

# BUSINESS VIEW Australia

SEP - OCT 2015

**SUSTAINABLE BUILDING TRENDS IN  
COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION ON THE RISE**





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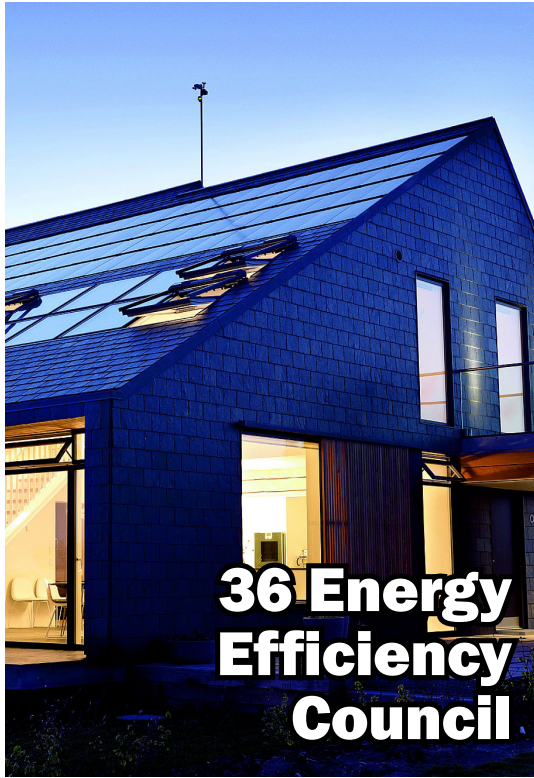
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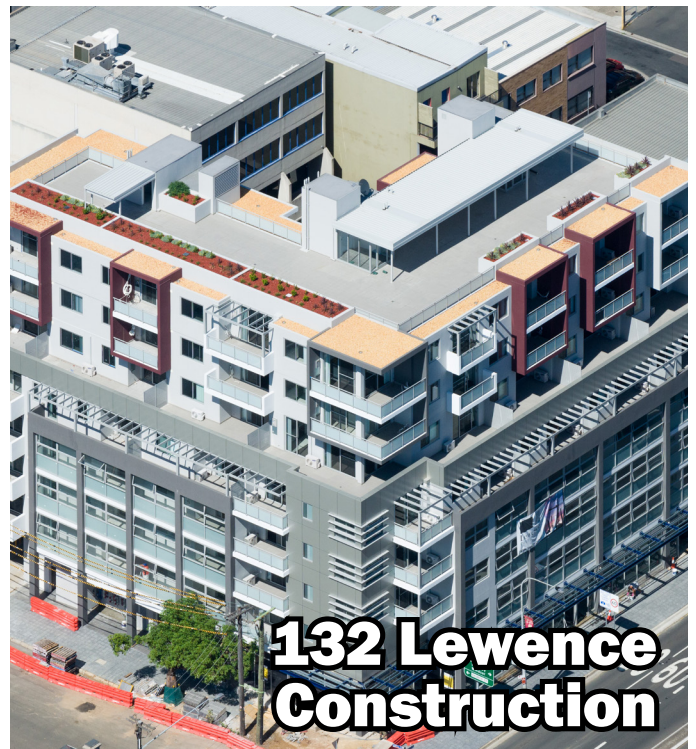
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**AUSTRALIAN BUILDING  
AND CONSTRUCTION  
INDUSTRY**

**LET US CONSTRUCT YOUR DREAM INTO PERFECT REALITY**

# **MASTER BUILDERS**

Master Builders is the major Australian building and construction industry association. Its primary role is to promote the viewpoints and interests of the building and construction industry and to provide services to members in a broad range of areas including training, legal services, industrial relations, building codes and standards, industry economics and international relations.

## **Master Builders Associations**

Master Builders Australia is the national body of the Master Builders group. Its members include all nine State and Territory Master Builders Associations.

Each Association provides an extensive range of services to assist its members which will ensure the building and construction industry operates in a profitable, efficient and ethical manner.

Membership of the Master Builders demonstrates that these companies value high standards of integrity, skill and responsibility to their clients.

# Editor's *Note*

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Australia's construction industry has established a strong reputation for itself by virtue of having completed a number of difficult and large-scale projects, not only in the country but in overseas locations as well. John Holland, which has recently become a part of the China Communications Constructions Company, is an extremely successful and reputed building contractor. In the current month's issue we examine its accomplishments with special reference to its adoption of sustainable practices.

Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders Pty Ltd is a family owned and managed construction business based in Queensland. In the last six decades it has completed a number of prestigious projects. Our story looks at the company's management philosophy and the reasons behind its growth and spectacular achievements.

The market for luxury homes is booming and Riverstone Custom Homes, a 20 year old company based in Perth, has established itself as an accomplished builder catering to the high-end of the market. We find that it offers a range of options and its prices provide excellent value for money. In this issue we have covered another company headquartered in Perth, Pritchard Francis, a leading

consultancy specialising in structural and civil engineering.

With our special focus on the construction industry this month we have reports on J & B Projects, Lewence Construction and T.C. Clarke and Son and we examine the important role being played by bodies such as the Australian Constructors Association and the Green Building Council. We also bring you details of an association in the related area of property, the Real Estate Association of Australia.

This issue also carries a story on Mondo Di Carne, a wholesale and retail meat business catering to customers in Western Australia and beyond. Finally, we have a piece on an institution promoting the cause of energy conservation, the Energy Efficiency Council, which has been set up by several leading companies in the energy and electrical related fields.

We hope you find the information about the featured companies and associations useful and interesting.

Best Regards,



Ravinder Kapur



# Australia's Food and Beverage Industry

## Innovation and Growth on the Menu





Agribusiness is an important part of the Australian economy and this sector has shown consistent productivity gains over the years. The country's food and beverage producers enjoy a strong reputation and its meat, grain, horticulture, seafood, confectionary and beverage industries have established themselves as manufacturers of high-quality products.

Australia is reputed for supplying produce that meets the most stringent hygiene and safety standards. The country's food processors are subject to stringent quality checks imposed by government-backed organisations.

The food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing industry accounted for \$25.4 billion in 2013-14, a 25.5% share of manufacturing GDP. The importance of this sector is reinforced by the fact that it provides employment to about 210,000 workers, which is 22.9% of the manufacturing labour force.

Australia is home to several types of climate and has a rich variety of soils and rainfall patterns. This diversity makes it suitable for growing a range of crops and raising livestock.

The country's geographic isolation and its strict quarantine and monitoring regime have helped it ensure that



its agricultural products are of impeccable standards. Additionally, Australia is close to the Asian market where the burgeoning middle-class population has created a rapidly increasing demand for the country's food processing industry.

As a result, the food component of manufacturing merchandise exports stood at \$19.85 billion in 2013-14. Although imports under this category were a little over \$10 billion, the sector contributed a massive net export figure in excess of \$9 billion.

The country's agricultural and food processing sector is at the forefront of technological innovation with many organisations having their own research and development wings.

In addition to this there are a number of associations and government-backed bodies providing facilities for increasing productivity and improving packaging and production processes in various food based industries. This has contributed to an average agricultural productivity gain of 2% over the last 50 years.

Another important factor contributing to the growth in Australia's food and beverage industry is the presence of a number of education and training

facilities which specialise in this sector.

As a result, the country has large numbers of qualified and competent personnel who have the requisite knowledge essential for the success of this industry. Due to these reasons many international food companies have chosen to establish a large presence in Australia so that they can capitalise on these strengths. The list of these companies include Nestle, Unilever, Parmalat and Hakubaku.

Australia's food and beverage processing industry is critical to the country's economy because of its relative size and the significant number of jobs it generates. Its well-established R & D institutions including Food Science Australia, Dairy Cooperative Research Centre and the Australian Wine Research Institute, to name a few, play an important role in the country's pre-eminence in this field. This sector is well-positioned to continue being a major contributor to exports and to further enhance its position in the domestic market in the coming years.



# Construction in the Green Environment

Building activity can lead to pollution in the immediate vicinity and also contribute to degrading the larger environment. Fortunately, there are a number of established practices and processes that can be implemented during construction, which serve to

minimise this damage.

The Australian construction sector has extremely clear and accurate guidelines on building environmentally sustainable structures and their implementation has resulted in the



Australia is at the forefront of the effort to encourage sustainable building practices across the country. It has established a Green Star rating scale which provides direction to builders in their effort to adopt ecologically friendly practices. Construction companies are motivated to adopt the Green Star rating system as it also results in lowering operational costs and increasing asset value.

In fact, the benefits available if a building that meets these standards is constructed, include a reduction of 66% in electricity cost as compared to the average Australian city building. The construction process also uses 51% less potable water against what would have been consumed if minimum industry requirements had been followed.

Wide acceptance of this standard has resulted in 550 projects totalling eight million square metres having received Green Star certification. Currently, over 20% of Australia's CBD office space is certified green.

development of skills and techniques within the building industry, which have led to reduced energy consumption and cutting down on the volume of waste material.

Climatic conditions across the country vary widely and many areas have a harsh environment. Due to this factor, it is even more important to conserve energy and water resources.

The Green Building Council of



Australia's construction industry, which has vast experience in operating in these conditions, has developed skills and techniques that have given it the expertise to create resource-efficient buildings that perform well in extreme climates. Recognising this ability, Australian companies have bagged prestigious overseas projects that exhibit advanced green construction techniques, including the Beijing National Aquatics Centre (the Watercube) and Arya Residences in the Philippines.

In addition to the Green Building Council of Australia, the country has several other institutions which are world-leaders in developing technologies that help reduce the industry's carbon footprint. One of these, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, has developed OptiCOOL, which is helping building owners across Australia and the United States reduce their energy consumption while improving comfort level of occupants.

More than 60% of the energy consumption in Australian commercial buildings comes from heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC). The OptiCOOL system intelligently alters the operation of a building's HVAC control system according to

settings for cost savings, occupant comfort and energy efficiency. Argonne National Laboratory in the U.S. has independently tested OptiCOOL and found that the system reduces HVAC energy consumption by up to 45%.

The Australian building industry has taken a number of steps to promote green causes and has made massive strides in implementing sustainable building practices. These initiatives have resulted in huge savings in operational costs in addition to achieving the goal of meeting energy, water and material efficiency targets.

A great deal of progress has also been made in waste reduction and management. All these factors have strengthened the Australian building industry and prepared it to meet the challenges of the future which will see greater stress being laid on green practices and the need to preserve the environment.

# General Business Trends in Australia







The fall in commodity prices and the slowdown in China is a reality that the country has been living with for some time now. While it is impossible to predict when this sector will pick up, there have been other developments in Australian business which are not getting the attention they deserve. These changes are positive and are an indication of things to come.

## **Growth in the Home Building Industry**

The Performance of Construction Index by the Australian Industry Group and the Housing Industry Association increased by 6.7 points to 53.8 in August. This growth was propelled by residential construction and apartment building was the strongest performer. In a welcome sign, commercial construction rose by 9.4 points to 54.6, after nine months of decline.

The momentum provided by expansion in the home and residential sector was enough to more than make up for the decline in engineering construction which has occurred due to slackness in mining and allied activities. The overall upswing in construction activities will have a cascading effect and will



lead to increased demand in other areas of the economy.

## **Increase in Automation and the Use of Robots**

As new technologies develop and make robots cheaper and give them the ability to perform additional tasks, the trend of automation in various sectors will increase rapidly. There is already a proliferation of driverless trains and vehicles in the mining industry. In the near future robots will be extensively used to carry out repetitive tasks like cleaning, digging, spraying and testing.

This trend will have the effect of reducing the need for many types of unskilled and semi-skilled labour and simultaneously increase the demand for personnel with technical and computer related knowledge. Overall, this is a positive development as it will make Australian industry more competitive. But it will call for retraining and reskilling of large numbers of workers.

## **Contribution of the Services Sector**

The lower Australian dollar and the surging demand from Asia has served to boost the services sector,

especially education and tourism. A telling statistic is that in the last year, the country's education exports were the third largest export earners, behind only iron ore and coal.

The tourism industry has also picked up, buoyed by the country's weak currency and a massive increase in the number of Chinese tourists. The annual number of visitors from China currently stands at 940,000, as against 400,000 five years ago. Meanwhile, Chinese international student enrolment has increased by 11% so far in 2015 compared to the same period last year.

## **Rebalancing of the Economy**

In the immediate future these trends will result in changes which will make the economy less reliant on commodities. In fact, the service sector, which already accounts for a massive 69% of the economy, will further strengthen as a result of growth in segments like tourism and education. Consequently the job market will also see a change with more opportunities in the service sector and stagnation or reduction in manufacturing and industrial employment numbers.



# **Real Estate Insti**

*Promoting the Property Market*



# Institute of Australia

*Real estate agencies play an integral part in Australia's property market and most of them are members of the Real Estate Institutes in their respective locations across the country. The Real Estate Institute of Australia (REIA) is the peak national association for the real estate profession and has as its members the State and Territory Real Estate Institutes.*

The State and Territory Real Estate Institutes' membership comprises around 75% of the real estate agencies in Australia. By virtue of this, REIA collectively represents the country's real estate agencies and works towards ensuring the overall health of Australia's property market.

The specific tasks which REIA takes up to promote the country's real estate market include providing research and advice to the Federal Government, Opposition, professional members of the real estate sector, media and the public, on a range of issues which are relevant to the property market.

The importance of real estate to the country's economy can be gauged from the fact that according to the 2011 census, the number of people employed in the rental, hiring and real estate services industry stand at a total of 117,880. Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data pertaining to occupation, numbers business brokers, property managers, principals, real estate agents and representatives at 64,699.

Australia's construction and building industry forms a major portion of the country's economy and real estate agencies play an important role in the success of this sector. They





serve as a bridge between builders and property buyers. The annual contribution of property to the nation's economy stands at \$300 billion.

One of the important issues concerning the property market which REIA has taken a firm stand on, is that of 'negative gearing'. According to the existing tax laws in the country, if the owner of a property spends more on it than he earns, he is entitled to a tax break. Under this rule, if an investor spends more on mortgage interest and maintenance than he receives in the form of rent, he may reduce the difference from his other income, say his salary, and by paying lower tax, make up for the loss that he has suffered on the property.

Some experts and the Reserve Bank of Australia are of the view that negative gearing is detrimental to the property market and results in an inflation of property prices. However, REIA strongly feels that negative gearing is a genuine benefit that must be given to property investors.

ACIL Allen Consulting recently issued a report on 'Australian Housing Investment', which analysed negative gearing in all its aspects and came to the conclusion that it is not a special concession to property



buyers, but a legitimate deduction and its withdrawal would cause great losses to middle income Australians.

REIA has been monitoring the issue of negative gearing very

closely and it has already started a dialogue with government officials to ensure that this essential tax deduction is retained. After the release of the report titled 'Australian Housing Investment',





Amanda Lynch, chief executive officer of REIA said, “This isn’t some tax lark for the wealthy, rather an incentive for people on low to average incomes and it has benefits for the broader economy.”

REIA has also made significant contributions to the debate around foreign ownership of property. This issue came to the fore when a parliamentary inquiry revealed that the Foreign Investment Review



Board, which is mandated to approve purchase of real estate by foreigners, had not prosecuted a single case since 2006.

REIA has said that it supports the current government regulations on the issue of foreign investment in property and was pleased to



Australia has a regulated approach to foreign investment in property as opposed to the open-door approach of countries like the USA.

Amanda Lynch says, “The objective of Australia’s foreign investment policy, as it applies to residential property, is to increase the supply of new housing. And it has been proven to do this.”

