

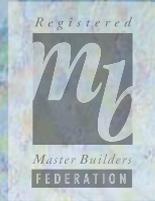
NEW ZEALAND

# building today

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS FEDERATION

## 17 smart ways to improve your bottom line!

APRIL 2006  
VOL 16 NO 3



**Win this Makita circular saw!**



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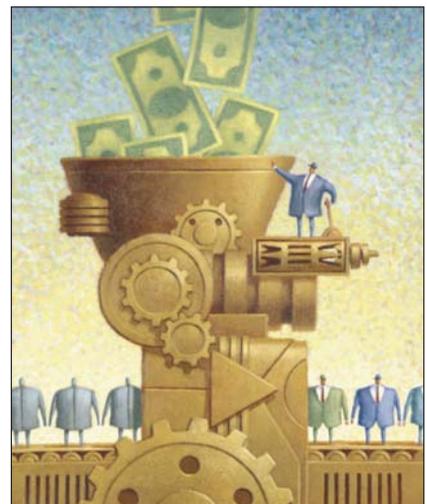
**Win a Makita circular saw! Page 7**

# building today

The Registered Master Builders Federation is full of interesting characters who have not only contributed fully to the progress and benefit of the New Zealand construction industry, but who have also given of themselves to other organisations during their lifetime.

Consider Wellington RMBA member Les Hall — a stalwart of the association administratively and in a practical hands-on capacity. He was able to not only offer his time freely to the Association but was also involved as a masseur for the Wellington representative rugby team, a role which brought him into contact with some of New Zealand's rugby legends such as Murray Mexted and Bernie Fraser. Les' work with a myriad of organisations has been rewarded with a Queens Service Medal recently — we cover his story which makes great reading any way you look at it.

**Andrew Darlington**  
Editor



**cover story p6**

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**AQURON WAREHOUSE SYSTEM**

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MARKHAM Satin Sealer is proving popular for the "HONED" concrete block.

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**AQURON MARKHAM MASONRY SEALERS**

## New shipment of concrete machinery

Markham's have just "released" the SMART CONCRETE/DEMOLATION SAW, with a powerful 2 stroke petrol motor making this machine suitable for any work site, requiring no electrical source. This robust power unit and mechanical system is still light-weight and compact making the machine easy to use.



ALLEN TROWELLS have recently arrived with all the extras including lifting hooks and adjustable handles. Markham's are offering Term Payment options, cash deals and Trade-in Offers.



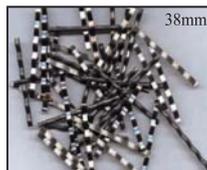
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**allen RAZORBACK**

## Cheaper steel fibre has landed

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## chief's chat

by ceo pieter burghout

# Grass roots strength

One of the themes that you often hear in the rugby union arena centres around ensuring “grass roots strength” — so that local players on the ground are well supported, thereby helping to build the All Blacks of the future.

Well, the same sort of theme applies to the Registered Master Builders Federation too.

One of our core strengths is the depth of passion and knowledge we have around the organisation — from our membership base, through our local Association



and for it to fulfil its mission of “leading a dynamic, professional and sustainable building and construction industry” — we need a strong national presence as well as a vibrant and engaged regional network.

From what I have seen around the country in the past six months, it's great to see that we have a great foundation at the regional level for that sort of strong network.

This is evidenced by the number of committed people right around the country who are proud of being involved with the Federation and who are keen to make a difference.

The future success of the organisation — and the future success of the industry — relies on us making the national and regional parts of our business work to the maximum benefit of our members.

While there's always room for improvement in that regard, we've got the right foundation to continue our progress towards achieving the strategic outcomes we have set for ourselves — and that's just fantastic!

That network is one of the Federation's critical organisational strengths, and I applaud the work that we do in the regions to foster that local passion and commitment.

boards and presidents, and through our various national boards and committees.

That network is one of the Federation's critical organisational strengths, and I applaud the work that we do in the regions to foster that local passion and commitment.

Having been around the country a bit in the past few months, I have come across some great examples of our “grass roots strength”, including:

- a meeting at the local PlaceMakers JV partner in New Plymouth, where the Taranaki RMBA hosted an open meeting of builders to give an update on, among other things, builder licensing,
- the AGM of the Wellington RMBA, and
- a meeting of the Federation's presidents.

For the Federation to continue to grow and prosper —



# Hall honoured with QSM

**W**ellington Registered Master Builders Association stalwart Les Hall was honoured with a Queens Service Medal for community services recently.

“It was pretty exciting,” Mr Hall says of the phone call he received to tell him he had been awarded the medal.

“I’m happy that all the work I’ve done has paid off to a certain extent.”

A glance through his CV shows the award is well warranted, being involved in the construction industry, at the sharp end and in an administration role, for more than 60 years, and in sport as a trainer and volunteer for more than 30 years.

Mr Hall can recall his time in the building industry and with Wellington rugby. Beginning his career as an apprentice joiner, the 77-year-old recalls how easy it was to choose what part of the construction industry he wanted to get into back then. He says things are more specialised these days.

“You could do anything you wanted — training is so much different now.”

From materials being manufactured offshore to the advent of new pricing systems and computers, the modern age means the building industry is a young man’s game now.

“I started off doing minor repairs which led to more work, and I rode to all my jobs on a pushbike. The hardest job I had was to re-glaze a window, taking my toolkit and everything on my bike.

“There seemed to be more trust and promise back then — I would go to some houses to measure something and the key would be under the mat. Shaking hands over a deal was good enough as far as I was concerned.”

In the 1950s Mr Hall established Les Hall Builders Ltd, with his home doubling as an office. Originally based in Ngaio, Wellington, it has been located in Grenada North for the past 15 years and is still a family-run business, with son Jeff one of the directors.

Up until the end of 2004, Mr Hall would be in the office



*RMBF member Les Hall: Awarded the Queens Service medal recently.*

every day “pottering about”, where he would regularly astound office staff by never needing a calculator to tally purchasing costs for a job.

One of the driving forces behind the Wellington Registered Master Builders Association (WRMBA), Mr Hall was involved with its administration for more than 50 years, serving on the executive for 45 years and as president for a two-year term.

“I had to do a lot of work at night,” he laughs.

He also played a key role in setting up apprentice training in

the region, was a carpentry tutor at Wellington Polytech and conducted peer reviews for the Association. In most cases, he would do this work unpaid.

