



construct

2014 Edition 3



FOR CHARTERED BUILDING PROFESSIONALS

- Update from Nigel Hadgkiss, Director, Fair Work Building & Construction
- Housing Affordability - A Policy choice? By Dr Ron Silberberg AO
- Interview with Neil Savery, General Manager of the ABCB
- AIB Professional Excellence Awards

Building Sustainable Value.



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OneSteel's manufacturing of reinforcing steel utilises energy reducing polymer injection technology and recycled steel scrap content. In addition to incorporating a high post-consumer recycled metals content, OneSteel's manufacturing of reinforcing steel utilises innovative, energy reducing Polymer Injection Technology. This technology recycles obsolete carbonaceous materials such as old car tyres to help form the all-important slag layer, improving furnace efficiency and reducing power consumption.



Pre-project Sustainability Assistance

By talking with OneSteel Reinforcing in the early stages of your project we can suggest design techniques to optimise reinforcing material use. This can improve the sustainability credentials of the project and also potentially allow the awarding of Green Star® steel credit points.



Eco-Bar™ – Offsite Prefabrication

Offsite fabrication of components such as cages, columns and 500PLUS® BAMTEC® engineered reinforcing carpet can assist in earning Green Star rating points for your project by providing the flexibility to optimise the diameter and spacing of the reinforcing steel used in their manufacture.



Eco-Mesh™ – Customised/Engineered

Customised special run ONEMESH® can minimise duplication of reinforcing steel and scrap losses that result from excess lapping and trimming of mesh sheets. Engineered and tailored mesh solutions can include variable wire spacing and wire diameters, and optimised mesh size (length and width).



Responsible Steel Initiative

As a key sponsor member of the Australian Steel Stewardship Forum OneSteel Reinforcing is committed to working with industry partners to optimise the steel product life cycle using sustainability principles including minimising the impact on society and the environment.



It's part of our process too.

To make our process a vital part of your projects contact **1800 ONE REO (1800 663 736)**

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*Supporting information and environmental claims for specific ECO-REO™ products given above can be found on the Technical Resources page of OneSteel Reinforcing's website.

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construct is published by The Australian Institute of Building



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An introduction to the Australian Institute of Building

The Australian Institute of Building (AIB) is incorporated by Royal Charter and is the preeminent professional body for building professionals in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The AIB has a long and proud history of supporting and serving the building profession. For more than sixty years the Institute has worked with the building and construction industry, government, universities and allied stakeholders to promote the building profession, support the development of university courses in building whilst promoting the use of innovative building techniques and a best-practice regulatory environment.

The AIB is proudly supported by:





A Message from the National President

Adj. Professor Robert Whittaker AM FAIB

It is timely at the end of my maximum statutory term as National President that I thank our Councillors, who have provided both you our members, and myself, invaluable service throughout my term, and beyond, and to note their achievements. So in alphabetical order it must be noted that:

David Burnell FAIB (Victoria) – Current Victorian Chapter President, a steadfast champion of the profession. A project manager with extensive experience with (amongst others) Walton and Hansen Yuncken, and as principal of the firm D. Burnell and Associates.

He has ensured that all four of his State's higher education providers for the building profession sought and attained the standards of delivery and content required for AIB accreditation, ensuring that all are recognised for licensing purposes by the Victorian Building Authority (VBA). David has introduced a successful CPD programme that satisfies the requirements of both local industry and the regulator and has been a keen advocate of the National Building Professionals Register (NBPR) and associated trademarks.

Colonel Ian Cumming CSC FAIB (ACT) – former commanding officer of the 1st Combat Engineering Regiment during the Aceh Tsunami Relief, former ACT Chapter President. A career Army officer, Ian has served this nation and the AIB well.

As Chair of the Education Committee, Ian has led a team which has put together a valuable Continued Professional Development program targeted at the various specific levels of membership, he also played a key role in previous years of ensuring that AIB accredited degrees are recognised for Direct Entry (Short Course) Commissions into the Army in the same way that degrees in Law, Medicine, Engineering, Dentistry are.

He is currently working to have AIB accredited building degrees (at both Bachelor and Master degree level) introduced for the first time at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).

Norman Faifer FAIB (Victoria) – current Senior National Vice President, Honorary Fellow of Building and Construction at Deakin University, noted building consultant as an accredited arbitrator and mediator, a director of the College of Building, and principal of his own construction firm Faifer Ryan.

Norman, with Damian Rogers FAIB, drove the reforms to the National Council which were given Royal Assent last year by the then Governor General, Her Excellency (now) Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO. This long overdue reform streamlined the administration of the AIB reducing the number of Councillors from 34 to its current 14 which saw Council meetings take place monthly, whereas previously they were twice yearly.

His role as Chair of the Finance Committee has been peerless, which has seen a recovery in the AIB's fiscal position.

Robin Fardoulis LFAIB (Queensland and representing the Overseas Chapter) – Former National and Queensland Chapter President, and Chair of the Australian Construction Industry Forum, member of the Australian Building Codes Board, member of the board of the Queensland Building Construction Commission, former adjunct Professor of Building and Construction at QUT, and principal of his own construction firm, Fardoulis Constructions.

A tireless worker for the AIB, Robin also is President of the AIB's Overseas Chapter (which includes all our foreign branches – but not Hong Kong). In the last two years Robin has successfully negotiated reciprocity agreements with our kindred bodies in Singapore and China, and conducted Professional Interviews of potential members in Hong Kong and China.

John Gaskin FAIB (Queensland) – former Queensland Chapter President and former independent Chair of the Queensland Building Services Authority. John is the current Regional Director with Brookfield Multiplex, and has also served successfully for long periods with Watkins Ltd and Watpac Australia. In 2005 John formed Gaskin Construction Services Pty Ltd, which provides consultancy to government, building contractors, developers and industry clients in the area of design and construction on existing and new projects.

Throughout his career on some of Queensland's biggest projects, and involvement with government and non-government bodies, John is recognised and highly respected as one of the leaders of the Queensland construction industry.

Paul Heather FAIB (New South Wales) – current (and outgoing) Chapter President, Senior Adjunct Visiting Fellow of Building and Construction at the University of Western Sydney, noted Building Consultant and principal of his own firm Kuring-gai Consulting.

Paul (with John Smolders FAIB) has spearheaded the Defence Force Shadow Programme, whereby senior commissioned officers and NCOs in the Australian Defence Force can find job placement with some of the nation's leading firms. Paul is also a member with the NSW Master Builder Association's Mentoring programme for apprentices.

Darren Jones FAIB (Tasmania) – former and longest serving Tasmanian Chapter President (or indeed of any other Chapter), who is also both a project manager and an architect, and a director of the firm BPSM.

Darren has recently put his time in developing floor plans for our new national office in Canberra, as well as inspecting various properties for that purpose. A strategic thinker, he has identified key priorities for the National Council including the National Building Professionals Register (NBPR) and associated trademarks.

Gregory McLean FAIB (Queensland) – Former National and Queensland Chapter President, member of the board of the Board of Professional Engineers Queensland, former adjunct Professor of Building and Construction at QUT, former Executive Director of the QMBA, former GM of Abigroup Queensland, a director of the College of Building, and principal of his own construction firm Grecon Constructions.

The current Chair of the External Awards and Appointment Committee, and until recently Chair of the Course Accreditation Committee, Greg has been tireless in ensuring that students of the building profession are afforded the best education possible at each of the AIB's accredited degrees across Australia – he has worked closely with fellow Queenslander Robin Fardoulis LFAIB in conducting Professional Interviews (PIs) in Hong Kong and other centres in our region.

Geoffrey Penley FAIB (South Australia) – Current Chapter President, former senior Project Manager with Built Environs and Fletchers, principal of his own project management firm Crossway Construct.

Geoff has made great strides with both the Master Builders Association of South Australia (MBA SA) and the University of South Australia (UniSA). He has ensured that the latter sought and attained the standards of delivery and content required for AIB accreditation, and with his predecessors Stuart White FAIB and Andrew Marshall FAIB made sure that was also recognised by the State regulator OCBA as the only SA degree acceptable for the purposes of builders' licensing.

With a much appreciated effort of John Stokes of the MBA Geoff's tenure has seen greater collaboration between the two organisations.

Damian Rogers FAIB (Tasmania) – Current National Vice President, the only individual in Australia's history to ever serve as a State Chapter President of both the RAIA and the AIB, and current member of the Tasmanian Architects Registration Board, and former electrician, and a director of the firm BPSM.

Damian has devoted his time to bedding down the AIB's new governance structure, developing more streamlined discipline processes, and has been a proponent for more active Committees and Chapters, with a particular interest in the National Building Professionals Register (NBPR).

Graham Teede FAIB (Western Australia) – Current (and outgoing) Chapter President, held in personal high regard by the WA Building Commissioner Peter Gow, Graham has also been liaising with a number of South African universities who are seeking AIB accreditation.

Through his efforts the AIB is being seen as the first port of call by the Immigration Department when assessing Building, Construction and Construction Management degrees of potential immigrants to our shores. Graham has also served as President of the YBA Committee.

Lam Lap Wa FAIB (Hong Kong) - Current Chapter President, Lam is working hard to bring about recognition of AIB membership by the Hong

Kong Government and with Robin Fardoulis LFAIB and Greg McLean FAIB worked hard to make the Professional Interview and membership accessible and relevant to the local industry.

Dr Ron Webber FAIB (Victoria) – Current National Vice President, former Associate Professor of Building and Construction at RMIT University, and past Victorian Chapter President.

The current Chair of the Course Accreditation Committee Ron has been a driving force in developing AIB accreditation standards for both master degrees in building, construction and construction management within Australia and foreign degrees – Ron is currently finalising the current round of AIB accreditations. Ron has been leading industry involvement with research at the various university schools and faculties which conduct our accredited programs.

Many thanks also to Chapter Presidents **Peter Henden FAIB** (ACT), **Jeff Palmer FAIB** (Qld), and **Peter Spratt AM FAIB** (Tasmania).

Neither time nor space permits me to do justice to each of the above – but join me in congratulating these fine professionals who have worked tirelessly on your behalf, with no remuneration (even of expenses) to themselves who have succeeded in living up to the highest ideals and standards of our profession.

Robert Hunt CPA also deserves special mention and thanks for his tireless efforts and many initiatives on behalf of our Institute. He has persevered in what has proved to be at times very trying circumstances, and our Institute is in a stronger position due to his leadership of operations at our national office in Canberra.



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Update from Nigel Hadgkiss, Director, Fair Work Building & Construction

July 2014

Introduction

Fair Work Building & Construction (FWBC) has been particularly busy attending construction projects of late. Unfortunately, these have not all been positive experiences. But such is the nature of FWBC's work. It is up to us to investigate allegations of coercion, unlawful industrial action, adverse action and breaches of Federal Right of Entry and freedom of association laws.

And, of course, where there is evidence and it is in the public interest, we put wrong-doers before the courts.

Return to the construction industry

When I took over as the head of FWBC at the end of last year, I found an agency which was a shadow of its former self – the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) – which I left at the end of 2008.

We now have reduced powers to investigate unlawful behaviour. This makes it that much more difficult to deal with the conduct we continue to confront on construction sites. Likewise, the heavily reduced penalties do not necessarily appear to be an effective deterrent.

For instance, the CFMEU and its affiliates have been penalised almost \$4.7 million since 2005 in cases brought by this agency and the ABCC. And one CFMEU official alone has been penalised approximately a quarter of a million dollars after 13 actions brought by FWBC and the ABCC.

Recently FWBC launched a case in the Federal Court against CFMEU National Secretary Dave Noonan. It is alleged he and several other CFMEU officials organised and controlled a blockade at a \$1.2 billion Children's Hospital development. We believe the individuals organised the blockade to stop a critical concrete pour in a bid to coerce John Holland to agree to their enterprise agreement demands.

This is just one of 29 matters we currently have before the courts.

Last month former CFMEU organiser Matthew Balde was convicted and fined \$1000 after pleading guilty to obstructing an FWBC Investigator who was trying to collect evidence of possible unlawful activity at the site.

Unfortunately FWBC investigators being abused and obstructed in their work is not uncommon. We have recently filed four cases in the Federal Court regarding alleged Right of Entry breaches. One of these matters includes allegations that a CFMEU official verbally abused one of our investigators and pushed the investigator with his stomach, causing the investigator to lose his balance.

The official was one of numerous CFMEU officials who flew into Adelaide and caused problems at construction sites in Australia's city of churches. This is an increasing trend we are dealing with – union officials flying interstate, and in response our agency has increased its mobility. Most recently we sent in reinforcements to Darwin to manage potential issues when a group of union officials flew into town.

It is always pleasing to hear of building sites which are free from workplace law breaches, but I urge people not to become complacent. Know your rights, particularly in relation to Right of Entry laws. You can visit our website www.fwbc.gov.au for information on your rights and obligations whether you are a union official, worker or employer. Or you can call our hotline anonymously for free advice on 1800 003 338.

New Vision

I recently outlined a new vision for the FWBC. The new vision is *"That all Australian building and construction workplaces are productive and harmonious"*. I emphasise the word 'all'. To my mind, that includes unions, workers and employers, because they all have a critical role to play in the industry. And, I note, they all have a role to play, in achieving that end goal, of productive and harmonious workplaces.

The push behind the new vision is to be found in the new mission: *"To ensure that the Rule of Law prevails in the building and construction industry."*

This mission means FWBC must investigate matters of alleged unlawful activity without fear or favour. And where the evidence exists, and it is in the public interest, we must bring wrongdoers before the courts.

A new agency

In the lead up to the 2013 Federal Election, the Coalition committed to restoring the ABCC. This commitment comes after the FWBC replaced the ABCC, in 2012.

In my experience, the industry requires a powerful regulatory framework, strong powers and a determination to apply those powers against any person, or organisation, that breaks the law. In addition, employees, subcontractors and head contractors, require the support of a strong regulator, to resist unlawful demands and behaviour.

As many of you would know, there is a Bill currently before the Parliament to re-establish the ABCC. The Government has stated it is steadfast in its commitment to re-establishing the ABCC and introducing a new Building Industry Code.

Meanwhile, it is not my intention to wait around. My job, is to do the best I can, for the industry, with the legislation available. My plans and priorities are simple: To ensure the rule of law prevails on Australian building and construction sites, and that all of those sites are productive and harmonious.