Another important role played by REIA is that it represents the interests of thousands of small businesses across the country as 99% of real estate agencies are small businesses and 11% of all small businesses in the country are involved in real estate. Although these agencies are members of the Real Estate Institutes located in their State or Territory, they are indirectly represented by REIA which is in a strong position to put across their views at various forums.

REIA plays a crucial role in the country’s property market by providing data and input to government and policymakers. It is in a unique position to collate the views of Real Estate Institutes at the state and territory level and present them in a balanced manner. It also uses its expertise to address issues confronting the sector so that the long term interests of the real estate market in the country are protected.

see the Parliamentary inquiry recommend a greater focus on compliance and enforcement. On a broader level, REIA says that

# ParkTrent Properties Group

***Where Trust is a Tradition***

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** ParkTrent Property Group

**WHAT:** ParkTrent is a full service real estate company in Australia

**WHERE:** North Wollongong, 2500

**WEBSITE:** <http://parktrent.com.au>

Property buyers and sellers have been utilising the services of ParkTrent Properties Group since 1989. With offices spread across the country this full-service real estate company also provides rental property management and is known for its sound advice in matters concerning investment in property. It has an in-house brokering arm, EasyPlan Financial Services, which complements its activities



by tying up financial arrangements for the company's clients.

between property prices in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales.

Speaking about the inception of ParkTrent, Ron Cross, Chief Executive Officer and founder said, "ParkTrent Properties Group commenced operations 26 years ago and we understood at the time the wonderful opportunities there were, as a great disparity existed

"We were able to get some fabulous listings in Queensland and property prices were probably at half the levels of prices in New South Wales and Victoria. We sold many hundreds of properties over the next five to six years to investors in Queensland and they reaped handsome rewards

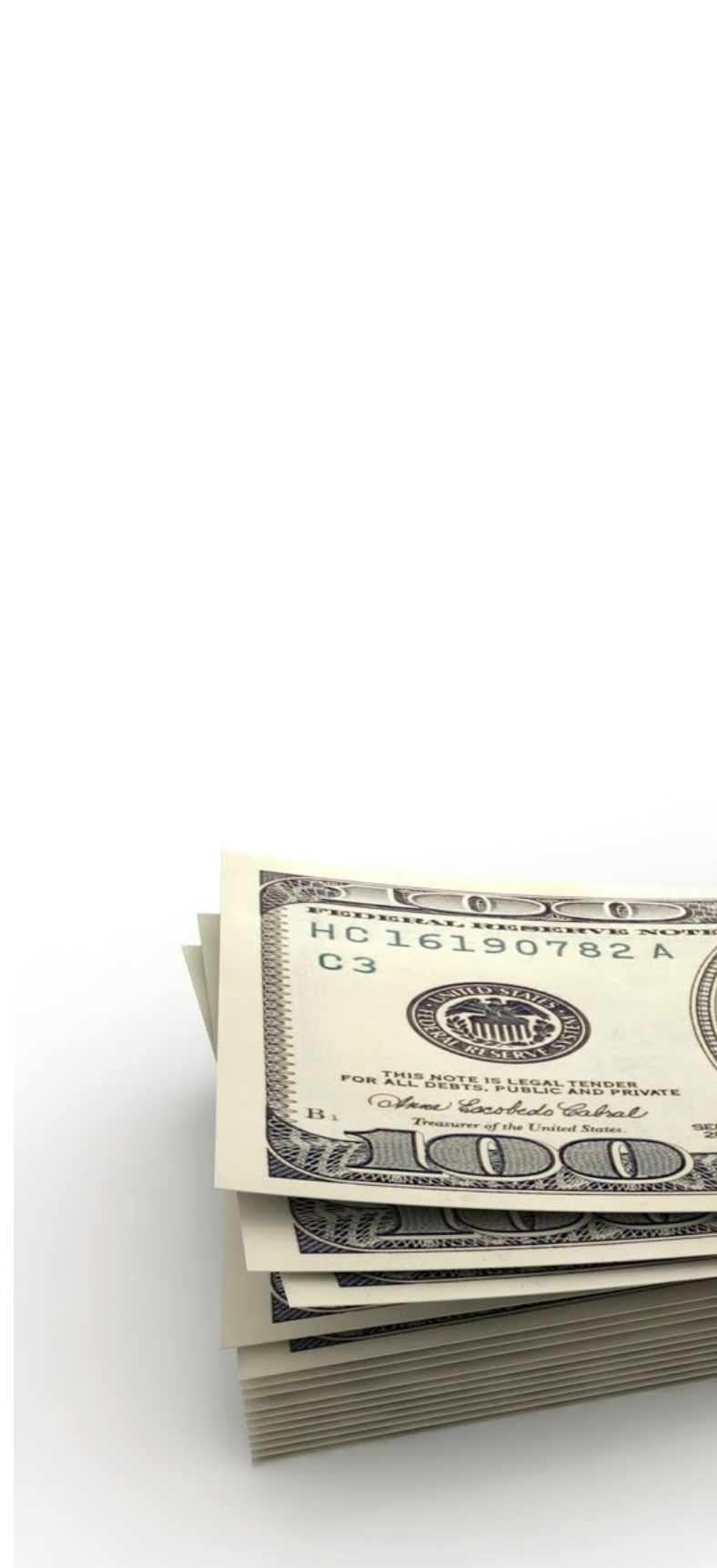
from these early purchases.

“The business has grown tremendously since then and now there are some 400 staff nationwide and we sell a considerable amount of real estate. Not only are financial arrangements made available for buying real estate, we also do property management and arrange and assist with fabulous finance packages and structure the borrowings to get the best cash flow advantages for our clients.”

The country-wide presence ParkTrent enjoys came about when the company began selling properties in ACT, Perth, Victoria and North Queensland. Research conducted by ParkTrent indicated that these areas would show marked increases in demand for rental properties. This prompted the company to actively market properties to investors.

Once ParkTrent established its presence in these areas a need was felt to introduce property management services to look after the investments made by its clients. With this intention the company established 10 offices and this led to even more business.

Ron Cross is very positive about the property market, “Melbourne



and Sydney are the two hot places at the moment, not only for investors to buy properties but also for rental properties. We are finding an extraordinary demand in the



outer ring of Melbourne. A week ago we had a three bedroom dwelling for rent in a western suburb of Melbourne 40 kilometres from the CBD and we had over 40 people

come over for the inspection of the rental property on Sunday morning.

“My views on the property market are different from the view of others

whom I see on the television and in the press, talking about interest rates driving the market. I don't think it is interest rates driving the market. Sure, it's a part of the equation, but the most important thing driving this market is the demand, and demand is caused by our population increasing and it is not necessarily migration, you have to look at the babies being born in this country.

“There are 6000 babies being born every week. What most people talk about is the ageing population but I think we need to look at what's happening in this country. When a baby is born, within 15 to 20 years they become independent and leave the family home and will be looking for rental accommodation. I think the future for Australian investment properties is going to be very good for those people who are looking for rental incomes and capital value increases.”

ParkTrent has a focussed marketing plan and they hold investment conferences across the country and in Malaysia, China, Vietnam, and New Zealand. In Australia alone there are five or six conferences held every week.

At these conferences a professional presenter, and at times Ron Cross himself, explains the



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Pr





# ParkTrent Properties Group

investment opportunities and the company is successful in generating large numbers of leads.

Between 25% and 30% of the company's sales are referral based. It also markets its services through its call centre. Radio advertising and press advertising are used extensively and the company receives 700 to 800 enquiries every week through its Facebook and web pages

A gala event is held in each state and attracts about 3000 ParkTrent clients. The event is free and some of the best entertainers to be found in Australia perform for the audience. The company has built up a loyal customer base and this has helped it to expand its business over the years.

ParkTrent's clients have the advantage of getting in-house financial advice from EasyPlan Financial. "We have our own brokering arm which is called EasyPlan Financial Services with staff at all our major branches throughout Australia.

"When a client is interested in buying an investment property we have a look at their current financial arrangements, and if what they have in place is the best possible thing that they should



be doing we don't change that. we have saved people considerable

"If their current arrangements are not the best available in the market, we will suggest to them that they change,

and the reasons why they should change. In most cases, I can tell you,

**The future of the residential property market in Australia is very bright**

amounts of money by showing them all the cash flow benefits.

"We deal with all the major banks including CBA, Westbank, St.

George, NAB and ANZ – we have been dealing with them for many years. All

these banks have a high service level and their products are also similar, but sometimes you can get an extra discount for your client because of what they do, how many properties they have, and their credit rating.”

The future of the residential property market in Australia is very bright and Ron Cross is sure that investors will gain tremendously, “We hear so much about the property bubble and property prices and that this can’t keep going on.

“One of the things that we really need to think about in this country is that Australia is a continent and it’s surrounded by great oceans which help protect us. We have a wonderful pollution free environment and a stable government.

“Our titles on our properties are there for generations. In many countries throughout the world these conditions do not exist. I see the future for residential property investment in this country to be magnificent and unique because our population is increasing and there are many millions of people who would like to come and live in Australia.



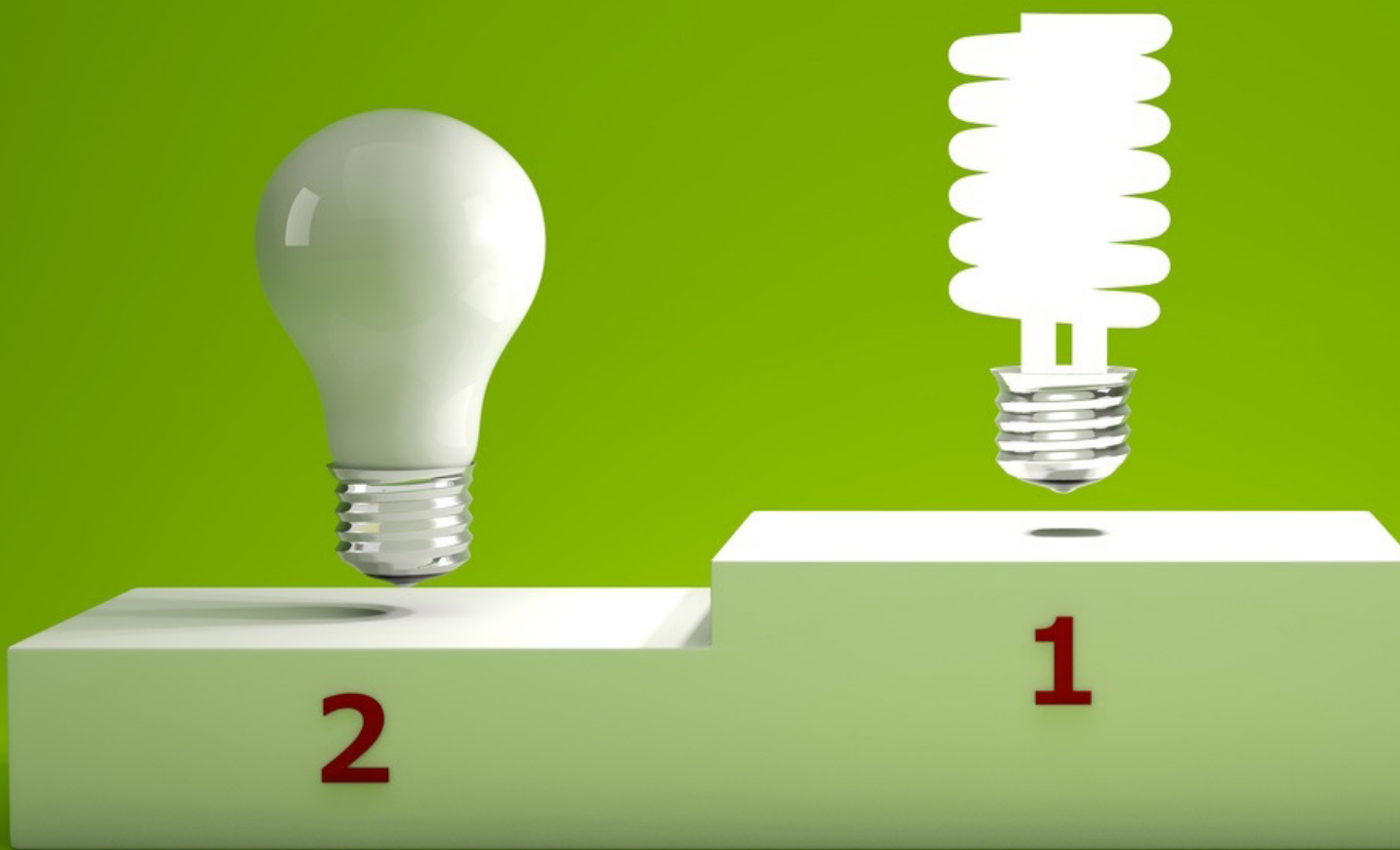
**Ron Cross**

“In the next 50 years Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth will be amongst the largest cities on the planet. If you look at the prices of property in London, New York, Tokyo and Paris today we are considerably less expensive.

“So my advice to anyone out there today is, don’t be put off by people saying this can’t continue. It will continue because of the uniqueness of the wonderful country that we live in – Australia.”

# Energy Efficiency

Promoting the Cause of Energy Conservation



# Energy Council

## Conservation



It is possible for businesses and homes to greatly reduce the amount of energy that they consume by using it in a more productive and effective way. The Energy Efficiency Council (EEC) has tasked itself to promote this message in Australia and to equip energy users with the technology and know-how to achieve this goal.

The EEC was set up by several leading companies who were in the energy and electrical related fields and over the years it has taken various initiatives to promote energy conservation.

Describing the activities of the EEC, its chief executive officer, Luke Menzel says, “We have large multinationals like Schneider Electric as members. We also have small two or three person consultancies, but they are all organisations that in some way or other provide energy efficiency services helping Australian businesses and households to save energy.

“Energy Efficiency Council is pretty agnostic about where you get your energy from, whether it is from renewables, coal-fired power stations or any other source. We



are very much focussed at the other end of the power line in trying to make sure that energy is used as efficiently as possible by the end user.

“There is a raft of reports and studies that have been done over many years highlighting the opportunities for households and businesses to save money apart from achieving energy efficiency.

“The organisation has been around for seven years. The goal of setting

up the organisation is to give energy efficiency an appropriate voice within Australian policy and to make sure that Australia is taking advantage of this opportunity and not leaving it untapped.”

The EEC also plays an important role in influencing government authorities and providing inputs and data which can form the basis for taking decisions which result in lower energy usage.

Commenting on this aspect of the EEC’s activities, Luke Menzel says,

“We are involved with the Prime Minister’s task group on energy efficiency and contribute to policy processes at the federal level.

“We have been involved with various state governments in providing the view of the sector as governments develop their energy efficiency policies. This is an important part of our role – making sure that what they are proposing is feasible and meets the needs of the sector. The goal in all of that is to develop an energy efficiency policy which is simple and stable.”

