us because we know that machine will never come in contact with live wires,” said Mike.

One big difference the BG Contracting team has noticed compared with other 20 tonne machines is the increased stability due to its longer undercarriage and heavier counterweight.

“When you're working at full reach with machine control, the bucket can tend to wobble a bit, so Komatsu have put on a longer undercarriage and bigger counterweight, which gives great stability. That's something you really need with this machine, because it absolutely can't move or you lose accuracy.”

Shortly after arriving on site, BG Contracting took the opportunity to compare the iMC excavator with a similar-sized excavator fitted with a standard “bolt-on” GPS-based excavator indicate system.

The test involved two service trenches, both 2 m wide by 1.2 m deep, one on each side of a new section of road.

“On one side of the road, we had a 20 tonne machine fitted with a Topcon indicate system, and the iMC excavator on the other side,” said Mike.

“They both started at the same time, and we told them to go for it.

“The standard machine achieved 238 lineal metres in an eight-hour day, and the Komatsu iMC got to 352 m – so 124 m or 48% further.

“I think the difference was the iMC operator not having to constantly stop digging

and use his bucket to check his depths to ensure he wasn't over-digging.

“As well, the iMC trench was absolutely dead straight and level, while the other one had little ridges all the way along.”

Mike and the BG Contracting team actually carried out a similar test when they first introduced a machine guidance excavator some years ago.

“Before we got our first GPS system on a 20 tonner, we were averaging 120

lineal metres a day using conventional manual techniques, and we doubled that with the GPS machine. Now with the iMC excavator, we are tripling that.

“We have our own survey team who are responsible for getting all our survey designs into the machine, but all technical issues are handled by Komatsu,” he said.

“And getting a system off the actual factory production line which is fully compatible with the machine is a no-brainer.

“The cost of the iMC machine is similar to that of a standard machine plus a bolt-on aftermarket GPS system – and in fact there are savings in setting it up and calibrating it.

“iMC is definitely the way of the future, we can see that,” said Mike.

For his part, having seen the success of the iMC excavator with client BG Contracting, Clarke Machinery Hire owner Paul Clarke will be looking to add more to his fleet.

“BG Contracting is very happy because everything is factory fitted; this iMC option beats aftermarket for similar cost, and it comes with an 8000 hour warranty,” he said.

“We supply machine control on quite a few of our machines, responding to customer demand.

“iMC is a good option for us, as the machines are all set up ready to go, and we are just dealing with the one supplier,” said Paul.

“iMC IS DEFINITELY THE WAY OF THE FUTURE, WE CAN SEE THAT”





Pictured: Wayne Cowley, Cowley's Hire Governing Director stands in front of one of the company's PC18MR-3 excavators. Quick recovery of a stolen machine thanks to KOMTRAX has prompted the company to buy four more new Komatsu mini diggers.

KOMTRAX remote monitoring helps recover Cowley's Hire stolen mini digger

The ability of Komatsu's KOMTRAX remote monitoring system to help recover a stolen PC18MR-3 excavator – and the client's truck it was sitting on – within a couple of hours has prompted Northland-based rental company Cowley's Hire to order three more Komatsu mini excavators.

Cowley's PC18MR-3 and the truck it was sitting on – along with six or seven other items of equipment – were stolen from a client's locked up yard near Kerikeri one Sunday evening in mid-March.

As soon as the client's staff arrived around 7 am on the Monday morning, and saw equipment had been stolen, they notified police, and also Cowley's as the owner of the excavator, said Cowley's Hire office manager George Jarrett.

"They'd called us straight away to ask if we had GPS on the machine, which we weren't sure about," said George. "We got on to Dave Barnes, Komatsu's local representative, he got onto their KOMTRAX team, and within an hour or so we knew exactly where the machine was.

"They'd pinpointed it smack bang in a shed near Kaitaia – about 200 km away from Kerikeri. The police swooped about 10.30 am, and the digger was still hooked up to our client's truck that had also been stolen.