In the 1970s, largely through his children, he got involved with rugby and, before he knew it, was masseur for the Onslow senior side.

When asked “out of the blue” to be masseur for the Wellington representative team he jumped at the chance and for 21 years, up until rugby turned professional in the 1990s, Mr Hall could be seen

running onto Athletic Park to tend to the injuries of Murray Pierce, Murray Mexted or Bernie Fraser — again, all voluntary, and without

qualifications, but he loved every minute.

He says it was a sad day when he had to give that up, but the professional era of rugby required team physios and masseurs to have qualifications from then on.

A life member of the Wellington Rugby Union, he is well qualified to pass criticism on players and coaches past and present, and says the reign of Ian Upston as coach in the late 1970s and 1980s was a golden time for Wellington rugby.

Softball, athletics, judo and cricket also benefited from Mr Hall’s training and management.

Residency at Village At The Park — on the site of the old Athletic Park — is fitting for someone who gave much of his time to Wellington Rugby Union. He says he still tries to watch every Wellington game he can.

## Les Hall: A look back . . .

**W**ellington Registered Master Builders Association:

- Les Hall Builders Ltd has been a member of the WRMBA for 54 years
- Executive committee: 25 years
- President
- Apprenticeship committee
- Father Christmas at children’s Christmas parties (once his children were older)
- Annual Ball organiser, assisted by hand picked helpers (the workers)
- Wairarapa Master Builders exchange — barn dances and horse and cart functions
- Registered Master Builders Federation conference organiser (while president or past president)
- Established Registered Master Builders Building Centre in Jervois Quay. Built with voluntary labour, it displayed manufacturers’ and suppliers’ goods
- Industry trips organiser
- WRMBA squash competition organiser
- As president he was first to employ a female secretary (Jacqui Beder) in a “man’s industry”, a move that generated a great deal of controversy but that also gained support
- Purchased the Wellington Registered Master Builders piano for \$25 as it was unable to be moved at the time after a function
- Master Build Guarantee inspector

**Wellington Polytechnic:**

- Carpentry tutor
- Organised the technical training institute reunion — a seated dinner for 200 people and cocktail party for 1000 people

# 17 smart ways to improve

By RMBF president [Mike Fox](#)

**T**he following points are simple but smart ways to work more efficiently, reduce waste and make better returns without increasing your prices.

They can contribute to a win-win for all situations, and you will find that they apply no matter what size your business is.

## Don't take on bad deals

If you are doing work of a high risk nature or below your normal margins you are probably better off not to do it. Do work that you are competent in and that consistently returns a fair margin.

## Don't give things away

Every time you include something at no cost or low margin you have to work that much harder to catch up financially. Put upgrades into your specification as options with a cost, and let the client decide if they wish to incur the extra expense.

## Design and build product for your customer — not yourself

One of the biggest mistakes builders make is that they think customers want a home that the builder would like. This often leads to design and construction costs that may be beyond the client's budget. Survey your customer's needs and build accordingly.

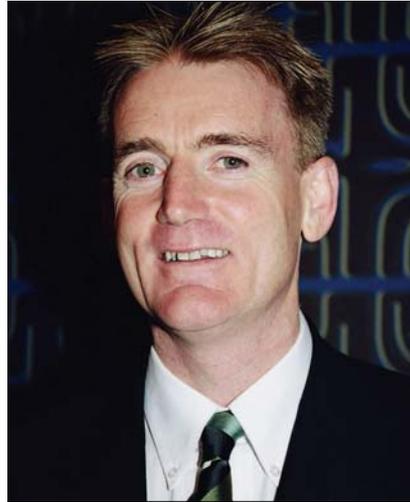
## Eliminate waste and excess material usage

If you evaluate your construction techniques significant savings can usually be made. Ensure you check delivery quantities for error (yes, many a mistake is made) and always return excess material for credit.

Failure to do so means that you can end up with damaged material that is only fit for the bin. If you could reduce the number of bins from three to two on each site consider the savings over a year.

## Develop scopes of work and checklists

Train your on-site staff and subtrades on the scope of work they are expected to complete. Callbacks will reduce significantly for unfinished items.



RMBF president Mike Fox.

## Don't start until you have detailed drawings

Accurate detailed and complete working drawings are a must if you are expected to work efficiently. You are better off to delay the start of the project until these are available. If you commence on less than full information the project will cost you through delays and rework.

## Value engineer the drawings

In a design-build situation or given the opportunity early in the design phase, significant savings can be made by builders analysing the drawings for construction inefficiencies. New or alternative materials can be considered along with different construction techniques, saving time and money.

## Keep a tight control of budgets

Implement a formal purchase order system with good descriptions and quotes on all orders. This controls cost slippage and makes checking your monthly accounts so much easier.

Don't be frightened to negotiate with trades and suppliers because if you don't ask, they are not likely to offer a better deal for loyalty or volume.

## Improve your estimating

If your estimates are not accurate how can you ever expect to know how much margin to charge or if you are making a profit?

Detailed back costings should be kept against the original estimates. You do this as a check against the accuracy of your estimating. Failure to do this correctly means you are in the dark, and is a sure way to end up going broke.

## Programme your work

The more efficiently you work, the more you can achieve and your earning potential increases accordingly.

For example, if you consistently build four homes in any one year and through good programming you increase that to five homes using the same resources, your income increases and your overheads reduce. This message is simple — get yourself and your trades organised.

## Standardise and systemise procedures

Wherever possible make detail and work practices consistent from job to job. Train your staff and subtrades fully in these systems. Efficiency will increase through repetition and you will have the peace of mind knowing it is a tried and true reliable system.

## Watch staff levels

It is important that staff levels maintain a balance with on-site work and sales volumes. Builders tend to be eternal optimists when it comes to that next job starting, and often leave hard decisions of reducing staff until it's too late.

## Keep an eye on your sales volumes

As I have mentioned in earlier articles, you are better to do less work at higher margins than lots of work on smaller margins. Do not discount your prices to increase your volume — it is a sure one-way ride to the builders scrap heap.

Always look six months out. If your inquiries are down now then there is nothing surer than you will be quiet in six months' time.

Some builders fall into the trap of being so busy trying to complete their current work load that they lose sight of where the next projects are coming from. Keep an eye on the future.

