

FEATURE
 COMMERCIAL
 CONSTRUCTION

15 minutes Time before dangerous CO levels are reached with conventional concrete cutters

Fume Tube cleans up concrete cutting



INNOVATION: Steve Terpstra (left) and Craig Penty have created a simple solution to a dangerous problem. Photo: Attila Cszaszar

A Perth-based company is looking to make an international impact in the concrete cutting industry.

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JUST five years ago, Enviro Chasing Services founder Steve Terpstra was thinking of closing down his business.

Mr Terpstra was suffering the long-term effects of carbon

monoxide poisoning, brought on from sustained work with petrol saws used for concrete cutting.

The saws produce so much of the toxic gas that using them can result in carbon monoxide exposure well above legal limits in as little as 15 minutes.

There is specific legislation in

place in Western Australia, and other jurisdictions, placing strict time limits on how long an operator can continuously cut concrete or bricks indoors.

In practice on the work site, however, Mr Terpstra said those time limits were rarely adhered to.

So instead of packing it all in, Mr Terpstra decided to find a solution.

"We redesigned the saw, and from the carbon monoxide extraction point of view we invented this kit, which attaches to the exhaust on the saw and there is an industrial vacuum on the other end," he said.

"You turn that on and it sucks the fumes down the pipe and out into the open space so the fumes aren't getting anywhere near the operator."

Enviro Chasing Services managing director Craig Penty said the company's product, called

The launching pad for the Fume Tube was the World of Concrete trade show, held in Las Vegas last year, where it was named most innovative product at the event, attended by 55,000 people.

"We demonstrated it there for the first time and got a great response from the industry at our booth," he said.

"The concrete cutting guys looked at it and said 'wow, this is fantastic, we've been looking for a solution for this for ages!'"

The carbon monoxide issues are more acute in the cold-climate states in Europe the US, where operators are forced to put up tents to regulate the temperature if they are cutting outside.

"They basically gas themselves, so they've got a big issue," Mr Penty said.

Discussions with potential distributors of the Fume Tube are ongoing, with Mr Penty saying the company hoped to get a deal in place by the end of the year.

"We're focused on the US market now, while there is a market here it's going to be smaller and people have been a bit slow to pick up on the carbon monoxide issues," he said.

"The legislation in some of the US states is very rigorous; California in particular has some very strong carbon monoxide workplace legislation."

Fume Tube, would seem a relatively simple solution to the fume extraction problem, but it was one that hadn't been developed before.

"It looks like just a piece of pipe but there's a lot more going on inside," he said.

The tube fits on existing equipment and is also incorporated into the company's own patented, lightweight saws, which are designed to reduce operator danger and fatigue.

Mr Penty said the company was now looking to commercialise the Fume Tube globally, and was already in discussions with international manufacturers Husqvarna and Hilti regarding potential licensing deals.

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See the Fume Tube in action: youtu.be/IFx7Uqd9KVo

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