"As a result of that, we were definitely impressed with KOMTRAX's capabilities, and that was the tipping point for our next purchase," said George.

"We've always been very strongly pro-Komatsu, but there's a bit of a price war going on as the end of the financial year is approaching, so we were looking at a couple of other brands. But after this theft, having KOMTRAX included at no extra charge was the biggest selling point.

"We've just put in an order for four more Komatsu diggers, three PC18MR-3s, which we'll get in the next

few weeks as soon as they arrive in the country, and a PC20MR-3, which arrived a couple of days after we ordered it in late March.

"Certainly KOMTRAX proved itself to us. We use it more to track our Komatsu machines when we need to find them in a hurry, rather than monitoring machine condition and how they are going. Komatsu always alerts us when a machine is due for a service, or if something's about to go wrong – even before we know about it."

ABOUT COWLEY'S HIRE

Based in Whangarei, Cowley's Hire has been servicing the Northland region since 1952.

"We hire anything from party hire goods up to 16 tonne diggers," said George. "Our catchphrase is 'We've got it all!'"

The company owns about 35 pieces of Komatsu equipment, across excavators, dozers, graders – and rollers.

"We'll hire machines for all types of earthworks projects, contractors, local councils, private hirers, and DIYs," George said.

"We bought our first Komatsu machine about 25 years ago, and they've always looked after us very well."

"CERTAINLY KOMTRAX PROVED ITSELF TO US. WE USE IT MORE TO TRACK OUR KOMATSU MACHINES WHEN WE NEED TO FIND THEM IN A HURRY!"

PROFILE:
Elle Schutte



Pictured: Elle Schutte, National Aftermarket Marketing Manager, New Zealand

Elle Schutte is the friendly face of Kiwi Komatsu. She is the person responsible for putting the Silver Fern on the uniforms of the company's 100 team members.

Her personal quest is to reinforce the national identity of the organisation – its employees and its customers – not by separation but by inclusion in the culture of Komatsu. Elle is the proudest Kiwi of them all.

And yet every day her colleagues have to listen hard to understand what she's saying and most days she learns from them something she's never known before.

"What's a jandal; when you go for a smoko why don't you smoke; why does a chillybin have nothing to do with red hot peppers; and if you stop for morning tea where's the brew?"

"These are just some of life's mysteries that perplex me," she smiles.

Elle, her husband Hugo and their two boys Joshua, 14, and Joel, 13 are South Africans.

But after two years and two months in Auckland, they'll deny it.

"I can't wait for the day I have my New Zealand passport in my hand," she says.

That's another three years off – until 'resident' status transitions into citizenship.

Elle and her family don't want to be seen as outspoken critics of the homeland they've left behind.

The stark reality of their change in lifestyle is perhaps best left to a third party – this year's Pulitzer prize winner, noted American sociologist Matthew Desmond:

"Home," he says, "is where children have safety and security, where we find our identities and where citizenship starts."

For Elle the lightbulb moment came when her sons arrived in Auckland to join her and she gave them money to walk two blocks to the local shop.

"They said Mum you can't be serious – it's far too dangerous," she says.

"We came from an environment where you wouldn't do that, where you had locks and bars on all your doors and you still had home invasions.

"We've traded fear for freedom."

Elle had been national marketing manager for a global PC and smartphone company. Komatsu was the first time she'd touched the earth.

"I love it," she says.

"I'm happiest when I trade the high heels for the safety boots and I'm up to my ankles in mud on a customer site."

Elle is Komatsu New Zealand's National Aftermarket Marketing Manager, the first time the company has had such a title. It's all-encompassing – far more than it suggests.

"There's pride and respect in this country and in this company," she says.

"We should be doing all we can to capture our spirit."

Little by little, Elle has been injecting Kiwi into Komatsu NZ.

In 2016, she started a new local electronic news letter "The Dig it" for members of Komatsu NZ's far flung staff across the country.