## Monitor advertising and promotions

Advertise and promote yourself in boom times and while you are busy for two good reasons.

# your bottom line

First, you will be able to afford it and, second, because the gestation period for new projects is so long if you wait until you need the work it could be too late.

## Actively develop your referrals

We all know the value of a referred client. They come to you on recommendation and, on the strength of this, a sale is likely to occur.

Not many builders actively work on getting referral business, but this can be done very cost effectively with outstanding results.

## Look at your management systems

It may be time to upgrade your computer system to a fully integrated estimating, ordering, back costing and accounts system. You are better to invest in quality systems before hiring more staff — it is so easy to become top heavy.

## Build the project right the first time

This is probably the most effective way of improving your bottom line in the whole article. Rework, callbacks and maintenance all cost money, time and resources, the cost of which will come from your company's profits.

It affects you in two ways — first, the direct cost of fixing the problem and, second, the lost earnings while you carry out the remedial work.

So really, it is a no brainer. Put the effort and time into getting it right first time so you do not need to return. The client will be happy and so will you with the increased earnings and lower hassles.

• **This article was based on a seminar titled 25 Sure Ways to Improve Profitably presented by Charles Shinn at the International Builders Show in Orlando, January 2006.**

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• **Congratulations to Alan Hardy of Ngaruawahia who was drawn out as the winner of the Makita cordless drill! The prize is on it's way Alan.**

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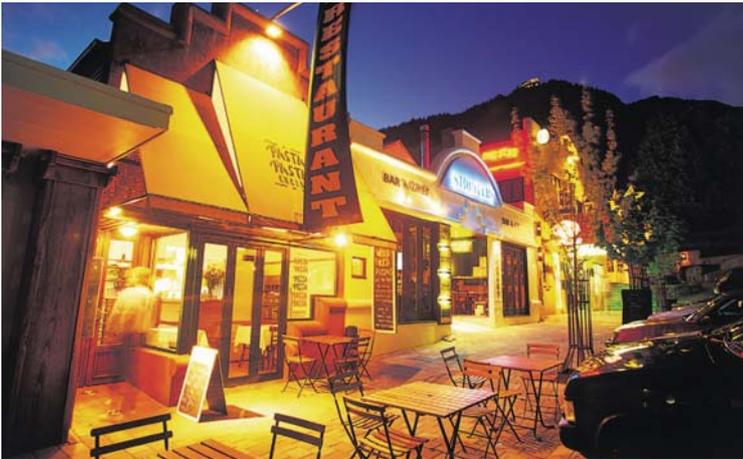
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**SPECIALIST DESIGN • BUILD COMPANY**

# Conference to take a fresh

Softening building market, changing regulatory environment on the agenda



Dining on Brecon Street, Queenstown.

**'F**resh Powder" is the theme for the 2006 annual Registered Master Builders conference in Queenstown over Anzac weekend, reflecting registered master builders' desire to take a fresh look at issues facing the building and construction industry.

From April 22 to 25 registered master builders from around New Zealand will gather in Queenstown to hear and discuss ways to handle business in times of weathertightness, a softening building market and a changing regulatory environment.

Just over 200 people, including company directors, manufacturers and industry commentators are expected to participate.

#### Timely insight into Government's role

Minister of Building Issues Clayton Cosgrove will open the conference, giving a timely insight into the role of the Government in the building industry as builder licensing comes into a critical phase.

Guest speakers this year include John Anderson, who will tell his incredible story of how he developed a simple idea into one of the world's major tour operators, Contiki Tours.

Social commentator Celia Lashlie has worked for years in the prison service and knows what can happen when boys make the wrong choices.

Celia is the author of the current best seller *He'll Be OK: Growing*

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## Registered Master Builders charity auction to be held at conference

**T**he RMBF will host a charity auction to benefit local charities during its conference in Queenstown on April 22 to 25.

100% of the proceeds from the auction will be donated to the Southland and Otago Hospices.

Up for grabs this year is a Bluesky Wireless prepaid mobile phone, a half page advertising space in *Building Today* worth \$2000, two 18V DeWalt lightweight cordless drills, five bales of Pink Batts R4.0 Ultra Ceiling, one night's accommodation for two at the Sofitel in Queenstown, an autographed Highlanders rugby jersey and an autographed Crusaders rugby jersey.

The RMBF will be accepting absentee bids from RMBF members who are unable to attend the conference — please get these to Larissa Garnet by April 18.

# look at industry issues



Minister of Building Issues Clayton Cosgrove will open the RMBF conference in Queenstown.



There will be plenty to do at the RMBF conference in Queenstown.

*Gorgeous Boys into Good Men.* While her writing and research focuses on boys, her message is relevant to all who are involved in shaping the lives of young people.

With economists predicting a softening in the market in the next few years, ASB Bank chief economist Anthony Byett and Stand Consulting's David Stand will brief delegates on how to position and make the most out of business in a slowing economy.

The RMBF's new publication *Building your Business* will be launched. Editor Chris Preston, along with a panel of experts, will present a series of workshop sessions on legal, employment, insurance, ACC and OSH issues — all subjects central to builders' businesses.

Ben Mitchell from Pro-Directions and Anthony Leighs from Leighs Construction are presenting the award-winning Hillary Field Centre as an exemplar case study of how project management can exceed expectations

in the harshest of conditions.

Other speakers include a team of experts from various sectors of the industry who will discuss sustainable building. Nick Collins (Beacon Pathways), Peter Robertson (BRANZ), Peter Thorby (DBH), Mahara Inglis (Ministry for the Environment) and Peter Watt (EECA) will give an overview of sustainability and the Government's perspective, and will also launch the latest BRANZ *Sustainable Foundations Guide*.

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## Nelson builder updates the past in stunning style

An impeccable character renovation elevated Nelson builder Paul Brockie to national winner of the PlaceMakers Renovation up to \$250,000 Award in the Registered Master Builders 2005 House of the Year Awards, held in association with PlaceMakers.

The renovation was so seamless that the national judging panel initially wondered what they were meant to be critiquing when they arrived at the home. Once they were finished judging they were emphatic in their praise.

"Paul Brockie Builders has transformed this 19th Century home from a state of disrepair to a graceful, spacious building that caters to the demands of modern life without compromising the property's character. This sets the standard for all character renovations," the judges said.