A practical initiative that the EEC has taken towards reducing the use of energy is the “Energy Efficiency Certification Scheme” which trains and equips individuals to lead and manage comprehensive energy retrofits of commercial buildings. A professional certification is awarded to these individuals. Building owners and managers can then identify suitable

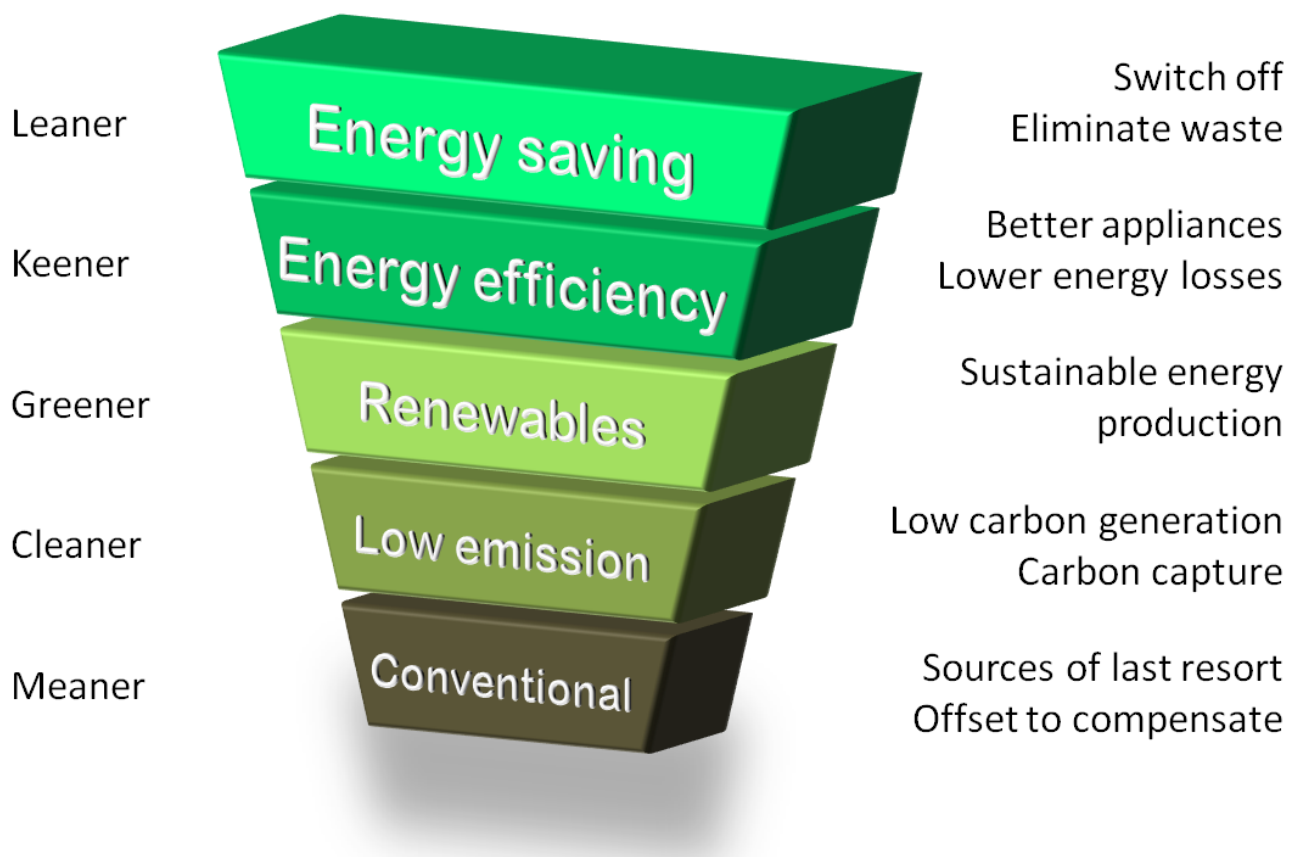
industry professionals who can provide commercial buildings with an integrated building energy retrofit.

Speaking about the role of EEC in this area Luke Menzel says, “It makes an awful lot of sense to address a range of technologies simultaneously and take a comprehensive approach for upgrading the energy performance of buildings.

“We have a number of members who are experts in this space and one of the biggest projects that we have been working on for the last three or four years is starting a certification scheme for individuals so that businesses can easily identify people that have these skills and undertake these comprehensive retrofits.

“One of the things that we are really proud of as an organisation is that we spend a lot of our time and effort in making sure that end-





users are aware that they have this significant opportunity to improve the performance of their buildings.

“The good news around energy efficiency technology is that cost effective options with short payback periods, particularly with things like LED are available. These can be installed in a building, and the cost of installation can be paid back in a very short period of time, because you are saving a significant amount of energy by making that simple change.

“Technology develops quickly so businesses that are looking to

take full advantage of the energy efficiency opportunity and those businesses that want to keep their bills down, are well advised to seek out experts, so that they can make sure that they are not spending too much on their energy bills.”

The EEC organises the National Energy Efficiency Conference which brings together Australia’s top efficiency experts, international thought leaders, policy makers and energy users to debate and explore the latest thinking on energy saving. This year’s conference is scheduled to take place in Melbourne on 17-18 November.



One of the prime objectives of the EEC is to spread the message that there is a need to conserve energy so that emission of greenhouse gases can be reduced. Towards this end the EEC takes a number of steps which are described by Luke Menzel, “We engage with the media to a certain degree where there is a policy issue that is of interest to our members.

“We are participants in policy processes whether they be forums or submissions which pertain to our sector. The National Energy Efficiency Conference is very significant in our yearly calendar as this allows us to bring together the entire sector, including customers and policy makers and really drive the conversation around energy efficiency and how we can work together to save energy.

“There is also direct engagement through one on one meetings with members and prospective members, which is really important as well for us to have a sense of what is going on in this space and being able to translate that into effective advocacy work on part of people that are working on energy efficiency.

“The aspiration of our members is to make sure that Australians, whether they be business owners or householders, are making investments in energy efficiency across the board and that does not mean spending every last penny in your bank account on energy efficiency.

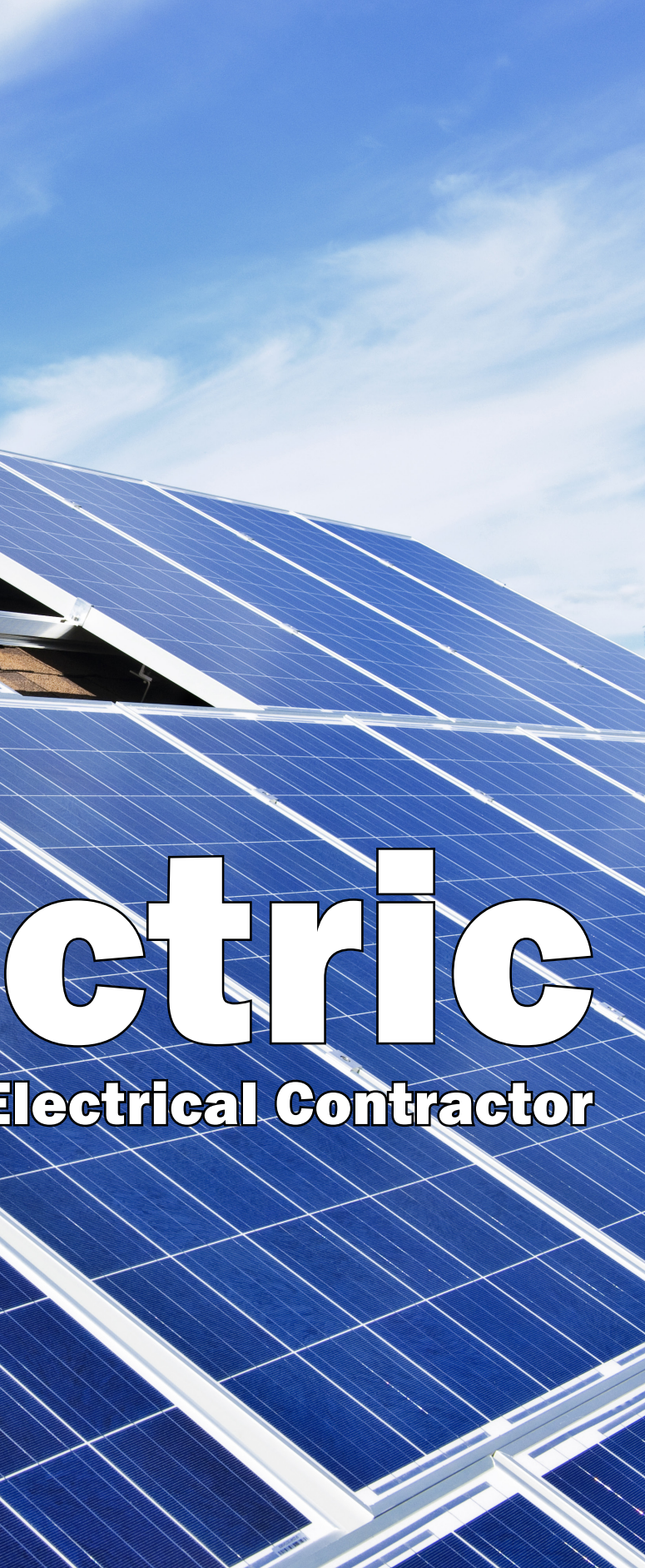
“We talk about sensible energy efficiency investments that I guess make good economic sense and put money in people’s pockets rather than spending it unnecessarily on an energy retailer. It is really an education process before you get to that point.

“As an organisation we want to continue that work of putting that information into the hands of consumers so that they act on it. It saves money and benefits the environment at the same time.”



# Ecoele

**An Environmentally Friendly E**



*Ecoelectric is an electrical contractor which specialises in renewable energy and building automation. The company started its operations in 2008 and over the last seven years has completed numerous assignments in commercial buildings and homes. It has gained a high level of expertise in the solar energy field and specialises in installing solar power and hybrid battery systems.*

### AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Ecoelectric

**WHAT:** leading provider of licensed electrical contractor services specialising in solar power and hybrid battery systems

**WHERE:** 35 Moolingal St, Jindalee

**WEBSITE:** <http://ecoelectric.com.au>



Jeff Wehl, founder and managing director of the company explains how he started, “Rather than start a business which just offered services such as installing electric supply points, we wanted to take it from the perspective of where we can come in and audit your home and business and save you money.

“In 2008 that was something quite different and as luck would have it, that has grown and expanded. We incorporated in 2009 and we are now at a stage where we do not really do traditional electrical work any more. We are purely a solar and energy management company.

“One of our first projects was an energy efficiency assessment for Bank of Queensland. That was when the first lot of government legislations came through about greenhouse gas emissions. As Bank of Queensland is a large company they had to engage an independent auditor to go through their business and determine their level of greenhouse gas emissions based on their electricity use.

“I audited a number of typical branches and used that to form a baseline and then I was able to deliver a report meeting the national greenhouse emissions reporting act.



“Our growth started in 2010 when the state government created a once in a lifetime business environment for firms specialising in renewable energy. To keep up with the demand we had 15 staff at one point and that went from four or five staff in the space of 12 months.

“I found myself spending most of my time dealing with quality assurance and staff issues. I realised that we had to downsize. We have about five staff at the moment that do very good work for us. We also realised that we did not really have the systems in place to keep everything under control.

“In the last two years we have put in a lot of conscious effort into developing processes and we have now reached a point where we have a full digital management system that has procedures on safety and testing built into it and is accessible out in the field. We have procedures that allows us to maintain quality which is very important in the electrical industry.”

Ecoelectric has built an enviable reputation for itself in the field of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. It has 2500 installations to its credit in Brisbane, Ipswich and Gold Coast. The company has a unique business model whereby it provides the potential customer



with a detailed performance estimate which it also puts in writing.

In its solar installations the company uses original equipment supplied by world-class manufacturers like ABB, Decktie and Sikaflex. The system carries a five year warranty and this is accompanied by manufacturer warranties ranging from 5-25 years. Ecoelectric provides end-to-end solutions and has even tied up with a finance company, Solar Financial Solutions, to enable customers who do not wish to pay the entire amount



with energy management systems.

The technical competence developed by the company has enabled it to take up commercial assignments for customers ranging from manufacturing units and workshops to government and corporate offices. Ecoelectric offers a complete energy efficiency solution which includes installation of solar PV systems, LED lighting, load shifting and power factor correction, all of which serve to reduce the customer's energy costs.

After the company put its systems and processes into place it concentrated on expanding its marketshare. Jeff Wehl describes the steps that he took in this direction, "After we had got our business systems down pat, the solar market was still down-turning, in fact it is still down-turning, and I realised that we would no longer be able to rely on work coming in from just general demand, so we started a process of marketing and branding and that's pretty much what we have been doing for the last 18 months.

"What I have learnt in the process is that you can throw all the money in the world at Google adwords or print advertising, but unless the demand is there and you are ultra-competitive,

for the equipment upfront, to install these energy saving devices.

When the company started operations it concentrated on automation and not on solar energy. But with the change in the policy environment solar quickly became its core business. Now the company does automation as an add-on service. Ecoelectric has rapidly carved out a niche for itself in the solar energy industry with its ability to install standard domestic solar energy systems, which are integrated



which doesn't necessarily just mean price, you won't get your return.

“What we have been finding is in a way it is all about referrals, word of mouth and building authority on the technical systems that we design and build. Therefore companies like ABB give us work and that is very important as there are a number of smaller electrical contractors around Brisbane who do traditional electrical work but they don't do solar.

“If they get a request for solar it gets referred to us and we pay them a lead fee. We also encourage our customers to refer people that they know through paying lead fees

and we have managed to do a lot of business through referrals and partnerships.

“Our primary business partner is ABB. We use their product wherever possible and we assist them with technical support. In turn they pass on leads to us. Last week they referred the lighting automation system for Ikea at North Lakes to us. That's obviously a very large project and we have just finished the tendering on that. That job landed on our desk because of our working with ABB.”

Ecoelectric is currently investing in battery systems and automation. Speaking about this endeavour, Jeff



Wehl said, “It will be the first time that we are rolling out a system of this type.

“It’s a new lithium ion hybrid unit, very similar to what you may have seen from Tesla’s press release last week. The solar panels run into this battery and its charging system and moving forward we will be further integrating that with controls, so depending on how the solar is working during the day, we will ensure that appliances are only run off the sun rather than drawing power from the grid.

“We have electricity prices that are pretty much the highest in the world, they are actually double what they are in the U.S. We think that this is one of the primary emerging markets for this technology and it has got a huge future here.”

By pushing the cause of green energy,

Ecoelectric has played a part in making a significant contribution towards reducing emissions. In the process it has built up a profitable business which enables its customers to contribute towards reducing the impact of global warming while saving on their electricity bills at the same time.



**ecoelectric**

Jeff Wehl gets a sense of satisfaction from the role

that his company plays in promoting green energy, “I wouldn’t say that there is a lot of money in the solar industry, but it is reasonably profitable and that combines with the feeling of doing something positive for the world and helping everyday people and businesses. I get to go home at night and think that businesses can save operating costs in terms of electricity and that allows me to feel good about my job. That aspect and the quality of the work we do is very important to us.”



# Mondo Di Carne

## World's Finest Meats

### AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Mondo Di Carne

**WHAT:** Making Mondo the only meat wholesaler in WA that is currently registered to sell wholesale certified organic meat.

**WHERE:** Australia

**WEBSITE:** [mondo.net.au](http://mondo.net.au)

What started as a corner butcher shop in 1979 is today a thriving wholesale and retail business which is known for its wide variety of range-fed and ethically produced meat products. Mondo Di Carne was established 36 years ago by Vince Garreffa who had done his butchering apprenticeship and worked in the industry for a while before setting up his shop.



This part of the business operates from a large factory and supplies meat products to the top 300 hotels and restaurants in Western Australia. Mondo Di Carne's products enjoy a reputation across the country and the company also regularly flies its products to the eastern coast of Australia.

The company is known for its natural, organic and grass fed products and has been certified by Demeter for retail and wholesale of Certified Biodynamic Organic Meat products. Mondo Di Carne is the only meat wholesaler in Western Australia that is currently registered to sell wholesale certified organic meat.