And she's started 2018 off with a bang, launching Komatsu New Zealand's own Facebook page, Twitter feed and a NZ-specific Merchandise website (in NZ dollars, with local stock and shipping), and this very publication: the first New Zealand edition of the Down to Earth customer magazine.

Another exciting item on her agenda is a NZ-centric website which will be completed by mid-year.

And there's cause for celebration among both customers and staff with Komatsu NZ's own Distribution Centre in Auckland (not Elle's work alone by any means) – stocked by parts arriving directly from Japan and other overseas factories – now up and running.

"Komatsu is a great company and this is a great country, far more so than many people appreciate," she says. "Sometimes you have to see a place through fresh eyes to truly appreciate it."

"Other people have batches – another phrase I'd never heard," she says. "We prefer to explore and discover rather than staying in the same place."

"My boy's think I'm a bit over the top because whenever we're on the road I can't stop smiling and wondering at the beauty. But I hope I never stop."

Elle is, however, on a cultural exchange mission of her own – to introduce the braai – South Africa's traditional smoked-wood barbecue – to New Zealand.

"You use gas here," she says in mock horror. "Someone should introduce her to the hangi."

ELLE IS KOMATSU NEW ZEALAND'S NATIONAL AFTERMARKET MARKETING MANAGER, THE FIRST TIME THE COMPANY HAS HAD SUCH A TITLE.



PHIL THOMSON
USED EQUIPMENT MANAGER,
KOMATSU NZ

"IT'S ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS"

In 1985 Phil Thomson began work as a Territory Sales Manager for Komatsu. In 2018 he is New Zealand's Used Equipment Manager, and continues the Komatsu tradition of providing customers with service and equipment that is second to none. "Komatsu is a company that is very driven by engineering, more I believe, than others. There's a real emphasis on engineering and innovation, that's why Komatsu is at the forefront."

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10000 OUNCE BULLDOZER

Iain Whyte buys his Komatsu equipment by the ounce. Iain is one of the most successful gold miners on the West Coast of New Zealand and while most people calculate in currency he does his budgets in ounces of gold.

His latest investment, a Komatsu D475 bulldozer – the biggest in the region – is going to return its capital cost to him in just three years at a pay back of an ounce of gold a day.

“It’s good value- so much better than buying used machinery,” he said, although he has a mix of new and used machines across his claims behind Greymouth in the glacier region of the South Island.

“People in the area said I would have to work the D475 hard and long to get a payback on such a big investment,” he said.

“It’s turned out to be just the opposite. I use it for specific tasks and it is so quick and efficient that it is giving me a substantial return in productivity.”

Iain’s Whytegold company, established just 17 years ago, is currently moving between 12 and 15,000 metres of material in a daily 10 hour shift and processing and washing about 15 percent of it to reclaim precious metal.

The D475 which is one of the core components of a system he has devised to optimise return has made a massive contribution and yet has worked less than 600 hours in the six months since he bought it.

“The golden rule is that if you don’t have to use it, don’t,” he said. “The big dozer uses a lot of fuel so I expected my fuel bill to go through the roof – but I’m using it effectively for specific tasks and my total fuel bill has actually reduced.”

Iain struck out on his own with a single 20tonne digger and a four-foot sluice screen after working for another miner, as he put it “helping to make him millions.”

It was a calculated move in a volatile industry in which he says “80 percent go broke before they find enough gold to pay their way.” He didn’t – relying on local knowledge of claims up to 100 years old to work sites that were still rich with potential.

The giant upshift came when he invested in a 95tonne Bucketwheel excavator with a capacity of a substantial 1100 metres an hour. Its workload outstripped his ability to process the material despite the purchase of a second hand Komatsu PC600-7, “a really good digger”.

Iain ingeniously devised a unique way to halve the excavator’s output by alternately stopping one of its two conveyor belts so that his processing system could keep pace.

It was a learning which today has resulted in an integrated production protocol which ensures all elements – diggers, dozers and trucks, as well as the screens which capture the gold trace, are utilised to their optimum. Most of the machinery is Komatsu.

