



# Manufacturing News Out of New Zealand With The Isaac Findings

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*Noted New Zealand Journalist, Peter Isaac, takes a look at the many facets of manufacturing in New Zealand*

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## NEW ZEALAND ELECTRIC UTILITY VEHICLES ON SALE . . .

Electrical bus and utility truck manufacturer ZEV of Palmerston North has driven to the forefront of alternative power heavy vehicle manufacturing.

The New Zealand company took advantage of the lag globally in vehicular battery development to focus on new applications.. Zero Emission Vehicles has sold several of its compacting rubbish trucks to local bodes, notably the Kapiti District Council.

These ZEV Enviro Series trucks are in a range of weights from 9 tonnes. These are all battery-electric vehicles.

ZEV provides rear-loading, compacting refuse and recycling collection options available in a range of bin sizes.

The locally conceived, designed and built ZEV returns Palmerston North to the era in the 1960s and 70s when the city was one of the Australasia's automotive centres. Palmerston North was the home of the first mass produced utility vehicle the Trekka, a boxy light all terrain vehicle which enjoyed a following at the cusp of the 1960s/70s.

The waiving of road user charges for electric vehicles gave the ZEV scheme a fillip. Palmerston North has been a consistent leader in green projects and financed its refuse dump co-generation plant from the sale of green credits.

Palmerston North has a long reputation for sustained civic industrial campaigns and the ZEV concept grew out of a trust designed to implement a trackless tram service in the sprawling capital of the Central Districts. Out of the Manawatu Tram Trust grew the concept of the ZEV.

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## NEW ZEALAND MANUFACTURING ENGINEER INSTALLS ITS CONTAINER LOADER IN UKRAINE Company Developed ISO Container Tipper

The sale by A-Ward of New Zealand of a coal/grain container loader to TIS Group of Ukraine

underlines the opportunities now for heavy engineers in the newest of markets in the remotest of regions. The loader is interchangeable between dry commodities.

A-Ward specialises in very heavy materials handling equipment and is often considered to have perfected the tipping mechanism for full scale ISO containers enabling their part handling, and also their use for straight-to-silo discharge of dry commodities.

The Ukraine sale points up the opportunities for firms like A-Ward in customisable large scale materials handling equipment. Prior to the advent of the internet this kind of sale relied on a heavy layer of intermediate middle men.

But now this kind of equipment and its benefits can be readily appreciable via the internet and contacts made on a direct basis instead of through sales agents.

A-Ward had its roots in earthmoving machinery customisation. A feature of the container loader sold to the Ukraine is a number of customised accessories. Another is that the loader is mobile and can move around ports as required.

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## NEW ZEALAND EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER LEADS IN PRECISION BULK CARGO HANDLING . . .

The Port of Tauranga, New Zealand, is the home and applications testing ground for production engineer Page Macrae Engineering. The company's grabs feature dual operating techniques. The manufacturing engineer's grabs work in the standard way deriving grab open-close from the crane, or through their own grab-mounted autonomous motors which are operable by remote wireless from the crane cab or anywhere else.

Grab materials handling via open/close power from the crane via its own pulleys, and also by the diesel hydraulic wireless operated type in which the open-close motor is part of the grab itself established the New Zealand firm as one of the most innovative in bulk cargo movement.

The company's bulk handling equipment is routinely specified when and where atmospheric contamination by dust is an issue. Port of Tauranga to Huntly power station coal logistics earn consistent high marks for efficiency and dust control and at the heart of this materials handling are Page Macrae's special purpose grabs and hoppers.

Among the coal-dust reducing benefits integrated in Page Macrae bulk coal grabs are damper controlled discharge to reduce dust levels, clam-like bucket seals, semi enclosed buckets, and also vegetable-based lubricants.

The 50-year-old company is known as a world leader in its application of latches and dampers in grabs, and it insists on designing its grabs to be used with chains. In contrast, the alternative, wire ropes, can fray.

Coal handling equipment is a particularly demanding area for heavy engineering because by definition bulk grabs with their many moving parts in use are under constant high load impact, gathering and discharging their abrasive and corrosive cargo over and over again. The use of the self-powered radio control grabs goes a long way to eliminating a major cost in dry minerals bulk cargo

handling which is grab impact damage to hatch coamings and to other parts of the bulk carrier.

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## ENERGY RICH NATION POSES AS ENERGY POOR NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT IN LIGNITE STAYS BURIED . . .

New Zealand government mining agency Solid Energy stockpiled \$60 million worth of Southland farms as a lignite resource prior to 2009 and delayed exploiting the investment because of the climbing value of dairy production in the nation's richest pastoral region. Now that milk prices are tumbling the government is devoid of excuses for failing to exploit the investment. This was scheduled to have been done through a gas-to-liquid process.

The quandary underpins New Zealand's greatest economic contradiction. On a per capita basis New Zealand shares with Australia the distinction of being one of the world's great energy rich nations. However because successive governments must appease the nation's liberal professional activists these resources can only be partially tapped.

At this time Solid Energy quietly let it be known that a single Fischer-Tropsch coal-to-liquid gasification plant in Southland could replace all New Zealand's imported diesel. Another concept being advanced by Solid Energy then was that the offshore Great South Basin and the lignite fields could be worked in unison.

This would occur with carbon emissions from a synthesis plant being stored or sequestered in the depleted off shore oil workings.. Also at this time Solid Energy was establishing itself as a broad gauge energy company acquiring substantial acreages in the Fairlie area of the South Island for crop-based energy. It took an interest in domestic wood burning stoves.

The explosion of the independently owned Pike River Coal Mine in 2010 at the cost of 29 lives meant that further debate on any coal or lignite development was stalled and that the government via Solid Energy had to take over the underground mine which remains sealed with the bodies of the brave miners entombed in it.

The Pike River Mine was situated in a scenic area designated a National Park in 1987. This was at the same time as there was under evaluation a survey indicating that this same area contained substantial metallurgical grade coal, the absence of which had been a major problem, for example, in the establishment of New Zealand Steel.

Official inquiries have still to elicit if the Pike River Mine was an underground one instead of an open cast mine in order to conform to the extremely rigorous definitions of a National Park.

Solid Energy at around this time was struck by falling demand for energy due to the recession and its over-extended positions across a number of fuel sources both mainstream, and alternate. Its extreme indebtedness was augmented when it had to acquire the ill-fated Pike River Mine.

The need to disguise New Zealand's status as an energy rich nation has also been convenient in the face of consumer resentment against the nation's industrial and domestic energy costs.

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