A key part of the brief was that the addition had to match the beauty and character of the original home, Mr Brockie says. "To ensure we achieved the right look we used old photographs and sketches of homes from the same era, and spoke with a local historian who provided invaluable assistance."

Craftsmen from around New Zealand were contracted to create fineries such as the lace and fretwork on the verandah. The posts on the verandah were custom made so no bolts or nails are visible.



*This Paul Brockie Builders entry was winner of the PlaceMakers Renovation up to \$250,000 Award in the Registered Master Builders 2005 House of the Year Awards, held in association with PlaceMakers.*

The exposed curved rafters around the verandah had to be cut and fitted together precisely so they looked the same from all angles. To complement this picturesque home a Juliet balcony with iron balustrades was placed on the upper level at the front of the house.

The interior was transformed and although original doors and ceiling heights were maintained, only the staircase and a bay window in the lounge remain as original pieces.

A team of two builders completed the project, and Mr Brockie says although they knew they had completed

an historic piece of building, they were still stunned to be named a national winner at the gala event.

"You never think you will win the top prize, and this makes it even more special. Even now I am surprised how many people know about the award and congratulate us on our achievement," he says.

There is no doubt Paul Brockie Builders will be busy perfecting and honing homes in Nelson for years to come.

"We stake our reputation on quality work and enjoy the renovation process. To take an original home and give it a new lease of life is very satisfying — and rewarding."

## Dunedin company builds on strong foundations

An overhaul of historic rest home and hospital Ross Home earned Naylor Love high praise in the Registered Master Builders 2005 Commercial Awards, held in association with PlaceMakers.

The judging panel named the Dunedin building company national winner of the Commercial Award over \$5 million for creating a building with a "wonderful atmosphere enthusing those who live there".

"The complete renovation of this property required great sensitivity, and the builder finished the smallest details to an exacting standard," according to the panel.

Ross Home was first built by the Fletcher brothers and was originally opened in 1918. Graham Marshall of Naylor Love says it was a privilege to work on the same land that the Fletcher brothers worked on so many years before.

"You don't often get the chance to work on a building constructed by such a revered team. Contributing to the history of an iconic building and making it into a comfortable place for the people living there was

deeply satisfying," Mr Marshall says.

The existing building and site were completely redeveloped by a 40-strong team over a 28-month contract period. New accommodation wings were created, the commercial kitchen was overhauled and the old coal-fired boiler heating system was decommissioned and a modern gas-fired boiler installed.

The building was inhabited throughout the contract period. Due to the sensitive nature of the occupants and the essential services that needed to be maintained throughout construction, co-ordination and planning were a high priority for the construction team so their impact was minimised.

"Construction noise, vibration, dust and planned service shutdowns were what the residents had to put up with over this period, but they took a keen interest in the activities and welcomed intrusion in their daily lives. We shared a great sense of camaraderie," Mr Marshall says.



*Naylor Love won the Commercial Award over \$5 million category with this Dunedin entry in the Registered Master Builders 2005 Commercial Awards, held in association with PlaceMakers.*

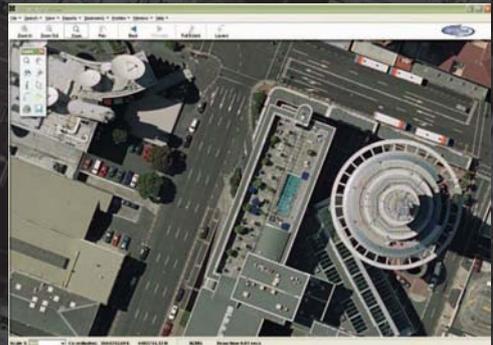
The Naylor Love team was excited to receive a national award for its efforts, and Mr Marshall admits that it was great to be recognised for the project. The team is involved in another rest home redevelopment, and he says they are relishing the opportunity to make a difference.

"Contributing to your community is one of the best things about being a registered master builder, and working on Ross Home highlighted this."

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## CIC aims for zero fatality record within five years

**A** pan-industry approach to make New Zealand building sites among the safest in the world has been agreed by the Construction Industry Council.

A Health and Safety Strategy prepared by the CIC envisages a zero fatality record in the construction

workplace within five years and an annual 10% reduction in injuries annually through to 2010.

The strategy will be launched in June by Minister of Labour Ruth Dyson.

"We are committed to achieving an industry-wide safety culture," CIC chairman John Pfahlert says.

"In recent years the industry has had a high number of fatalities and a high injury rate. Contributing factors identified by the CIC may include a large number of unskilled and unqualified workers entering the industry, and a decline in skills and competency across all sectors," Mr Pfahlert says.

"Consequently, our members have determined that a health and safety strategy specifically for construction industry participants is needed for individuals and companies to direct attention on areas which will contribute to continuing reductions in workplace deaths and injuries."

Mr Pfahlert says a significant step forward is inclusion

by the CIC of health and safety issues in its guidelines for best practices in procurement.

"We want developers to take into account health and safety records of contract bidders when selecting construction and building services. They can send out a strong message that quality health and safety practices are a key element for business success within the industry."



Construction Industry Council chairman John Pfahlert

Mr Pfahlert says the strategy was developed through co-operation between industry members Site Safe, the Occupational Safety and Health Service, the Accident Compensation Corporation, the Council of Trade Unions and Statistics New Zealand.

## Incorrect picture

**A**n article in *Building Today* March 2006 about the Reid Nirvana insulated concrete sandwich panel system was accompanied by an incorrectly captioned picture of a house in Wanaka.

The system was not used in the construction of the house which was, in fact, built using Insulform Polystyrene Blockwork with an insitu reinforced concrete core and insitu cast reinforced concrete floors.

*Building Today* apologises for any confusion and inconvenience caused by the error.

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## AIPM calls for major rethink to avoid skills shortage

The retirement of up to one third of Australia's project managers in the next decade signals a major skills shortage in leading industry sectors, according to Australian Institute of Project Management (AIPM) chief executive Peter Shears.

Mr Shears proposes significant changes to the role of project management within companies to resolve the looming crisis.

"As a third of our membership exits the profession in the next 10 years, they will leave a major gap in experience and business acumen to backfill," he says.

"That spirit of risk-taking leadership that has characterised this generation of project managers just won't be there in 10 years' time."

Almost 50% of AIPM's membership falls within the 40 to 54 age group, and another 10% in the 55 to 60 bracket face imminent retirement.

