

Ken's Korner

MLA is 40 years old this year.

A long time. Yes, but for the owner of our company, Tercia and Company Ltd (and myself) it all started 50 years ago.

In 1970 the trading company Tercia (at that time called T. Chatani and Co) were looking for partners in Australia to market the newly produced Mitsubishi Forklift Truck and settled on Brambles Industries Ltd's Forklift Truck company "CHEP Equipment" where I was employed at that time.

After 10 successful years, Tercia decided to start their own company to represent Mitsubishi and asked me to form what was to become MLA Holdings Pty Ltd.

I was lucky to have top staff from Brambles join me.

Garry Cassel – Engineering and Service Manager, Gary Matherson – Spare Parts, Vic Condie – Manager and later, Arthur Beach – Sales Manager.

All this run from a small office in Rydalmere.

40 years later with 150 staff and 7 substantial branches throughout Australia there is no doubt that MLA is one of the main players in the Australian Forklift Truck industry.

The star-studded staff we started with set a good example.

I am retiring as Managing Director of MLA this year and Matt Saunders will be taking over this role. All the best Matt.

I am pleased that I will still have a keen interest in the operations of MLA as Deputy Chairman under our Chairman Mr. Y Chatani.

All the best for the next 40 years of MLA.

Ken Rathgen



Inside >>> ■ Looking back over the years ■ New Managing Director: Matt Saunders
■ Congratulations to Steve Cook on 30 years of service!

Looking back over the years



T Chatani & Co offices circa 1980

Ken Rathgen' long association with Mitsubishi Forklift Trucks started with Brambles Limited almost 10 years before the creation of MLA Holdings Pty Ltd. In 1970 Mitsubishi had commenced manufacturing Forklifts of quality in Japan.

In 1980 Masuda-san, from Japanese trading company T. Chatani & Co Ltd, invited Ken to head up their new venture distributing Mitsubishi Forklift Trucks in Australia. The first Chairman of MLA was Mr Kanamori and Mike Itani was a founding Director of the company only retiring from this role in 2017.

In the 1990's MLA continued to grow and expanded its influence in the Heavy Forklift Truck market. In 1991 MLA was appointed the Australian Distributor of Fantuzzi Trucks and later distributor of Linde Heavy Trucks, and the MLA Vulcan brand was born. In 1996 MLA was accredited ISO 9002 Quality Assurance.

Since the start of the new millennium product development has become more rapid incorporating advancements in technology.



MHI Training at MLA Adelaide



MLA Vulcan

To this day ongoing improvements to product knowledge and technical training have been hallmarks of MLA's culture with suppliers sending their most qualified people to train in Australia.

Now the national network of MLA owned branches has expanded to the Gold Coast and the Hunter. Seven branches, one company and one focus. To excel in customer service, safety and equipment reliability.



Ken Rathgen

Ron Palmer

Gary Cassel

Gary Matheson

Mike Itani

In 1980 the MLA start-up team in Pike St Rydalmere were Ken Rathgen-MD, Ron Palmer-Finance Manager, Gary Castle-Service manager and Gary Matheson-Parts Manager. As a Director, Mike Itani played a vital role for MLA as the man on the ground in Japan. MLA Victoria also started in 1980 with Queensland following in 1982.

MLA Head Office Sydney



MLA Melbourne



MLA Adelaide



MLA Perth



Hard work and persistence through the 1980's paid off with growing numbers of customers choosing MLA and Mitsubishi Forklift Trucks. MLA outgrew its original site and needed to move. But not too far, down the street to 26 Pike St Rydalmere.

Over time and working closely with T Chianti & Co Ltd and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), MLA was able to input local Australian market needs to the development of better Mitsubishi Forklift Trucks products.



Ken at Pike St Rydalmere

MLA Brisbane



Classic MLA Gold Coast



Hunter MLA Newcastle





Introducing our new Managing Director: **MATT SAUNDERS**

We're pleased to announce that, as Ken Rathgen retires after 40 years at the helm of MLA Holdings Pty Ltd, Matt Saunders steps up into the role of Managing Director from January 1st, 2020.

Matt's appointment as Managing Director comes as part of a planned leadership transition that followed Ken's announcement to retire at MLA's Annual General Meeting earlier this year.

Matt Saunders has been the General Manager of Operations at MLA since 2006 and a Director of the company since 2017.

Prior to joining MLA, Matt held senior leadership roles at NACCO as General Manager within the Hyster and Yale groups for over a decade where he developed his leadership within the Material Handling Industry.

Previously, Matt's working career commenced at QANTAS as a Management Graduate. He progressed in a variety of management roles with Qantas Operations

and Freight Divisions over a 7-year period. He holds a Bachelor of Commerce and an MBA.

Matt said "MLA must continue to build on the accumulated experience of decades past and always ensure that progress and prosperity will continue to higher levels. It is imperative that we should never, either through extravagance or carelessness, fritter away all that we had so laboriously built up over the past 40 years. MLA will realise improvements in customer service, revenue growth and profitability in the years ahead. Every staff member will need to play their part to ensure our continued success in 2020 and beyond."

Matt is born and raised in Sydney's Sutherland Shire and the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks Rugby League team is another great passion of his. Matt not only has a busy working life but as a father of 3 growing boys his family life is pretty exciting too.

"I would like to take the opportunity to thank all MLA employees for your significant effort and contribution in 2019. I look forward to continuing the journey together next year and wish you and your families a safe and happy festive season." Said Matt.

Congratulations to Steve Cook on 30 years of service!

At MLA Holdings, we understand that our staff are our greatest asset, and we are thrilled to honour Steve's 30-year dedicated service and commitment to MLA. It is our valued staff whose commitment to MLA's mission and values that make MLA the organisation it is today.

Steve Cook started as a Storeman with MLA Holdings in October 1989. Now Senior Parts Interpreter Steve is one of MLA's longest serving staff members.

MLA would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Steve for his 30 years of service and we look forward to many more good years to come.

Nasser Rahiman (National Parts & Distribution Manager) presenting Steve Cook with a token of appreciation on behalf of MLA.



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