



VFS have saved over \$150,000 on forklift gas since switching to a battery electric fleet.

# FOLLOWING THE LEADER

From working night shifts on ground, to becoming Director of Operation at Victorian Freight Specialists, Chris Collins reveals the importance of the company's high-performing Jungheinrich EFG forklift trucks.

**G**rowing need for expansion of warehouse space and rising e-commerce business in Australia has significantly increased demand for forklift truck replacement and bulk investment in purchase of electric forklift trucks for warehouse operations.

In recent years, there has been a considerable shift away from internal combustion to electric powered forklifts. Chris Collins, Director of Operation at Victorian Freight Specialists, began his career in transport working with his father and grandfather in their family transport business, Express Freight.

He joined Victorian Freight Specialists over 22 years ago as a night operations manager, and although now he oversees the company's entire operations department, Chris still loves the feeling of team spirit when he works the occasional night shift.

"I've done some night shifts recently to see how things are going, and I just can't believe how different warehouse operations are now because of our Jungheinrich EFG forklift trucks," he said. Chris used to return home every night for 10 years covered in gas smoke

residue from head to toe.

"When I was out on the floor, there were 20 or so forklifts making a loud racket buzzing around with gas. I would finish my shift with a dirty face and a really bad taste in the throat," he says. Chris credits the Jungheinrich EFG trucks as a game-changer for not only his health, but for the entire business as a whole.

"At a time when health is so essential, having an outstandingly clean site because of our powerful EFG trucks is setting a new standard in terms of ergonomics. It's a pleasant environment at work, and I know our staff are thankful across the board, due to the changes in our forklift model," Chris says.

## SILENT ACHIEVER

Australia has witnessed significant growth in the industrial property market over the past few years, with greater interest by property and real estate investors to invest in business parks and logistics. VFS cater for local and regional distribution through Victoria and Southern New South Wales and have recently expanded their

operations, which sparked the need to revamp its essential equipment.

"Our focus is to have the best equipment possible. We had internal combustion trucks for years because they're a cheap unit. Then we trialled other products, and compared to other EFG trucks on the market, Jungheinrich is the only brand that ticks all the boxes," Chris says.

VFS have over 175 employees across five large depots in Dandenong, Truganina, Wodonga Geelong and Gippsland. VFS provide general freight services and are the biggest general freight carrier in the state of Victoria.

Chris says it's a giant organisation that requires the most reliable equipment to serve Australia's well-known hardware, pharmaceutical, automotive and beverage providers.

"It's more important than ever to provide efficient and cost-saving service to our customers who are also providing an essential service during this time. The efficiency we've created is because of Jungheinrich EFG forklift trucks already in operation," Chris says.

"We've achieved a win across all categories. Jungheinrich provide

superior units that are ergonomic and proven to be the best equipment for our operations."

## WORKPLACE WITH COMFORT

Chris says VFS prides itself on being a loyal company, committed to offering good, old fashioned customer service. When choosing new machinery that has the capacity to alter business operations for good, he says it's about finding a provider that aligns with your company's values.

For many workers, like Chris, who have been involved in warehouse operations for many years, the introduction of new technology through shifting from internal combustion trucks to EFG trucks has been a welcomed miracle, and now the staff will never look back.

"Mistakes in the warehouse are dangerous. Jungheinrich has provided a safer unit with ergonomic design resulting in great throughput and driver comfort," Chris says.

Safer operation during a time of unprecedented demand has been crucial to sustaining workplace morale and operations, Chris says. He highlights the massive difference from no longer experiencing the setbacks with previous gas units.

"No changing LPG bottles and no inspecting IC Engines, no exposure to exhaust fumes, has provided substantial saving. Minimum operation noise with the battery electric unit means a quieter and more efficient ride for the operators," Chris says. He also pointed out there has been notable savings in fuel costs due to low power input for chargers, rather than renting and storing LPG bottles.

"The business was spending over \$150,000 a year just on forklift gas alone before we thankfully changed to our electric fleet, and now these units are installed at all of our depot sites," he says.



Jungheinrich economic designs result in workspace safety and driver comfort.

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"It's amazing how changing over a forklift model can transform a warehouse into a cleaner environment. Before we went to our full fleet of electric trucks, Jungheinrich ran charging numbers and trials that really made us feel comfortable with our choice," Chris says.

## EFFICIENT AND EASY

Li-ion batteries are revolutionising the market for electric industrial trucks. Jungheinrich's li-ion batteries ensure continuous operation and thanks to their long service life, Chris says VFS are getting plenty of use out of them.

With units requiring battery changes, the Jungheinrich Snap fit System has ensured a safe and non-time-consuming method of installation, in two minutes. Chris says the new Lithium Ion units installed at the company's Wodonga site allows 24-hour operation without the need to change batteries.

"When you tender for major work, you have to be able to ramp up operations and have key machinery in place that are also sustainable and cost-efficient," Chris says.

He added that the professional ongoing service has helped maintain the electric fleet to always be high performing machinery. "One thing that goes without saying is that the Jungheinrich After Sales Service works excellently and is always there when you need it, which is rare."

Cleaner energy technology has provided new possibilities for VFS' warehouse efficiency. "The Jungheinrich equipment has improved our efficiencies and substantial savings in our operational costs," Chris says.

After rolling out the full fleet of electric trucks across all VFS' depots, Chris wishes the company converted to the smarter and cleaner units sooner. "We always want to be on the front foot and have the most innovative and safe equipment that has proven results, which we definitely have," Chris says. ■



VFS utilise Jungheinrich EFG trucks for maximum performance at minimum energy consumption.