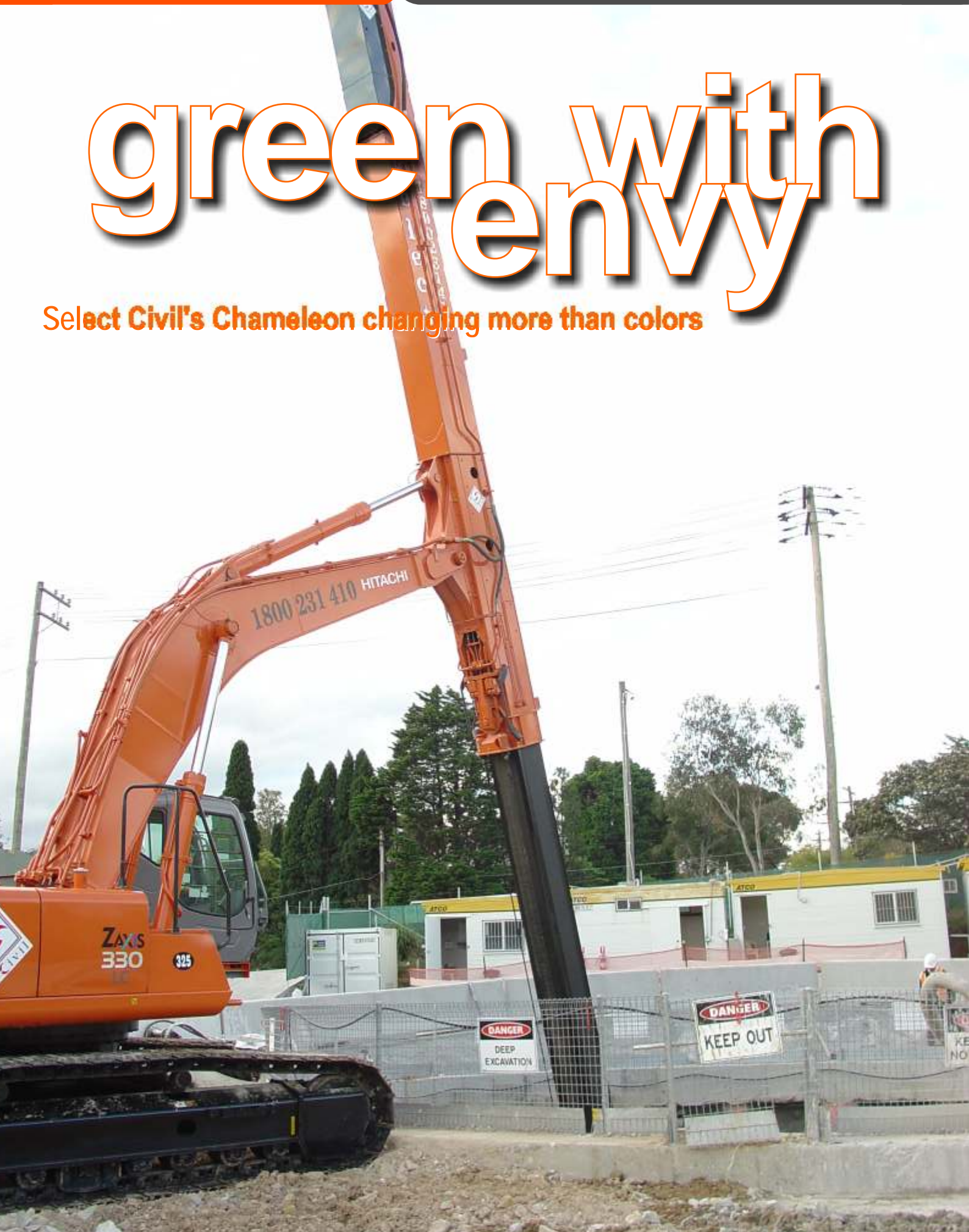


green with envy

Select Civil's Chameleon changing more than colors



Sydney based contracting outfit 'Select Civil' are leading the way with the Zaxis Chameleon, an innovative solution, which at the time of our visit was working on the prestigious Lane Cove Tunnel Project. As we drive along with the traffic in Sydneys Inner West, you can't help but notice the incredible sight that lays partly concealed by the trees on one side of the six lane blacktop. We're not the first visitors to the site either we quickly learn, the telescopic arm on this excavator sets it apart from any other machine in the country and it's been receiving it's fair share of attention from all corners of the Construction Industry.

