

Specialty rentals for air, power, flow and temperature

MechChem Africa talks to Henry Fourie of Rand Air about the transformative evolution of the rental landscape in sub-Saharan Africa. Highlighting the company's extensive rental offering, Fourie elaborates on Rand Air's compressed air solutions, temporary solutions for power, recent integration of flow and temperature controls (heating and chilling); as well as being part of Atlas Copco Specialty Rental Group.



"Even north of our borders in countries such as Botswana, Namibia and Mozambique the Rand Air brand is very familiar. But we are now bringing the full suite of specialty rental offerings into South and Southern Africa and across sub-Saharan Africa, all managed from our new home within the Atlas Copco facility in Jet Park," says Fourie.

"We are currently officially launching in Kenya and re-establishing our presence in East Africa, and we will use the ASR name there, but across the SADEC countries just north of our borders, the Rand Air name will be retained. We are taking the slow but sure approach, carefully strategizing based on the industrial needs of each country so we create a solid and growing footprint, starting in East Africa, where there is industrial manufacturing that can be supported by our machines" he explains.

For the Kenyan market, Atlas Copco's electrical and diesel portable oil-free compressors and the electric and diesel oil-injected machines are ideal for industrial rentals,

while for the geothermal market, Rand Air can provide Atlas Copco high pressure oil-injected machines with boosters for the duration of the drilling projects.

Compressors for industrial rental applications have been Rand Air's traditional market since its inception and the company is well-known for its oil-free and low emissions compressors. "But our product offering has evolved significantly. We are expanding our power offering to serve industry's needs with some market leading products such as our QAC TwinPower dual genset solution, which has two engines and alternators for generating power from portable 20-ft containers. These systems offer up to 1450 kVA of prime or standby power from an easy and flexible installation.

"They are fully modular, so you can run them in parallel to meet the exact power requirements needed on the site. And, because of the excellent engine management system onboard these units, they can operate very economically, as the engine output and as-

sociated fuel consumption is always closely matched to the onsite electricity demand," says Henry Fourie.

Also coming into Rand Air's rental offering on the power side are Atlas Copco's hybrid power solutions, which involve the full integration of mobile, solar and battery storage with gensets. "These Atlas Copco systems can be grid connected for maximum flexibility and economy. Solutions such as these help clients to meet their ESG commitments, without having to invest directly in the expensive capital equipment needed for transformation," he says.

"To help make onsite projects more environmentally friendly, we propose the use of our portable hybrid power solutions – for the construction of the pump substations, for example – and for the initial power up before a grid connection is made. Energy storage systems will most probably be required, and we can replace diesel driven power sources with hybrid units capable of meeting these needs, or alternatively offer a full hybrid solution," he explains.

The next utility added to Rand Air's rental fleet was the flow product line, which is mostly a rental offering based on Atlas Copco's wide range of dewatering solutions. "We now offer a wide range of pumps for emergency and seasonal dewatering applications," says Fourie. "Late last year Atlas Copco acquired the Sykes Group, the Australian manufacturer of high-head, self-priming diesel driven dewatering pumps, which are widely used for mine pit dewatering," he tells MechChem Africa.

"With this acquisition we will soon be able to offer a wider range of dewatering solutions than anything we previously had in our range," he adds.

The new temperature offering

Rand Air's new temperature offering involves a rental service for steam boilers and chillers. "The first two boilers arrived last year, and they have been returned from their first project. These are 3.0 t packaged dual fuel – gas and diesel – boilers that have been containerised for easy transportation and onsite installation. We are awaiting final delivery of a further two units, which are currently being locally manufactured," Fourie tells MechChem Africa.

"Even more exciting, the first eight tonners are about to land in South Africa. These are built into 40 ft containers, which house the water treatment, burners, and controls. For anyone needing additional process steam for an emergency, breakdown, or turnarounds, renting one of these is as easy as renting a genset," he says.

On the cooling side, Rand Air offers cooling capacity of up to 550 kW with dedicated rental chillers. "The units are purpose-designed

and manufactured to cope with the rough handling needs of the rental market," he says.

As a result of climate change, Fourie expects a ramp up in seasonal needs for cooling; for food and beverage plants, for example. "The installed capacity in factories and industries is struggling to cope with higher peak ambient temperatures. Renting additional capacity, rather than investing in capacity that will be redundant for 10 months of every year, is a better way of funding these additional needs," he explains.

Outcomes based pricing

Describing Rand Air's adoption of outcome-based pricing in rental services reflects a strategic commitment to delivering maximum value to its customers across Sub-Saharan Africa. By shifting away from traditional fixed-rate rental models, Rand Air aims to align its pricing structure with the specific outcomes and benefits that customers seek from its extensive range of rental solutions.