Whytegold has two Komatsu bulldozers including the new D475, five PC excavators, one a PC710 with a “mega 35,000hours”, three WA loaders and four articulated dump trucks with the addition of an HM400-3 bought especially to complement the D475.

The diversity of equipment provides redundancy so that if one should be out of operation (“a rarity”) there is backup. While some gold miners prefer to use one large screen to filter their sluice material Whytegold has several smaller ones, providing, Iain says, a more reliable service.

Iain rejects new technology when it comes to assaying and core drilling to determine the prospects of minerals beneath, preferring to rely on his own judgement and his ability to dig deeper, up to 30 metres, on his claims.

However he is a huge fan of technology in machine maintenance and has subscribed to Komatsu’s Komtrax advanced satellite monitoring data service for all his new equipment.

“I depend on Komatsu for its reliability and I don’t expect anything to go wrong, that’s why I buy them,” he said, “Operationally, Komtrax is able to give me so much data that I could not access before like revs, pressures, temperatures, load weight, or even just when the machine is being used – all on my lap top,” he said.

But if something does go wrong?

“Recently we were driving a dump truck out of a hole when it stopped and a sign came up on the screen to say Komtrax had detected a potential fault and had shut the machine down remotely as a precaution.

“We were in an area so remote there is no telephone coverage, yet Komtrax knew.

“Twenty five minutes later someone in Japan had not only diagnosed but rectified the problem and we were under way again.”

Iain is an enthusiastic driver. At 63-years of age he races a Modified Sprint Car in NZ speedway, and he has nominated himself as the principal operator of the D475.

“It’s the Rolls-Royce of dozers,” he said. “It’s comfortable for a full shift with an air tight cab that makes it dust proof and it even has auto greasing so all you do is check it out once in the morning before you turn it on,” he said.

Iain still works a full shift, and more, to maintain his claims and he is justifiably proud that his “small family company” is succeeding when larger organisations with perhaps less personal commitment from their operators are struggling. His success has allowed him to contribute to his community. Recently he gave his time and financial contribution to building a new public hall and Speedway clubrooms in Greymouth and was surprised that the council recognised him with a special citation.

“Gold does silly things to people,” he said. “Gold fever can lead you to make rash decisions. It’s important to stay grounded.”



2 YEARS GENUINE PARTS WARRANTY UNIQUE OFFERING FROM KOMATSU

When an earthmoving equipment customer buys a new piece of gear, it’s standard practice for the machine to be covered by a manufacturer’s warranty for a number of years or several thousand hours. But the same doesn’t usually apply to parts for that same piece of equipment.

However, buyers of Komatsu equipment can take advantage of a unique offering from the company: every new Komatsu genuine part supplied and fitted by one of its skilled service technicians is fully covered by a 24-month/4000 hour warranty (whichever comes first).

According to Bruce Gale, Komatsu’s Business Development Manager – National Service, when a customer invests in Komatsu Service, they are getting a wealth of service expertise, commitment and genuine parts.

“No matter how big or small your requirements are, Komatsu offers Total Customer Support – backed by our unmatched parts guarantee,” said Bruce.

He said having Komatsu service a machine using genuine parts with an extended warranty was just one of a number of elements designed to reduce customer costs and ensure peace of mind when dealing with Komatsu.

“It ties in with our Fix It First Time approach, which ensures service staff have the diagnostic machine information before they even leave for a customer’s site, assisting with our aim of getting your machine back to its optimum performance on the first visit.

“In turn, that means we are reducing customers’ downtime when machines are back to work faster with a lower cost of repair and we can eliminate multiple trips to site.

“And of course, the genuine Komatsu parts provided as part of that service are fully warranted for the next two years,” Bruce said.

Komatsu Kids Corner

Health and Safety are Kim, Matt & Sue's top priority.

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Cross ✗ the box where the technician is doing the **WRONG** thing.



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