Mondo Di Carne's wholesale operations have seen rapid growth over the last 10 years as the company has been investing in its staff and implementing automation of many of its processes. This has enabled it to take on large clients. The company focuses on meat that has been ethically produced and on the free range end of the market. It operates on the principle that healthy and happy animals result in premium meat products and is therefore very particular about its sources of meat.

The company works closely with

Vince nurtured the retail business and slowly expanded into wholesale operations. In 2004, Robert Garreffa, Vince's son, joined the family business after completing his Chartered Accountancy and working in PricewaterCoopers for four years. Over the last decade, business volumes have grown by 220%, mostly on the wholesale side which is a separate business now.

its hotel and restaurant clients who interact directly with Mondo Di Carne's key operational staff. This enables clear and direct communication between customers and the company, making it possible to understand the client's requirements and fulfil them in an appropriate manner.

In its effort to maintain direct communication with its clients, Mondo Di Carne does not employ sales representatives. This system has been working very well and customers appreciate that company staff is available to understand and fulfil their requirements.

Robert Garreffa, who is a director of Mondo Di Carne and has a one-third ownership stake in the company, describes the approach taken to address the needs of wholesale and retail customers, "We provide a level of service that customers will not find elsewhere and we also endeavour to educate our clients on what our capabilities are and how best to utilise those capabilities for themselves as well.

"We try and educate our clients on how we operate and how they can best help themselves with the way they order and with the way they approach

us and the information they give us when they are ordering to ensure that we get it right for them first time and every time. And I think that is reflected in our error rates which are below 1% now on our order fulfilment side.

"In the retail side of the business we implemented a lot of IT infrastructure and automated our till system, which enables us to serve our clients faster. Christmas is a big part of our retail store and we service about 3,000 customers at that time. We have automated that process and implemented online ordering. This is integrated with the back-end of the business so that it all goes into one system.

"We have also introduced payment gateway processing to minimise the impact on our office staff. The system enables customers to actually process their own orders so that they can see that they have got it right. At the end of the ordering process the customer receives an email notification of their order."

Mondo Di Carne's wholesale operation is very efficiently run by a team of highly skilled and trained staff. The company has put in great effort to develop the skills of its employees and



enhance their capabilities. Employees are allocated to various teams which are responsible for the production of different product sets in the fastest possible time.

One of the key offerings of the company in the wholesale side of the business is that it does not have a cut-off time for placing orders. Customers can place orders all night up to 5 o'clock in the morning and still get delivery on the same day. In comparison, Mondo Di Carne's competitors stop taking orders between 12 and 2 o'clock a day before delivery.

This policy helps customers tremendously as many of them do not know the quantity of the order they need to place till very late. In other cases they are not organised enough to place their order earlier. The facility to place orders at any time is an important feature and is greatly appreciated by wholesale customers.

The company is in the process of implementing a number of initiatives to provide an enhanced level of service to its customers. On the wholesale side of the business it proposes to move out of the existing premises to a new facility where it will have more space to carry out processing activities. The new factory will also give the company

more space to carry out dry ageing, as there is a need for this service from wholesale customers. Currently many customers conduct this activity at their own premises.

Mondo Di Carne's wholesale division is also looking at other lines such as pre-cooked items. Certain items like short ribs or lamb shanks can be pre-cooked to minimise preparation and cooking time at the customer's location. In addition to the convenience

this product offers it also gives the hotel or restaurant the ability to reduce its staff cost.

On the retail front the company is looking at delivering products to regional areas that are at a distance from its store. It is exploring the idea of having orders delivered by courier. Another area the company is exploring is a pre-cooked range where clients can buy pre-cooked items or a long



slow cooked roast or a similar product that can be taken home and heated.

In the company's experience a lot of people still want to eat old-style, old-fashioned long slow-cooked products but they do not have the time or feel that do not have the skills to do that for themselves at home. Mondo Di Carne is planning to cater to this requirement.

Mondo Di Carne has a policy of dealing directly with

product by milk feeding them for four to six months and growing them into full size calves to produce the best veal in the country. Delicious, a premier Australian food magazine, has awarded this product for its high quality. White Rock Veal is one of the three products to feature in the Delicious Produce Hall of Fame.

The company has also developed relationships with Cargill and Rangers Valley which produces the famous Black Angus and Wagyu beef. High quality and ethically raised products are sourced from around Australia for Mondo Di Carne's restaurant, hotel and retail customers. It is ensured that each of the products sold is high quality, consistent, and has good ethical farming principles and handling principles behind it.

producers and farmers especially for its organic line of products. The company works closely with farmers to develop new products. One of the most successful initiatives has been the development of White Rock Veal. This is premium milk fed veal which is produced from unwanted bobby calves from the milk industry.

In developing this product, these calves were turned into a premium

A great deal of stress is laid on training of employees within the organisation. Staff members who wish to upgrade their skills or opt for jobs requiring specialised knowledge are given the support to meet their goals. Currently, 10% of the workforce consists of apprentices training to become qualified butchers. Recently, a cleaner who had been working in the factory for the last two years, wanted to become a butcher and was actively supported to take up the required training.







Staff retention is high and the average tenure is six to seven years as compared to an industry average of two to three years. Employees who require flexible working hours are accommodated and timings are suitably adjusted to help them.

Robert Garreffa says, “Basically I lead by example, there is nothing that I am afraid to do so we expect that of our staff as well. I am happy to jump in there and get my hands dirty and get into all the jobs within the facility and we expect the same of the staff. I think that reflects in my staff and their willingness to do whatever is required to get the job done and make sure that the clients are happy.”

It is proposed to introduce a bulk store format for the convenience of hotel, restaurant and even retail customers who wish to make large purchases. There is already a smaller version of such a store in the existing factory where the customer can buy whole cuts of meat or larger pieces of meat if they want to take advantage of the lower prices and are willing to go to the trouble of cutting their own steaks at home.

In the proposed bulk store, which will be much bigger, all the different brands of meat will be on offer. This facility will even cater to those retail

customers who have eaten a certain brand of steak in a restaurant and want to replicate that meal at home. These customers will be able to visit the store and buy their chosen brand.

In another effort to enhance customer facilities, it is proposed to introduce an online portal for ordering products. This is intended for those clients who live at a distance from the retail outlet and find it inconvenient to drive there every week for their requirements of meat. Ordering online will give them the ability to access high quality products for their daily consumption rather than just on special occasions.

Mondo Di Carne has become synonymous with high quality meat products in Perth and the surrounding areas. Through its wholesale division it has captured the hotel and restaurant market in Western Australia and is now making its presence felt across the country. The company’s strict adherence to quality standards and its customer orientation will ensure that its reputation and business volumes continue to grow.

# Campbell Foods Australia

## Fresh from the Wilderness Coast





*Campbell Foods is located in Eden on the Wilderness Coast of South Eastern NSW and is actively involved in farming, processing and distribution of quality Australian beef, lamb, veal and fine food products to domestic and international markets. The quality of the products is a reflection of the freshness of the local environment with pristine areas of the wilderness forests and beaches.*

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Campbell Foods Australia

**WHAT:** Campbell Brand is recognized worldwide for its long tradition of supplying superior quality beef, having been actively involved in the meat industry since 1861..

**WHERE:** Australia

**WEBSITE:** [campbellfoods.com.au](http://campbellfoods.com.au)



The Campbell brand is synonymous with quality meat products – and is recognised world-wide for its long tradition of superior quality beef, having been actively involved in the meat industry since 1861.

Campbell Foods Australia's director, Katie Campbell has followed in the family business and is an active member of the company's top management. She has detailed

world famous

# CAMPBELL BEEF

campbell foods australia



knowledge about how the beef industry works and currently handles the company's sales and marketing. Currently based in Hong Kong, Katie and brother Damien Campbell are heavily focussed on expanding in the Asian markets.

Campbell Foods Australia has already made steady inroads into the export market and has a number of customers in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Mauritius. The export

business for Campbell Foods Australia initially began with Katie's father, Brendan Campbell, over four decades ago and a large portion of the current export sales are due to the contacts established by him.

Brendan also worked in close liaison with the late Vlado Gregurek of the famous Vlado's Steakhouse in Melbourne where he was entrusted with selecting the rump and loins of beef for some 25 years. The



knowledge they were able to share with each other has been invaluable in selecting, ageing, preparing and cooking beef.

Campbell's Hong Kong plays an important role in the company's plans as the market in China is handled from this city. Opening the office in Hong Kong has given the company a tremendous advantage, as the local presence has enabled them to make rapid strides in expanding in the Asian

region. The company has also opened a retail arm in this Asian city and this business has expanded rapidly.

One of Campbell's main selling points is that the beef is from Black Angus and Hereford cattle that are grass fed and hormone free and the company's range of products is from naturally farmed pasture-fed cattle. The high-end products are sold primarily to four or five star hotels and restaurants, and the company has built up a large



base of customers in this segment over the years.

The company is well regarded in the highly competitive Hong Kong market because of the superior quality of their produce. Explaining the reason for the success enjoyed by the company's products, Katie Campbell says, "We pride ourselves on top quality produce and breeding is of the utmost importance when producing a high-end, consistently

flavoursome product. The mix of rich soils for natural pastures, pristine waters from abundant rainfall, clean air and predominantly British breeds of cattle selection are required.

"I feel very proud of our family business running for five generations. We have achieved a lot and I have learnt a great deal from a young age, just watching the industry expand and now I am putting that knowledge to good use."

A photograph of construction-related items on a wooden surface. In the top left, there are two rolled-up white blueprints. Below them is a bright yellow hard hat. In the bottom left corner, the head of a silver hammer is visible. The background is a light-colored wooden plank.

# Australian Construction Association



The background of the page is a vertical wooden plank texture. On the left side, the words 'Australian Constructors Association' are written in a large, bold, blue sans-serif font, with each word on a new line.

# Australian Constructors Association

The Australian Constructors Association (ACA) represents the leading construction and infrastructure contracting companies and is dedicated to promoting a sustainable construction industry in the country. The ACA member companies are involved in a range of activities including residential and non-residential building, engineering construction, process engineering, contract mining, maintenance, oil and gas operations and telecommunications and environmental services.

Lindsay Le Compte, Executive Director and Company Secretary of the ACA told us about the background of the association, “The Association started in 1994 and it represented the major construction contractors in Australia and New Zealand. Basically there are 16 members of the association and they range from companies like Lend Lease, Leighton, Brookfield Multiplex, Downer and Fulton Hogan. These are our top organisations which are primarily responsible for the major construction activities on the projects in this country.

It’s a requirement for membership that members must have a turnover on an annual basis exceeding



\$1 billion, they must operate in at least two states in Australia and their chief executive or the equivalent must be a member of the board of the association.

The association has always been in a situation where it has ranged from 14 to 20 members. It is not an association that looks for significant growth in member numbers, it's an association that merely represents the major construction companies in the country and by its very nature that has a limitation in terms of the number of members that it would have.

So it is unlike a normal industry association which would look to increase its membership for a range of reasons. It doesn't operate that way. The board of the association is made up of the chief executives of the members."

## **Leadership role of the ACA**

The ACA being composed of the largest construction companies in the country plays an important role in taking up various issues to ensure the growth and continued contribution of the industry to the Australian economy. Towards this end the board of the ACA has established five working parties and

each of these includes a number of executive general managers from the member companies.

Each working party has anywhere from six to twelve members and is mentored by one member of the board. The five working parties which are currently operational are on safety, work force development and skills, sustainability, work place relations and commercial and contractual issues. The parties work to a strategic plan which is endorsed by the board. They are also tasked with working on projects and developing positions in relation to advocacy and major policy items that the association wishes to be involved with.

Each of the working parties functions according to the terms of its strategic plan and deals with pre-identified issues. The working party could address matters that the board wishes to pursue or it could also respond to items that come up through the media or through government proposals.

## **Safety is a primary issue**

The construction industry, by its very nature, involves a great deal of outdoor work which is often carried out in difficult or potentially unsafe

conditions. Consequently, safety is an important issue for the industry and the ACA has taken a lead in this area.

Lindsay Le Compte explains the steps being taken by the association in this regard, "One of the big issues that we are dealing with at the moment relates to safety and in particular safety culture, so what the working party on safety is involved in at the moment is the development of a number of guides and other publication materials to help the industry to improve the culture of safety at the work place.

Some of these include a glossary of safety terms and the identification of the type of skills and training that would be required of all people of a safety responsibility in organisations and at work places. We are trying to look at who is involved in the industry including the whole supply chain who actually sends people to work places and how those people would interact in a way which would reduce the risk of safety problems occurring.

The difficulty of dealing with that is the fact that in this industry we deal with a workforce which comes from a very wide ethnic background and a number of those components have an impact on the culture of safety

in the industry. A lot of what we are trying to do is assist organisations across the board to improve their organisational culture, so that will of itself improve safety and that's more important today than simply the development and completion of different types of documentation.

It's really about how people at work places actually view safety and how they interact with each other. So you can have safe work method statements which set out what is required to be done, it's another thing to actually have a culture in the work place which results in the various people who turn up at the work place and get involved."

## **Workforce development and skills**

The ACA will shortly release a website on the construction industry for the purpose of providing useful information to young people, their parents and school advisers as to the types of jobs that are available within the sector. This website will also provide details which will enable visitors to make career choices by explaining the different facets of work involved in the construction area.

A concerted effort is being made by the ACA to improve the skills of existing



people in the industry and attract more people to it by informing them about opportunities that are available today and in the future. The attempt is to build a workforce that will be adequate to meet the requirements in the coming years and the process for this has been started now, because it will take some years before a person who starts an apprenticeship or an engineering degree can become fully qualified.

## **Eco-friendly policies**

The Australian Constructors Association has a sustainability working party which is involved with a number of organisations external to the ACA such as the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia and the Green Building Council.

It is actively involved with these organisations in the development of a range of processes and systems to assist with the construction sector and to look at sustainability in the context of the economic, social and financial benefits that flow from having effective sustainability processes in construction.

The ACA's efforts are aligned with those of the Australian Industry Group as well as those of the construction supply chain and other organisations and service providers





who are connected with industry.

Lindsay Le Compte describes the ACA's view on sustainability, "It is now recognised by all organisations that looking sensibly at their day-to-day operations and their future within any industry, that sustainability issues link their interests and they are going to be a little more important factor when tendering for work or for other processes."

### **ACA's goals**

"The association's future is tied to the industry. Obviously if the industry is doing well then the major organisations in it are doing well. But they need to operate on the basis that while between them they have over 100,000 employees, they probably contract with another 200,000 employees of other organisations across the sector," explains Lindsay Le Compte.

"For the future the association is looking to being involved with government to maintain an appropriate pipeline of public works. The state governments do not have a lot of money to build infrastructure, so a lot of the work we will do in the future will consist of assisting public and private sector clients to clear the way for funding and financing of projects, as well as better ways of developing those projects and managing them and completing them on time."

# Sustainable places for everyone

**Romilly Madew**  
*Chief Executive Officer*





**Now** *more than ever,*  
*people want to know*  
*where their 'stuff' comes from.*

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Increasingly, we want assurance that our beauty products aren't tested on animals, our shoes and clothes aren't made in sweatshops, our food isn't genetically modified, our coffee is organic or Fairtrade, and our meat has the Heart Foundation's tick of approval.

## *The demand for transparency is having a profound impact across entire supply chains*

This demand for transparency is having a profound impact across entire supply chains. Selling a product is no longer about 'biggest, fastest, cheapest', but also about what is best for people and best for the planet.