Mr Shears urges organisations to plan now to overcome the significant challenges facing the profession and Australian companies.

"While older project managers had 30 years to develop skills, today's generation has to fast track to accumulate the same range of skills in just five to 10 years," he says.

He outlined three solutions to overcome the skills shortage, including a new approach to mentoring by senior project managers.

"At the moment mentoring is seen to be working at company level, but it's inevitably laid on top of a manager's existing workload. I'm proposing companies take pre-retirement project managers off sensitive projects and make them full-time mentors," Mr Shears says.

"If these changes don't take place and young people are not taught these skills, we will see a few years of turmoil as organisations are forced to come to grips with the issue."

## Big Aussie expo on next month

Australia's most comprehensive building expo will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre from Thursday, May 4 to Sunday, May 7.

The HIA Home & Building Expo 2006 will feature the latest in building and renovating products, services, kitchens, GreenSmart initiatives and home services.

Held in conjunction with the HIA National Convention which includes three days of informative and practical business sessions and social events, visitors will learn about the future of the housing industry, find out new ways to improve business and finally relax and have a great time with industry peers at the social events.

A trade-only day takes place on Thursday, May 4.

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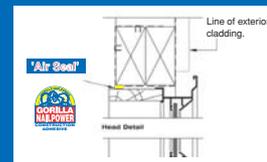
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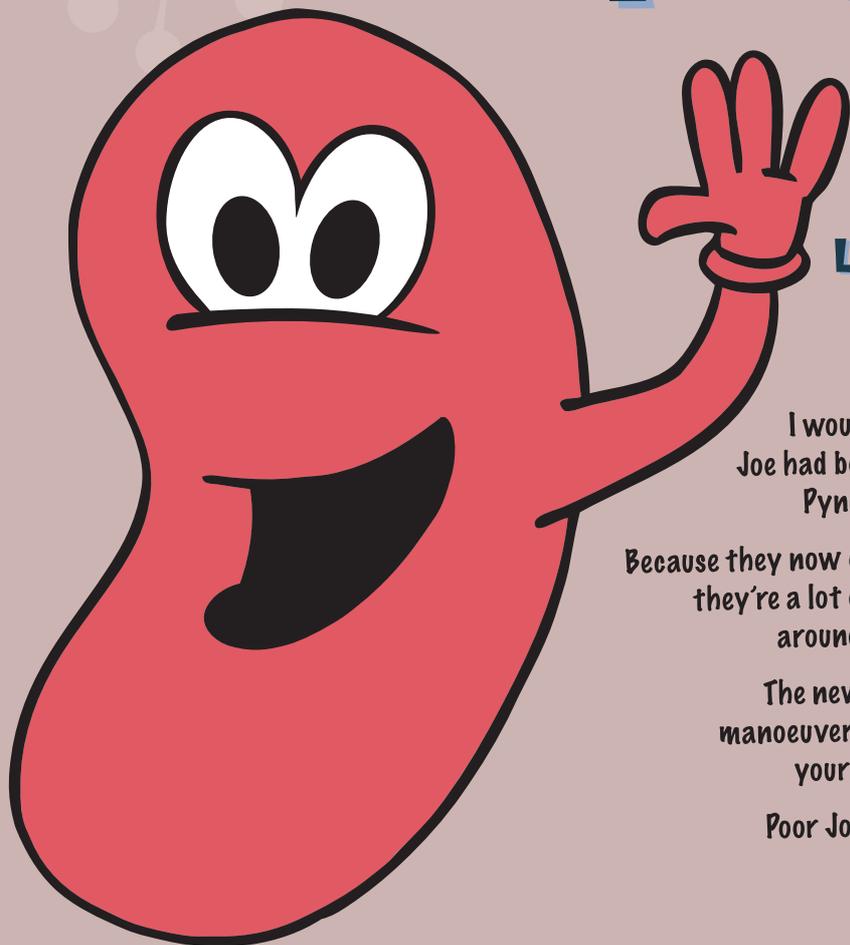
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# Influential Christchurch I

Registered Master Builder company helped **shape** city's style

**G**raham Armitage, co-founder of leading Christchurch Registered Master Builder company Armitage Williams, has retired. He will be succeeded by Mark Blyth, who has worked for the company for 15 years.

Established in 1985 by Mr Armitage and Paul Williams, the company quickly grew to become one of the major commercial contractors in Christchurch.

Armitage Williams has been involved with many major construction projects in the city, including the Koru Lounge and other buildings at Christchurch International Airport, Canterbury Museum, Christ's College and the Antarctic Centre.

Mr Armitage played an active role in the building industry. He is a past president of the Canterbury Master Builders Association and the New Zealand

Registered Master Builders Federation (RMBF).

He remains a member of the regional advisory group for the central South Island in the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation, a member of the New Zealand Institute of Building and is a past chairman of the Registered Master Builders Federation commercial and contracts committee.

Armitage Williams has trained at least 200 young people in building and related trades.

"We feel it is our responsibility as a major company in the Christchurch construction industry to continue training young people for the future," Mr Armitage says.

Canterbury Registered Master Builders Association president Graham Anderson says Mr Armitage has made a major contribution to the building industry by providing leadership to the RMBF during a time of change.

Brent Mettrick, a past president of the Canterbury

Registered Master Builders Association and managing director of Stonewood Homes, also paid tribute to Mr Armitage.

"He has always been generous with his time and knowledge," Mr Mettrick says. "It has shown in his apprentices and his work with registered master builders at national and local levels that he involves people around him to achieve results."

Mr Armitage began his career in the industry as an apprentice carpenter in 1957. In 1981 he was appointed construction manager of Williams Construction Canterbury where he worked closely with future business partner, quantity surveyor Paul Williams (not related to the founders of Williams Construction).

Mr Armitage says one of the most significant and positive changes in the industry has been improvements in standards of health and safety. However, he says some aspects of legislation have



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# builder retires

added to the industry's costs, and that the application of the Resource Management Act could be unwieldy.

Armitage Williams has worked with architects and designers on many well-known buildings in Christchurch, helping to shape the style of the city.

But at 65 he feels it is time to move on. "I want to give a younger member of the team an opportunity to develop the business," he says.

He will continue to be involved with sister companies in the Armitage Williams Group, including AW Interiors.

