

Safer and faster pipehandling

Vacuum lift equipment, designed and manufactured by **Vacuum Lift Australia**, is contributing significantly to the efficiency of the pipelaying industry. With a vacuum lift unit attached to crane or excavator, chains and slings are a thing of the past, and pipe handling becomes a one man operation.

The lift is applied through rubber lined suction pads which can easily be changed to suit the pipe diameter. Pipes down to 100 mm diameter, and lifts to 10 tonnes and more can be handled. Safety systems make it virtually impossible for the load to be dropped. The equipment has been approved by industrial safety authorities in all States.

Typically, pipelayers have experienced the following advantages with vacuum lift equipment:

- stockpiling and stringing becomes a lot less labour intensive
- the accident rate drops markedly
- damage to the pipe coating is much reduced, as point loading from timber dunnage and chains is eliminated
- the amount of construction machinery can be reduced as the pipe handler can be readily changed over to an excavator.

Some vacuum lift units are designed to be completely self contained, and can be fitted to any crane. They comprise a petrol or diesel motor driving a vacuum pump and supplying electric power to the control unit. Control is by a cordless infra-red or radio system.

Vacuum Lift has achieved recent export successes, selling its units to pipe laying companies in Indonesia and Singapore. The system can also be used to handle concrete slabs, heavy stones and steel plates.

For further information: Klaas Boelema, Vacuum Lift Australia, 2 Kalamunda Rd, Sib Guildford, WA 6055. Telephone (09) 279 3414 Fax (09) 377 2822. (Melbourne agent: Australian Crane and Machinery Pty Ltd.)



A 9.6 tonne pipe being unloaded by a Vacuum Lift unit attached to a mobile crane.

Case study

A world competitive manufacturer

Ajax Spurway Fasteners, by far the largest producer and supplier of industrial fasteners in Australia, has achieved a major ambition; to be recognised as a world competitive manufacturer. Its products are replacing imports, and export sales are increasing dramatically. Asia and the Pacific Rim are the specific focus at the moment, but its major export markets are in the United States, Canada and Europe.

The company's origins can be traced back to 1917 when the forerunner of Ajax Fasteners, McPhersons Boltmakers, began operations in Richmond, Victoria. For many years, this factory supplied the bolt and rivet requirements of major construction and engineering works throughout Australia. A notable example was the supply of 2 inch diameter rivets for the Sydney Harbour Bridge. During recent decades, a combination of tough import competition, the progressive running down of Australian manufacturing industry, and the 1980s economic difficulties placed severe pressure on local fastener manufacturers, resulting in amalgamations and rationalisation.

Ajax Spurway Fasteners, a division of Ajax Cooke Pty Ltd, was formed in 1988 from the amalgamation of two groups, Ajax Fasteners and Spurway Cooke. It has five manufacturing plants, four in Victoria at Richmond, Nunawading, Clayton and Hawthorn, and one in New South Wales at Marrickville, with a total of 520 employees involved in all operations.

Ajax's standard product range covers structural and high tensile bolts and nuts, building fasteners, screw products and blind rivets. Specialised fasteners are also manufactured for construction, engineering automotive, aviation and aerospace industries in Australia and overseas.

Key elements in Ajax Spurway's drive to achieve world competitiveness have been:

Management A management group was recruited to develop a strategy that would put the company on the right path. This required new appointments to general management, manufacturing, sales and marketing.

Workforce The company assembled the people it needed with suitable expertise, and provided further training. Much work was done to create an industrial relations atmosphere where changes in the workplace could be achieved, and the foundations laid for enterprise agreements.

New plant After three years of planning, and the investment of \$5 million, new boltmaking

equipment, capable of taking Ajax into the next century, was installed last April. More new facilities will follow.

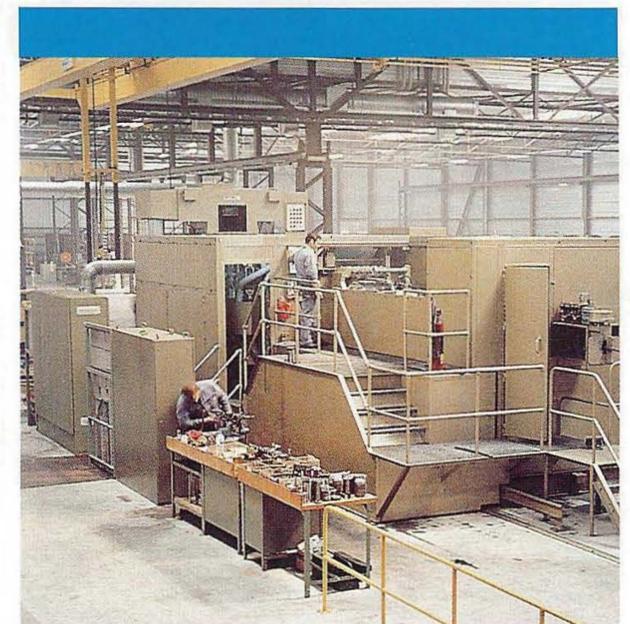
Product quality Through the Crosby programme, Total Quality Management was introduced right through the organisation, involving all employees. The Standard Products Group achieved quality accreditation to AS3902 early this year and the remainder of the company is currently being audited to this status.

Marketing and sales The Standards Products Group totally changed the basis of its operation. An 'accredited distributor' network was established, and a more intensive promotional and lobbying policy adopted. The OEM (original equipment manufacturing) Division re-invigorated its marketing approach, focussing on meeting customers requirements on time.

Raw materials High quality raw materials, such as steel, available at world competitive prices, are essential if Ajax products are to succeed in the marketplace. Over recent years BHP Steel has worked closely with Ajax in the development of a number of alloyed steels for the production of high tensile bolts. This has given Ajax an Australian source for steel previously imported, and has contributed to the company's success in this important market.

At more than any time in its history, Ajax Spurway Fasteners is confident of its ability to remain in the fastener 'big league' and looks forward to a prosperous future.

For further information: Chris Dyball, Ajax Spurway Fasteners (Division of Ajax Cooke Pty Ltd), 11-21 Doonside St, Richmond, Vic. 3121. Telephone (03) 429 1422 Fax (03) 428 2860.



A Nedschroef high speed bolt maker, specially developed to Ajax Spurway Fasteners' requirements.