

Frews Contracting prepares for another century of solid business with WrightZone



Frews Contracting undertakes a range of demolition, civil and site works, site remediation, and material processing work throughout Canterbury and further afield.

Recent projects by Frews Contracting include the partial demolition of Nelson Airport, site works for two new McDonald's restaurants, as well as site work and site remediation works for several new fire stations around Christchurch.

In addition, the company also has two quarries where it sources aggregate for its projects. A family-owned company, that's been operating for 97 years now, it's grown to a point where it employs 65 staff.

Hamish Frew, managing director, leads the company. He, along with Business Analyst Damien Provis, made the decision recently to upgrade the company's weigh load system – "to bring it into the 21st century," as Damien puts it.

Historically, both quarries and the supply yard had its own weigh system, with differing levels of sophistication.

"Savills Road Quarry had loader scales, and the supply yard in Factory Road had a slightly more complex system, but the quarry at Hororata had a very rudimentary system – the weigh docket had nothing

more than the weight on it," says Damien.

"We had a lot of double handling, and there was always the risk of losing dockets or having a data entry mishap.

"However, when we had new loader scales installed at Savills Road, by Position Partners, they recommended we talk to WZ (WrightZone) about a system offering weighbridge, loader scales visibility, and compatibility in one.

"Naturally, we did our due diligence and compared competitor offerings but seeing the WrightZone system in practice was quite compelling.

"We visited Longburn Shingle in Palmerston North to see the system in operation and came back thinking it was probably the right solution for us," says Damien.

WrightZone International is a full-service quarry management software and solutions company providing software development and implementation as well as training and ongoing support services.

Frews introduced the WZ Weighbridge system to its different sites in stages. The first to be upgraded was their Belfast supply yard, followed by the quarries a few months later.

The Hororata quarry is in a remote rural location, making it particularly challenging when it comes to using electronic devices, as there is no fixed electricity. The site's weighbridge has solar power, and there's a generator too. The tablet in the loader (that's plugged into the loader scale) has a 3G USB stick for server communications, while the tablet in the scale house gets its connectivity from a 4G modem.

WrightZone's WZLoad tablet technology mitigates two factors that most take for

granted in this day and age, in that without power or internet, the system still works!

"Aaron was quite clear that all stakeholders including loader drivers had to be involved," says Damien.

"So, we put together a one-night training session and got our loader boys together."

Malcolm, one of the loader operators, simply says about the system; "It's bloody good."

He and his colleagues have found the WZLoad application to be simple and very effective to use.

Hamish Frew, says quite a few of his drivers are older; "but even they could pick it up quickly – it's not a steep learning curve."

While the one who's benefitting the most is Damien himself, the effects of the new system are being felt throughout the company.

"It's great to see the quality of information coming out of each department, and I'm looking forward to seeing how else this software can improve our operation," says Hamish.

And Damien agrees.

"We're definitely reaping the rewards. The process for the operators and drivers is not any harder than before, but the results are so much better.

"At my end, I can see everything as it happens – I can see when trucks are waiting, I can see the quantities coming and going – pretty much everything the quarries are doing from a transaction level, in real time. With a few clicks, I can

"We really pushed WrightZone to the limit when it came to how to get what we wanted to achieve, but that being said they still indulged us with our 'want to haves' and 'like to haves,'" says Damien Provis from Frews Contracting.

see exactly how many tonnes of material have been delivered to a site.

"The software is great for invoicing, too, with a direct upload to our financials, as is the ease of reporting."

The system is also more accurate, with fewer data entry mishaps, he adds.

"I can fix fat finger moments quickly and easily. And it's faster too, as there's a lot less data entry to do, in comparison to previous systems we've had and tried.

"Having everything on one cohesive system is great – it just makes it all simpler. When operators switch sites, it's still the same system, which makes it easier for staff to cover for each other.

"We really pushed WrightZone to the limit when it came to how to get what we wanted to achieve but, that being said, they still indulged us with our 'want to haves' and 'like to haves,'" says Damien.

"For example, we wanted the tablets to be optionally independent of the weighbridge. The Hororata weighbridge is unmanned so we use a tablet for that, the supply yard weighbridge at Belfast is manned Monday to Friday only, hence the Loader Driver is following digital instruction.

"But on Saturdays, the systems configuration flexibility delivers choice;

from inside the cab transactions are created with dockets printed with or without the weighbridge, with or without the certified loader scales, and/or in combination. The tablets are set up to be the point of sale terminals.

"It's a mutually beneficial arrangement – we are getting exactly what we want and need in our operation, and WrightZone is getting a lot of great and practical improvements to the system that I'm confident will be passed on to other clients."

Frews and WrightZone continue working together, looking at more ways to improve the system, with the most recent advantage being the ability to export data directly from WrightZone Weighbridge into the company's project management system.

With a faster and more accurate weigh load system, offering easy invoicing and reporting, Frews Contracting is ready to head into its second century in business.



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WrightZone
committed consulting

(m) +64 21 978 963

(m) +61 420 978 963

(o) +64 9 834 8340

support@thewrightzone.com

www.thewrightzone.com