I realise that achieving both of these goals will be challenging, to say the least. But, I will not falter in my determination; because Australia's construction industry, those who work in it, and all Australians, not only deserve it, but badly need it.

What lies beneath?

Prior to entering into a construction contract, a 'good' builder has a plan for the management of all known risks. However, a 'great' builder also has a plan for the unknown risks.

Latent conditions are generally understood to be the physical conditions of a site which differ materially from the physical conditions which should reasonably have been anticipated by a competent Contractor at the time of tender.

This definition is founded upon three key variables:

- |||| What are the physical conditions of the site, including whatever exclusions have been agreed by the parties?
- |||| What information regarding the site's physical conditions has the Principal provided to the Contractor, and what other enquiries has the Contractor made (or should reasonably have made)?
- |||| What constitutes a material difference in the physical conditions?

Standard terms and conditions should be amended to clarify any ambiguities in these variables, and to establish how the parties intend to act should a latent condition arise. Commonly, latent conditions concern geological and ground conditions which have not been accurately identified prior to the Principal engaging a Contractor to undertake the works. Contamination, for example, can have significant impacts not only on the cost of disposing of bulk

excavation waste, but also on:

- |||| safety of your employees and subcontractors, particularly in the instance of asbestos;
- |||| treatment or capping of in-situ materials (if they are to remain on-site); and
- |||| performance and management of all works in or around the contaminated area.

APP has a proven track-record managing significant remediation projects. From the 52ha former Mortlake Gas Works Site in Sydney's West, to the former Sunbeam factory in Campsie and the Australia Post distribution centre in Rydalmere, APP has advised on the strategic and commercial management of contracts related to difficult, unusual and unexpected ground conditions. APP has the experience to consider 'what lies beneath', and to draft contract documents and develop management strategies for the various scenarios which may arise.

No one has a crystal ball, but with experience comes the ability to foresee likely issues. Fundamentally, contracts are about the allocation of risk between two parties. Prior to entering into any contract, a Builder must consider what are the unique, physical features and risks of this project; and how the cost of those risks is to be carried by the parties.



Getting the right contract advice starts with APP

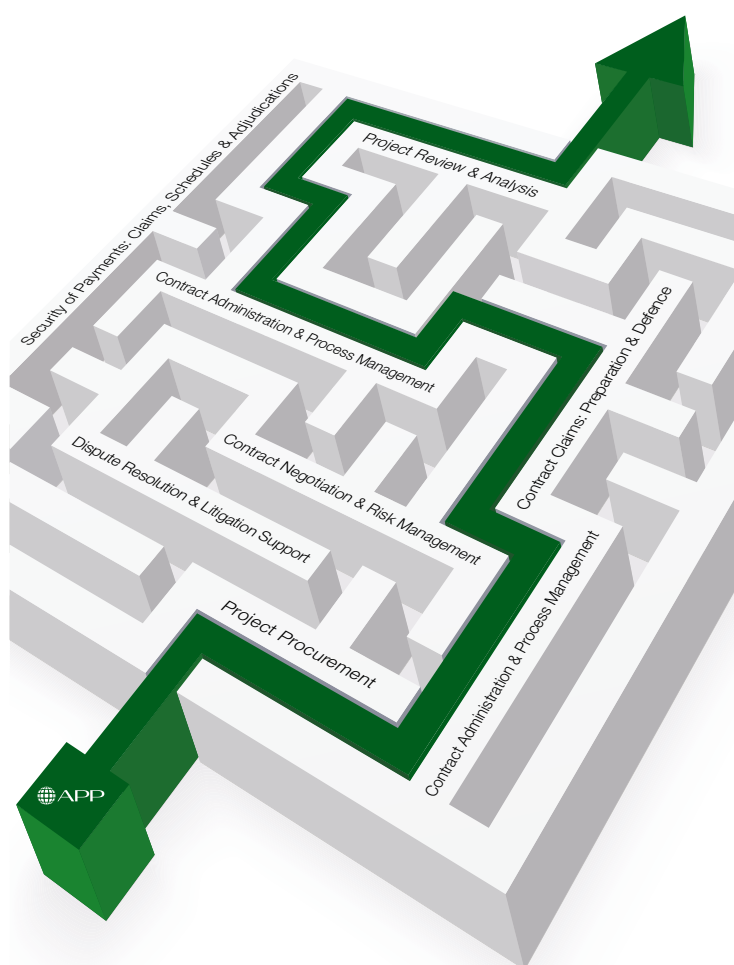
APP's Contracts, Claims & Disputes team can advise and assist you with the strategic and commercial management of your contracts.

We can prepare or assess progress claims and final payment claims, as well as claims for delay, disruption, acceleration and variations. We also understand all forms of dispute resolution, including adjudication under Security of Payments Legislation. We can ensure your company's compliance with contractual procedures and advise upon negotiated commercial outcomes.

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AIB submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Government's approach to re-establishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission

Dear Senate Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Senate Inquiry into the Government's approach to re-establishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

The Australian Institute of Building (AIB) strongly supports the immediate re-establishment of the ABCC with its former powers. The AIB supports all parties abiding by the law, and for a strong enforcement agency that will ensure that this occurs.

After the establishment of the ABCC in 2005, building sites across Australia saw a massive cultural shift. The level of industrial action sharply declined to a level that is comparable with other industries. Clear rules were put in place that managers and workers understood, and it was clear to all parties what their rights and responsibilities were.

Without strong sanctions against illegal behaviour in the construction industry, and regulation to compel people to speak about such behaviour that they have witnessed, then we will see a return to this behaviour. The ABCC also protected workers by enforcing that employers pay them the correct pay scales, so everybody benefitted. Since the ABCC was abolished by the former Government, industrial activity has been on the rise, and this has meant higher costs for construction firms, and has added to financial pressures that have seen more companies going bankrupt. The higher costs have also resulted in less construction work, which has meant less work for existing construction workers, and fewer new workers being taken on. The re-establishment of the ABCC would therefore be a win-win for construction firms and workers in the industry.

We also support right of entry provisions, a focus on productivity, with industrial action allowed only if agreed to by the Fair Work Commission if the claims are deemed to be realistic and sensible. This will stop wildcat strikes and extortionate claims by unions demanding \$100,000 salary increases for their members.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and AIB would be happy to attend a Senate estimates committee to discuss re-establishment of the ABCC.

Yours sincerely

Robert Gordon Whittaker FAIB Chartered Builder (NBPR-1)
AIB National President
January 17th 2014.

John Holland and the Young Builders Alliance

Building Future Careers



Last year, The WA Young Builders Alliance (YBA), student and graduate members of the Australian Institute of Building (AIB), commenced a program with the goal of increasing the professional skills of members not currently employed in the industry. A joint initiative between John Holland, the YBA principal sponsor, the Industry Support Program ran for the period of the university second semester.

Three YBA members were selected for the Program, and entered into a one-on-one professional advisory relationship with experienced John Holland employees. Participants engaged in various activities, including:

- //// Reviewing and improving CV's
- //// Casual one-on-one meetings to discuss YBA member queries in relation to the industry
- //// Attendance at YBA and AIB events; and
- //// Investigating various potential career paths.
- //// Industry and personal mentoring.

Selected John Holland team members were able to impart their invaluable knowledge and advice to the younger YBA members through these skill-building exercises. Feedback from the YBA side confirmed that it had contributed to better grades during their tertiary studies, and also led to two participants gaining employment within the industry.

The select employees of John Holland noted that the experience had led them to improve their communication, interpersonal and advisory skills. Being fortunate to be in a position to relate previous experiences and lessons learnt in the industry, it was great to see a positive contribution to the start of a professional career.

As the YBA principal sponsor for the past four years, the WA YBA would like to thank John Holland, without their continuing support, the YBA would not be in the strong position it currently is in, nor be able to offer initiatives such as the Industry Support Program.

As the only Australian organisation which represents Building Professionals and Chartered Building Professionals, the AIB is leading the way for young industry professionals. This program has been continued into 2014, with the response even greater than last year. It is expected that this initiative will continue to provide a fantastic opportunity for current and future WA YBA members.

For more information on the AIB and YBA go to www.aib.org.au

Matt Bowen
Vice-President
WA Young Builder's Alliance

Building Sustainable Value.



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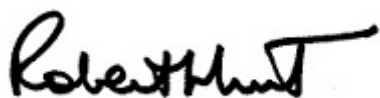
Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the Sixty Third Annual General Meeting of members of the Australian Institute of Building will be held at 3.30pm on Saturday 20 September 2014 in the Council Room, AIB National Office, Unit 10, Building C, 28-34 Thynne Street Bruce ACT.

Business:

- To receive the minutes of the Sixtieth Second Annual General Meeting held in Melbourne Victoria on Friday 6 September 2013.
- To receive and consider the financial statements for the Australian Institute of Building for the financial year ended 31 March 2014.
- To receive and consider the annual report of the Australian Institute of Building for the year ended 31 March 2014.
- To declare the election results for Australian Institute of Building Councillors for the year 2014-2015.
- To install President Elect as the President of the Australian Institute of Building for the year 2014-2015.
- To appoint auditors for the financial year ending 31 March 2015.
- To transact any other business which may properly be transacted by an Annual General Meeting.

An AIB member who is eligible (individual at the grade of either Member or Fellow) to vote at the Annual General Meeting may appoint a proxy in accord with by-law 6.7.3 of the AIB Handbook. The Agenda and proxy forms will be available in the members only section of the Institute's website on 19 August 2014.




Mr Robert J Hunt CPA
Chief Executive Officer
4 August 2014



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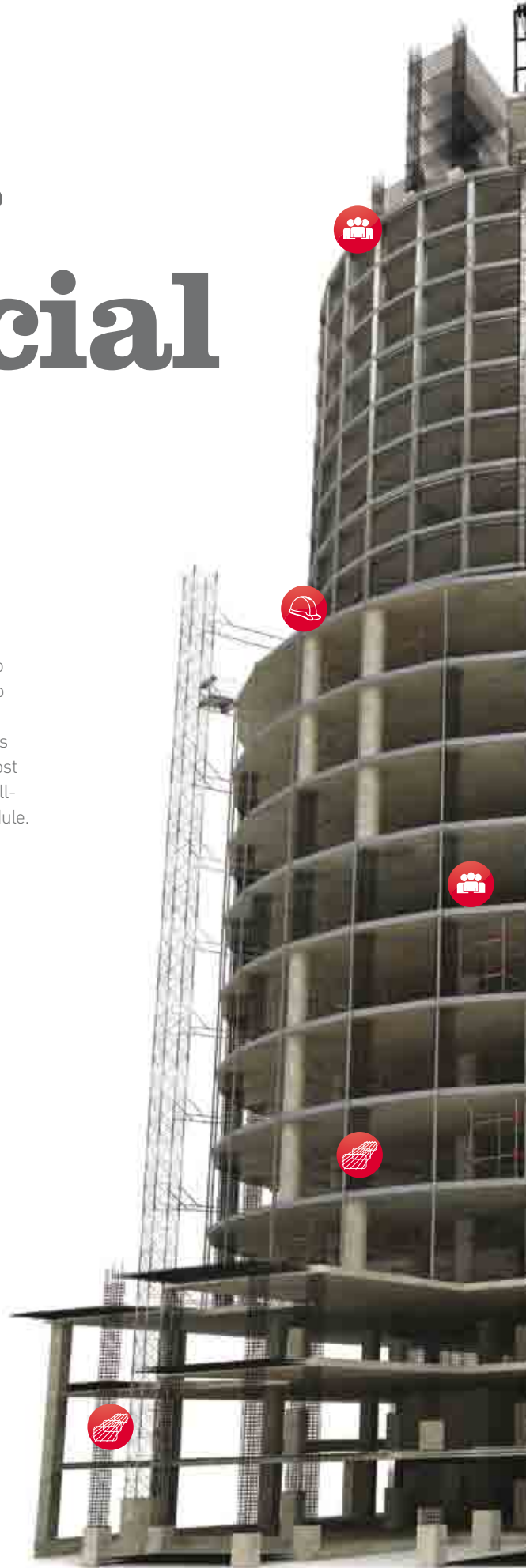
Detailing & Scheduling

Accurate and timely scheduling is crucial in keeping a project running smoothly, and a good scheduler, one that's more than just one step ahead of the fixers, is absolutely invaluable. OneSteel Reinforcing has the largest and most experienced scheduling team in Australia, available to ensure your project stays on track, on time and trouble free.



Purpose-fit Prefabrication

Offsite prefabrication offers numerous benefits, ranging from minimising onsite risks to workers to earning Green Star rating points for your project, and OneSteel Reinforcing offers the best in prefabrication products and service. Our dedicated facilities adhere to the highest standards in prefabrication design and manufacture, and provide prompt, professional transportation and onsite handling.



To discuss your next commercial construction project contact **1800**



Project Management

We know the critical importance of keeping strict control of a project's costs, logistics and supply chain. We also know that construction schedules change; it's a fact of life. OneSteel Reinforcing has dedicated project managers to work with your team to manage the changes while keeping everyone informed and the project on schedule.



Logistics Management

Getting the right reinforcing steel to the right place at the right time, safely and securely, is paramount. And it's something OneSteel Reinforcing does with rigorous attention to detail. Details such as whether prefabricated elements need to be lifted and handled, have lifting points been certified, do loads have to be pre-slung before they leave the yard and, if so, how and where? By understanding and managing every requirement, we can save time and reduce risks onsite.



Safety & Risk Management

Our customers call on us to solve their problems; not create them. That's why OneSteel Reinforcing's experienced team members take no chances with safety, working closely with our customers on every project to maintain the highest standards of workplace safety. We ensure our onsite and product handling safety procedures align with yours to eliminate any confusion and minimise risk.



It's part of our process too.



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY - A POLICY CHOICE?

By Dr Ron Silberberg AO former National MD of the HIA, for the AIB Address delivered May 12th at the University of Western Sydney

One of the recurring debates in Australia surrounds house prices and housing affordability. It is an issue that evokes considerable community interest and opinion, especially when house prices are escalating. The availability of affordable housing, or more accurately, the shortage of affordable housing can be linked to policy choices adopted by different levels of government, whose policy interventions, although not always housing-specific can impact on the efficiency of housing markets, the cost of housing and housing prices.

Government interventions in housing markets through the provision of grants and subsidies, tax changes, environmental regulation, workplace restrictions, more stringent building standards, land planning controls and infrastructure cost recovery, can be well-intentioned but also have a marked impact on the availability of affordable housing with far-reaching distributional consequences.