By now, you too will have noticed that this is no ordinary Excavator. The Chameleon is a product of Hitachi's Special Applications Division, sort of like HSV but for Construction Machinery. It has a number of features that differentiate it from a standard Zaxis 330, the first of which is the 25 metre telescopic arm and grapple bucket.

Two hydraulically extendable sections are housed inside the Outer Arm, which is connected in turn to the Boom just like a normal Excavator. This gives the machine incredible functionality and makes familiarisation a breeze, several operators have accumulated hours in the machine since Select Civil took delivery in August and have quickly adapted to the machine's unusual configuration.

With such a long arm, you may be wondering how on earth the operator keeps an eye on things. If you look closely you will notice that the cab is structured slightly differently, this is because the whole cabin extends on its own telescopic mounts, allowing it to protrude forward of the machine and over the top of the work-site. An unimpeded view is offered through the perspex floor, improving productivity and removing the need for a radio relay, which while effective,

comes with an increased level of risk. Now the operator can work from the top of a work-site even whilst other machines are operating in the pit, with total safety and improved productivity. There is no longer a need to bench out of deep holes either which would require two machines and two operators, so the Chameleon delivers real savings for owners in a number of ways. Working here on the Lane Cove Tunnel, we dropped by to take a look at the Chameleon in action. It just so happened that on that day, the team had broken through a ventilation shaft into the main tunnel, which signalled a significant moment. The shaft is 12 metres in diameter and will be around 20 metres deep when completed.

"The Chameleon has been a real productivity bonus on this job" we're told by Steve Clarke, Major Accounts Manager for NSW. "They would have had to bench the dirt out, which takes a while. There's a mini down there with a hammer breaking things up and to take that hammer off and replace it with a bucket to clear the rubble, takes too much time" Steve said. "Then you have to drop the bucket and re-attach the hammer, the Chameleon sorts all of that out for us and now that they've broken through, they can just drop the rubble into the main tunnel, where the trucks can get in and out more easily as well."

The Select Civil crew are on a work-site that is not too far from some suburban homes and is also located on a busy main road, making access difficult during Sydney's notorious peak hours. The Zaxis offers a fuel efficient as well as noise efficient option for work in and around built up areas, the auto idle feature ensures that you don't waste a drop of fuel and is a feature that is greatly appreciated by machinery owners all over the country, in this climate of heightened fuel prices. With the engine idling down to match the necessary power required, a lower rpm average results and ensures that minimal impact is imposed on the





There is already solid demand for the machine and it's very unique approach to earthmoving. "You won't find anything else like it in the country" continues Clark, "This is a great demonstration of how we at Hitachi, can offer all of our customers, application specific solutions and support for their businesses. It's only by listening to our customers that we can understand their needs and deliver the right solution to keep them productive and profitable - it's not an added extra, it's all part of the service" he said.



The Chameleon will do service in and around Sydney and regional New South Wales for Select Civil, who may be in the market for another one if demand continues at its present rate. Hitachi has received a number of enquiries regarding the machine and several parties have expressed interest in adding one to their fleet. With a standard boom utilised on the machine, a day in the workshop is all that is required to retrofit a standard arm onto the machine, making it an incredibly versatile machine for Contractors who need some flexibility in their operation.

Steve Clarke tells us "A crystal ball would be a wonderful asset to any business, but in the absence of that, you need the ability to maximise machine utilisation if you want the maximum return from your investment. The Chameleon offers Business Owners the ability to bid for some high profile and highly profitable work, without having the machine sitting idle in between contracts."

More information on the Zaxis 330 Chameleon is available by contacting your local Hitachi branch, who have all the resources necessary to help make your business more productive and profitable. It's about up-time and getting more from your equipment, Select Civil are showing us how.