Mr Blyth, a qualified quantity surveyor, has worked in increasingly senior positions within the company, most recently as head quantity surveyor.

He purchased Mr Armitage's shareholding in Armitage Williams Construction on April 1, and has become a

director with co-founder Paul Williams.

"Mark has impressed us all the way through with his motivation, enthusiasm and industry," Mr Armitage says.

Mr Blyth will work closely with Mr Williams to build on the company's achievements. He is also interested in expanding its activities in the South Island.

He says the future of Armitage Williams will be secured by maintaining its high standard of quality staff through training and planned personal development, and by continuing to provide a high quality of service, innovation, workmanship and performance that key clients and consultants have become accustomed to.

"I look forward to the continuing support of our current staff, clients and subcontractors. We want to build on these relationships."

## GM appointed

**P**aul Blackler has been appointed general manager construction of Armitage Williams.



Mr Blackler began his construction career as an apprentice with Chas S Luney Ltd in

1981, becoming project foreman in 1989 and then rising through various positions to chief executive.

He was responsible for overseeing the \$32 million Westpac Stadium project, the largest indoor sporting arena in New Zealand. Mr Blackler also plays a key role in the building industry, being deputy chairman of the Building Practitioners' Board, and a board member of CPIT's Trades Innovation Institute.



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### Fairview and Elite Easiclean Slider

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# When a little more horsepower's needed

By Building Today Motoring Correspondent

**T**here would certainly be a time in any man's life when just a little more horsepower would be meaningful, whether that be in power tools, the bedroom or out on the road.

Power tools don't get discussed in motoring pages and the bedroom's your own affair, but out on the road Ford's there to help.

The new BF series Falcon has arrived and, with it, has come a range of trade-friendly, extra horsepower utility vehicles — such as the XR6 turbo-charged version.

For the technologically-minded, Ford's engineering team has boosted power to 245kW at 5250rpm, while torque has been significantly increased to 480Nm at just 2000rpm. It's been done through revising camshafts, incorporating dual knock sensors and building dual, independent variable cam timing (VCT) into the Barra 245T engine.

Now add to that the inclusion of the all-new ZF 6HP26 six-speed automatic which is a no-cost option on the XR6T ute.

This sophisticated transmission deserves a small book of its own. Despite the fact that the conventional four-speed has been upgraded, I personally cannot see why the necessity is there for it at all, given that the six-speed is so much more versatile and cooler to have.

Now you can also take into account that the new BF Falcon range, and that includes the XR6T — offers better fuel efficiency. In the BF XT sedan, the difference is a 5.2% increase in efficiency over the BA Mk II. We're not suggesting that it will necessarily be the same for the ute, but it's pretty obvious that the BF ute will show some improvements.

But if you're buying the XR Turbo, performance may not necessarily be foremost in your mind.

And the BF line has thrown some design elements into the workhorse arm of the range. The tail section shows off new tail lights, while the front gives a new bumper unit and racy fog lights a la a V8 supercar image.

And specifically because this is an XR model, the turbo ute gets 17-inch alloys over the regular 16s.

Inside, new fabric makes for a cooler interior look, and the integrated centre console has been treated with a new liquid metallic finish to serve as a counterpoint to the leather wrapped wheel.

There's also a button on the dash that's new —



The BF series Falcon XR6 turbo charged ute — all the extra horsepower you'll need is here.

traction control. Trust me, you want to leave this on for the most part.

And while we're on the subject of car control equipment, you also have ABS with electronic brake force distribution and a performance brake package.

Will it haul? Will it what! With that much power, there's not much that fazes the new Falcon turbo ute.

And for those who have issues with cab space, granted that this is a two-seater — there's actually quite a bit of covered stowage area between the seats and rear cabin walls.

In summary, the new XR6T is quieter, more efficient and more refined, and offers a little more horsepower. And at \$49,990 we reckon it's a bargain.

## Ford and Rockgas cruise into record territory

**W**hat vehicles offer the best fuel economy? It's a question to which there is no easy answer due to the immense number of variables involved.

However, while there is talk of fantastic future programmes for fuel saving such as hydrogen and fuel cells, cheaper motoring has some pretty significant proponents.



One of those is LPG. Ford, the only car manufacturer in New Zealand which provides factory-fitted dedicated LPG sedans, wagons and utes, has just put LPG back on the map, both locally and on the world stage.

Just last month New Zealand set a new world record when the Ford-Rockgas LPG Endurance Challenge finished at the Powerbuilt Raceway at Ruapuna Park near Christchurch. The purpose of the run was to see how far an LPG powered vehicle could go in 24 hours straight.

Driven by professionals Keith Sharp, Graham Sharp, Anthony Myhre and Mark Babb, Ford set a new world record, and proved a point. The Ford LPG XT Falcon sedan travelled 2449.15 kilometres, averaged 102.05 kilometres per hour and set interim LPG world records at the six hour (620.88kms), 12 hour (1238.16kms) and 18 hour (1858.23kms) marks as they completed 1043 laps of the 2.35 kilometre circuit.

"The car is as tight and as strong at the end of the 24 hours as it was at the beginning — it simply hasn't skipped a beat, and we haven't even had to pop the bonnet to change the oil," a tired but elated Mr Sharp said.

"Its reliability is highlighted by the fact we were continuing to set fast lap times in the last hour," he said.

As far as real road usage goes, an LPG dedicated vehicle will cost you a little more, but according to Ford, a customer who drives an XT LPG Falcon 30,000 kilometres can expect to pay back the LPG option premium within 11 months and can then enjoy savings on fuel costs of up to 20%.



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# Falling exchange rate and increased costs driving up price of reinforcing steel

**P**acific Steel has advised its customers that it has increased prices for reinforcing steel and wire by about 10%, effective at the start of April.

"We have seen the exchange rate fall 10.5% since last November and world scrap prices have increased by 5% in the past month alone," according to Pacific Steel general manager Alan Pearson.

"The combination of these factors has meant that we have been forced to increase our prices.

## Significant change

"We have maintained our current list prices for the past nine months which is a significant change from a few years ago when steel and wire prices were extremely volatile," Mr Pearson says.

"We have sustained the current prices for as long as we can, but are forced to increase our prices due to external factors beyond our control."



## Global trend

The increase in the price of New Zealand-made steel is consistent with the global trend of increasing prices of imported products.

