

## Linde helping to keep F J Walker on a roll

**Client:** F J Walker  
**Location:** Blacktown, NSW  
**Application:** Warehousing & Distribution  
**Equipment:** Pallet trucks, forklifts & reach trucks



**If F J Walker was to consider the key moment in its 84 year history, it would be hard to look past 1970. During this period it became Australia's largest meat company and was approached by McDonald's to manufacture 100% beef patties for the restaurant chain's impending opening in Australia. F J Walker is now a division of Australia Meat Holdings Pty Ltd - Australia's largest beef processor and exporter.**

The company subsequently delivered beef patties to McDonald's first restaurant in the Sydney suburb of Yagoona in 1971. In 1975 McDonald's again approached F J Walker to commence a centralised distribution operation to its rapidly growing restaurant chain, starting initially with frozen goods.

By 1978 it became clear that dedicated facilities were needed to cope with the dramatic growth of McDonald's. In 1979, F J Walker opened a

**Above:** Linde reach trucks mast stability has impressed the operators at F J Walker.



## A P P L I C A T I O N R E P O R T



dedicated integrated manufacturing and distribution operation in Blacktown in Sydney's west. McDonald's used the capacity from this world-class facility to develop its Asian operations, with F J Walker at one time supplying beef to McDonald's stores in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan, Guam, the Philippines and Japan.

The manufacturing plant and distribution centre at Blacktown has since been progressively expanded and updated to keep abreast of technological developments.

As McDonald's expanded interstate DCs were also opened in Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane and a second NSW DC near Newcastle.

Today, F J Walker warehouses and distributes around 98% of McDonald's restaurant requirements in Australia

including soft drinks, orange juice, ice cream, French fries and tray liners, in addition to manufacturing and distributing the world famous 100% beef patties. It still also exports beef patties to McDonald's in Japan.

Providing logistics support to more than 700 McDonald's stores throughout Australia generates significant operational activity:

- Annual distribution of 180,000 tonnes of product
- More than 16 million cases of products delivered per year
- 53 specially designed trucks + 25 trailers (3 temperature zones - frozen, dry, chilled)
- National truck fleet covering 3.7 million kms per year
- Processes close to 15,000 tonnes of prime beef annually; and
- Operates a national fleet of 85 electric forklifts.

Sophisticated and dynamic supply chain management is obviously a key attribute to meet the demands of a restaurant chain that is constantly expanding its geographical presence and its product offering. This has been coupled with a dedicated customer-focused culture to meet McDonald's ever changing needs.

An important part of McDonald's competitive advantage is the cost-effectiveness of getting products to store, so F J Walker is constantly looking for ways to reduce total logistics costs. According to F J Walker's Fleet Manager, Cec Denning, the introduction of 81 Linde forklifts in 1999 definitely assisted this goal.

"When we went to tender for our whole fleet in 1999, we had 11 responses. We had some level of experience with most of the brands, so we had a good idea about whether a forklift could actually perform to the promises made. Aside from track record, the key decision issue for us this time was operator preference.

"As part of our Total Quality Management philosophy, we don't have management dictating the decisions on what equipment should be used.

"Providing the cost is competitive, we will be guided by operator preference. Forklift operator performance can have a much greater impact on our productivity,

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Cec Denning – Fleet Manager, F J Walker



**Left & Below:** F J Walker's fleet of Linde Electric warehouse trucks are utilised in all aspects of logistics from the production line and freezer through to dock duties.



than the performance variables of the various brands.

“Three years ago our operators chose Linde, and it’s a decision we are all still happy with. They found all the Linde products to be superior from an ergonomics viewpoint, while the excellent travel speeds and simplicity of operation offered better productivity,” added Mr Denning.

“Another key issue for our operators was the stability of the reach truck masts. We retrieve and put-away pallets up to 7m high in the DCs. The sturdiness of the Linde with full loads at high lift heights is excellent, and obviously comforting for the operator.

“The Linde forklifts have performed as anticipated and the back-up support around the country has been excellent. They really look after us,” added Mr Denning.



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Cec Denning – Fleet Manager, F J Walker



**Left:** Through its long association, F J Walker has become synonymous with McDonald's in Australia.



The fleet of 81 Lindes includes pedestrian and ride-on pallet trucks, electric counterbalance forklifts and electric reach trucks. They are all fitted with freezer protection to provide optimum fleet utilisation and are used in a variety of functions throughout F J Walker's manufacturing and distribution facilities.

**Linde manufactures an extensive range of forklifts, with capacities from 1.2 to 52 tonnes. The company has a national factory-owned customer support network and operates one of the largest rental fleets in the country.**

**For further information contact**

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