When it comes to buildings, people want to know that the timber isn't sourced from rainforests, that the paint isn't dripping with harmful chemicals and that the building isn't an energy- and water-guzzler. Importantly, both individuals and corporations now want to ensure that any claim about the sustainability of their building is verified with independent proof.

This is where Green Star comes in. Launched in 2003 by

the Green Building Council of Australia, Green Star is now an internationally-recognised sustainability rating system that is transforming the way our built environment is designed, constructed and operated.



Green Star is a national, voluntary rating system, and more than 800 building projects around Australia, including and existing buildings, interior fitouts and entire communities, have achieved Green Star ratings after being assessed against a range of environmental impact categories, from water and waste, to energy and emissions.

# *A sustainable building is for rough sleepers as much as it is for investment bankers*

## Australian buildings

- use 66% less electricity than average Australian buildings
- consume 51% less potable water than if they had been built to meet minimum industry requirements
- Recycle 96% of their waste, compared with 58% for the average new construction project.

A range of international reports have also confirmed

that green buildings reduce operational costs, improve return on investment, boost productivity, health and wellbeing and enhance corporate reputation.

The Building Better Returns report (2011) found that Green Star-rated buildings deliver a 12 per cent 'green premium' in value and a five per cent premium in rent, when compared to non-rated buildings.

The Property Council/IPD Australian Green Property Index (June 2014), found that Green Star-rated CBD office assets outperformed the broader CBD office market by 100 basis points.

Modelling from Australia's

The Value of Green Star (2013) report, found that on average, Green Star-certified buildings:

- produce 62% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than average

CitySwitch program has found that a typical financial or professional services firm operating from a 5 Star Green Star-rated office of 5,000 square metres could save \$18,200 a year in electricity costs alone, not to mention massive savings in reduced absenteeism, employee retention and increased productivity in the region of \$4 million a year.

Green Star buildings are recording productivity increases of up to 15 per cent, which is perhaps why Colliers International's Office Tenant Survey (2012) has found that 95 per cent of tenants want to be in a green building. 'Green space' is now one of the top four attributes tenants look for – along with bike racks, childcare facilities and a gym.

The World Green Building Council's Business Case for Green Building (2013) finds that a minimal two per cent upfront cost to support green design can result in average life cycle savings of 20 per cent of total construction costs – more than 10 times the initial investment.

Each year, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index is led by Australian companies, such as Stockland, GPT Group, Investa and Lend Lease. Similarly, the Global Real Estate Sustainability Benchmark





**star**

(GRESB), which now reports on 56,000 assets worth US\$2.1 trillion dollars in value, identifies Australia as the global leader.

But sustainable buildings aren't just for office workers or for people who can afford sparkling penthouses overlooking the harbour. We are proud of the many Green Star projects that support better environmental, economic and social outcomes for everyone.

The Common Ground housing projects in Sydney and Melbourne demonstrate that a sustainable building is for rough sleepers as much as it is for investment bankers.

Similarly, green features at the Lilyfield Housing Redevelopment in Sydney have reduced residents' electricity bills by 25 per cent while at Monash University's Briggs Hall and Jackomos Halls, cash-strapped students are paying 45 per cent less for their electricity. The Redfern Housing Redevelopment project, also in Sydney, gained an 'Innovation' point for specifying that a minimum of 20 construction workers on the project were indigenous.

This created jobs, enhanced the 'green collar' skills of the local community, and

spread wide the message that everyone deserves a sustainable home.

And the Green Star story is about more than just buildings. If we were to plot the evolution of the Green Building Council of Australia over last 12 years, we'd see

**We  
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sustain**

# are singly g the age of cial nability

As we've matured, we've expanded our thinking to recognise and reward social return on investment such as shared value, improved productivity, health and wellbeing, and skills development.

The 30-odd project teams working with us to achieve Green Star – Communities ratings, the local governments achieving Green Star ratings for their community centres and libraries, the state governments certifying healthcare facilities and the school principals educating a whole generation of environmentally literate students are committed to building communities that are diverse, fair, inclusive and sustainable.

Today, we are increasingly talking the language of social sustainability – about how our buildings benefit people. Our next great challenge is to put a value on the social capital to be gained from green building.

We will continue to adapt Green Star so that it remains robust and relevant. Why? Because everyone should have the opportunity to learn in a green school, work in a green office, or live in a green home – and because Green Star is the mechanism to help us create and define sustainable places for everyone.

the early emphasis on the environmental benefits of green building such as kilos of carbon, litres of water and tonnes of waste evolve to consider economic benefits such as payback periods, cost savings, asset values and vacancy rates.

# Tomkins Comm & Industrial Bu Where Building Relationsh is a Family Tradition



The Tomkins family entered the construction business in Queensland three generations ago in 1951, when Ted Tomkins established the E.D. Tomkins building company. Over the last six decades the family owned and managed enterprise has grown

and thrived and is currently one of the most respected builders in Queensland with a reputation for successfully completing the most complex and demanding projects.

Mike Tomkins, owner and director



# Commercial Builders Tips



of Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders Pty Ltd did his apprenticeship as a carpenter in the family business. Today he runs an award winning building company which has executed a number of large and high profile projects across a diverse range

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Tomkins Commercial

**& Industrial Builders**

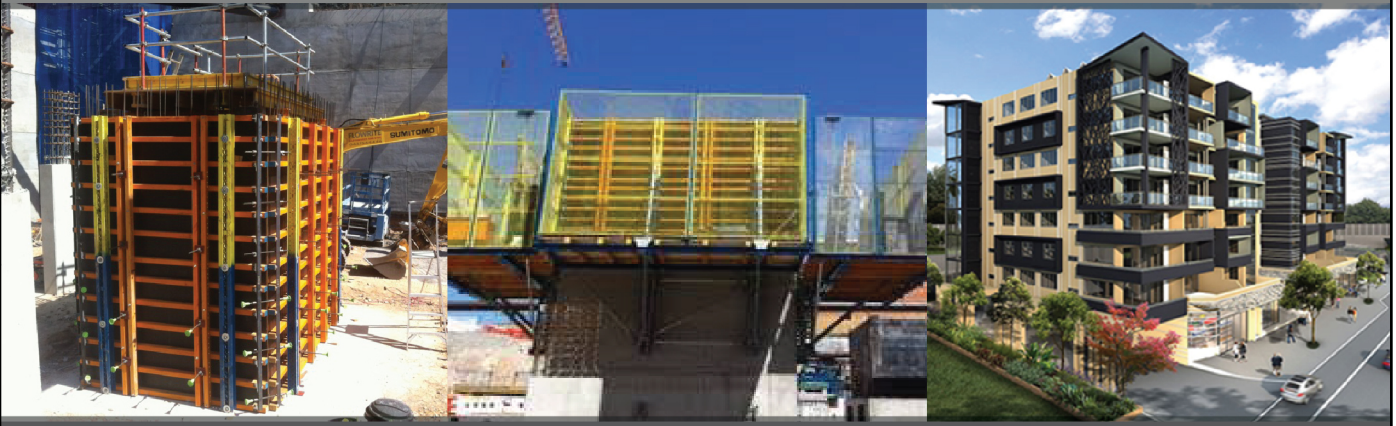
**WHAT:** They design and construct a wide variety of dynamic commercial, industrial and residential projects including special heritage ventures to each client's unique specifications.**WHERE:** QLD 4014

**WEBSITE:** [tomkinscommercial.com.au](http://tomkinscommercial.com.au)

of sectors including commercial, industrial and residential.

Although the company has grown rapidly in size and scope handling single projects up to a value of \$60 million, it is still very much a family business, with Mike's son Brendan working as a project manager, his daughter Rachel as a marketing manager, and father Vince also involved with the business as warehouse manager.

Speaking about the growth of the business, Mike Tomkins says, "Originally we were residential / semi-commercial builders. We did different types of projects over the years until about 18 years ago. At that time we got out of residential and into commercial. Ever since then we have grown the business in the commercial sector.



## ADCON QUEENSLAND IS A COMPANY THAT PROVIDES ADVANCED CONSTRUCTION SOLUTIONS.

Adcon Qld is a Queensland based formwork contractor focused primarily on multi-storey residential/multi-density apartment projects. We specialise in innovated formwork systems which ensure maximum safety and quality, resulting in reduced construction time. Our team of experienced personnel are eager to assist with your upcoming works.

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Phone: 07 3888 2660



## BRISBANE PUMP ACTION

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“We have become accredited by the Queensland government and have also been empanelled as a Category “A” contractor by the Brisbane Airport Corporation. We currently operate out of Brisbane and work all along the East Coast of Australia.”

Currently the organisation takes up projects in the residential, commercial, industrial and institutional areas and caters to customers ranging from hotels and resorts to the health and education sectors.

## **Capability to Complete Large and Complex Projects**

In mid-2014 Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders was selected to design and construct 100 apartments over eight storeys above three basement levels for the *Radius Apartments* project. The building assignment is extremely challenging, with the construction site located alongside the Queensland Transport Rail Corridor.



The project, which is targeted to be completed in 74 weeks from the date of commencement was awarded to Tomkins as the organisation has a well-deserved reputation for taking up and successfully completing challenging building jobs.

Another prestigious assignment executed by Tomkins has been the *DHL Express Logistics* design and construct project which was the result of full tender process and is a testament to the excellent relationship the company enjoys with the *Brisbane Airport Corporation*.

The scope of work involved partial

demolition of an adjacent building occupied by DHL and the construction of the new DHL Express Gateway & Service Centre, comprising of 3,500 square metres of warehouse and 780 square metres of offices. The work also entailed 2,650 square metres of heavy duty external paving, stand-alone power generation systems and state of the art services and management systems.

At the time of the completion of the project, Brisbane Airport Corporation's representative issued a testimonial to Tomkins stating, "I would like to take this opportunity to express mine and BAC's



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appreciation for a successful outcome to the DHL Gateway facility project.

“From the outset, I believe both parties invested heavily in the relationship between the two organisations, with a collaborative and positive working relationship between the BAC project team and the entire Tomkins onsite crew.

“The experience with Tomkins has been one of responsiveness in resolving our issues and delivering a building to BAC’s high standards and tight timeframes in what was a very difficult project.”

In fact, Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders considers its relationship with its clients as one of its most important priorities. It has also used this philosophy to great success with its suppliers and sub-contractors. Holcim has had Tomkins as a customer for several decades and a number of sub-contractors have enjoyed rapid growth because of the work allotted to them by Tomkins.

Mike Tomkins has established a practice of personally mentoring several sub-contractors and meets with them once a month to provide



advice and share his experience gained in the construction industry over a period exceeding 30 years. This has resulted in Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders enjoying the support of reliable and trustworthy sub-contractors and at the same time, enabling the sub-contractors to become large businesses in their own right.

Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders has also been awarded the contract to build 34 luxury boutique riverfront apartments at *Newport, Hamilton Reach* by the Singapore-listed

Frasers Property (then Australand).

The apartments will go up over five levels in two and three bedroom configurations with one level of basement parking, and features a spacious air-conditioned lobby with secure lift access and a private swimming pool and central tropical garden.

## Awards

Tomkins has won a number of awards in recognition of the excellent quality of its work.

In 2015 it won in the category of Best Education Facility over \$5 million (Brisbane) for its work at the Australian Catholic University Building. In the current year it has also won the Best Retail Facility (Sunshine Coast) Award for the work carried out at the Beerwah Shopping Village, and best Commercial Facility under \$5 million (Central Queensland) Award for the Transit Systems Gladstone project.

In 2014 the company was awarded in the Best Sport & Community Facility up to \$5 million (Gold Coast) category for the work it did at the Ahamadiyya Muslim Association Community Centre. It also received the Civil Contractor of the Year (Central Queensland) Award for the job executed at the Carinya Drive Stabilisation project.

## **Strong Commitment to Customers**

Tomkins has seen rapid growth in the number of projects that it is involved in and in the value of these projects. Interestingly, business expansion took place from 2008 onwards, when the rest of the building industry experienced a slow-down. The foundations for this growth had been laid by the company in the earlier years by building a base of highly satisfied customers.

The company has been giving equal focus to private work and to institutional customers. In the last few years it has won a number of high-value jobs amongst which a \$20 million project for the Australian Catholic University is a notable example.

It executed the complete assignment in a record 11 months and earned high praise from the customer in the process. The Associate Vice-Chancellor Brisbane, Professor Jim Nyland, made specific mention of the accommodating nature of the team from Tomkins and specified in a written testimonial that they were easy to work with and very competent.

In its effort to provide a full range of services to its clients, the company launched Tomkins Special Projects, which specialises in smaller jobs of up to \$5 million. This division handles small construction refurbishments, restaurants and other low value work. But Tomkins gets large volumes of business from jobs in the \$15 million to \$40 million range.

In this manner, Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders ensures that it caters to the complete requirements of its clients. Above all, Mike Tomkins ensures that all dealings are handled with integrity and the highest level of



ethics. To implement these principles, he is at the forefront of business operations and plays an active role in each and every project.

Special emphasis is laid on training staff, with the objective of keeping them up to date with the latest technologies and developments in the building industry. Development opportunities are provided to existing employees and Tomkins also offers a range of cadetships and apprenticeships across its business to new entrants.

All these steps have led to putting Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders in a position to provide clients with the highest level of workmanship in the jobs that it undertakes. In the process the company has built up strong relationships with all key industry stakeholders. As a result of all these factors, Tomkins receives large volumes of repeat business from past clients.

## Building is a Relationship, Not Just a Contract

Turnover has steadily increased over the years, and is expected to touch \$100 million in the current year. Tomkins has steadily built up its capabilities and is currently in a



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position to complete projects ranging in scope and value up to \$60 million.

But despite rapid growth, Tomkins has remained true to its roots and places great value on the deep bonds that it has established and nurtured over the years with its customers.

Mike Tomkins summarises his philosophy, “The brand in the market is around our last name. Most people who know me know that I will handshake them at the end of the day and deliver what I promised. It is a little bit old fashioned and old school, the way that we do business, but it works.

“It doesn’t matter whether it is a small job or a large job or an institutional client or a private client, we pay equal attention to all of them. We get our repeat business in this way and this is the reason why our business has been so successful. It is not about today, it is about the relationship with the client.”

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# John Holland Australia's Leading Construction Company

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** John Holland

**WHAT:** They have been providing innovative high – performance engineering and construction solutions for more than 65 years.

**WHERE:** Melbourne VIC 3004

**WEBSITE:** [johnholland.com.au](http://johnholland.com.au)

John Holland's expertise covers a wide range of contracting and service capabilities, from building and civil construction solutions in the infrastructure sector to the delivery of major tunnelling, water and environment, energy, minerals, and industrial projects in the energy and resources sector.

John Holland is part of the China



John Holland is a tier 1 contractor with a large number of highly successful projects to its credit. The company is also a leading provider of services to the transport sector, with industry leading expertise and capability in railway construction, operations and maintenance.

## Green Star Initiatives

Issues such as resource scarcity, urbanization, population growth, ecological decline and climate change are of great importance to John Holland and the company is actively participating with other industry stakeholders to suitably address future social needs.

John Holland has adopted sustainable practices and implemented them throughout the organisation in its effort to effectively manage future risks, increase positive social outcomes whilst reducing environmental impact. It is an active member of the Green Building Council of Australia, Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia, Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre, Australian Constructors Association's Sustainability Working Party and is a founding member of the Australian Supply Chain Sustainability School.