In the past 12 months house prices in some capital cities have increased by more than 10 per cent leading to clarion calls for government action to address a yawning housing affordability gap. When we talk about rising house prices, we should be paying more attention to movements in the value of the land component of housing, because the cost of building tends to increase more or less in line with general price movements. The same cannot be said for the price of urban land, which has consumed more and more of the home purchase dollar.

Australia has among the most expensive housing prices in the world much higher than population levels in our capital cities would suggest. As the housing affordability gap widens, politicians, industry stakeholders, commentators and the like, spring forward with proposals to alleviate the shortage of affordable housing.

Currently, there is a Senate inquiry into housing affordability. More than 200 submissions have been made to the Senate inquiry, such is the level of interest in housing. Typically, policy proposals call on government to intervene in housing markets to improve housing affordability, particularly for first home buyers and lower-income renters.

So we have policy proposals for the Federal Government to clamp down on negative gearing on rental investment property, to extend the capital gains tax to the family home and to sell off surplus Commonwealth land. We also have interest groups calling for increases in deposit grants, including allowing first home buyers to access their superannuation to buy a home.

The track record of Federal Government housing programs has not been a runaway success; it is a chequered history. The previous Labor Government, when in opposition identified housing as one of its five top public policy priorities. Following the 2007 election, the Labor Government introduced a national agreement with the states and territories on housing affordability, which replaced the long-standing commonwealth-state housing agreement.

Under the national affordable housing agreement more than \$5 billion in special purpose payments by the Commonwealth is to be provided for social housing, homelessness and indigenous housing.

In addition, there was a housing affordability fund aimed at lowering the cost of new housing through infrastructure grants to local government. There was a first home saver incentive providing tax concessions on saving. And there was the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) to encourage the supply of new affordable rental accommodation for key workers and lower-income households through direct subsidies to rental investors providing below market-rent accommodation.

Despite substantial commitments of expenditure by the previous Labor Government to housing programs, there has been a disappointing lack of

information on housing program outcomes and their cost-effectiveness. The recent National Commission of Audit was somewhat mute on housing programs.

The paucity of readily available information on Commonwealth-funded housing programs has diminished accountability and added to uncertainty about the value received from housing-related expenditures.

Consider the recent publicity surrounding the National Rental Affordability Scheme, an innovative program under which the Commonwealth and the States contribute.

About \$10,000 a year indexed for ten years to rental investors to offset the provision of rental housing at 20 per cent below market rents. So, low-cost rental dwellings were meant to be constructed over a period of three years. But after five years only 14,000 have been built.

Thousands of rental incentives were approved to untried developers who submitted proposals without having acquired sites. Many of those incentives have lapsed or have been relinquished. There has been a lucrative business in the trading of rental incentives at a discount. The Coalition Government has suspended the fifth tranche of rental incentives and has initiated an internal departmental review of the program.

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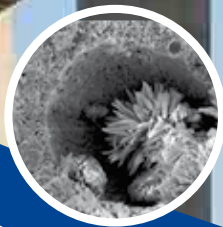
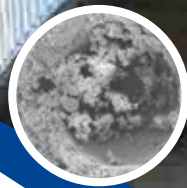
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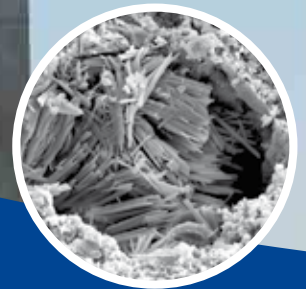
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The chair of the Senate inquiry into housing affordability, Labor's senator Mark Bishop has blamed the program's lack of success on public servants whom he considered lacked the experience to manage a complex scheme.

I recall at the time that NRAS was being developed in 2007, recommending that: Defence Housing Australia would be a suitable vehicle to manage the national rental affordability scheme. Defence Housing manages 18,000 rental dwellings and works closely with the private sector in procuring new and existing rental stock.

Defence Housing Australia, which last year earned the Commonwealth more than \$80 million in profit and is reputed to be worth more than one billion dollars, has been recommended for sale by the National Commission of Audit. Apparently, accounting firm, Ernst & Young is preparing a report on the disposition of Defence Housing Australia.

The success of Defence Housing Australia makes it an attractive sale option for a government keen to reduce debt. Retention of Defence Housing Australia might prove to be the salvation of the National Rental Affordability Scheme. We will find out in the Budget tomorrow night if the government intends to persist with NRAS.

The Coalition Government, in the hunt for Budget savings will have found that a number of the previous government's housing programs had been wound back or terminated, leaving the billion dollar national affordable housing agreement with the states and territories and the National Rental Affordability Scheme as the two remaining housing-specific programs.

Of course, there is Commonwealth Rent Assistance, which is aligned to existing entitlements, such as the age and disability pension. Commonwealth Rent Assistance or CRA has been one of the fastest increasing areas of Federal Budget outlays. Over the past decade, CRA outlays have increased by about 5 per cent a year. CRA expenditure is running at about \$3.6 billion a year and rising. The increase in CRA outlays has been affected in part by increases in the number of eligible renters. Declining levels of home ownership do not bode well for future outlays under CRA.

A ticking time bomb under the Federal Budget arises from the transfer by state governments of public housing upon which CRA does not apply to non-profit community housing groups, which can claim CRA. The conversion of public housing to private rental housing removes the operating costs of public housing, where maintenance is burning a hole in State Budgets. At the same time, hiving off public housing to housing co-operatives increases Federal Budget outlays for Commonwealth Rent Assistance. The divestment of public housing to housing co-operatives raises issues about the ongoing level of funding by the Commonwealth to the States for the provision of social housing.

In light of these developments, it might be appropriate for the Commonwealth to redirect grants provided to the States for social housing in favour of income support for low-income renters, including public tenants. Under the arrangement State Governments would assume full responsibility for the funding of new social housing where they deem this to be a priority and limiting the cost impact on the Federal Budget.

It has been argued previously that a switch away from capital grants for social housing to rental income support would involve additional expenditure for the Commonwealth with more than 300,000 public housing tenants becoming eligible for Commonwealth Rent Assistance. Well it is happening by stealth.

The National Commission of Audit has recommended that the Commonwealth should focus on rent assistance, including for public housing tenants. The Commission proposes that the additional cost of rent assistance be funded out of the savings from the abolition of the National Rental Affordability Scheme and the National Housing Affordability Agreement.

One of the enduring concerns about governments providing rental income support to low-income tenants is the potential for the subsidy to be captured in higher rents by owners of rental housing. In tight rental markets, there will be upward price pressures. But demand pressures could be moderated by a more supportive planning approach to medium-density housing combined with a well-targeted and effective National Rental Affordability Scheme.

There is a glaring need for a housing report card that consolidates housing expenditures across Commonwealth agencies and profiles recipients of Government Housing Assistance. It is ironic that the current government has initiated more reviews than the Rudd Government, but so far has not commissioned a review of housing programs.

At the Commonwealth level, the housing functions have been split across a number of Federal agencies; housing affordability and housing assistance are located within the Department of Social Services; housing supply within Treasury and the construction industry aligned to the Department of Industry.

The emergence of coherent policy strategy can be a casualty when responsibilities are fragmented between departments. Without a dedicated focus on housing policy there is a risk that policy responses can lead to ad hoc and disjointed policy approaches with unintended outcomes.

The Coalition Government is struggling to identify a place for the Commonwealth in housing. For the most part it sees housing as a state and local government responsibility. Yet there are compelling economic as well as social reasons why housing should matter to the national government. There are more than one million jobs combined in residential building and the industry's supply chain, that produces, sells and distributes building products and services.

The housing sector and related business activity make up about 15 per cent of total economic activity, representing about \$200 billion of the nation's domestic activity. The contribution of housing to the economy is much larger than the more limited figures on dwelling investment indicate, reflecting the strong linkages between changes in housing activity and other sectors.

With mining investment in engineering construction coming off quite sharply, expansion in residential building and its supporting sectors can help to maintain employment levels.

Regulatory reform in residential building is worthy of policy priority because the gains can be very substantial by way of example, independent work by the Centre for International Economics commissioned by the Housing Industry Association reveals that a modest 1 per cent improvement in productivity in residential building can generate a step change in overall economic growth of more than \$1 billion a year.

We could lift productivity in the building industry by much more than 1 per cent with larger gains to be reaped in relation to jobs and living standards. The pursuit of regulatory reform in residential building can provide long-term benefits for other sectors, including manufacturing and exports. Some of the avenues through which regulatory reform can be channelled are reductions in planning approval times, reform of building regulation and apprenticeship training, and the removal of archaic workplace restrictions.

Housing touches on and is impacted by many areas of policy, industry, workplace relations, taxation, and immigration to name a few. There would be benefits in one agency having responsibility for the development of housing policy strategy and co-ordinating views across different Commonwealth and State agencies. You do not need a large bureaucracy. The Department Of Prime Minister and Cabinet would be a suitable agency to co-ordinate and co-here housing policy strategy, a responsibility that could be undertaken by a small policy unit.

Too often housing policy changes at the national level have been implemented against a background of a housing industry crisis, leading to stop-start policy approaches. Policies to stimulate industry activity although meant to be counter cyclical can add to instability, particularly as implementation lags can see stimulatory measures adding to housing demand in the upswing of a cycle.

For much of the past 10 to 15 years, the price of existing housing has increased much faster than increases in the stock of dwellings, indicating that the supply of new housing has fallen well short of increases in the demand for housing.

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In a market where there is a shortage of new housing, why would any government provide grants for the purchase of an existing house? But that is precisely what has been done since 2000 when the Howard Government and the States agreed to set aside some of the GST receipts to provide grants to first home buyers. The first home owners grant from time to time has been boosted by Federal and State Governments, such as during the Global Financial Crisis. Not only have grants for the purchase of existing housing added to price pressures, but they have had a direct negative impact on the availability of lower-cost rental housing. The erosion of low-cost rental housing, caused in part by demand-side subsidies to owner-occupiers has not received the policy attention it deserves.

The supply of rental housing is volatile, reflecting in part the profile of small-scale investors that dominate the private rental sector. But also, the private rental sector is affected greatly by market conditions in the owner-occupier market.

Because the owner-occupier market accounts for most of the for-sale market for dwellings, periods of rising prices for owner-occupied housing can see rental investors taking capital gain by selling to first home buyers and other purchasers. Housing stock, in the low and middle-price segments, moves regularly between the rental and owner-occupier sectors.

So when governments increase demand by first home buyers for existing housing, investors can take the opportunity of rising house prices to sell off dwellings to owner-occupiers, reducing the availability of rental housing, particularly at the low-cost end of the rental market.

Thankfully, most state governments have closed off first home grants for existing housing and re-focused the grant on new housing. Providing a grant to buy or build a new house does increase housing demand, but at least it also helps to lead to new supply. In limiting the first home grant to new housing, state governments have reaped a windfall in savings out of their GST receipts, worth about \$500 million a year. The destination of these savings remains a mystery.

There is a plethora of business regulation affecting the cost of new housing. Many of these regulations apply at the state and local government level. One of the more important influences on housing affordability has been land-use planning.

Land planning regulation can have far-reaching effects on the cost of new land and housing and economic development. Planning strategies adopted by state governments to curb suburban expansion in favour of urban densification and the imposition of steep development contributions by local government on greenfield subdivisions have eroded the affordability of new dwellings, causing buyers to shift to existing dwellings.

In the past twenty years, the share of purchases for new housing halved under the weight of urban containment that pushed up the scarcity value of raw land, higher development charges on new subdivisions, the commencement of the GST on new housing and more stringent building regulations.

So even though the price of existing housing rose inexorably during the 2005, the cost of supplying a new house and land package increased faster, making new housing a less attractive proposition except for those buyers who were prepared to pay a large premium for a new house.

Regulatory creep and inordinately high indirect taxes, fees and charges levied on new land and housing- much of which has taken place since 2000- have distorted buyer preferences away from new housing to established housing. Unexpected increases in population during much of the past decade saw state planning authorities greatly underestimate the expansion of demand for residential land and infrastructure.

The containment of suburban development through the imposition of growth boundaries and the setting of density targets for existing urban areas could not work because overwhelmingly existing property in inner areas of the capital cities remains in the hands of private owners not governments.

It should come as no surprise that there was an explosion in the land component of house prices in existing suburbs and new land subdivisions on the urban fringe. But another force impacting on the cost of residential land has been the increasing reliance by state and local government on revenue raisings from new housing developments. According to the Centre for International Economics more than 35 per cent of the cost of a new house and land package consists of, infrastructure charges, GST,

stamp duty, land tax, building fees and charges. state and local governments have become so dependent on revenue from new housing that it poses an enormous hurdle to turn back.

While the development industry claims that local government development charges have reduced the viability of new land development, local government maintains it does not have the revenue streams to meet the communities' demands for services and facilities. There is some truth in both arguments.

What is less obvious are the solutions. In finding ways to fill the infrastructure funding gap, there is obvious resistance from state and local governments to increasing property rates or by expanding the land tax base, none of which would endear them to their voters. Also there is a very narrow constituency in support of new housing, particularly from existing home owners fearful that a large cut in the cost of new housing could jeopardise their house values.

There is tension between the need to loosen the regulatory shackles on new housing development to increase the affordability of new housing and the community's opposition to new residential development. The increased structure of land prices tends to become embedded and existing property owner are likely to be resistant to reforms that might jeopardise the market value of their housing assets.

Development applications for higher density development can meet with fierce opposition from existing residents fearful that densification would place strains on stretched community facilities, add to traffic congestion and impair property values.

If there is to be greater community acceptance of the need for new development there should be a closer alignment of infrastructure facilities and services with community expectations. A potential response might be found in new financial incentives for states and local government to embrace planning reforms that support economic growth and jobs.

In recognition of the financial constraints operating on the Federal Budget, it might be sensible to consolidate existing housing funds and some of the proceeds from the sale of surplus Commonwealth property into a renewed national competition payments system.

The housing affordability fund would reward those state and local governments that support and facilitate new housing development for example, through the release of land and reduced development assessment times. HIA has estimated that accelerating planning approval times could reduce the cost of a new house and land package by about \$15,000. The Commonwealth would negotiate payment arrangements with the states and local government based on key milestones and performance outcomes.

Currently, new residential building is experiencing a substantial upturn, not because the cost of new housing has become more affordable but because the price of established housing has risen strongly in a number of cities making new housing more cost competitive against existing housing. It is a pity that a recovery in residential building has to rely on a surge in the price of existing housing instead of affordability gains achieved by regulatory-reform of new housing.

