

The power of two

After father and son team Noel and Mark Power decided to make their small transport company carbon neutral, the benefits turned out to be more than just the feel-good factor. Charles Pauka reports.

Noel Power established the company in 1975 as Power Documents, a specialist courier to the shipping and airfreight industries, picking up and delivering documents, clearing cargo with shipping lines, airlines and Customs on behalf of freight forwarders and customs brokers. Noel's son Mark joined about ten years ago.

Over the past few years, the duo decided to grow the business through two means: one, by expanding the document service to include the finance and legal sectors, and two, by purchasing a 5-tonne truck and offering LCL cartage of their own, as well as FCL via subcontractors. The company was renamed Power Documents and Freight (PD&F).

"I always had an interest in environmental issues," said Mark Power. "And now

the issue of climate change and emission trading is in the news every day.

"I was concerned about being involved in an industry that has such a high level of emissions, and the transport industry inherently faces challenges, making a green commitment difficult. Around 30% of global energy use can be attributed to transport, and 60% of the world's crude oil production is used to fuel the world's transport."

Deciding to turn his concern into action, Mark began to research carbon offsets but was uneasy about some of the schemes being offered. He came across the Carbon Offset Watch website (www.carbonoffset-watch.org.au), an independent ranking of Australian offset providers established by the Total Environment Centre, the Institute for Sustainable Futures and the consumer organisation Choice. As a result, Mark decid-

ed to go with the Carbon Reduction Institute (www.noco2.com.au), which was one of the providers at the top of the rankings.

Know where you are

In the first instance, the Carbon Reduction Institute's (CRI) adviser audited Mark's company, including its financials (to determine direct electricity and fuel use, travel etc.), office/warehouse, and other aspects of energy use, including Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

(Scope 1 is a company's direct emissions, whether from its own vehicles, on-site energy production or other industrial activities. Scope 2 is from non-fuel energy use, e.g. electricity, and Scope 3 includes the emissions generated through employee travel, emissions embedded in products purchased or processed by the firm, and emissions associated with transporting and disposing of products sold by the firm by its contractors, e.g. transport company.)

"The process was remarkably easy," said Mark Power. "The audit process is very comprehensive and well-established, so it was no trouble at all."

The CRI found that PD&F in the 07/08 financial year emitted 134.25 tonnes of GHG (greenhouse gases). The second part of the audit looked at ways the company could reduce its emissions before carbon offsets were considered.



Mark and Noel Power.