Communications  
Company (CCCC), one of the world's largest infrastructure construction organisations. CCCC is ranked #187 on the Fortune 500 list and #4 in Global Contractors by Engineering News Record and is an acknowledged leader in the execution of complex infrastructural projects including bridges, high speed rail, deep water port development and social infrastructure.



The Green Building Council of Australia has instituted various rating tools to assess the impact of design, construction and operation of buildings. The Green Star rating tool assesses the social and environmental attributes that relate to the design and construction activities carried out by construction

companies. John Holland has excelled in the construction of such projects:

### **Kings Square 1 (KS1)**

KS1 is a commercial high rise tower located in the Perth City Link Precinct, part of one of Australia's



materials and efficient destination controlled lifts amongst a host of other features resulting in a 5-Star Green Star rating being awarded to the project.

## Medical Science 1 & 2, Tasmania

The company's expertise in this area is exemplified by the *University of Tasmania's (UTAS) Medical Sciences Precinct*, which became the first educational building in Tasmania to achieve a Green Star rating for environmental design.

The precinct includes the \$42 million *UTAS Medical Science 1 stage*, a five-storey structure and refurbishment of a student accommodation building. The second stage, MS2, was valued at \$62 million and houses clinical research facilities for the Menzies Research Institute, UTAS School of Medicine and the Royal Hobart Hospital.

The 5-Star Green Star – Education Design v1 rating awarded by the Green Building Council of Australia was based on a number of key innovations implemented by John Holland. These included an 80,000 litre rainwater harvesting tank

most significant CBD urban renewal developments. The building offers 23,156 square metres of A Grade commercial office space across 19 levels with 680 square metres of ground floor retail.

The tower features advanced energy efficient systems, locally sourced



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serving toilets, solar hot water, energy-efficient lighting units with proximity sensor activation and daylight controls.

The building also has a number of other features to make it energy efficient. Extensive contoured sun shading serves to reduce power consumption. Thermal insulation breaks in the precast panels and high performance glazing systems serve the same purpose.

Provision has been made for rain water storage for use in toilets and for landscape irrigation. Outgoing water is treated before being pumped away. The interiors use natural rubber-



based flooring, recycled timber and recycled content carpets. The entire construction activity has been done using sustainable materials.

The award-winning building provides facilities for 1,000 undergraduate students and office and laboratory facilities for 450 staff and postgraduate students. The company has succeeded in erecting a building which not only provides excellent facilities for students and staff, but also minimises the environmental impact.

John Holland's and UTAS's commitment to sustainable practices have also resulted in UTAS being conferred the Australasian Campuses Towards Sustainability Award of Excellence and the MBA National Commercial/Industrial Construction Award (\$50 million to \$100 million category).

## **University of Tasmania, Institute of Marine and Antarctic Sciences**

John Holland executed the *University of Tasmania's Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS)* project where it successfully achieved a 5-Star Green Star rating. The \$40 million facility is situated

on Hobart's Princes Wharf No 2 site in Sullivan's Cove.

The project has been jointly promoted by the University of Tasmania, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the Tasmanian government to explore and conserve Australia's Southern Ocean and Antarctic Territories.

The IMAS building project is an initiative of the Australian Government which falls under its Education Investment Fund. The facility has a gross floor area of over 7,500 square metres and provides a suite of managed learning spaces. Lecture theatres and research hubs complement general and specific laboratories, some requiring physical and quarantine containment.

The construction involved the creation of controlled temperature and centralised culture facilities. All aspects of the building including its layout, orientation, façade treatment, material selection and building servicing were executed keeping in mind the UTAS brief to achieve a 5-Star Green Star design rating.

A number of specific features

# John Holland

have been incorporated into the construction to make the building eco-friendly and give it a design that reduces its carbon footprint. Appropriate sun shading and management of solar thermal loads has been provided for.

The design allows natural daylight ingress to the inner part of each floor plate via skylights and central voids. The building is naturally ventilated and its design allows effective cooling and air change. John Holland received the Master Builders Association, Tasmania Award for 'Commercial Building \$20 - \$50 million' category for this project.

## **University of Newcastle Student Accommodation, Newcastle**

Another contract for which John Holland has earned accolades for the implementation of eco-friendly

concepts in its planning, design and construction, is the *University of Newcastle student accommodation project*. Four eight-storey towers were erected, with a total of 335 apartments accommodating 778 beds.

Each building was provided with a ground floor common area, a combination of apartments including six, five, two and one bedroom configurations as well as studios and a multi-use common room on each floor.

The buildings have been built to a 4-Star Green Star Design rating, which includes the installation of a cross-ventilation system and features the largest hydronic heating system installation in Australia.

Project Manager, Glen O'Connor says, "Natural energy is used to heat and cool the apartments through a cross-ventilation system with hollow

core concrete floor planks acting as ducts, and a natural gas hydronic water system with 910 heating outlets. These features have a significant positive impact on the building's internal environment, and provide a long-term advantage to cost saving and future building maintenance."

John Holland has 16 Green Star-qualified staff members participating in the Green Building Council of Australia's continual professional development program. Eleven staff members have completed IS Foundation Training with the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia.

The company's green initiatives and practices have served to differentiate it from its competitors and establish John Holland as a leading Australian construction firm for clients who wish to contribute towards preserving the environment.

## **The Way Ahead**

Over the years John Holland has gained experience in a wide range of industries and sectors and has a well-deserved reputation for being a highly competent and capable construction firm. Now that

it has become a part of the China Communications Construction Company Ltd, it will have even greater scope as it will be able to leverage the opportunities offered by its parent.

With increasing stress being laid on sustainability and green issues, John Holland is at a distinct advantage as it has attained numerous Green Star ratings for its work. The company has embedded sustainable practices in every part of its business in a manner that enables it to intelligently weigh the economic, environmental, social and governance aspects on its long-term ability to prosperously sustain the business and the communities in which it operates.

John Holland is well-positioned to take advantage of its unique set of skills and experience to benefit from the projected growth in Australian infrastructure and to capitalise on the new possibilities presented by virtue of being a subsidiary of one of the largest international construction companies.

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# J&B Project

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## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** J & B Projects

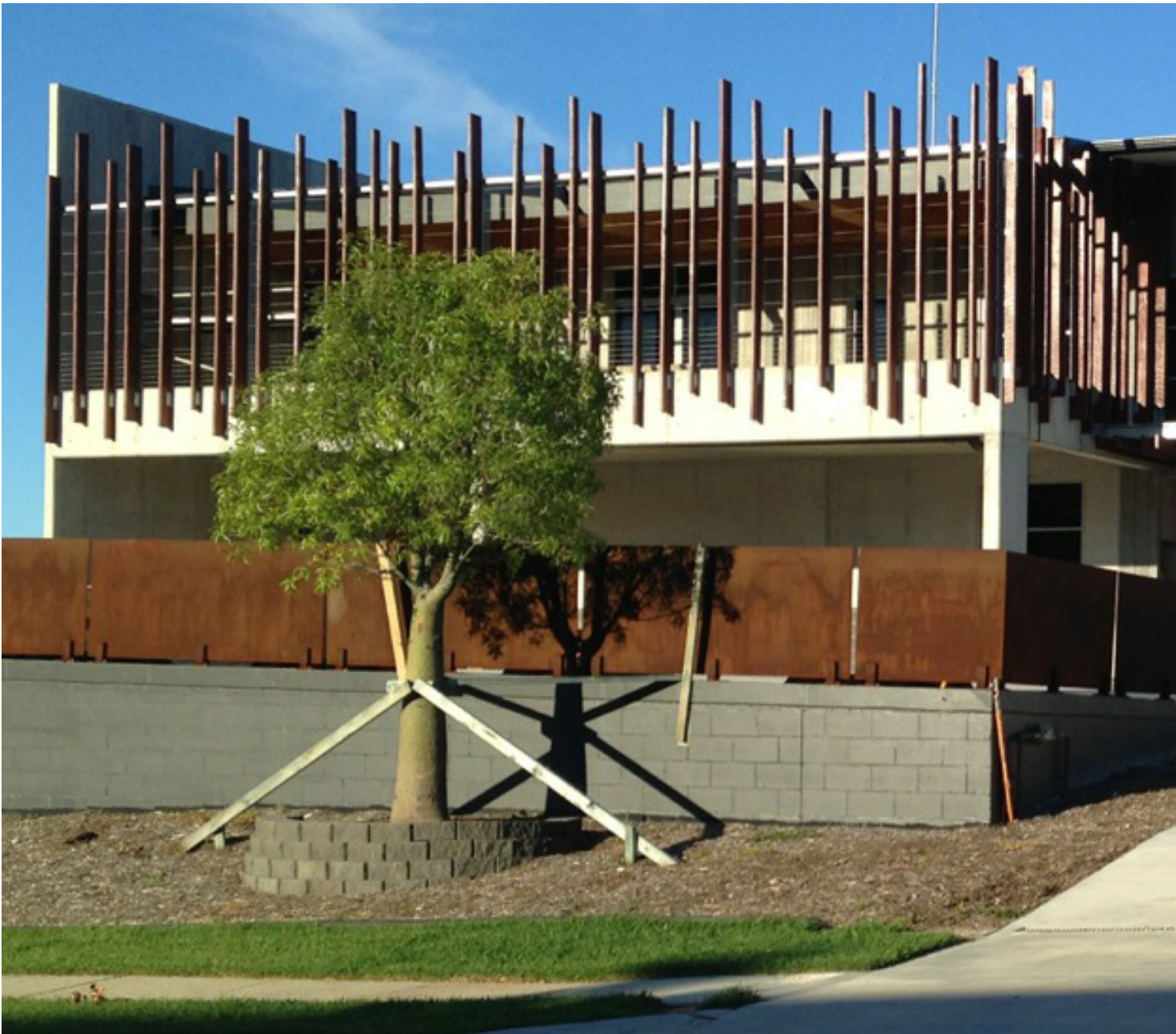
**WHAT:** It's J & B Project's aim to provide clients with detailed budgets, preliminary design concepts and expected capital return analysis that enables implementation of strategies based on real information.

**WHERE:** QLD 4218, Australia

**WEBSITE:** [jandbprojects.com.au](http://jandbprojects.com.au)

The company is a local Gold Coast commercial builder that has been in operation since 1971. In the 44 years of its existence, J & B Projects has completed a number of prestigious assignments and it offers its clients a complete design and construction management service.

Brad Kane, Managing Director, is a 25 year veteran of the building industry and his expertise lies in handling the entire gamut of activities involved in a commercial project. His vast experience has given him the ability to execute projects flawlessly by coordinating the efforts of architects, engineers, interior designers, surveyors, estimators, tradesmen and project and construction managers.



difficult of circumstances. His team recently completed the total refurbishment of two penthouse units on the 25<sup>th</sup> floor of a high-rise. The work entailed practically dismantling the interiors and then redoing the two units completely,

Apart from his technical skills and expertise, Brad Kane brings an unflappable demeanour to the job and his presence encourages his team members to produce outstanding results in the most

*Be respectful,  
treat everybody  
with integrity*



including the addition of new rooms. Although it was a challenging job, it went off without a hitch.

Speaking about his management style and his approach to work, Brad Kane says, “Be respectful, treat everybody with integrity, treat everything in a calm professional manner and always do the right thing. That normally gets you

through most situations.”

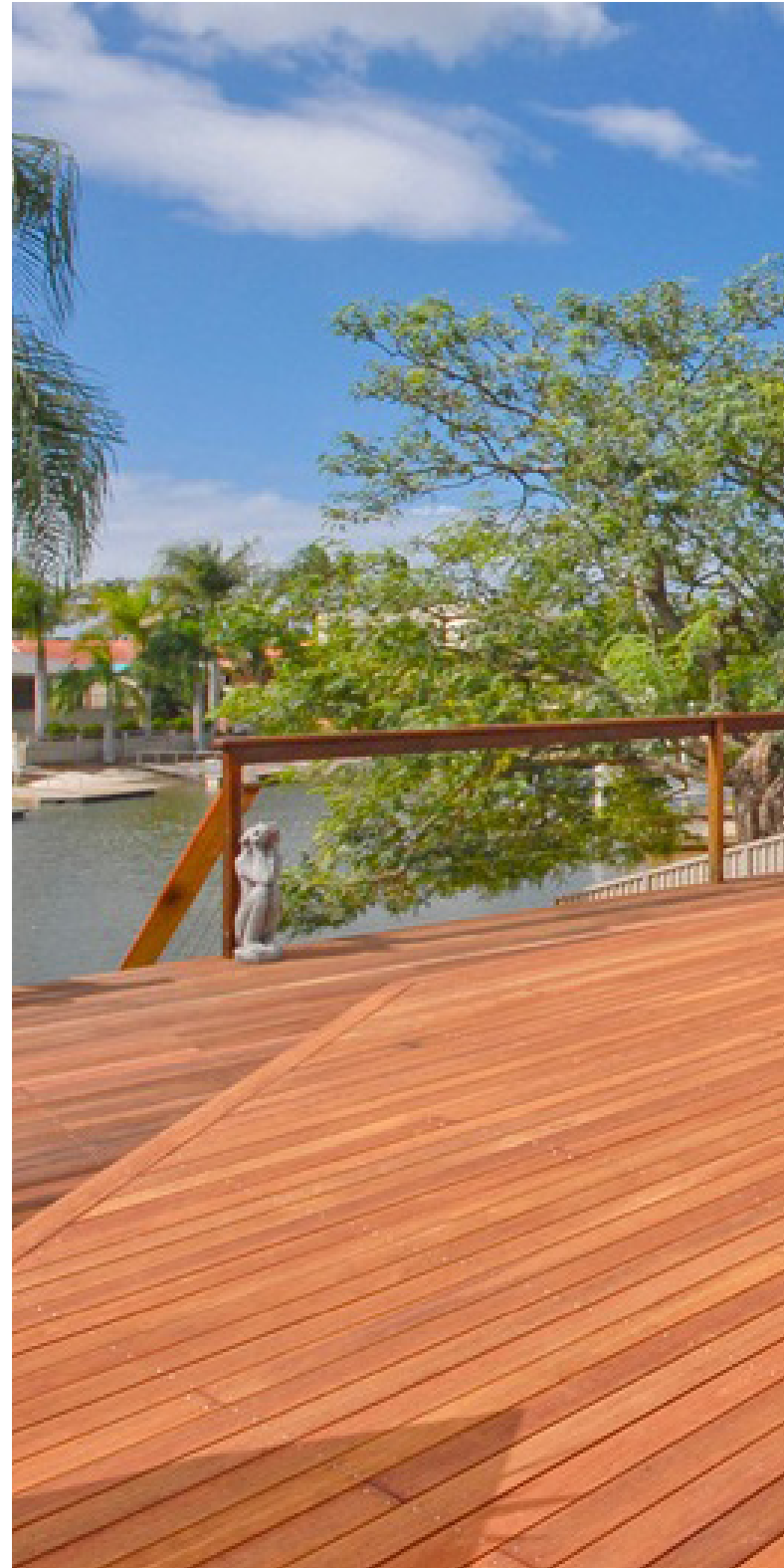
When J & B Projects takes up a new assignment their first step is to prepare preliminary design concepts and a preliminary budget. The company considers getting a buy-in from the client as essential and that planning is the key to a successful outcome. A detailed cost break-

up is provided to the client and relevant information is furnished periodically, so that it is possible to track the actual cost as compared to the budget throughout the project.

The company lays a great deal of stress on transparency and maintains a high level of communication with the client. Over the years this practice has earned J & B Projects a reputation as a sound and dependable builder with the result that today most of the new business that the company gets is through referrals and word of mouth.