In summary, these are the actions that could be taken to improve housing policy and ultimately housing affordability.

1. We need to have a report card on the cost-effectiveness of housing assistance and government expenditure on housing programs, including tax expenditures.
2. Policy proposals to increase housing affordability should focus on those factors that inhibit the responsiveness of new housing supply to shifts in market demand conditions.
3. A small policy unit in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet could be formed to consolidate and develop housing policy strategy.
4. Some of the proceeds received from the sale of surplus Commonwealth land and buildings should be allocated to the funding of productive assets, especially vital economic and community infrastructure that is required to underpin and increase Australia's competitiveness, productivity and living standards.
5. Policies to encourage higher-density development should be accompanied by a rigorous assessment of the carrying capacity of existing urban infrastructure with different population scenarios, especially in the inner suburbs of the major capital cities.
7. Funds currently committed to housing programs could be channelled into a renewed national competition payments system to reward states and local government that encourage affordable housing development.

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MANAGING THE ESTIMATING TEAM

By Mike Musgrave

All construction organisations are different. From the small family run business that usually sub-contracts with larger construction firms to the largest multi-disciplined construction company. Getting the cost planning right is the process where companies will either succeed or fail. Management must be aware of how to get the best from their estimating teams. Here are some tips from MD&E that we have learnt from the building, structural and civil engineering industry over the previous 35 years.

If there is a particular project that your company wants to win at tender time and make a profit then assemble the best estimating team. Not necessarily the most experienced people but the best people in your organisation that come up with good ideas. Throw the project to them and see what they come up with.

Remember, there are always one or two juicy kernels of project construction elements where you can beat the opposition to win the project; this maybe in quarry materials, piling works, craneage or the bulk supply of certain expensive items.

Encourage any new ideas including from the least expected sources. They may come from an inexperienced team engineer who may have insights into a certain construction element of which management was not aware. There is nothing worse and many tenders lost, due to the lead estimator or manager being stuck in his own ideas on how to construct and win a tender; without encouraging and motivating the team to express themselves.

People making up your estimating team must feel free to express ideas and any suggestions without being put down. Everyone wants to feel included and appreciated. Senior team members need to have attitude as a priority in their relationship with the estimating team.

One example of this was when we suggested to management to negotiate with the local spudded barge operator for the piling works of one of the coal loaders at the Hunter Port in Newcastle. We did and we won the tender.

By contrast, for an underwater car park in Sydney Harbour, we suggested to go with a large ballasted barge with the piling rig welded to the deck. This proved to be the most efficient and profitable as our productivity was far higher than our opposition, who lost the tender due to a longer program of works.

Good ideas by themselves are often not enough. The whole team has to analyse new ideas for cost, availability, local conditions (land forms, waterways, tides etc), program time and work breakdown structure.

Problems will occur and it is up to management and the team leader to acknowledge and inform the team of the problem. The rest of the estimating team will only feel let down if they are not informed. If a problem is identified, then the whole team needs to analyse the

problem and ensure no 'over-reaction' to the situation. Most problems can be overcome as they are simply challenges with another name.

A classic example of over-reaction was the case of a construction company tendering for a NSW south coast viaduct by-pass. The ground over which the viaduct was to be constructed was a porous aquifer during king tides (where the water rises through the ground). We were informed by our consulting engineers that this occurred 13 times a year. This would result in the supply of tens of thousands of tonnes of gravel hardstand areas for cranes, falsework, scaffolding and jinker truck delivery of viaduct girders,

We at MD&E doubted this assessment of king tide occurrence and went to site to check with the local dairy farmers. King tides only occur twice a year, not 13. The challenge here was to re-jig our program of works for these two predictable yearly events. We needed to have hardstand material available in the construction areas under the viaduct where and when required.

Our consultants disagreed, despite first hand local information; they were confusing king tides with spring tides but would not admit it. Spring tides occur about every 29 days. However, our management did not want to disagree with the respected consultants so they included over \$1m worth of hardstand material in our tender. Our opposition included just over \$100k for hardstand, won the tender and made a profit.

Our management over-reacted to a perceived problem, reported from just one source, without having the tender estimating team analyse the perceived problem.

Every construction project (and site) is different. The tendering team has to be motivated by the manager to accept changes to every aspect of the estimating method for all projects. Copying and pasting from previous projects is best left to the cowboys of the industry. Estimating systems will never be perfect and it is foolish for any management to spend time trying to make estimating systems 'just right'.

Management of the estimating process and the make-up of the team is the key.

The risk on any construction project is in the detail. The foundation to any profitable project is to first pothole for underground services, then drill and check extra boreholes for precise site geotechnical information and then double check the survey information and the have that double check survey verified. The information so gathered must be mapped, noted and made available to the whole estimating team.

Senior managers and estimating team leaders are often loathe spending time on chasing, checking and analysing details. But this is precisely where most risk lies. Most construction companies rely on

generic algorithms for risk analysis. Far better to establish an original real cost analysis for each project.

For example, the risk of a major rainstorm event during a civil construction project will result in delay costs to the program works, re-drafting of the programme, costs for clearing site drains, detention ponds, re-constructing site roads or access tracks, costs for extracting bogged machines etc. Show me a generic risk algorithm that allows for this. None exist.

Real cost analysis involves carefully checking commodities price trends (polymers included, as they are a commodity), access for site supply deliveries and costs for getting these supplies to the various site work areas and the company costs involved for delays, however caused, they do and will happen. Managers cannot rely on variations paid by the client to cover these risks.

Finally, if your construction company has a hierarchical structure then the team has to find polite ways of overcoming the problem of communications upward or down. Everybody, from the newest employee to the senior executive should be able to talk to anybody at any time, regardless of their position in the company. If the job is to win a tender then use the old dictum "if you want the best apple, go to the top of the tree". In other words if you want the best advice or information get it from the top.



ABOUT MIKE MUSGRAVE

Mike Musgrave, Director of Musgrave Design Engineering Pty Limited, is an Engineering Cost Consultant to the Civil and Structural Engineering Industry. Mike is a Licentiate of the AIB and has been a member since 1993. Mike is also an Associate Fellow of the Institute of Management and has been a member of AIM since 1990.

Mike has been in the building and construction industry since 1977 and has been involved in some of the east coasts major projects including Abbott Point in Queensland, Sydney Olympics site, TransUrban Link in Melbourne and Darling Harbour in Sydney. Mike works regularly with most of the major civil construction companies as a Cost Consultant. Mike also contracts with State and Federal government departments for major infrastructure projects.



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High flying construction services company named WA Business of the Year

From Irish backpacker to managing a national construction services business in just six years - that's the incredible story of the 30-year-old owner of Monford Group Pty Ltd, named as the 2014 Telstra Western Australian Business of the Year.

Declan White arrived in Australia in 2008 on a working holiday visa and quickly gained employment with a number of construction companies. He worked as a project manager, expanding his skills and knowledge of the local industry while completing a Bachelor of Construction Management with Honours.

By 2010 Mr White had launched the multi-disciplinary services company Monford Group, first in Perth, then expanded the business to include Karratha as well as setting up in Sydney, Brisbane, Darwin and Mackay.

Monford Group Pty Ltd specialises in servicing and supporting mine sites, gas plants, power plants and pipelines, offering haulage services, plant, equipment and labour hire. It has secured major projects including the Perth City Rail Alliance and Wheatstone LNG.

Now employing 180 people, Mr White says the business' success has been driven by its staff. "Our employees have a very strong work ethic and always produce quality work - we pledge to excel and we deliver on our promises."

Monford Group prides itself on strong environmental values, forming the Monford Foundation to support community and environmentally responsible initiatives.

"We have worked hard to build an incident and injury free culture and produce a quality product without causing harm to the environment. Innovation is encouraged in every aspect of our business and we make it a priority to be at the forefront of industry software and technology developments," Mr White said.

Other winners of the 2014 Telstra WA Business Awards include, Armed For Life, which has run workshops for more than 20,000 students in 59 schools across WA to address bullying, self-esteem, stress management and resilience.

Established by teacher and chaplain Adam Przytula, who experienced schoolyard bullying as a child, the business uses a mix of humour, games and stories to engage students and has recently moved into providing workshops for adults.

Handmade raw sweets producer Rawsome took out the Start-Up Award, while financial advisory firm TWD, won the Small Business Award, and Mandurah Cruises & Gift Shop, which operates a variety of scenic, heritage and eco tours with a fleet of five ferries, was the Regional Business Award winner.

Will Irving, Telstra Business Group Managing Director and Ambassador for the Telstra Australian Business Awards, said: "The winners are brilliant and inspirational businesses whose owners are recognised for their professionalism, innovation, leadership and creative use of technology."

"Monford Group has displayed a tireless and unmovable commitment to achieving its vision as the business wins against multinational players."

"The Telstra Awards judges were impressed by the commitment to offering a value for money service to all customers and its use of new technology and systems to identify waste and efficiency improvements," he said.

More than \$800,000 in prizes will be shared by winners of the 2014 state, territory and national Telstra Business Awards - a program that has celebrated Australian small and medium businesses since 1992.

Monford Group Pty Ltd

Arriving from Ireland on a working holiday visa in 2008 with no contacts and little knowledge of the local construction industry, Declan White now has Australia covered from north to south and east to west. He quickly gained employment and a reputation with construction companies through roles as a carpenter, supervisor and project manager. In mid-2010 Declan established his own construction sub-contracting business. Monford Group Pty Ltd grew rapidly into a multi-disciplinary construction company, initially employing 37 people and growing to 180 employees. It specialises in the infrastructure and resources sector, working on mine sites, gas plants, power plants and pipelines. It also offers haulage services, plant, equipment and labour hire. Headquartered in Perth's Victoria Park, Monford Group Pty Ltd has expanded with offices in Sydney, Brisbane and Darwin and depots in Karratha, Mackay and Toowoomba. Key projects include an earthworks and concrete works contract on the Wheatstone LNG Project, west of Onslow.

'Our aim is to become a one-stop shop for construction contractors nationwide.' Declan White, Director (pictured).





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Interview with Neil Savery, General Manager of the Australian Building Codes Board

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Head: Q&A: Neil Savery

Intro: *Ecolibrium* poses a few questions to Neil Savery, who was appointed general manager of the Australian Building Codes Board earlier this year. Savery left his role as deputy commissioner of the Victorian Building and Plumbing Industry Commission to take on the position. Previous roles include chief executive of the ACT Planning and Land Authority, director of Waterfront Geelong and Special Projects, and executive director of Planning South Australia. He has qualifications in town planning, urban design and ecologically sustainable development.

Ecolibrium: What are your impressions of the ABCB, having been working in the role of GM since January?

Neil Savery: Given that I was previously an ABCB board member for 11 years and had worked closely with the ABCB Office as a state regulator for the same period of time, my impressions were already well established.

That is a test case of successful inter-jurisdictional co-operation: a very trusting working relationship between the board and the office and a highly competent workforce.

The work of the ABCB compares very favourably with its international counterparts; its record in terms of what it has produced is positively commented on by national review bodies. Over time the expectations placed upon what it can achieve have expanded, in part because of the effectiveness of the model, in part because of what it has delivered, and in part because of the diversification of demands being placed upon the built environment.

Eco: What do you see as the major challenges facing you and the ABCB?

NS: Like most operations, challenges come in more than one dimension. Administratively, the big challenge is to establish a business model for the ABCB going forward that does not rely on the National Construction Code being a commercial product that generates approximately 50 per cent of the board's operating revenue.

There are justifiable reasons for why things are the way they are, and ultimately it is for governments to determine if there is a feasible alternative model. But the aim for all involved should be to enhance practitioner access, awareness and

understanding of the NCC, so that we can improve compliance and productivity.

From a content point of view, while the NCC will continue to respond to policy challenges around things such as climate change adaptation and demographic change, there is also the challenge of making the document more useable.

This is not just in respect to presentation in its published version, but asking what applications can be made readily available over time through new technologies. An example might be the provision of a search engine for the electronic version of the NCC. The potential opportunities become more apparent if and when the NCC is able to be made free online.

Given some of the more significant changes to the NCC over the past decade, in particular around what we might describe as "societal" issues rather than those to do with structural integrity, there is a challenge to ensure that the NCC is achieving the policy expectations. This means reviewing policy content and determining what levels of compliance are being achieved, and if expectations are not being met, what are the barriers to achieving the desired outcome?

Within the overall setting of national governance of construction standards, there is a challenge to maintain national consistency through minimising state and territory variations; ensuring that where minimum performance measures have been established through the NCC, they are not usurped by local government interventions through their planning ordinances; harmonisation between building and plumbing within the NCC; and in accordance with the decision of COAG, moving to the next onsite construction activity to be consolidated into the NCC.

Eco: How do you think compliance with the National Construction Code can be improved?

NS: Making the NCC freely available, promoting its contents and engaging in training, in my view are some of the most effective ways in which we can improve compliance.

The industry associations, the education sector and the state and territory regulators all have a role to play, and the NCC should be an integral part of the early development and education of those practitioners who should be using it as part of their occupations.

Ongoing professional development should include links to the NCC where relevant to a profession, and the opportunity also exists to make it a more significant part of examination for practitioner licensing and registration.

In terms of the NCC's utility, the Board is intent on establishing quantifiable performance measures for the NCC, under a project that that will take at least three years to complete and involve significant engagement with industry.

This will provide clearer direction for practitioners who are often called upon to develop "alternative solutions", retaining the ability to promote innovation, while providing a higher level of guidance as to the outcomes that need to be achieved.

This can have the added benefit of less reliance on "deemed to satisfy" provisions and intervention from other authorities who do not consider that their interests are being adequately satisfied through the alternative solutions they are being requested to sign off on.

While in the first instance this project will have the greatest benefit for Volume One, I would anticipate it will also have flow-on benefits for those in the housing sector who are involved in developing or assessing alternative solutions against similar "performance requirements" in Volume Two.

Eco: Is there a work plan in place for addressing compliance around J5 in the NCC?

NS: The Board is conducting a review of J5 in Volume One of the NCC. Apart from the importance of reviewing this section in its own right, it will also help inform future reviews, and in this respect it will act as a pilot for the Board.

The review itself will commence in August, with the overall aim of simplifying the provisions of J5. Through industry engagement, which will involve the use of social media, the results will be presented to the Building Codes Committee and the Board for consideration and inclusion in the Public Comment Draft of the NCC 2015.

