



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science

dealflow

ENTREPRENEURS' PROGRAMME

SEPT-DEC 2016



In focus:
**Advanced
manufacturing**

Australian steel
Automated and
competitive

Delivering data faster
Further and faster wireless
transmission

Trading on the grid
Connecting consumers
and power companies



Jamie Howard and his compact mini loader which has cost and safety advantages.
Photo: Simone De Peak © Fairfax Syndication.

Engineering safe solutions

A mini solution for costly clean-ups.

“The mini loader eliminates the risk of injuries on work beneath conveyors, reduces downtime and is cost effective.”

**JAMIE HOWARD
MANAGING DIRECTOR, HMS EQUIPMENT.**

An award winning Newcastle engineering company has launched its remote-controlled miniature front-end loader into the lucrative Chinese mining market.

HMS Equipment’s mini loader weighs in at 1.6 tons, is only knee-high and 1.3 metres wide but is able to carry up to 300 kilograms in its front bucket and is highly manoeuvrable using a simple remote controller.

Whilst the mini loader has multiple potential uses, it was designed by HMS Equipment to clear coal spillages under conveyor belts in mines. These incidents are costly and potentially dangerous to rectify.

HMS Equipment’s founder and managing director Jamie Howard says the mine conveyor belts that carry coal from below ground to the surface often need to be shut down when coal spills occur off a belt, with manual clean-ups taking up to three hours and costing as much as half a million dollars.

Howard says his innovative mini loader makes it safer for mine operators to clear up spills in dangerous and extremely small areas under conveyor belts and prevents wastage of coal after spills.

“Our machine is operated by one person using a remote control and it can work underneath operating belts, which means there can be zero downtime for conveyor belts and no production time lost due to spills,” he says.

Local collaboration, global markets

HMS Equipment is part of the HMS Group of Companies Australia, which Howard, an engineer with an extensive track record in the mining industry, established in 2008 to provide labour hire, equipment and training to the mining sector and other industries.

The company is an active member of HunterNet, a network of manufacturing, engineering and specialist services companies located in the Hunter and Central Coast Regions of New South Wales and has worked to keep all aspects of the manufacture of the mini loader local, with about 20 regional companies involved to some degree.

Despite its focus on keeping manufacturing local, HMS Equipment is actively targeting international markets, with China a key customer.

“Australia has roughly 123 black coal mines, while China has around 19,000. So there is a massive opportunity there for local Australian manufacturers,” Howard says.

“Making these machines is easy, it’s getting the products into markets that can be difficult.”

**JAMIE HOWARD
MANAGING DIRECTOR, HMS EQUIPMENT.**

Following a HunterNet trade delegation to China in 2014, Howard entered into a distribution agreement with the JKZZ Shandong Kingtec Star Electromechanical Company, which operates in 20 Chinese provinces, to provide above and below ground versions of the mini loader on a trial basis.

The mini loaders have been exported to China and negotiations are underway to secure further larger orders.

Mini loader markets

The HMS mini loader has attachments for road sweeping, ploughing and concrete mixing and the company has developed a modified version of the vehicle for the construction and road sweeping industries.

Several machines have been sold or are being leased by Australian aluminium smelters, mines and construction companies and Howard says feedback has been “overwhelmingly positive”. The company is also exploring options to market the street sweeper version of its mini loader into Asia and beyond.

HMS Equipment secured Australian Government Accelerating Commercialisation assistance to develop the mini loader, including the pilot vehicles for China.

Australian Government Commercialisation Adviser Maureen Murphy sees great potential for the mini loader, particularly in developing markets such as China, where she believes it can make a positive contribution to mine safety standards.

“By the end of the China trial, HMS Equipment will be in a position to attract further investment to help them scale the business,” Murphy says.

Murphy is also upbeat about the flow-on effects of HMS Equipment’s successes in its local region.

“As HMS Equipment grow their markets and production there will be positive flow-on effects in the whole Hunter region because this company is focussed on sourcing its supplies locally and is keeping its manufacturing of the mini loader in-house.”

Snapshot

Company

HMS Equipment Pty Ltd

Established

2012

Key products

Above and below ground HMS Mini Loaders with attachments including augers, trenchers, forks, road sweepers and concrete mixers

Personnel

In 2012—just the founder; in 2016—four staff and hiring additional manufacturing labor as required

Company growth

The company has pilot machines in China; has sold several machines within Australia; and is leasing machines with and without operators. It began expanding into the construction industry in 2016

Revenue and investment

The company is seeking investors and strategic partners to help it tap into wider Australian and global markets

Awards and recognition

- › 2016 Diesel Dirt and Turf Expo Best New Product winner
- › 2015 Hunter Manufacturing Awards, Excellence in Technology winner
- › 2014 Hunter Manufacturing Awards, Excellence in Technology winner
- › 2013 Hunter Manufacturing Awards, Excellence in Technology winner
- › 2013 Hunter Business Awards finalist
- › 2013 New South Wales Mining Suppliers Awards winner

Web

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