In its decades long existence, J & B Projects has established close ties with a number of suppliers, many of whom have been dealing with the company for over 20 years. Brad Kane makes a special mention of those who have partnered in the company's progress over the years - Penguin Concrete Construction, Richard Steel Fabrication, Australian Temporary Fencing, Tilt Action, Zen Electrical, G. James Glass, Gold Coast Timber and Trusses, Ron Nickel Roofing, Gold Coast Roofing and Coastal Excavations.

The company has developed great skills in estimating costs for a



project and uses *Buildsoft* as its estimating program. It also uses the MYOB online cloud service and is very satisfied with the results.

A project that has given Brad Kane





a great deal of satisfaction is the construction of a 2700 square metre warehouse/office centre. The client had shortlisted nine industrial/commercial builders and finally asked two of them, including

J & B Projects, to tender for the job. The client's criteria for awarding the contract included inspection of the completed projects of the respective builders. Ultimately the job was awarded to J & B Projects.



According to his usual practice Brad Kane took on the role of site supervisor to ensure that the exact specifications of the client were adhered to. The building, which includes a 50 metre X 50 metre clear area without any supporting columns, was completed on time and within budget. The client was extremely satisfied with the end-result and especially pleased with the high standard and quality of the structure. J & B Projects won the State Master Builders Award for this Helensvale warehouse development in the category of 'Industrial Building up to \$4 million'.

Another project that the company has completed and which has earned it great praise is the extension of an existing swim centre which also offers dancing, gymnastics and tennis lessons. As the number of students had increased greatly the owners had decided to expand capacity.



The job entailed creating two new activity areas at different levels. A new structural steel and timber ramp was created to allow access for disabled persons. This part of the project was so skilfully executed that it blends into the original structure and does not appear to be an addition at all.

Over a period of time J & B Projects has developed the ability to win commercial building assignments in the face of stiff competition on the basis of its past work and strong reputation. In the last five years it has seen a jump in the number of jobs that it has been awarded. It is now positioned for rapid growth and Brad Kane says that he owes this to the relationships that have been built by the company and the trust that it has earned from its clients.

# Pritchard Francis

## Setting New Standards in Civil and Structural Engineering



### AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Pritchard Francis

**WHAT:** Pritchard Francis is an award winning Civil & Structural Engineering Consultancy based in Western Australia.

**WHERE:** WA Subiaco 6904

**WEBSITE:** [pfeng.com.au](http://pfeng.com.au)

Specialising in structural and civil engineering, Pritchard Francis is a leading consultancy based out of Perth. The company also has a regional office in Broome, Western Australia, which services the Kimberly area and beyond. Initially established as a structural engineering consultancy in 1977, Pritchard Francis expanded



optimal design solutions to each client. This resulted in a large volume of repeat business and the company has expanded rapidly over recent years.

James Leiper, Project Engineer, says “We have tried to keep client service as our sole focus and this has developed a good reputation in the industry. As the company expanded and started to employ more people we were awarded bigger jobs. In the last 10 to 15 years the company has really boomed as we moved into different areas and clients have trusted us knowing that we do a good job.

“Now we have got a number of large assignments across different industries. We operate in the industrial, commercial and residential sectors. We are also in the resource sector, land development and several other industries.”

into civil engineering and more recently lead consulting.

The company currently has a staff of approximately 70 and is involved in a wide variety of projects across Western Australia. When Pritchard Francis started operations it had a strong customer focus on providing

## Civil Engineering

The firm is highly skilled in Civil Engineering and has several decades of experience working in this area. The land development industry utilises the company’s expertise in bulk earthworks projects. This work is primarily for greenfield



land development for residential, commercial and industrial applications.

Pritchard Francis has executed bulk earthworks projects for educational facilities and commercial sites across Western Australia. The Civil Engineering team's work includes feasibility studies and due diligence, planning concept design, detailed design and documentation, approval processes, site supervision and contract administration.

Having executed many projects of this type, Pritchard Francis' team

will identify key issues applicable to a project at the modelling stage and ensure these issues are successfully managed.

In July, 2014, the company completed the *Precinct 3, Port Hedland* bulk earthworks project. Pritchard Francis completed the initial due diligence for the 70 hectare site located adjacent to the Port Hedland International Airport. Subsequently the company was involved with the concept design, detailed design and documentation and tender documentation.

A total of 39 lots were developed



at the site which presented several unique challenges including the provision of services to a site relatively remote from existing infrastructure, the necessity to carry out flood modelling and the importing of substantial volumes of fill material.

Pritchard Francis has also gained significant experience in site remediation projects. This sector has grown as sites previously too expensive to develop or at the end of their original use are identified for regeneration. The *Bentley Regeneration Project* valued at

\$30 million is a good example of this category. The site covers an area of 25 hectares on which the Department of Housing is looking to provide 1500+ residential units.

## Structural Engineering

Pritchard Francis' structural engineering team believe positive outcomes result from sound engineering principles. They place importance on understanding a client's specific requirements and having experience in specialised areas, these elements are



fundamental to maintaining excellence in engineering consulting. Working and communicating within a team environment to integrate aesthetic design and functionality is critical to a successful project, this is an important component of Pritchard Francis' success.

Aged care accommodation has seen rapid growth in the recent past. The requirements in this sector have changed and facilities often provide multiple services such as low care / high care, special areas for dementia sufferers and units for independent living.

Construction of aged care

accommodation requires a great level of expertise as they need to provide a number of supporting facilities for residents. Traditional construction is not in a position to meet all these requirements. Pritchard Francis has completed a number of large aged care facilities within Western Australia and its projects have been received very well.

The *RAAFA Bull Creek Development* at Perth involved the redevelopment of an existing 11 hectare aged care facility over an extended period. The project consisted of two stages, with the first involving a 108 new



bed accommodation facility in two six-storey residential buildings. The second stage incorporated a new respite care facility with 100 accommodation units over two storeys with undercroft parking.

Speaking about the company's projects, James Leiper says, "We usually have over one hundred projects in the business at any one time in a wide range of industries. In the last couple of years some of the more notable amongst these have been the Wheatstone and Gorgon projects which have kept a lot of us busy for a number of months."

The *Wheatstone Non Process Infrastructure Buildings* project is located at Onslow, Western Australia. This \$240 million project was completed in 2015 and involved the structural design and documentation for the plant, which incorporated a total of 12 buildings and other miscellaneous structures.

Pritchard Francis' expertise in Blast Engineering was put to good use as the structures were governed by blast pressures up to 50 times larger than wind. In conjunction with the sub-contractors the company was involved in research and development of cladding materials

simulating cyclonic wind and blast loading. The excellent quality of work resulted in the company being awarded additional assignments from Chevron.

Another major project completed by Pritchard Francis in 2015 was the execution of the *Gorgon General Administration Buildings* at Barrow Islands. This \$180 million project had the company providing lead, civil and structural consultant roles for the development.

The permanent administration buildings included a fire station, workshop and warehouse. The site was extremely difficult to work on due to cyclonic conditions and flooding. This project was a landmark achievement for the company and has set the stage for procuring more assignments that require the specialised capabilities developed within the company.

## Technology

Pritchard Francis utilises cutting edge technology and owes a large part of its success to keeping up-to-date with the latest developments in its fields of expertise. James Leiper says, "On the design side of things computers are making Engineering



so much more efficient and it is also allowing us to offer more efficient solutions.

“We have a lot of technical expertise in areas like blast design and this would not be viable without the computer modelling that we use. As far as documentation goes we have readily embraced building information modelling which is basically about drawing a 3D model of any structure within a virtual construction model.

“We are using this on every new structural project. This helps the project timeline and is sometimes used for the operation and maintenance of the building as well. Moving forward, building operators will have a 3D model that they can use to find out if any maintenance is needed or if they want any work

done they can make use of the model. This technology is rapidly evolving and we make sure that we are the forefront of any new development in the area.”

## Sustainability

When awarding projects, most companies specify that they would like to lower their impact on the environment. Historically, one of the biggest problems with implementing sustainable designs was quantifying and verifying the benefits derived from these efforts.

The Green Star environmental rating system implemented by the Green Building Council of Australia has provided a solution. Pritchard Francis has worked on several jobs where



it has achieved four and five star ratings. The company has five staff members who have gone through the Green Star accreditation process. This enables the firm to actively contribute to discussions during the design process and to work towards the most sustainable solution within the time and cost constraints.

Pritchard Francis has a strong focus on its existing clients and is constantly on the lookout for new market sectors to work within. It is concentrating on the sustainable design aspect as the company is of the view that this will gain greater importance in the coming years,

especially with topical climate change issues and environmental issues.

Commenting on the way forward for Pritchard Francis, James Leiper says, “I think life-cycle analysis is going to become a lot more common on projects

as the benefits to be reaped are huge. People will realise that some design options might be a bit more expensive

at the beginning but if you look at the life-cycle of those products and those systems there are substantial savings to be realised. As a result clients are going to be more willing to adopt those kind of approaches. This side of our business is going to be a real selling point.”



# Riverstone Custom Homes Luxury Homebuilders



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Riverstone Custom Homes

**WHAT:** Riverstone is among the leading custom home builders in Perth. It has earned an outstanding reputation for design, quality, value and service.

**WHERE:** Cottesloe WA 6911

**WEBSITE:** [riverstone.com.au](http://riverstone.com.au)

Established in Perth in 1995, Riverstone Custom Homes has earned a reputation as a builder of some of the most luxurious and high-end homes in the city and its surrounding areas. All its projects have an upmarket finish and each Riverstone Custom Home is individually designed and built to the specifications of the client.



involved in all aspects of the process of building their homes from the design, to making the selections for the finishes to the home. During construction we have regular site meetings and correspondence with our clients. We find that some customers visit the site every day because they enjoy seeing the progress of the construction work. Many clients enjoy being involved in the process with us.”

The budget for a Riverstone Custom Home starts at \$500,000 and can go up to \$4-5 million. Within this price bracket the building project can have a range of complexity. The construction itself may take place on 1000 square metre blocks or even on as little as a 200 square metre block.

Riverstone prides itself on being able to offer fixed and accurate pricing. Being a design and build company with two decades of experience, it is in a position to estimate costs with a great degree of accuracy. At the inception of each project the client is given a clear picture about the time and cost estimates and over the years Riverstone has delivered on its commitment of providing high quality homes within budget and by the targeted date.

Riverstone is a family owned and managed enterprise, with Tim Marshall as its Operations Director. Customer focus is at the heart of Riverstone’s operations, with each project being given special attention to ensure that it addresses the specific needs of the client.

Tim says, “Our clients are heavily



One of the unique features that Riverstone Custom Homes offers is that clients get a complete home into which they can move immediately. The homeowner does not need to incur any further costs and the price which is settled at the inception of the project is all-inclusive.

Speaking about Riverstone's approach to meeting and exceeding the client's requirements, Tim Marshall says, "Being a custom builder we allow our clients to make changes both in the initial designs

and also during the project if they find something they have missed or overlooked. We accommodate their request even though it can be quite difficult for us to implement. We want our clients to be very happy with their homes when we have finished."

The company has designed a unique method, which it utilises to give each client an opportunity at every stage of the project, to participate in the design and construction process. The various stages are:

## First Meeting

At this stage the client is encouraged to share ideas about every detail of the proposed home to be constructed. Discussions are held to understand the exact requirements. The Riverstone Consultant spends time to get an idea about family size and how the occupants will spend their time at home.

Every requirement of the client is taken note of and at this stage the company's experience of two decades comes into good use. The Riverstone Consultant can also contribute by suggesting how to make the best use of the available space to design a luxury home.

Riverstone has a policy of not hurrying the process and the client is free to request additional meetings to clarify any doubts.

## Site Visit

This is the essential next step as it allows the Riverstone team to get an idea about the physical layout of the block. At this stage it is possible to plan the view from the various parts of the home and decide on other matters which can be taken up only at the site.

## Concept Design

In this phase the design of the home is finalised and the client will have an opportunity to view a 3D elevation of the proposed structure. This will allow the prospective homeowner to visualise what the completed project will actually look like. The budget for the project is also finalised at this juncture. Describing this step Tim Marshall says, "When we do our drawings everything we do is modelled in 3D now and that really helps us during the construction process. Being able to model our homes in 3D before we start on site can ensure that everything works correctly and it does save a lot of headaches on site. We are currently looking into a step further than that and incorporating a 3D printer to provide our clients with real models of their homes prior to construction."

Once the client approves the concept plan, a Preparation of Plans Agreement is entered into and at this stage a non-refundable contract package fee of 2% of the budget estimate is collected.

## Documentation

Riverstone Custom Homes takes care of all the paperwork including



obtaining the necessary planning approvals and building licences. The contract drawings and contract package will also be frozen and the company's design consultant will go over all the documents with the client and suitably reply to any queries.

When the client is satisfied that everything is in order and all questions have been fully answered, the documentation will be required

to be signed and 10% of the contract price would be payable.

## **Selections**

During this phase of the project, Riverstone Custom Homes offers clients advice on making the interior and exterior selections. The company's Interior Architect works with the customer to ensure that



every part of the new home uses materials which will enhance its finish and give it an upmarket and luxurious look. This facility is not offered by most builders. Riverstone Custom Homes has seen that this service is very popular and clients benefit greatly from the professional advice.

Riverstone has the ability to design and order custom-made artwork and arrange for furniture and carpets if this is required. The company can even order bed linen and cutlery if requested.

A large number of clients visit the display homes maintained by Riverstone to get an idea about the design options available. The company regularly invests in display homes and currently has two and is in the process of building a third. Every two or three years the display homes are renewed to keep pace with changing customer preferences and tastes.

Riverstone offers its clients various “green” options to make their homes eco-friendly. Based on specific requirements, features can be incorporated to make the home energy efficient. This is a very popular option with luxury homeowners who wish to reduce their impact on the

environment. The company can recommend a range of energy saving fittings and quality water systems.

## Construction

This is Riverstone’s forte and the company has a reputation for excellence in its building processes. Over the years it has established strong relationships with various suppliers and sub-contractors and this enables Riverstone Custom Homes to build homes that meet clients’ specifications in every manner.

Tim Marshall says, “We rely on our suppliers and on the trade for many of our requirements. We have a lot of sub-contractor relationships where they do various parts of the building or supply different materials. We like to see ourselves as a quality builder so we certainly rely on good tradesmen and good suppliers and they are essential to our successful operations.

“Some of our suppliers have been with us from very close to when we started. We have long working relationships with many of our business partners. There is a company called Brikmakers who supply our bricks and Avanti supplies



us with windows. International Cabinets has pretty much been with us from the start. We consider them as a very good partner of ours.”

Riverstone keeps clients informed about the progress being made during construction. Both the client liaison manager and site supervisor are available for discussion and any feedback that may be required. Monthly progress payments are collected as construction progresses.

At this stage of the project, changes can only be made by signing off on a written variation. Tim says, “We are

a very customer focussed business so we always have to consider our customer’s viewpoint in all matters and that is a key part of what we do and very important for us. Clients have very definite views about what they want in their homes and in one sense it does make it more challenging for the builder but it also makes it more interesting.”

## **Practical Completion and Handover**

When construction activity is completed, the client has



an opportunity to carry out an inspection along with the client liaison officer. Final payment is due at this stage. Riverstone Custom Homes has established a practice of giving each new homeowner a “handover pack” at the end of the project. This includes a set of keys to the home, a guarantee letter, homeowner’s manual, a set of plans, emergency numbers and a 12-month maintenance plan.

Each Riverstone Custom Home comes with the statutory six-year warranty and the company also

offers the facility of rectifying any issues that arise up to 12 months from practical completion.