The project has been informed by a survey AIRAH conducted of its membership, in conjunction with other industry bodies, in 2010, which identified significant issues as contributing to non-compliance, as well as a number of technical concerns.

This information was supplemented by an industry workshop co-hosted by the ABCB and AIRAH in 2011, which discussed some of the options for addressing the issues raised in the initial survey.

Eco: How do you see AIRAH contributing to the ABCB?

NS: Like many industry bodies, AIRAH brings a significant level of expertise to an area that the ABCB has only some involvement in.

Given that the building industry is highly diverse and in many areas very specialised, the ABCB can't have resident experts in every area. It therefore depends on the contributions from industry organisations on topics that are relevant to them, as well as their contributions to other subjects that might be of interest or relevance.

We also appreciate feedback from organisations such as AIRAH on where general enhancements to the NCC can be made, which can either be through their participation on the Building Codes Committee, through engagement in topic-specific consultation exercises, such as the review of J5, or through individual representation.

Eco: What are the two biggest lessons you've learned in your time in the role?

NS: As I indicated above, I came into the role very much with my eyes open, and while not suggesting I had nothing to learn, I nonetheless had a good appreciation of the role and the organisation.

Not taking anything for granted, operating between an industry sector and those who regulate it does enable you to see an issue from both sides.

It is critical for the success of the ABCB model for the Board to remain impartial and adhere to its mission, noting the value of having industry sitting at the table with the regulators.

The second, which is more a lesson reinforced, is that none of us can solve the intractable problems by ourselves.

Most people have something useful to bring to the table that can add to our understanding of a problem and potentially contribute to the direction we take in finding a solution. As with most things, the outcomes are unlikely to satisfy everyone, but engaging with those who have an interest and being able to justify how you arrived at a solution is often as important.

Q. In general, how do you, as someone who has considerable planning experience how do you think we in Australia are dealing with our future planning needs?

As a planning professional who has ventured into other areas of administration over time it is useful looking back in at planning.

This is a critical topic that has to have national traction, even if the connections are not always fully appreciated by those who are debating it.

Firstly, it is important to lift the discussion about planning beyond development assessment, as this is much like dealing with the symptoms rather than the causes.

The discussion has to be at a more strategic level where objectives, outcomes, costs/benefits, evidence and governance of solutions need to be debated, and given the length of time implementation often takes, ideally agreed with bi-partisan support.

Planning has to be at the forefront of anticipating problems, where through the establishment of an evidence base, measures can be put in place at an early point to help address a range of societal issues, be they economic, environmental, social or cultural.

In this respect we can look at demographic change, costs of living, infrastructure needs, climate change, food security and natural hazard mitigation as some of the more obvious and compelling issues that need to be addressed.

These subjects are not the [sole] preserve of urban and regional planners, but a host of professional interests who need to work together given the complexity of the issues and their inter-dependencies. The moment you think you have addressed one problem another emerges.

In many respects this is occurring as more and more groups, some of whom are not natural bedfellows, are attracted to similar issues, seek to achieve the same outcomes and benefit from providing a collective perspective.

In summary, and bearing in mind that planning appropriately happens at a number of different levels, we are talking a lot about our future planning needs, we even have some of the solutions proposed or options presented, but we appear to struggle to get to the point of agreed action.



AON Hewitt's 2014 Best Employer Reveals Secrets To Success

AON Hewitt Best Employer Award Winner for the fourth consecutive year, Hilti Australia, has revealed its recipe for success that has allowed the brand to lead nationally in employee engagement, retainment and satisfaction.

The Awards, held last night at Doltone House Hyde Park saw over 120 companies vying for the highly sought after title.

Hilti Australia is a premium global brand that specialises in designing and manufacturing top-quality power tools and fastening systems, with a focus on the construction and building maintenance industries. The company employs over 300 staff nationally and over 20,000 people across the 120 countries it operates in and has consistently experienced double-digit year on year growth.

Compiled by Hilti's Managing Director Jan Pacas, these 'trade' secrets to success have been integral not only to internal culture, but also to the company's growth and profitability.

1. Take it personally

Every employee is different. They are motivated by different things, they have different strengths, they need development in different areas and, most importantly, they have different goals. To really make an impact on the level of internal engagement, a business must understand that there's no magic 'one size fits all' approach. At Hilti, we implemented an annual development discussion which is a one on one meeting between a staff member and their direct manager to review their role and get an update on their career objectives. This program is rolled out in addition to the general performance reviews that we conduct, and although it requires a significant investment into the training of management to run these effectively, the benefit it can have on a business' bottom line is extremely powerful.

2. Focus on the customer facers

Like any company, keeping our customers happy is essential to building a profitable business. This was the reason we implemented a development program specifically for employees that were dealing with customers on a regular basis. The objective of this was to increase repeat purchases, as well as build a strong new customer database. The three-phase plan saw the development of business-wide standards, a 2-day workshop and a field assessment. Oftentimes, brands overlook their sales staff and customer-facing representatives, instead focusing on the executive and management team; but working with employees on every level is one of the best ways to get a quick boost in productivity, and ultimately in profitability.

3. Sell yourself

A great way to access a plethora of the Industry's best performers, who are ready and willing to work for your business, is to make your company the most appealing. Hilti developed a partnership with one of the most well respected educational institutions in the country, The University of Sydney, allowing us to participate in guest lecturing opportunities, run networking sessions and offer internships. This enables us to not only position Hilti as the leading industry organisation, but it gives us the chance to access the brightest students from very early on in their career and integrate them immediately into the culture of our brand.

4. Raise the bar

It's surprisingly easy for a business to get stuck in a rut with objectives and

standards, so it's essential to constantly re-evaluate performance drivers and train executives and middle management on these new indicators. Markets change and you learn to go with the ebb and flow of the business environment, but if you are always striving for better, your results will reflect this – sales will increase and the gap between where you're currently positioned and your target will decrease.

These secrets to success come from Hilti's recognition in the prestigious Aon Hewitt Best Employer Awards, which are judged on business' employee engagement, talent management practices and overall company performance, all of which are measured with an organisational audit and scrutinised by a panel of independent industry representatives.

"Hilti's staff is our most valuable asset and we employ the best and brightest in the industry. With our strong focus on developing an engaged and motivated workforce, our employees will continue to be our brand's most powerful and passionate ambassadors," explains Mr. Pacas.

This year has been a year of award wins for Hilti, with the company also being presented with the 2014 Swiss Award, in recognition of their leadership and innovation contributing to the growth of the Swiss-Australian relationship. Hosted by SwissCham (formerly known as the Swiss Chamber of Commerce), the Swiss Awards are judged by a distinguished panel who voted unanimously for Hilti to take out this year's top honour.

Hilti is renowned for its high quality products and systems including drilling and demolition tools, diamond cutting and coring, direct fastening systems and anchors, construction chemicals, laser measuring systems and modular support systems. Operating in 120 countries, Hilti Australia employs 300 staff and has a company culture based on the values of the typical tradie - integrity, teamwork, commitment and courage to embrace change.

New Services at the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC)

As part of our strong plan to give the building industry a brighter future the Queensland Government is making some changes to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC).

As of 1 July the QBCC is offering a number of new services and products designed to make life easier for licensees.

One of these services is an early dispute resolution process which will allow the QBCC to take action whilst building contracts are still active. Previously, it could only get involved once construction was completed and the contract was terminated.

This will allow disputes to be resolved faster and at a lower cost to those involved.

Mediation services are also now available for contractors and homeowners to use should any issues arise during residential construction. This allows both parties to work towards a solution in a timely manner and may prevent some disputes needing to be referred to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

The first case has already been resolved under the new system between a builder and home owner and took only four hours.

This initiative is one part of the Government's Ten Point Action Plan which will make the QBCC more efficient and customer focused.

Other measures introduced include a new 'standards and tolerances' booklet, a more user-friendly website and a new 24/7 telephone service.

For more information about any of the new services and how they can make your life easier, contact the QBCC on 139 333 or visit www.qbcc.qld.gov.au



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Civil Engineering – Concrete Diagnostics

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ALS Industrial has extensive experience in providing independent services assessing the integrity of civil infrastructure and concrete structures.

With over 40 years' experience and one of the largest commercial teams of material consultants in Australia, ALS Industrial offers an extremely strong knowledge base with a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of failure.

The multidisciplinary team of professionals has expertise in metallurgy, materials, mechanical and civil engineering, chemistry and related fields. ALS Industrial's services are characterised by expertise, timely response and an approach focused on identification of root cause of problems and developing realistic solutions or improved designs.

ALS Industrial offers a comprehensive solution that can accommodate focused tests on limited aspects of a facility to broad ranging service life assessments and enhancements.

The ALS model provides a holistic engineering led service which includes:

Site sampling, testing, surveys and assessments

This includes a wide range of equipment and techniques to address all eventualities. ALS continually strives to adopt the latest technologies and keep abreast of the current research.

Laboratory analysis and research

This aspect of the service processes the site samples and is led by the engineering team to gain a full understanding of the problems at hand.

Material durability studies, structural integrity assessments and failure analysis

This is facilitated by the site staff and laboratories being controlled and managed by the engineering team to return data that is relevant to provide optimal results to the client that address longer term requirements.

Capabilities

Sonic Surveys

There are a wide range of sonic techniques that ALS utilises to search the internal fabric of elements. This includes Phased Array (to map cavities, cracks and voids in 3D), Sonic Echo, Impact Response, Ultrasonic Pulse Velocity, Impact Echo and Spectral Analysis of Surface Waves. These techniques are used to assess material quality and defects, from element dimensions to fractures and inconsistencies.

Acoustic Emission Analysis

ALS uses signature sound impulses of specific occurrences, like the propagation of cracking, to assess the longer term performance of structural elements. This is particularly useful in understanding the behaviour of post-tensioned tendons and corrosion. Systems may be installed and remotely monitored over varying time frames to deliver precise and valuable information. This will not only identify the location of distress occurrences, but also provide reliable service life projections.

Structural Surveys

There are a range of techniques and equipment that ALS employ to identify element geometry, internal reinforcement configuration, concrete characteristics and structural performance. This includes impact echo, eddy current, radar, phased array, strain gauging and load testing. This information is used in structural analysis including determining residual capacity and finite element analysis.



Chemical Analysis

Using a suite of chemical analysis and related techniques ALS can assess contaminants and deleterious materials that may be found in concrete structures, ranging from the commonly experienced chloride and sulphate contamination to cement content. There are a large variety of possible problems that may be analysed such as the reactive properties that stone aggregate may have with the cement paste (alkali aggregate reaction - AAR). ALS offers a full range of laboratory testing including, but not limited to X Ray fluorescence (XRF) elemental analysis, X Ray diffraction (XRD) crystallinity analysis and scanning electron microscopy (SEM).



Mechanical Testing

ALS laboratories are equipped to test the physical properties of concrete such as unconfined compressive strength (UCS), tensile or cohesive strength, permeability and abrasion resistance.

Corrosion Surveys

The corrosive stability of the reinforcement in concrete is a pivotal concern with regard to a structure's longevity. ALS performs corrosion surveys to map likely corrosion and concrete resistivity then correlates this data with related reinforcement mapping and corrosive contaminant analysis.

ALS Industrial offers:

- National coverage with offices throughout Australia;
- A multidisciplinary team of engineering and technical professionals;
- Engineering Led inspection and testing services;
- Multiskilled testing and inspection personnel that can undertake a range of inspection and sampling services onsite;
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Historically, price has been used as a point for differentiation for many companies within the building and construction industry, however with the intensification of competition, industry leaders are searching for more sustainable practices.

"If price is the sole point of competition, in a saturated market no one will profit".

Nic Thomas, a consultant at Scope Training stated that he is witnessing a gradual change with many of his clients. "In tight times, many of our clients, including large companies, have been enjoying rather small profit margins and having to win more work just to stay in the game - this has been largely due to the provision of competitive bids just to win work, in some cases bids provided 'at cost'".

This is not sustainable!

Consider this; if labour and materials for construction are estimated to cost \$500,000 and your company wishes to make a 20% profit- how much should you charge?

If you worked out a nice figure of \$600,000, well you would be with the majority in being incorrect.

True costs in construction projects are comprised of two factors; direct costs (the actual cost of the project work) and indirect costs (the costs borne by the organisation to support its business activities; overheads, rent, admin staff, insurances etc.).

So in the above example the profit could not be accurately calculated without an attributed proportion of indirect costs to the works. Many businesses fall victim to this trap, thinking they are profiting on every job - but in some cases they are actually losing money and walking blindly into liquidation.

"I have assisted many businesses in the development of practical solutions to win work without cutting their profits".

There is no simple answer; clients will utilise price as a factor in decision making. There are however a multitude of strategies which owners, directors, managers and even team members can implement to enjoy a sustainable competitive advantage.

An essential skill in any project is the understanding and practical application of Project Management.



The real cost of replacing an employee

By Martin Belfield – MBAQ Workplace Relations Manager, originally published in the June/July 2013 edition of Master Builder magazine.

The cost to a business when a good employee leaves is hard to recover, but it can be reduced by better people management.

Have you ever been disappointed when a good employee resigns without warning? Do you know the real cost of replacing such an employee?

Unfortunately, many employers will underestimate, by a very large amount, the actual cost of employee replacement. More often than not, a manager will also fail to identify the real reasons a good employee has moved on. The fault can be traced back to inefficient human resources management and an absence of policies, procedures and skills.

Cost reduction

Numerous case studies have revealed that the financial cost of replacing a good employee can be between 100% and 150% of the new employee's salary. For example, a replacement employee paid \$80,000 per year could cost an employer a further \$100,000 to get to the level of productivity and efficiency of the previous employee.

These costs arise from obvious upfront activities like advertising, interviews, induction and training, as well as the not-so-obvious, including lost productivity, customer dissatisfaction (external and internal), lost business, lost intellectual property and lost corporate culture.

Knowing how these costs arise and where they can be reduced requires human resource management. More specifically, it requires employee retention and employee satisfaction techniques. It is necessary because it saves a lot of money.

