

Definition of Circularity: a sustainable circular economy involves designing and promoting products that last and can be reused, repaired, and re-manufactured.

Definition of Sustainability: sustainability consists of fulfilling the needs of current generations without compromising the needs of future generations while ensuring a balance between economic growth, environmental care, and social well-being.

Access Solutions is committed to reducing our carbon footprint to create a sustainable future for emerging generations. Circularity and sustainability are crucial considerations when it comes to our fleet – all of our equipment plays a significant role in many varied industries, and choosing fleet that is designed and built with materials that have reduced their environmental impact will make a difference.

As a company, we own around 1000 elevated work platforms, forklifts, and a large collection of aluminium scaffolding that we manufacture in our Auckland warehouse. Using aluminium as opposed to Steel, being a lightweight and durable material, can minimize energy consumption during manufacture.

When we invest in new fleet we need to keep energy efficiency as part of our decision process; electric motors, regenerative braking, and advanced battery technologies can all enhance the overall energy performance and reduce gas emissions. Transitioning to renewable energy sources when it becomes available, such as solar for charging or powering batteries can significantly reduce carbon emissions associated with their operation. Regular repairs and maintenance and inspections on our fleet ensure that EWPs and forklifts operate at peak efficiency, reducing energy waste and extending their lifespan. Also, investing in new fleet regularly, and keeping the average age of our fleet low, means R and M costs will be kept to a minimum.

Managing the end-of-life of our fleet will also help contribute to a more sustainable economy. EWPs need to be recertified at the 10-year mark – but

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we sell most machines before we need to undertake this costly exercise. We sell our older units overseas so they get to continue their lifecycle in less regulated markets, enhancing the circularity of an EWP. Forklifts don't need to be recertified meaning their lifespan is a lot longer and we retain them in our fleet for as long as they are working well. We can then sell them, usually within the domestic market.

As we purchase more machines to replace 'old' fleet, more and more of these will be alternate power sources to fossil fuels. This will push our favourable percentages (of the fleet that use an alternative power source) to a much higher level.

Currently:

EWP's 459 - total number in our fleet (and the % that currently use an alternative power source)

Electric, Peco and Hybrid – 78.65%

Diesel – 21.35%

FORKLIFTS 447 - total number in our fleet (and the % that currently use an alternative power source)

Diesel = 35.33%

LPG = 24.38%

Electric, Manual = 40.29%

When it comes to the circularity of our vehicle fleet, we keep our transporter trucks for a number of years - they range in age from 5 years to 17 years old with an average age of 8.2 years. We are waiting for a new low loader to join the fleet later this year, so R and M will be reduced. We buy diesel trucks as electric models are still a very expensive alternative.

We have a modern fleet of Amarok utes, which are updated around the 170,000km mark. All our vehicles are well maintained and regularly serviced and are on-sold or traded on newer models. Electric utes for our needs are few and far between and as with trucks, are an expensive option.

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Although it is difficult to reduce the amount of mileage our transport drivers, techs, and BDMs undertake, we can implement efficient scheduling, route planning, and load optimization techniques to minimize fuel consumption, reduce kilometres travelled and enhance productivity. We have also installed a fuel tank on site, so all diesel vehicles can fill up without having to travel to a service station.

In the office, our sustainability is getting better all the time. We use Inspire, a specifically designed rental software package, that looks after all facets of the operation and has eliminated a lot of paper usage; with its mobile functionality, our drivers and technicians all have iPads and phones so they can sign off deliveries and collections on site, make job notes and look at contracts, complete maintenance records, take photos of damage and have it all stored in the cloud. We also use Xero for back office functions, which merges well with Inspire and with the ability to store all invoices, has eliminated more paper.

We have been trialling paperless timesheet functions with our pay provider Ezy pay and once that is up and running even more paper will be saved.

We use Employment Hero as an HR, people management platform. All personal paperwork is stored in the cloud and all employment contracts and paperwork can be sent by email via this platform, eliminating even more paper.

We also utilize the recycling of paper, rubbish, batteries, and aluminium by using external recycling providers.

Access Solutions is certainly evolving as a company when it comes to sustainability and circularity – and there is plenty more that we can do in that space. By focusing on sustainable design, efficient operations, circular economy principles, and innovative business models our company, and indeed the industry, can contribute to a more sustainable future.

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