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Kalgoorlie business thrives under pressure

Hydramech Engineering was founded in West Kalgoorlie in 2013. The start-up involved one man and a lathe in the back of a mobile plant workshop. The idea was simple – build quality components, have the ability to warrant and support those components, and take away the external influences which affect quality and customers.

Fast forward to today and Hydramech boasts a fully fitted workshop with an extensive range of new precision machining equipment and a team exceeding 18 people with diverse skills from mobile maintenance to precision machining. The business is innovative and unafraid to move with technology and the constantly changing business environment.

Hydramech specialises in mobile mining machinery components including hydraulic cylinder services for underground mining equipment within the Kalgoorlie region. The company is the first choice for cylinder precision machining and fabrication tasks such as cylinder refurbish, repair, rebuild, exchange and sales. Hydramech carries an extensive range of service exchange components to suit Caterpillar, Sandvik, and Epiroc machines, along with complimentary parts for installation and service.

Continued business growth and a dedication to timely customer service has driven Hydramech to invest in smarter solutions. A recent investment in several Micron Technologies digital cylinder service units has resulted in cutting edge capability for disassembly, assembly, and testing completed jobs. It demonstrated the value of working smarter rather than harder, so the next logical decision was to reduce the company's dependence on manual machining, which can be time-consuming and reliant on an individual's skill. This brought about an investment in a Mazak Quick Turn 350MY CNC turning centre.

Steve Nappy, Hydramech's General Manager, explains what prompted the Mazak investment: "Our business is growing and finding skilled labour in Kalgoorlie is a challenge. We had been at capacity for some time and run quite a lean model, so instead of adding to the labour force we decided to invest in technology to achieve greater volume – do more with the people we already have.

"I needed versatility and the ability to do a wide variety of jobs. The Mazak Quick Turn 350MY with a 1500Umm bed length gives us the ability to machine longer rod shafts. The optional Y-axis functionality adds milling capability resulting in less setups per part. It's a very versatile machine that has performed well since we powered it up."

The Mazak Quick Turn 350MY CNC turning centre with multi-tasking capability brings together advanced technology, productivity, and

value to deliver exceptional performance for machine shops large and small. As an MY configuration, the machine features milling capability and Y-axis functionality along with a standard through-hole chuck package, and an integral turning spindle motor to process a wide range of medium or larger diameter parts in a single setup.

Steve describes how Hydramech has benefited from the investment: "We have improved our turnaround times and job costs are down, which means the customer gets a more cost-effective repair faster. Turnaround of parts has improved significantly, and we are definitely achieving more throughput in the shop. The Quick Turn 350MY is versatile and simple to use. We get a higher level of quality than we could ever achieve through manual machining." When asked why Hydramech chose a Mazak over other brands, Steve says: "The Mazak brand was highly recommended by everybody I spoke to. We had to be realistic with our first machine as we had zero exposure to any form of CNC machining, so we needed a solution that was user friendly and allowed us to hit the ground running. Mazatrol has allowed us to do this and we are very happy with the decision to select Mazak for this and future purchases. I was also confident that I could rely on John Hart for world-class support and service. We live and work remotely in Kalgoorlie, so when things go wrong, we need to know we have access to timely and reliable support."

Steve adds: "John Hart guided us through the purchase from an initial concept to installation. We're the new kids on the CNC block and needed help with this decision. Hamish Todd, John Hart's WA Branch Manager, gave us several potential solutions and visited the workplace to understand what we do and the problems we were trying to solve before we settled on this machine. It's not something I could have done alone, and choosing the wrong machine would have been a costly mistake."

Steve concludes: "Our investment in technology is already transforming our business model, so we have ordered a Mazak VTC 530C with a 2m table and fourth axis. We are also investigating additional technologies such as John Hart's Agile Flex machine loading system, to further increase our overall productivity with the same number of people."

www.johnhart.com.au www.hydramech.com.au



Hydramech Workshop Manager Tony Herron (Right) and Lead Machinist Ryan Price in front of Hydramech's Mazak Quick Turn 350MY.