Reducing staff turnover

To reduce staff turnover, managers need a plan to neutralise the most common reasons an employee will leave their job. These reasons may include:

1. The relationship the immediate supervisor or manager has with the employee – An unhappy working relationship without communication, objectivity and support from the employee's manager is fertile ground for employee dissatisfaction.
2. Opportunity for flexibility in work and life – Within reason, an employee expects to be recognised for more than just the role they perform at work. Family obligations, or personal arrangements that cannot be accommodated by an employer, will eventually lead to an employee moving to a more flexible workplace. The National Employment Standards enable flexible working arrangements for parents with young children.
3. Meaningful work gives confidence and status – An employee will stay longer in a job that provides recognition, both within and outside the work itself. Relationships with co-workers also play a key part in why employees attend work and stay in that employment environment.
4. Wages and conditions of employment – These will often factor into why an employee decides to change employers. However, it is rarely the primary reason, and it is not uncommon for employees to change jobs for less pay, when one or more of the above reasons are the determining factor.

Managing a retention program

In order to manage your employees, you need to be able to measure your workforce. When it comes to staff retention, you should take some time to consider the costs, why it is occurring and how to increase retention.

The most effective method of retaining employees is to adopt a whole-of-business policy to improve communication, share information, acknowledge worthy performance, quantify the improvement, and reward the effort. The techniques will vary from one company to another, however it will require training in people management skills, regular performance assessments, information sharing or updates on business performance, and a general review of human resource policies and procedures.

Getting started

Master Builders Human Resources Manual is a must for employers in the building and construction industry to develop a platform for managing people. It contains a ready to use disk of templates, forms and policies.

Master Builders Workplace Relations Advisors can provide further assistance in training and consultation to ensure you get the best possible results on reducing staff turnover and costs.

For more information contact Master Builders on 1300 30 50 10 or email workplacelrelations@masterbuilders.asn.au. To order a copy of the Master Builders HR Manual visit the website at www.masterbuilders.asn.au/eshop.

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AIB POLICY ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Summary

AIB advocates for greater awareness of and action on the issue of mental health in construction, and would like to see further growth of support networks in companies and on construction sites. Construction managers have a key role to play in boosting the morale and mental health of staff in their workplaces. It is a critical issue that must be addressed in a positive and proactive manner by Governments, the industry, individual companies, professional bodies, construction managers and all workers in the built environment.

Background

Mental health in the building and construction industry in Australia has long been a silent and destructive problem that has had a profound impact on individuals, their families, friends and colleagues, as well as on the productivity of the industry. For example, the suicide rate for young workers in the Queensland construction industry is more than double the national average for men. Further, a construction worker is up to six times more likely to die from suicide than from an accident at work.

AIB Policy Positions

AIB will be proactive, and do as much as possible to address this issue. AIB holds the following positions in relation to mental health in the construction industry:

- |||| Suicide prevention is too large a task in the construction industry to be left to health professionals, and those in the industry should be proactive in being part of the solution;
- |||| Workers in the industry should also be encouraged to seek external help where needed, and assisted to be put in touch with those professionals;
- |||| Getting help should be an easy and hassle-free, and not just to prevent suicide, but for all mental health and wellbeing issues on construction sites. This help offered to workers must be relevant and effective;
- |||| Mental health and wellbeing issues need to be de-stigmatised and construction workers should be encouraged to seek help for a range of issues, and not just those that relate to suicide. People should not be afraid or ashamed to admit that they have a problem with their mental health;

|||| Suicide awareness and prevention should become a part of everyday activities in the construction industry;

|||| AIB supports organisations and initiatives that assist with suicide prevention, such as Mates in Construction, Black Dog Institute, Beyond Blue, OzHelp and SANE Australia;

|||| Awareness should be raised of suicide as a preventable problem within the building and construction industry, and seminars, webinars, addresses and one-on-one and group discussions are all means of doing this;

|||| Construction sites should have access to appropriate and available suicide first aid resources;

|||| The culture on construction sites of conflict and intimidation by certain groups needs to end;

|||| Suicides in the industry are often indicative of a greater malaise, and so there is also a need to address the underlying issues; and

|||| Substance abuse, such as abusing drugs and alcohol, as well as gambling and other addictions, are also indicative of mental health issues, and need to be addressed.

Actions

To further the above policies, the Australian Institute of Building will:

- |||| Raise awareness amongst its members about this issue, as construction managers have a key role to play in boosting morale amongst workers on construction sites;
- |||| Encourage building professionals to join the AIB and attend AIB events to increase camaraderie and morale;
- |||| Support Mates in Construction and other relevant organisations, and liaise with them to achieve tangible outcomes; and
- |||| Raise awareness about this issue with politicians, the construction industry and the community at large.

BIM INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

The Australian Institute of Building was a key participant in an industry and government roundtable discussion held on the 10 March 2014. Representatives from Department of Treasury, Building Management & Works, Building Commission, Construction Training Fund, NATSPEC, AIA, AIB, AIQS, BEDP, EA and MBA attended. The participants agreed unanimously that Building Information Modelling (BIM) was now part of the Australian industry vernacular and that their organisations believed there were benefits to gain from BIM. However, there are still challenges to obtaining the best benefits of BIM. The three

top issues were the need to improve awareness and understanding, develop BIM standards and increase training. It was agreed to collectively support a BIM seminar session to be held on 24 October 2014. It was further agreed to endorse and promote the NATSPEC National BIM Guide as a learning resource. The Guide is freely available from www.natspec.com.au. All participants believed that the release of the NATSPEC National BIM Protocols in June would also help remove a major area of confusion.



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EFFECT OF THE BUILDING ACT 2011 ON COMPLIANCE COSTS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Below is a summary of an academic article by Elizabeth Bazen, University of Western Sydney, Australia published in the Australasian Journal of Construction Economics and Building.

The Building Act 2011 commenced in Western Australia on 2 April 2012. It introduced private certification for design and construction compliance, and reduced fees and timeframes for local governments to issue permits. This research project assessed the effect of the Act on the time and cost of building approvals in WA, using an internet-based, self-completion survey to obtain feedback from people on their experience of the new building approvals process.

As a result of this research, it is apparent that the new building approvals process introduced through the Building Act 2011 has affected building projects in WA in a number of ways. The hypothesis underlying this research – that for lower-value projects, particularly alterations to existing buildings, the new approvals process is likely to be more costly – has been supported by the analysis of the 16 building projects studied in this report. The 16 building projects studied indicate that the average cost of approval for projects valued up to \$1 million is 4.0 times greater under the Building Act 2011 than under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960. Conversely, the introduction of private certification has reduced the cost of approvals for larger projects. The cost of the Building Act 2011 for the building industry as a whole therefore appears to be neutral, with the reduced cost for larger projects offsetting the increased cost for smaller projects. The new approvals process has also succeeded in reducing the time required to obtain building permits, with most permits now being issued within two weeks under the Building Act 2011, instead of five weeks under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960.

With continued monitoring and review by the Building Commission, and longer-term consultation and feedback from building industry practitioners, particularly in relation to alterations to existing buildings, the Building Act 2011 will deliver a more streamlined approvals process and a greater level of safety and accountability in the built environment for Western Australia.

Further research is needed to determine if the increased cost of approval for projects valued under \$1 million, demonstrated by the 16 projects analysed in this report, is applicable to the whole building industry and is generally balanced by cost savings for larger projects.

Further research is also required to identify what maximum fee would be reasonable for permit authorities to receive and if the Building Commission should consider setting a maximum value to cap the 0.09 the building permit fee. There is also a need for the Building Commission to liaise with building industry practitioners and organisations to monitor occupancy permit requirements, to ensure that the 10-day timeframe to issue occupancy permits is being met, and does not delay the occupation of buildings.

FIVE AREAS HOLDING AUSTRALIAN CONSTRUCTION BACK

By Andrew Heaton, originally for www.sourceable.net

Low productivity, a looming skills shortage and high tender costs are among a number of factors holding back the ability of the construction sector in Australia to deliver significant dollar value projects on time and within budget, a recent report says.

Published by international law firm Ashurst in conjunction with Infrastructure Partnerships Australia and the Australian Constructors Association (ACA), the Scope for Improvement 2014 report sourced from boardroom lunches and interviews notes that only around half of the significant construction and infrastructure projects undertaken throughout Australia since 2006 have been delivered on time.

The report goes on to say that while the country has developed greater levels of expertise during the resources boom, there has been little if any overall performance improvement with regard to areas of structural weakness and 'pressure points' in project delivery.

Of particular concern, the report noted:

- There are significantly lower levels of productivity in Australia compared with many other countries
- Skills shortages, though less of an issue now compared with a couple of years ago, are expected to surface again as infrastructure projects ramp up, especially in light of a generational shift at a project director level and a lack of training and expertise in project management
- The industry suffers from poor scoping practices, which have seen a number of developments not derived from master plans, improperly prepared specifications and inadequate or incomplete request for tender processes
- Continually rising tender costs are common as a result of complex and lengthy processes.
- Practices are worsening in risk allocation, bringing about greater levels of risk allocated to contractors amid tight conditions in tendering markets and increasing risk aversion on the part of principals and financiers in a post-GFC environment.

Interestingly, the report found that one problem in terms of productivity revolved around a push during the resources boom to 'fast track' projects – a practice which at first intuitively would seem conducive to faster completion times. In fact, fast tracking led to shortcuts whose impact was often not felt until either construction had commenced or operations staff took over and found completed infrastructure did not match their requirements.

Practices associated with making contracts before regulatory approvals had been granted, contracts being entered into on the basis of incomplete design and commencement of work before 'issued for construction' drawings had been fully prepared, for example, had led to situations in which contractors have had to be granted extensions of time and extra costs for complying with conditions not in contract documents, variations to contract scope and the need for substantial volumes of rework.

The latest study comes at a critical time for Australia, with the Business Council of Australia expecting a whopping \$760 billion in real terms (public and private) to be spent on infrastructure in the next 10 years and the federal government alone having committed to spending \$50.3 billion on road and railways over the next six years.

Ashurst Partner, Construction and Infrastructure Projects, Grant Rowlands encouraged all industry participants to carefully consider issues surrounding project delivery and identify opportunities for improvement.

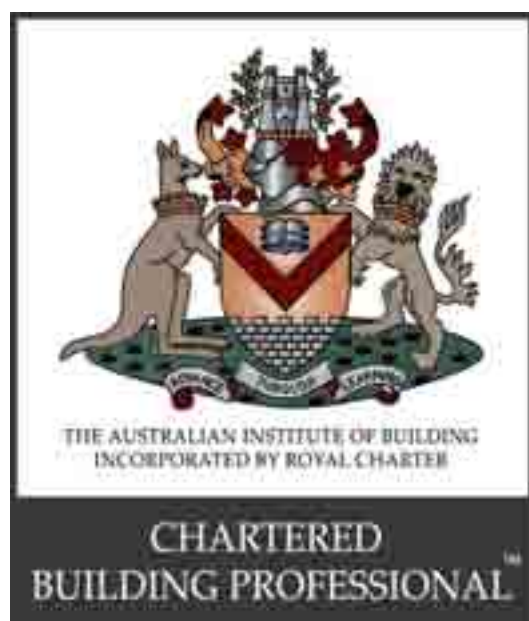
"A 10 per cent increase in the delivery of those projects (the \$760 billion BCA identified) would result in more than \$75 billion in additional assets being able to be delivered into the Australian economy," Rowlands said. "Obviously, that's directly a very important impact but equally it's the impact upon the productive capacity of the balance of the Australian economy that is really important."

The latest report follows the release in March of the draft Productivity Commission report into public infrastructure, in which the Commission found "an abundance of flaws, mythologies and foregone opportunities in infrastructure financing, funding and procurement."

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The AIB is incorporated by Royal Charter which provides it with an opportunity to offer the exclusive use of the titles Chartered Builder and Chartered Building Professional. These titles and trademarked logos provide an excellent opportunity for building practitioners to differentiate themselves in the market place and promote their individual capabilities as having been independently assessed by the peak Australian building professional body – the AIB.



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HOT DIP GALVANIZING – TRIED. TRUSTED. PROVEN.

No other protective coating for steel provides the long life, durability and predictable performance of hot dip galvanizing (HDG).

The galvanized finish has long been associated with highly functional structures, a readily recognisable appearance and a long reliable treatment, yet it can be overlooked that it is frequently intrinsic in the development of some striking built structures. In essence, the high level of steelwork protection offered by modern galvanizing allows architects and builders more freedom to design intricate and complex profiles confident they will stand the test of time.

Already well known for providing the best corrosion protection for steel lintels and beams in masonry construction, the building industry features increasing amounts of architecturally exposed structural steel which, of course, must have a high-performance, low maintenance corrosion protection system. The consensus in many project teams is that HDG is the coating of choice.

An alloy of its steel base, a galvanized coating is unique in matching the design and handling characteristics of steel. Hot dip galvanizing, with a

history of over 175 years, commands an unrivalled service reputation as a cost effective and efficient system of corrosion protection. HDG is prepared off-site in controlled conditions and has outstanding handling efficiency in transit and at installation.

The Galvanizers Association of Australia (GAA), an industry association established fifty years ago to represent galvanizing companies Australia-wide, provides free galvanizing design and consulting services to builders, engineers and architects alike. The Association claims the ten general benefits of galvanizing in the building industry are:

1. Lowest first cost. Galvanizing is lower in first cost than many other commonly specified protective coatings for steel. (The application cost of labour-intensive coatings such as paint has risen far more than the cost of factory operations such as galvanizing.)
2. Less maintenance/Lowest long-term cost. Even

in cases where the initial cost of galvanizing is higher than alternative coatings, it is almost invariably cheapest in the long term (because it lasts longer and needs less maintenance). And, maintenance causes problems and adds to costs when structures are located in remote areas, and when plant shutdown or disruption to production is involved.

3. Long life. The life expectancy of galvanized coatings on typical structural members is far in excess of 50 years in most rural environments, and 20 to 25 years-plus even in severe urban and coastal exposure.

4. Reliability. Galvanizing is carried out to Australian /New Zealand Standard 4680, and standard, minimum coating thicknesses are applied. Coating life and performance are reliable and predictable.

5. Toughest coating. A galvanized coating has a unique metallurgical structure that gives outstanding resistance to mechanical damage in transport, erection and service.

6. Automatic protection for damaged areas. Galvanized coatings corrode preferentially to steel, providing cathodic or sacrificial protection to small areas of steel exposed through damage. Unlike organic coatings, small damaged areas need no touch up.

7. Complete protection. Every part of a galvanized article is protected even recesses, sharp corners and inaccessible areas. No coating applied to a structure or fabrication after completion can provide the same protection.