Steel industry monitors such as Steel Business Briefing and ME Steel are reporting movements in global prices for reinforcing steel of between 4.5% and 11% during the past month.

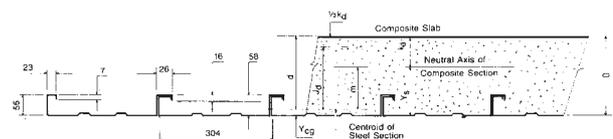


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Fig 1 TRAY-DEC 300 — NOTATION FOR COMPOSITE SLABS



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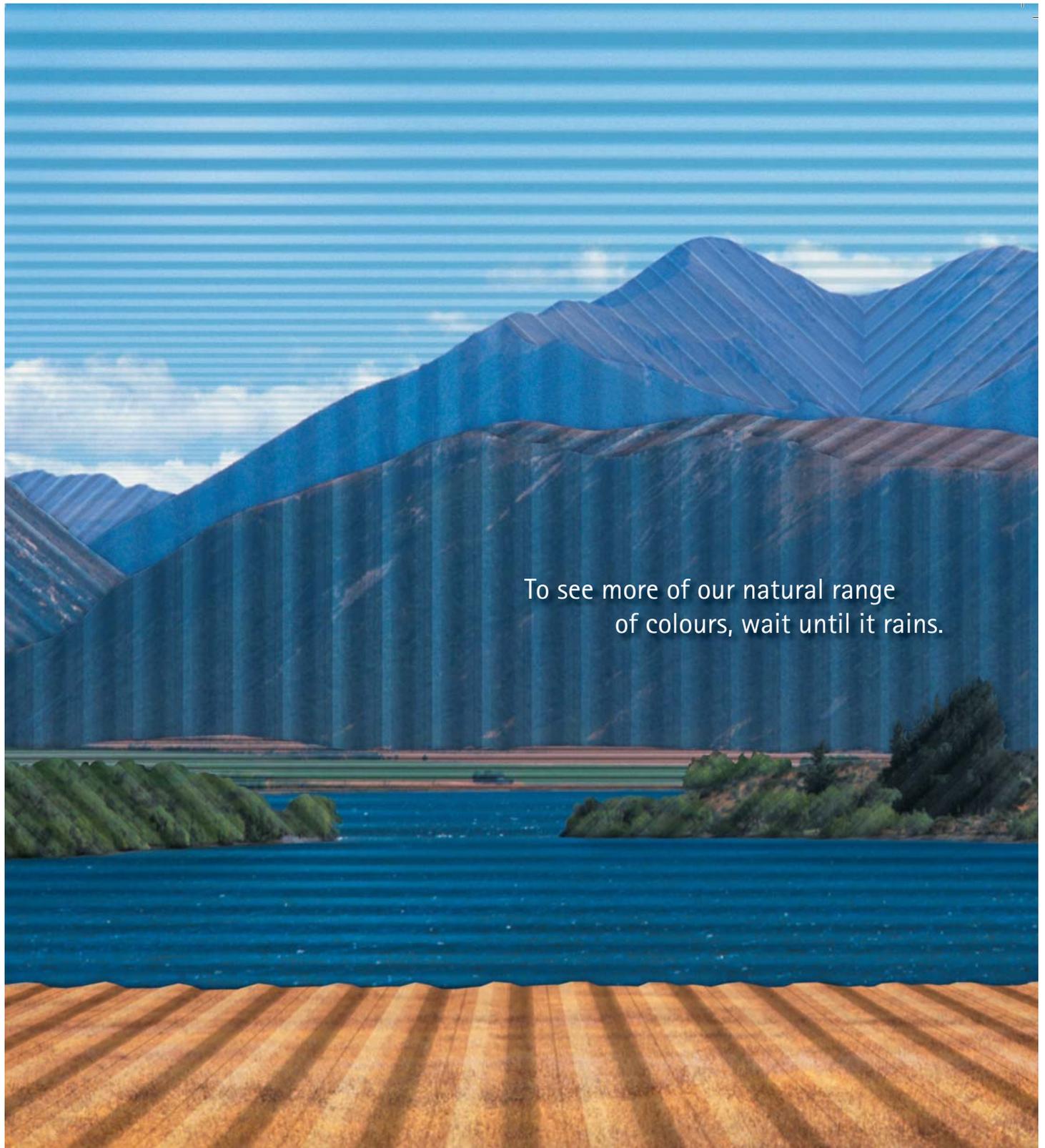


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E-mail: [grant@nelsonstud.co.nz](mailto:grant@nelsonstud.co.nz)

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To see more of our natural range  
of colours, wait until it rains.

The crowning glory of more New Zealand homes than any other roof, a Colorsteel® prepainted steel roof is a reflection of the unique colour palette of this country with a timeless range of tough, enduring colours. Colorsteel® prepainted steel roofs are designed to withstand New Zealand's harsh environment yet remain flexible enough to work with any design. For further information on the entire Colorsteel® prepainted steel range, our interactive colour selector and more, please visit our website. Endura™ Colour for the future.

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FCB NZS0020 E

## Plastic fantastic

The introduction of Dimondek 630 to the New Zealand market by Dimond has seen a change in the design of large commercial buildings.

Among other attributes, Dimondek 630 provides the unique ability to eliminate step joints in roofs through its on-site manufacturing unit and, as a result, sheet lengths have increased markedly, with the current New Zealand record standing at 65.5 metre sheets of Dimondek 630.

To cater to these ground breaking sheet lengths Dimond has developed an innovative new clip system which ensures strength and durability of the Dimondek 630 system no matter the sheet length.

Features are:



*This innovative clip system ensures strength and durability of increased sheet lengths of Dimondek 630 steel roofing.*

- The new clip facilitates thermal expansion and contraction of the roof sheet so that the length is not restricted by thermal movement.
- The clips are one sheet wide and each clip holds three ribs of Dimondek 630.
- The roof profile is locked onto the clip and previously

laid sheet.

- Each clip joins positively to the next clip to maintain exact sheet cover and positioning.
- It is used specifically with the Dimondek 630 profile.
- The clips are screw fixed onto the roof structure so no screw holes pierce the profile.

## Timeless Tuscany

Tuscany is truly unique. It is a beautiful, timeless place with wonderful landscapes filled with the rich colours of ochre, burnt sennia and gold — and where 400-year-old villas built from solid stone are dotted over the rolling hills and vineyards cover the sun baked valleys.

