



## Company Profile

### FORKWEST/ WESTATE INDUSTRIAL REPAIRS

Forkwest/ Westate Industrial Repairs was established by the business owners Paul Poller and Phil Baker in 1993 when they identified a market niche to repair forklifts and similar equipment for the expanding mining and processing industries in the region. The partners left their employment, borrowed \$7,000 each, leased suitable premises and established Westate Industrial Repairs.

During the first week the only work undertaken was the partners' door knocking every business they could to promote their location and capabilities. They offered a one stop shop for mechanical repairs – forklifts, trucks, cars, and found that it was easy to attract customers as there was a high level of dissatisfaction with existing suppliers. The business still has customers attracted from this initial week of door knocking and from week two has never had a quiet period. Early on in the business history they met a representative from a Perth based forklift company who suggested that he leave a few forklifts with them to see if they could sell them on a commission basis.

They established their own premises in Halifax within two years and the business relocated in October 1995. At this time they decided to start selling forklifts in their own right rather than on a commission basis and started sourcing forklifts from dealers and auctions. The name Forkwest was also registered in 1995 so as to emphasize this aspect of the business. In 1996 they employed their first staff member, a mechanical trainee who was then taken on as an apprentice.

A relationship was established with Allied Forklift, a distributor in Perth. This relationship has been very positive for the business with the owner giving preferential access to equipment and acting as a mentor. After initial attempts to recruit a salesman it was decided that Phil would undertake this role and he has operated largely full time in this role since 2001. Paul manages the workshop section of the business. The business also started to hire out forklifts and has progressively built up a hire fleet currently having 21 machines with a hire out rate of 95 – 100%.

The partners realized that the growth of the business necessitated a move to new larger premises if the business was to continue to grow and they purchased a 3,350m<sup>2</sup> block at 68 McCombe Road, Halifax. This location provides increased exposure and allowed for the design and construction of purpose built facilities with a high quality showroom, well equipped workshop and a fully sealed yard. These facilities have allowed for the display of new product ranges such as skid steer loaders.

The business today has three income streams being Mechanical Repairs, Equipment Sales and Hire Fleet. This structure allows the convenience of a one stop shop service to our customers. The key strategies in the company business plan are to grow the hire fleet significantly while maintaining 95 – 100 % hire rates, increase equipment sales and expand services to existing workshop customers.

The company prides itself on its reputation, products, long standing relationships with customers and its work team. These factors have enabled the business to flourish and provide the base for anticipated future growth.