Riverstone has grown steadily over the years but limits the number of homes it builds so that it can maintain its high level of quality. In the last two decades the company has earned a reputation for being a premium builder of luxury homes with the capability to execute projects flawlessly and to the complete satisfaction of the client. This has made Riverstone the most sought after high-end builder in Perth.

# T.C. Clarke

## Upholding Family Tradition



# & Son tion

KE & SON PTY LTD - BUILDERS

## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** T.C. Clarke & Son

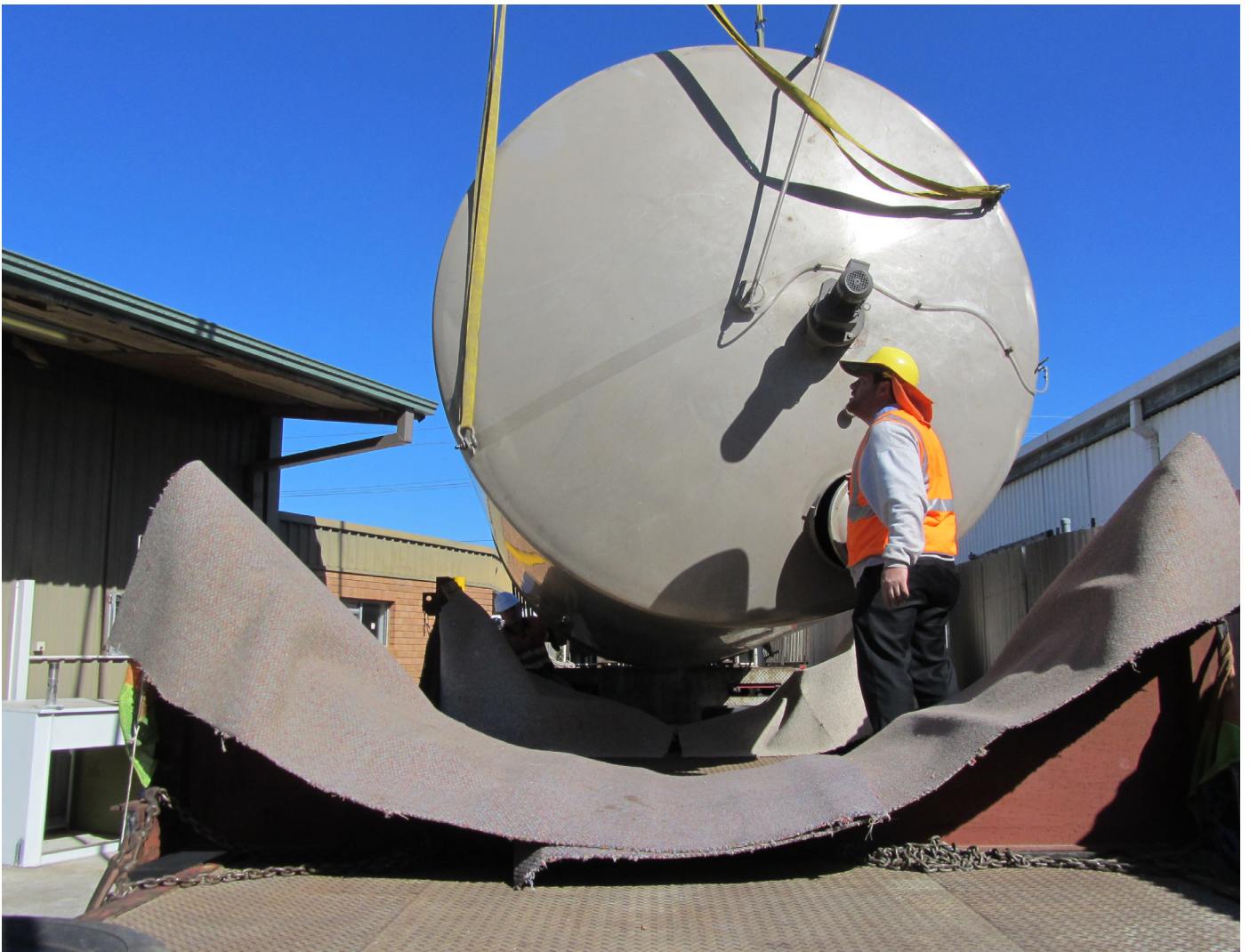
**WHAT:** They are long recognized and respected Commercial and Industrial Master Builders carrying out work throughout Queensland and Northern NSW.

**WHERE:** QLD 4013, Australia

**WEBSITE:** [tcclarke.com.au](http://tcclarke.com.au)

A construction contractor with roots that go back for almost a century, T.C. Clarke and Son is a Brisbane Master Builder with operations in the industrial and commercial sectors. Set up in 1919 by Thomas Charles Clarke after he returned from the First World War, the company is engaged in design and construct services, property maintenance and commercial and industrial restoration and renovations. Its latest diversification is in commercial cabinet making and shop fitting.

When the company began operations one of its first projects was for the Queensland National Bank which subsequently became the National Australia Bank. At that time a number of other bank projects were also completed



by the company in addition to a variety of construction work for the government. Several of these earlier buildings are now Heritage Listed, those being The National Bank of Australia buildings in Ayr & Mackay as well as the Goondiwindi Town Hall in Queensland.

The second generation of the family to manage T.C. Clarke and Son was Morris Clarke. He consolidated the company's operations and played a crucial role in enhancing the company's reputation for being a reliable and trusted builder for the period stretching from after the Second World War till the early 1970's.

Geoff Clarke, the current owner of the company, is the grandson

of the founder. He has very ably managed the business and, in addition to expanding the existing lines, has successfully diversified into commercial cabinet making and shop fitting.

The company's ability to carry out high quality and aesthetically

pleasing interior work has served to establish its presence in this market. With each completed project in this area, the company has gained greater recognition. In fact, this division has done exceedingly well and completed several prestigious projects.

T.C. Clarke and Son have also completed a number of high profile projects in the education sector. It has

built several new buildings at St. Margret's School in Brisbane and also the first two stages of

***The company  
has also  
developed  
expertise in  
retail design and  
fit out, office  
interiors, roof  
installations,  
roof restoration  
and construction***

the Padua College at Kedron. Although the company's only office is situated in Brisbane, it does work throughout Queensland and Northern New South Wales. It has even expanded into the Northern Territory and is currently executing cabinet supply and fit out projects there.

Over the years the company has also developed expertise in retail design and fit out, office interiors, roof installations, roof restoration and construction, and commercial office fit outs. One of the ongoing projects of T.C. Clarke and Son involves building two facilities for Urban Utilities. The company's specialised skills are being used to construct several buildings above flood level in flood prone areas.

The company is also executing a project which involves the fit out work for the redevelopment of the Central Queensland University in Brisbane. They have also recently completed the major refurbishment of 4 office floors for an English Speaking School in the CBD.

Speaking about the range of work carried out by T.C. Clarke and Son, Geoff Clarke says, "We do the maintenance work for the







Coles Group which includes Coles Supermarkets, Coles Express, Kmart, Target, Liquorland, First Choice and Vintage Cellars.

“We concentrate on medium sized projects and do about six to eight construction projects a year and in our shop fitting division there is constant work. These are smaller projects where we fit out a Liquorland or an office. We also do maintenance work and many small projects.”

The company has three divisions – construction, cabinet making/shop fitting and maintenance. Each of these has a constant stream of work and contributes to the reputation and standing of the company.

T.C. Clarke and Son purchase material from a wide variety of suppliers. Bunnings is a key materials supply source who have a tie-up with the Coles Group for whom the company does a substantial amount of work. Some of the other important suppliers are Virginia Building Supplies, Brett’s Timber and Hardware and John Barnes Locksmiths. For the cabinet making division Nova Hardware and Janden Wood Products are

important. The company also uses SJ Electric and Dr Ceilings as sub-contractors.

T.C. Clarke and Son have expanded steadily over the years and now the fourth generation of the family is playing an active role in its running and management. Geoff’s son, Scott, has completed a Bachelor of Applied Science in Construction Management and has been working in the company for the last 13 years.

There are very few companies in the construction sector which can boast of having been in existence for almost a century. T.C. Clarke and Son have not only survived, it has grown its operations over the years. Along with its business volumes, the company has gained a very reliable reputation and the large number of successfully completed projects is proof of its high quality work. Now, with the fourth generation of the family actively involved in the family business, T.C. Clarke and Son are ready for many more years of steady growth.



# Lewence Constr



## AT A GLANCE

**WHO:** Lewence Construction

**WHAT:** A philosophy which impacts on every aspect including: design, construction, development and administration.

**WHERE:** NSW 2152, Australia

**WEBSITE:** [lewence.com.au](http://lewence.com.au)

A Sydney-based building and construction company, Lewence Construction, has gained quick recognition as a reliable and trustworthy organisation in the eight years since it was established. The company has a record of fulfilling its commitments in all the projects that it has undertaken and its customers appreciate the high quality of workmanship that

# Construction



units and that was quite a task in itself. I was pretty much hands-on in that project. I did the both the construction & project management while playing a key role in the finalisation of the structural design.

“We also got an estimator on board and he helped me with the administration and the contract management. As the construction work progressed we started getting some more help in terms of supervision staff on site. I was able to step back and manage the building project as well as manage our company.”

## Range of Activities

The company has made rapid progress since then and currently its range of activities include multi-unit construction, development consulting, building residential homes, and remedial and maintenance work.

Lewence Construction brings to each assignment.

The company was started by Loui Abouhamad who combined his civil engineering and building qualifications to form Lewence Construction. Describing the initial project that he undertook in the new company, he says, “Our first project was for 75 residential

*Multi-unit construction* is an area in which Lewence Construction has a high degree of expertise. Many of the company’s employees have extensive work experience in this field and this has been put to good use in a number of completed and on-going projects. An added advantage that the company has, is its strong familiarity with state and local authority requirements.

Every aspect of the work carried out by Lewence Construction is in adherence with the applicable regulations. This ensures that the project proceeds smoothly and is not held up for any approval.

The company is also knowledgeable about design and in many instances customers involve Lewence Construction at the inception of the project so that cost effective measures are taken at the initial stage itself.

*Development Consulting* is another field in which Lewence Construction has great experience. Before initiating a project, a client needs to take into account various factors including project finance, design and construction and facilities management. It is always advisable to consider all these aspects before the project details are finalised. The company's strong technical know-how ensures that all potential risks are taken into consideration and the necessary pre-emptive action taken to prevent losses.

*Residential Home construction* is a prime focus area for the company. Every project that Lewence Construction takes up is initiated only after gaining a deep understanding of the client's requirements and needs.



This approach has ensured that the company has achieved a high level of customer satisfaction in each of its assignments in this category.

*Remedial work* is a niche area which Lewence Construction has targeted and is actively growing. This activity involves carrying out maintenance and



and sub-contractors so that there is as little inconvenience as possible caused to the occupants of the homes and strata buildings during the course of the work.

## **Customer-centric Approach and Team Development**

Lewence Construction has achieved great success in its entire range of activities which encompass development and construction, contract administration and project management. The company approaches each assignment with the objective of exceeding the client's expectations.

Principal, Loui Abouhamad, has extensive hands-on experience in the construction field in addition to the number of years he has spent in senior management roles in the private and public sectors. In addition to this, he brings his consulting background to Lewence Construction along with the practical knowledge that he has gained in managing residential and commercial developments, road and rail projects, and remediation works.

While the company keeps the client's requirements as the focus of all its activities, it ensures the success of each project by deploying its highly

compliance upgrades to homes and strata buildings. The company's close familiarity with building regulations allows it to carry out this work with a high degree of effectiveness.

As an added service, Lewence Construction's administrative office communicates regularly with residents



talented and multi-skilled manpower to the task at hand. Each member of the Lewence Construction team has vast experience and knowledge, which is constantly updated by having them attend training courses to keep up with the latest developments.

Loui pays close attention to the skill-set that each team member possesses and ensures that in addition to attending formal programs, each employee is given the required on-the-job training. He leads by example and adheres strictly to the official hierarchy so that each worker, foreman





site foreman and the project manager make the decisions at the site. A lot of times, bosses tend to walk on to the site and give direct instructions to the workmen.

“But I find that such an approach negatively affects the atmosphere on site. I like to put the problem on the table and let my team work at it. If there is an issue on site that I can see or at the office, I call the project manager and the foreman and have a quick chat about what should be done to fix the problem.

“I let them take charge of the work. I find that this helps the staff to gain experience and grow with the company. They increase their confidence and skills, and their trust in me.”

## **Strong Relationships with Suppliers**

Lewence Construction attaches great importance to developing strong customer relationships. It does not readily switch suppliers unless there is a very compelling reason to do so. The company is of the view that changing suppliers for the sake of a minor reduction in rate is counter-productive. Instead, it adopts an approach whereby it remains loyal to one supplier for its requirements.

and manager remains involved in the project and delivers the best possible outcome.

Speaking about this, Loui says, “I like to be hands-on in terms of being visible on site. But I let the site personnel take control of the work. My



**Loui Abouhamad**

“The working relationship, in its entirety, was found to be professional, while at the same time rewarding. The planning and execution of the supply of concrete worked well, with emphasis on quality and safety taking a leading role in the process.”

## **Delivering Uncompromising Excellence**

Lewence Construction’s turnover on an annual basis is \$10 million. The company does about two major projects in a year and three or four smaller projects. While it prefers doing residential projects it is equally capable of executing commercial projects to the satisfaction of the client. Loui’s background as a consultant helps him to organise and lead the activities in a manner that reduces costs and completes assignments effectively.

The availability of wireless communication technology has greatly enhanced the volume of work that Lewence Construction can handle. The company has a practice of installing computers on every site so that people at head office have access to all relevant information. The improvement in the flow of information allows the foreman at site to be in touch with the head office in real time.

This strategy has been of tremendous benefit to the company and has often helped it to keep the commitments that it has made to its clients.

Concrite, which is a leading supplier of pre-mixed concrete has been associated with Lewence Construction for several years. In a testimonial to the company, Concrite has said, “Over the last few years Concrite has had the privilege of working with Loui and his team on a few Sydney projects. Each one turning into an asset to the residential landscape of our City of Sydney.

It is possible for him to send a query along with documentation and obtain a decision or a solution very quickly. The company has also created a number of checklists which the foreman on site is required to complete periodically. This information is collated at head office and forms a crucial input for the decision making process.

The use of checklists also helps Lewence Construction obtain information from contractors and this is very useful as it reveals the work remaining at site.

In this manner, the company has implemented a number of well thought-out procedures that enable it to closely monitor developments, identify problems and address them quickly. Strict adherence to these procedures translates into well-managed projects that are completed on time and within budget.

Lewence Construction also has a practice of conducting regular meetings on site, with not only the client but also the finance and the design teams. This allows all relevant issues to be discussed in an open forum and the way forward can be decided upon after obtaining all relevant inputs.

The company is very particular about

site management and, as a standard practice, always ensures that the site is kept clean and organised. This also helps to reduce the chance of downtime due to injuries or mishaps on site.

Ultimately the success of any construction company is determined by the satisfaction level of its clients. In this respect, Lewence Construction has fared well and has a large number of customers who speak highly about the company and Loui's abilities.

Explaining the importance of maintaining strong relationships with clients, Loui says, "At the moment I am in a situation where all my clients are repeat customers and these are relationships that I have developed from my days as a project manager. It has been a long process. All the clients have known me for more than seven or eight years and they want someone they can trust, who is upfront and honest about everything."

# BUSINESS VIEW Australia

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