8. Ease of inspection. Galvanized coatings are assessed readily by eye, and simple non-destructive thickness testing methods can be used. The galvanizing process is such that if coatings appear sound and continuous, they are sound and continuous.

9. Faster erection time. As galvanized steel members are received they are ready for use. No time is lost on-site in surface preparation, painting and inspection. When assembly of the structure is complete, it is immediately ready for use, or for the next construction stage.

10. A full protective coating can be applied in minutes; the galvanizing process is not dependent on weather conditions.

Full member details are available at www.gaa.com.au; while life cycle cost comparisons for hot dip galvanized steel and paint are available at <http://lccc.gaa.com.au/>.



The recently completed Elizabeth Railway Station in SA features hot dip galvanized steel



A maintenance facility with low maintenance

Architects: HBO+EMTB

Photography: Dianna Snape

At the Craigieburn Train Maintenance Facility in Victoria, the use of hot dip galvanizing (HDG) has enabled the combination of modern design and a durable, cost-effective product with proven performance.

Compared to any other protective coating for steel, hot dip galvanizing is unmatched in its superior corrosion resistance, strong and tough coating, proven performance, and lifetime cost benefits.

It also has very high sustainability credentials, with zinc and steel being 100% recyclable, and is immune from UV damage. Hot dip galvanized steel contains no volatile organic compounds (VOC's) and does not emit ozone depleting gases, but its strength is its length of protection – with many examples where HDG steel has been in operation for over 70 years.

Hot Dip Galvanizing – First and last line of defence

For further examples of the durability of hot dip galvanizing please visit www.gaa.com.au or scan the QR code.



THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY SYDNEY OPENS NEW FACULTY OF ENGINEERING & IT BUILDING



The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) Faculty of Engineering and IT (FEIT) building is the first and largest of the three state-of-the-art buildings being completed under the University's City Campus Master Plan, a \$1billion investment in the future of learning and research. The FEIT building is a landmark building that marks the southern edge of the UTS City Campus in Ultimo and is a gateway to Sydney's new creative and technology innovation industries hub. The overall design concept of the building embodies the faculty's future focus and is wrapped by a sculptural "binary code screen" patterned with 1s and 0s.

Home to the University's Engineering and IT Department, the FEIT building will accommodate up to 5,000 students and staff through a mix of public, learning and faculty office space. The building's design has a student-centred strategy at its core, which aims to support graduate outcomes closely linked to both future trends and industry needs.

Designed to nurture graduates and researchers to drive technology innovation, traditional, large lecture theatres will be replaced by smaller, collaborative classrooms and theatres. These new learning spaces will facilitate UTS's Learning 2014 vision which enables students to experience creative, integrated and collaborative learning all supported by the use of contemporary technologies. This approach to student-centred learning aims to deliver the soft-skills and problem solving desired by employers.

The variety of research spaces in the building, including robotics, computer and human-centred design labs, are very much industry-focused. A 3D Data Visualisation facility – the Data Arena – will be the most advanced research facility of its type in Australia.

The FEIT building opening in mid-June 2014 will be followed by the opening of the Dr. Chau Chak

Wing Business School building designed by Frank Gehry in Haymarket and a new Science and Graduate School of Health Precinct on Thomas Street over the coming year. The foundations of the UTS Master Plan is to offer a unique on-campus learning experience centred on collaborative learning practices and a vibrant global city campus that connects UTS with the Sydney

residential and business community.

Interior design of the building:

The building fit-out was technology driven in line with FEIT's learning and research priorities.

The internal building plan promotes social and inter-collegial interaction as essential to FEIT's research and learning processes. The collaborative culture of the department's learning vision is materialised in the crevasse-like atrium which links all learning and social spaces in the building.

This atrium provides natural light, pedestrian access through the building and connects the UTS precinct to the local neighbourhood. The building presents a dynamic space with open stairs, bridge links and lounges for informal encounters. Naturally lit, with good internal lines of sight, ample fresh air and good thermal comfort, the work and learning spaces enhance interconnectivity and teamwork, and break down organisational boundaries.

Exterior design of the building:

The FEIT building is expressed as a singular sculptural object that clearly identifies it.

Located on the corner of Broadway and Wattle Street, Ultimo, the 44,000-square metre building will be clad in a unique, aluminium "binary" screen that defines the façade. Full height glazing and the binary screen maintain a high level of transparency allowing strong visual connections between internal learning facilities and research activities, ensuring activities inside the building are visible and engaging beyond the campus.

Binary screens made of aluminium sheets are perforated with the "1s" and "0s" – the base elements of binary code. The binary screens are applied to the four tilted and skewed plates that compose the building's volume. The screens operate at multiple scales, the transparency adjusting depending on proximity to the building. Up close, there is clear visibility through the screens; from a distance they appear uniform and continuous.

Building layout

There are 12 floor levels above ground, and four levels below ground, for research laboratories, lecture theatres, seminar rooms, learning laboratories, academic and administration offices and car parking. Publicly accessible facilities include a lecture complex, student union and retail outlets.

Gross building area is 44,000m²
Total usable floor area is 23,500m²
Technology - Data Arena

The FEIT building's innovative, dramatic design and integration of sustainable technologies reflect UTS's position at the cutting edge of creativity, innovation and technology. Its new Data Arena will be unveiled after the building opens and represents a quantum leap for Australian research capacity, creating an immersive virtual reality environment that brings data to life. Such technology includes a

3D data visualisation facility that can potentially produce results that will change the way we live. It will be the most advanced facility of its kind in Australia, in terms of the quality of the projection, screen resolution and sound.

Sustainability and Design:

The Broadway Building is designed by Melbourne-based international architects Denton Corker

Marshall. The design achieves a 5-star Green Star rating and is expected to deliver a number of sustainable design benefits including:

- _ An energy saving of 30- 45%,
- _ A potable water saving of 20-30%
- _ A 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions over benchmark tertiary educational buildings with similar functional spaces
- _ The shading of the binary code screen is estimated to bring a 10%-15%

operational energy saving

The FEIT building is a "living lab" that embodies leading-edge sustainable technology features such as a wind turbine, water recycling and solar panel technology. These elements will be captured and displayed in real-time on wireless sensors installed throughout the entire building.

Project Funding:

Total construction cost: \$190m

UTS has received both State and Federal Government funding for the construction of the Broadway

Building through a \$50 million Education Investment Fund (EIF) grant from the Australian

Government Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, and \$1.2 million from the NSW Government Department of Trade and Industry's Science Leverage Funding Program.

Project Developers:

Lend Lease employs circa 18,000 people and is a leading international property and infrastructure group operating in Australia, Asia, UK/Europe and the Americas. The FEIT Building is another important addition to the company's tertiary education sector portfolio, with recent projects including the UNSW Lowy Cancer Research Centre and Scientia building. The company has also been responsible for delivering sustainable landmark projects including the ANZ Centre and The Gauge in

Melbourne and 30 The Bond in Sydney.

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VDO's ProViu® takes a giant leap forward in OH & S providing real time high quality images utilising four specialised cameras with 187° fisheye lenses giving the driver or operator 360° all-round vision with an unprecedented view of the vehicle's surroundings.

Suitable for retrofit and original equipment application on a wide range of public transport, trucks, buses commercial, contracting, agricultural and special purpose vehicles, this latest development from VDO is designed to assist in risk reduction of accidents and life threatening incidents.

The unique robust four camera system is linked to provide all-round visibility for the operator, reducing blind spots and displaying pedestrians, obstacles and dangerous situations that may not appear in direct rear vision mirrors. The transmitted images are adjusted perspectively and consolidated to create a preview in one bird's-eye view.

Marketed as VDO ProViu® the new system improves the ease of manoeuvring large vehicles whilst decreasing the risk of accidents, improving turnarounds and downtime associated with damage to a vehicle.



The new ProViu® greatly facilitates vehicle operations providing an unprecedented view of the vehicle's surroundings in real time. Ideal in critical situations such as dense city traffic, narrow loading areas, cluttered factory yards, building sites or when negotiating narrow streets with parked cars, cyclists and obstacles.

Formally produced by VDO for original equipment fitment at the factory, the new ProViu® is now highly customisable and versatile and available for retrofit for commercial, industrial and special purpose vehicles making it an indispensable safety feature for today's traffic conditions.

ProViu® cameras integrate all the individual functions in one bird's-eye view image with the use of four 187° plus cameras located at strategic positions around the vehicle. The electronic Control Unit (ECU) then merges these four images and/or selected views and

displays them in a useful user friendly format on the screen located in the cab. The view can be configured to individual requirements to provide the ideal view tailored to the driver's needs.

Unlike CCTV and other mostly re-active monitoring systems the VDO ProViu® is a passive, pro-active system. Perfect merging, 'alpha' blending and grading are a standard feature. The entire system is designed for accuracy and has the advantage of a flexible SW tool chain with multiple screens, configuration, custom user interface etc. Light/



dark balance is achieved by the automatic balancing of the whole image on the screen reducing the differential between the images. The system is built to the highest automotive standards and has full certification for EMC and type approval.

"In public transit operations, blind spots can become a serious and life threatening problem, usually the bigger the vehicle the bigger the hidden area with blind spots hiding pedestrians, cyclists or even entire cars," said Phil Crosbie, VDO Commercial Vehicle and Aftermarket Manager.

VDO ProViu® hardware included in this cutting

edge technology system includes 4 cameras with 187° plus lenses, horizontal viewing angle, intelligent software driven light balance plus an Electronic Control Unit.

Ideal for applications on a broad range of vehicles including buses, coaches, garbage trucks, large and medium commercial vehicles, construction and mining equipment, fire appliances, agricultural tractors and combine harvesters, the VDO ProViu® is available from VDO stockists throughout Australia and New Zealand. For videos and pictures showing the ProViu visit www.vdo.net.au or contact phil.crosbie@continental-corporation.com



Dincel delivers a watertight solution for Charles Bank's Crocodile Farm

Constructing a crocodile breeding farm is not your everyday project. Ensuring breeding enclosures are structurally secure and waterproof are two important considerations. For the contractors responsible for building the new Charles Bank Crocodile Farm near Townsville, navigating a remote location and selecting materials which protect the health of the crocodiles required a building solution that ticked multiple boxes.

Figurehead Construction chose to use Dincel Construction System, a lightweight, waterproof modular formwork made from a durable ridged polymer. The product uniquely clicks into position to quickly build structural walls and columns, filled with ready mixed concrete on site. Suitable for above and below ground applications, the prefabricated forms, manufactured in Australia, are watertight to eliminate the need for an additional waterproofing membrane, as would be the case with conventional concrete walls. The adaptability of the Dincel system was an integral part of the project's success, resulting in easy handling and installation for the two on site construction workers, and a cost effective solution that kept the project budget in check.

Normally a remote off road location would have caused access issues if precast concrete or concrete blocks had been specified. These are heavy to transport and, logistically, cranes would not have been able to navigate the off road terrain. The lightweight Dincel Construction System was easy to deliver into the rough territory, with the trucks able to come right up to the site.

According to Mark Semmens, Contract Administrator at Figurehead Construction, "We were looking for a product that could solve a number of challenges. Dincel offered all the benefits of being lightweight, waterproof and easy to install. In fact, the installation could be made right up against the outer walls of the excavation and eliminated the need for additional waterproofing."

The crocodile farm also required a solution proven to be suitable for aquaculture, presenting no risk of toxins leaching into the water. Dincel was the perfect system, made from a PVC polymer that contains no heavy metals, VOC or contaminants that could affect the crocodiles. The CSIRO confirmed Dincel as offering the best possible water quality, with volatile matter 50 times better than the Green Star threshold.

Dincel Construction System is the world's first waterproof and structural wall which has been tested and approved by the CSIRO. Basement walls, water tanks and swimming pools are just some of the subterranean applications where the Dincel Construction System can be used to provide waterproof, crack and joint free walls that are also termite resistant and rot proof.

Dincel Construction System is an Australian made and internationally patented product that is growing exponentially in popularity. It offers builders and developers up to 50 per cent faster construction time and up to 43 per cent in cost saving as a load bearing engineering system. It was recently awarded the Best Environmental Practice (BEP) Approval Mark after meeting the strict Green Building Council Best Practice Guidelines for PVC.

Ph: (612) 9670 1633 or visit www.dincel.com.au



NINE TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL DISPUTE NEGOTIATION

By Professor Kim Lovegrove FAIB

In building disputes, a good or bad negotiator can win or lose large sums of money. Here's how to be a good one.

In any negotiation during building disputes, large sums of money can be won or lost depending on the skill of the negotiators involved.

So what makes for good negotiation? Here are a few tips:

1. Use 'Gun boat' diplomacy

Notorious American gangster Al Capone once quipped that "a kind word with a gun is more effective than just a kind word."

Whilst there is obviously no place for literal use of firearms during construction dispute negotiations in law abiding societies, the principle still applies in a figurative sense, and you will be more effective when you have strength in your corner. This means being fully on top of your brief, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of your case (and the case against you) and having seasoned negotiators on your side.

Get the strongest case you possibly can, and then take full advantage.

2. Pause.

Years ago, I read that the Japanese were more comfortable than Westerners with long silences in negotiation and were conscious of their Western counterpart's lack of comfort in this area.

If this is correct, negotiators should not feel uncomfortable about asking a question or giving an answer and then waiting – often not an easy task for some who feel they are in control when talking or that they are paid to talk.

Do not repeat questions or answers, or feel any need to break a silence. Ask or answer, then wait.

3. Don't bid against yourself

Most negotiations involve opening offers, counter offers, offers in reply and so on.

But what if your opening offer is knocked back without a counter offer? A temptation for 'wetbacks' is to make a more attractive offer. This is called bidding against oneself and should be avoided at all costs if you have a decent case.

Stick to convention. If your offer is at first not met with a counter offer, wait until a counter offer comes.

4. Stand up for yourself

Occasionally, you will come across an opposing negotiator who is a real 'head kicker' (easy to do when it's not your own money at stake).

This is not an indication of a strong or weak case, though vitriol is often a camouflage for weakness, and you should not fall for this. Your case will be won or lost depending the strength or otherwise of your position

at law, not by carry on.

Know your case well and be prepared to stand up to bullies.

5. Don't underestimate your opponent

This is perhaps an irony but sometimes the worst opponent to get is not one with good lawyers or professional negotiators but rather an incompetent one, who in contrast to skilled lawyers and negotiators may lack understanding about fair and reasonable outcomes for given situations and may feel his or her case is stronger than it actually is.