In implementing outcome-based pricing, Rand Air collaborates closely with customers to identify their requirements, performance objectives and key success metrics. This collaborative approach allows Rand Air to tailor rental agreements that are directly linked to the achievement of desired outcomes, such as increased productivity, reduced downtime, improved efficiency, or cost savings.

"We are also managing a plant for a brewery that was having reliability issues with

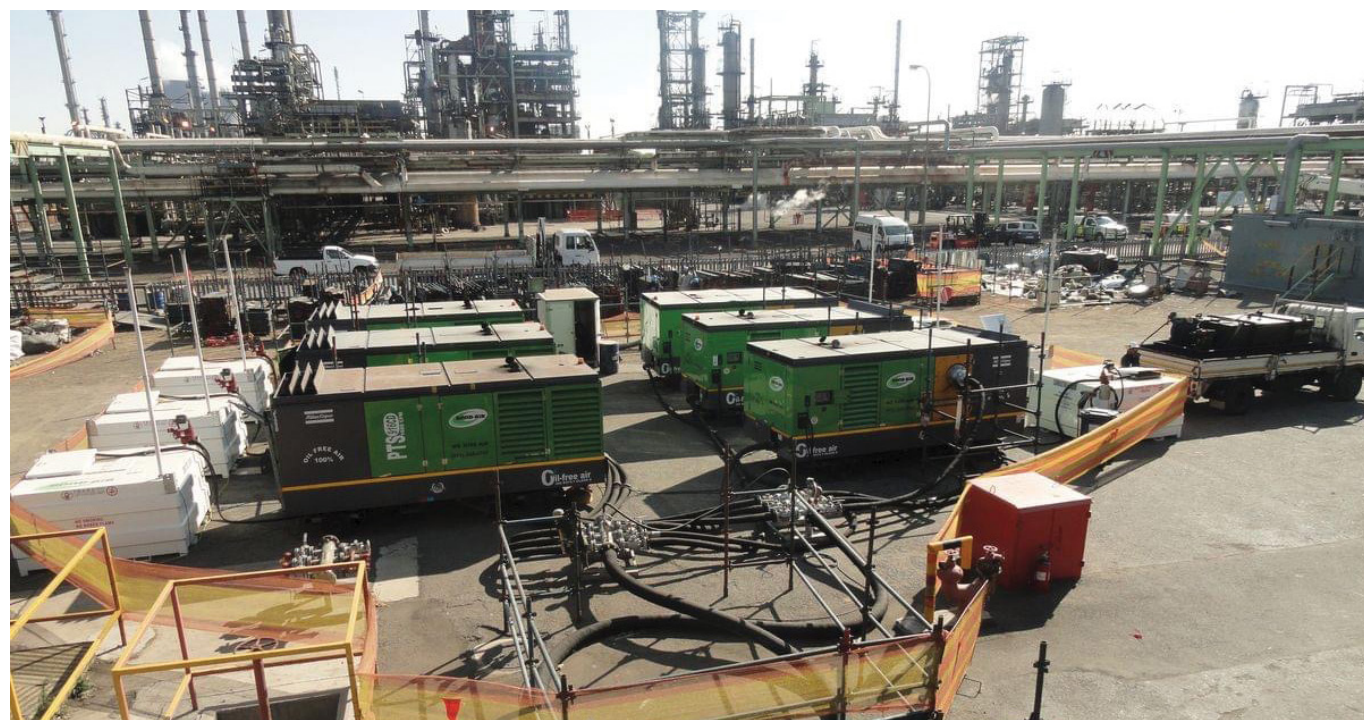
installed equipment. We took over the whole installation and guarantee equipment uptime of 98% on an annual basis. If we don't meet the 98%, we refund 5% of the annual contract fee, which significantly reduces the company's operational risks.

"Very few companies in the world will back their installed equipment to deliver 98% of full production across a year but we can, and we do," he notes. "We take on full responsibility for this and align the pricing outcomes with the utility savings we achieve," he explains.

"Because the client is renting, if production or demand decreases, then we can reduce the machine capacity, giving plant operators a lot of flexibility. And if we realize that a machine is running at very low load on a continuous basis, we can replace it with a right sized machine for the application. Not only does this save money but it is also better for the environment.

"We enjoy a big advantage being part of the Atlas Copco Group. We always have up to date access to current innovations and market leading products. Atlas Copco R&D is next level, especially when it comes to specialised equipment, and we are market leaders by a landslide. As a rental company, we can access the latest and greenest technologies available more immediately, without the need for capital investments or the risks associated with buying an unreliable or unsuitable machine," concludes Henry Fourie.

www.randair.co.za



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Air



Power



Flow



Temperature

Rand Air's comprehensive rental offering now includes compressed air solutions; temporary solutions for power generation, including hybrid power solutions; flow, which is the company's dewatering pump offering; and the recent integration of temperature solutions in the form of packaged boilers and chillers.