For this reason, do not make assumptions about your opponent, and do not assume logic will win out.

6. Make sure you have got all day

Every negotiation has its own rhythm, character and drivers. Arriving at an outcome is a process which happens at a certain pace and allows for hardened views to soften. This often takes the better part of a day and can go on into the night.

Be prepared for this. Allow plenty of time and do not assume things will happen quickly.

7. Don't tire

Where mediation goes well into the night, there is a risk of one of the negotiators becoming worn out.

Don't let this happen. Take breaks for meals, coffee or a walk, or ring up a colleague for another perspective.

Be ready for a long negotiation and ensure you are in adequate physical condition to stick this out.

8. Beware the 'scalp hunter' mediator

Occasionally, you will come across mediators who pride themselves on accumulating 'settlement scalps' and who literally terrify disputants into an outcome – often so by extolling the downsides of going to court and conveniently forgetting to mention potential upsides such as precedent value, sending out a signal, the rule of law or (where the other side fail to appreciate that their offers are inadequate) getting the best outcome.

Never be bullied or let anyone convince you that your strong case is really a weak one.

9. Draft settlement terms carefully

The devil is in the detail and it is crucial the terms of settlement are carefully drafted and agreed upon regardless of how keen the parties are to go home, as mistakes at this stage can lead to fallout which is difficult to deal with.

Make sure you agree and the terms of settlement are properly drafted to reflect this.



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CO-OPERATION WITHOUT SELF INCRIMINATION: BEST PRACTICE FOR HANDLING BUILDING PRACTITIONER INQUIRIES

By Justin Cotton, Partner and head of practitioner advocacy, Lovegrove Solicitors

It is only human, when faced with complaints that you have breached professional duties, to defensively leap to the ramparts in your own cause. A charge of misconduct against any professional will usually feel deeply personal – it is a missile aimed at one's reputation and professional life.

In rushing to your own defence, it often pays to heed the maxim: "speed kills". This is because it is important to ensure you strike the right balance between co-operating with an Inquiry and ensuring that your responses are not only truthful but properly considered.

Prior to Inquiry hearings under section 179 of the Building Act 1993 it is customary for an investigator to seek to interview the building practitioner. These interviews can take place at such venues as cafes or the practitioner's own office, and some practitioners have recounted that the interview seemed more like a "fire side chat" rather than an inquisition. Nevertheless, it is certainly not uncommon for charges to later be sent to the practitioner with notification of an inquiry hearing date.

Interviews with building practitioners are conducted either by a Building Commission investigator, or commonly an externally engaged investigator who then reports to the Building Commission. This investigator will have been appointed as a result of a complaint from a third party, be it a Council, a building owner or member of the public, or after a referral from the Commission or by VCAT.

If grounds for action under 179 of the Act are established as a result of the record of interview, then a charge or charges (otherwise known as "allegations") will be drafted and written notification will be sent to the practitioner. This notification will advise of the allegations and the facts said to support the allegations, including details of the section of the Building Act or Regulations that the practitioner is said to have breached.

At this point the practitioner will be asked whether they wish to contest (ie defend) or not contest (ie admit) the allegations, and to return the "preliminary information sheet" to the Building Commission advising of that decision. We find as legal advocates that this is the stage when our assistance is usually first sought, but in reality you should consider seeking legal advice even earlier, if possible.

In fact, a practitioner is well advised to seek legal advice as soon as they are aware of a complaint and receive an invitation to attend an interview with the investigator. It is not widely understood, but attendance at such interviews is not compulsory.

In recent times we have instead requested, on behalf of a person facing allegations, that the investigator instead send the questions in writing so that responses can be properly considered, and a written response generated. Investigators accept that personal attendance is not compulsory and are generally amenable to the practitioner (perhaps with the help of their lawyer) sending in a written submission.

That is not to say that a practitioner should never personally attend an interview. This is a decision to be made on a case by case basis. Even if you do attend though, it is necessary for the investigator to give you "the warning" to advise

you of your rights and that you do not need to respond to questions, but any answer you do give can be used at any later hearing. It is also theoretically possible to have a legal representative present at such an interview, if you want that for your own guidance.

Remember also that a written record should be generated as a result of the interview. You may be asked to sign a record of the interview once it is available, and it is possible to elect not to do this.

Always carefully check a written record of the interview before signing it, as we have had situations where practitioners facing a later inquiry hearing have not considered the transcript to be an accurate record of what they actually said. It goes without saying, that this can be awkward later on, and result in the prosecuting lawyer inferring that the responses at a hearing are 'late inventions'.

Also bear in mind that what one says at a stressful interview may not be fully reflective of the true situation. Some questions posed might require you to go over office documents or notes. If so, you should do this rather than jump to an "off the cuff" answer, as you can always qualify your answers or decline to respond to certain questions.

In cases where there are several allegations, there will generally be at least one that is not contested. This will however allow you or your lawyer to 'mitigate', that is, to give the BPB a full explanation of all surrounding circumstances so that 'your side of the story' is still expressed, even though the overall charge might be admitted.

The aim of this explanation, and a recital of other factors in your favour (e.g. first offence, early 'guilty' plea, changes to one's practices and systems), is of course to obtain the minimum possible penalty.

In situations where the practitioner has promptly co-operated with an investigation, and assisted third parties such as Councils or others to resolve issues on site, these are factors in favour of a practitioner. Certainly, one should never mislead or obstruct an investigation, as there is a general duty of co-operation and one must always be truthful. If you are obstructive or non-cooperative, this could crystallise a separate offence in itself.

However, this does not mean a person should be "hoist by their own petard" by making rash decisions about how to deal with misconduct allegations – for example by rushing into ill-considered responses to investigators.

Also an assessment needs to be made on how best to defend charges/allegations. If such charges are more likely than not going to be found proven on a technical basis, it makes more sense to 'fess up' to the imperfections and focus on what the practitioner has done or is doing to implement best practice from here on in.

That may call for a less adversarial approach; rather a problem solving approach is preferable and this would be appreciated by the BPB when it hands down its ruling.

3SIXTY MEETS NEW AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS ANCHOR TESTING

The height safety industry has seen a number of recent changes with the introduction of the steps, stairs, walkways and ladders standards (AS1657:2013) at the end of last year and the anchor testing requirements for manufacturers (AS/NZS 5532:2013), all aimed at increasing the level of performance of access and fall protection products used increasingly for the safety of construction and maintenance personnel.

The 3Sixty fall arrest anchor manufactured by Sayfa Group has performed in accordance with the testing requirements of the AS/NZS 5532 standard in which a 100kg weight is required to free-fall over 2 metres without failure of the anchor, method of attachment to the structure or structure itself. A second requirement is a static load test of 15kN (1500kg) for a period of 3 minutes without failure of the system.

Sayfa has welcomed the introduction of the new standards as it ensures a high level of safety and performance of products that are required to save lives.



Sayfa provides guidance to building owners and managers outlining their duty of care towards personnel working at heights and will assist with the selection and design of simple but effective access and fall protection systems including maintenance and recertification of existing installations. It's the Sayfa way ...

For more information on Sayfa's 3Sixty anchor point go to www.sayfa.com.au/3sixty.

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AIB NEW MEMBERS

Section 1

On behalf of the existing membership, the Chapter Committees and the National Council I extend a very warm welcome to all these new additions to the AIB family.

AIB NEW MEMBERS 1 May 2014 – 15 July 2014

Given	Surname	Member Group	State/Country
Edmund	Alarcon	Member	SA
Clare	Allender	Student	WA
Marcus	Anderson	Member	SA
Nick	Aston	Member	NSW
Jean	Azemothe	Student	WA
Mitchell	Bentley	Student	QLD
Dwaine	Bickerdike	Member	SA
Sean	Bruce	Member	ACT
Jonathon	Butler	Student	QLD
Kieren	Bynon	Student	VIC
Hugh	Campbell	Member	NSW
Leighton	Clark	Member	VIC
Ben	Crichton	Student	Victoria
David	Dawes	Affiliate	ACT
Errol	Edwards	Fellow	QLD
Trevor	Evans	Fellow	VIC
Paul	Farrell	Member	NSW
Stewart	Funnell	Member	WA
Michael	Gibson	Member	WA
Brian	Giffard-Burgess	Student	VIC
Lance	Gunther	Student	NSW
Sean	Hague	Student	ACT
Derek	Hammond	Member	WA

Kevin	Hansson	Member	TAS
Kyle	Hare	Student	QLD
Isabel	Hilder	Student	NSW
Zachary	Hill	Student	NSW
Samuel	Johnston	Student	NSW
Jason	Kunkler	Fellow	WA
Hoi Lun	Leung	Member	Hong Kong
Albert	Mann	Associate Level 3	NSW
Callum	McDowell	Student	WA
Anthony	Morris	Student	SA
Simon	Njenga	Associate Level 3	WA
Yuet Kim	Or	Member	Hong Kong
Robin	Pagan	Associate Level 1	ACT
Adam	Schipp	Student	NSW
Fred	Silz	Fellow	SA
Jarrad	Sims	Student	WA
Allie	Smith	Student	NSW
Neil	Stearnes	Associate Level 3	WA
Wai Yiu	Luk	Member	ACT
Simon	Toal	Associate	NSW
Mark	Vines	Fellow	VIC
Shane	Ward	Fellow	Singapore
Matthew	White	Student	SA
Joe	Willie	Student	VIC

ATO encourages employers to prepare for SuperStream

The ATO is encouraging employers to prepare for the introduction of SuperStream which will change the way they make superannuation contributions in the future.

In cooperation with their service provider or default fund, employers can opt-in to use SuperStream from as early as 1 July 2014.

The ATO expects most large and medium employers will implement SuperStream between July and December of this year.

SuperStream introduces a new standard for all employers which involves making super contributions electronically with linked data and payments. All super contributions are treated in the same way – whether sent to a default or choice fund, an APRA fund or self-managed superannuation fund (SMSF).

“The main benefit for employers is that the SuperStream standard will simplify the employer experience and reduce costs by eliminating unnecessary variation and complexity that has crept into the system over recent years,” Mr Philip Hind ATO’s National Program Manager, Data Standards & E-Commerce (SuperStream) said.

The improvements mean employers will increasingly find that they can use a single channel when dealing with super funds, regardless of how many funds their employees contribute to.

“The need for reform of Australia’s superannuation system was highlighted in the 2010 Cooper Review which found the existing processes made poor use of

technology and there was no consistency in the data required and how funds deal with contributions,” Mr Hind said.

“SuperStream is one of the most significant improvements to the compulsory superannuation system since its inception 20 years ago. All employers need to introduce changes in the way they currently make super contributions; although some who are already working electronically or have a clearing house partner will find these changes are relatively minor.”

The ATO is focused on awareness raising, education and support for employers during the first few years of SuperStream as the new standard is adopted.

“All large and medium-sized employers need to prepare now to ensure they’re ready to transition to SuperStream at the earliest available opportunity,” Mr Hind said.

“The ATO will provide flexibility and support to employers making a genuine attempt to comply with their obligations under SuperStream. This means you must have in place firm implementation plans with your service provider or default fund including a proposed completion date. A large or medium employer must complete their implementation by no later than 30 June 2015.”

Small employers (those with 19 or fewer employees) have another year before they commence using SuperStream, starting from 1 July 2015 but completing their implementation by no later than 30 June 2016.

NEW AIB Merchandise

Membership of the Australian Institute of Building (AIB) provides recognition and distinction amongst professionals within the building and construction industry. To assist members demonstrate their support for the building profession through their AIB membership the Institute is pleased to make available a range of merchandise.

AIB Safety Hard Hat \$24.95*
One size fits all

AIB High Visibility Vest \$15.95*
Sizes available – small, medium, large and extra large

AIB Scheduling Calendar \$5.95*

*All prices include GST and postage within Australia.
Orders from outside Australia incur a AUD \$7.50 surcharge.

To purchase any items of merchandise,
contact the AIB National Office on +61 2 6247 7433 or
email administration@aib.org.au



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No more 28 day render cure delays before painting

Fresh or “green” cement render and concrete is HIGHLY ALKALINE, traditionally requiring time to stabilise before painting, resulting in costly project delays and extended scaffolding costs.

In the real world, project schedules compress and painting sooner often results in coating failures or unsightly alkali staining (white salts or “efflorescence”).

AcraTex® GREEN RENDER SEALER eliminates the “28 Day” wait cycle - meaning project dollar savings and enhanced durability.



Eliminate unsightly efflorescence



Scaffolding costs reduced

Safe, Durable & Assured

- Water Based
- AcraTex® GREEN RENDER SEALER chemically reacts with free cement alkali to bind and block its migration
- Paint after only 2 days* render drying - instead of waiting 28 days
- Superior adhesion to masonry

Safe to paint over render In 2 days* - No more delays

Dulux Approved System for Cement Render

Cement render is highly alkaline and rigid due to the inherent nature of the cement binder. Coating systems for cement render must block alkali (salts) leaching and expand and contract to accommodate render shrinkage cracks. Low build (conventional) paint coatings are NOT recommended for cement render.

System Component	Dulux Recommended System	Feature Benefits
Primer Sealer	AcraTex Green Render Sealer Suitable for application over 2 day old cement render	- Blocks Cement Efflorescence - Reduces Project Delays - Optimises System Performance
Crack Bridging Topcoat	AcraTex AcraSkin Available across the full Dulux exterior colour range	High Build - Crack Bridging Protection Nap Roller - Paint Like Appearance Superior Application - Low Roller Spatter

Note: GRS is “Safe to paint after only 2 days” based on adequate drying of the substrate to a stable moisture content.

For further information about Dulux AcraTex Green Render Sealer please go to our website www.acratex.com.au

Fast track your project completion...

and reduce your scaffolding costs

SAFE TO PAINT
OVER RENDER IN
2 DAYS*
No more delays



AcraTex® Green Render Sealer™

The Anti-Efflorescence Primer-Sealer for fresh cement render eliminates project delays and unsightly efflorescence.



Fast Track - coat Render after only 2 days*



Lower Scaffolding Costs - drop scaffold faster



Restricts Efflorescence



Superior Adhesion



Water Based - low VOC



Dulux recommended system for cement render with AcraSkin crackbridging topcoat.

* Safe to paint over 2 days based on substrate adequately drying to a stable moisture content.




For further information go to: acratex.com.au
Dulux Customer Service: 13 23 77

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