This special region is the inspiration for the new Tuscan tiles collection. Tuscan and TuscanChip have been designed to recreate an authentic look of old Tuscany with all its inherent charm and timeless beauty, but with the benefits of modern innovation, advanced technology and the lightweight performance of steel.

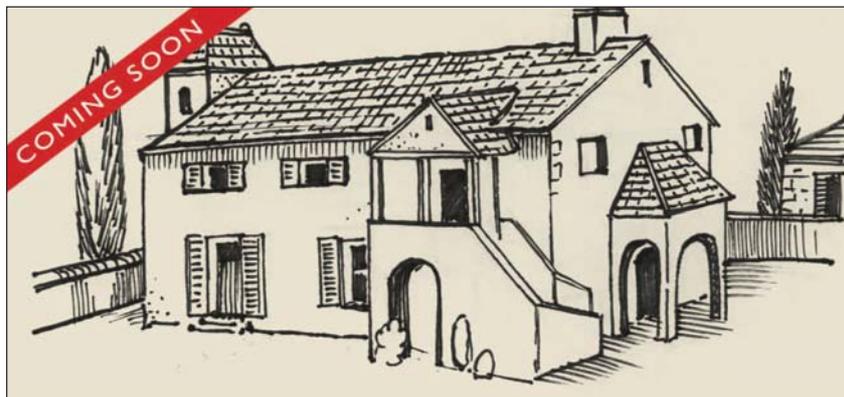
The interlocking and overlapping of the tiles and the unique fixing system ensures Tuscan tiles are fast to install and able to withstand adverse weather conditions.

The tiles are available in a range of traditional Tuscan colours that have been selected to enhance any home, either new or existing.

To add a rustic touch to this classic look, Dimond has created TuscanChip which features the same striking curves of Tuscan tiles but is blended with a chipped finish to give a roof unlike any other.



*Tuscan and TuscanChip tiles have been designed to recreate an authentic look of old Tuscany but with the benefits of modern innovation, advanced technology and the lightweight performance of steel.*





# TUSCAN

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# TUSCANCHIP

TUSCANY IS TRULY UNIQUE.

A TIMELESS PLACE WITH WONDERFUL LANDSCAPES FILLED WITH RICH COLOURS OF OCHRE, BURNT SIENNA AND GOLD.

THIS SPECIAL REGION IS THE INSPIRATION FOR OUR NEW TILE COLLECTION, TUSCAN AND TUSCANCHIP, DESIGNED TO RECREATE THE ENDURING BEAUTY OF OLD TUSCANY WHILE OFFERING ALL THE BENEFITS OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND MODERN INNOVATION.

# Innovative product **converts** moisture to seal from within concrete

Long term benefits far **outweigh** extra cost

**A**quron 2000 Cure and Seal is the answer to combat problems with moisture in newly-placed concrete when floor coverings are to be installed.

And while Aquron 2000 is a more costly option for sealing a concrete floor, the benefits of eliminating moisture and its associated problems far outweigh the extra cost.

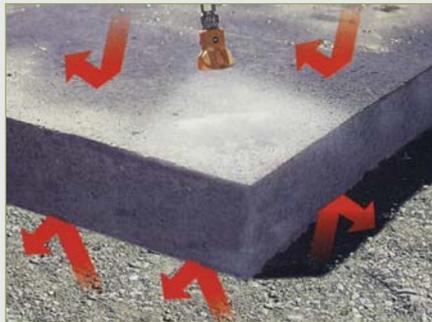
Put simply, Aquron 2000 can accommodate today's accepted fast-track building programmes by promoting a vastly quicker drying time than cheaper alternatives.

The product does this by converting moisture within the concrete into a silica hydrogel.

This process controls moisture/vapour migration within the concrete and eliminates the risks of elevated moisture levels (ie, above 75% RH) which can delaminate floor coverings.

Aquron 2000, applied as a Cure and Seal on freshly placed concrete, allows floor coverings to be laid just 28 days later, or when applied to aged concrete only three days after application, providing Aquron key issues are followed.

This compares extremely well with the



*Aquron 2000 converts moisture within the concrete into a silica hydrogel that fills pore spaces up to 150mm below the concrete surface and throughout the matrix, providing a permanent hydrostatic seal from within.*

In the long run, this process will save developers, builders and tenants money on rework and callbacks due to problems caused by moisture remaining within the concrete.

accepted drying time of concrete of 25mm depth per month — and that is only once the area is closed in from the weather.

So that's a six-month wait for a 150mm deep concrete floor — not an insignificant amount of time to fit into a busy construction schedule!

It not only cures, seals and controls moisture/vapour migrations, it also strengthens and hardens the concrete, and provides corrosion resistance while preventing dusting on the surface.

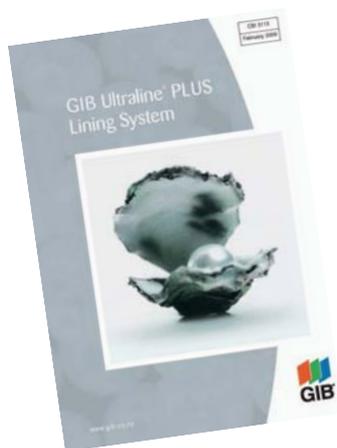
Providing Aquron key issues are followed, it provides a surface that can be directly adhered to. Once the surface has dried after application, the area can be opened to construction traffic.

In the long run, this simplified process helps to avoid problems for builders who think they are saving

money by using cheap curing compounds which do not keep moisture levels below 75% RH.

They end up having to remove the initial coating by grinding or similar — which incurs extra costs — before applying Aquron, something they could have done in the first place.

So for fast application, a quality result and long term peace of mind, the Aquron 2000 Cure and Seal is the way to go.



## New **lining** system developed for top homes

**T**he Gib Ultraline Plus Lining System is a complete lining system developed for New Zealand's top homes. The system makes specification of best practice easy by combining in one simple document best practice Gib products, systems and installation practices.

The system has been specifically designed and tested to deliver a high quality finish for the most discerning customers, while at the same time delivering mandatory performance, such as bracing, and desired performance such as noise control.

This can be achieved while using only the one plasterboard product, 13mm Gib Ultraline Plus, on walls and ceilings.

# Additive signals breakthrough in masonry technology

**T**raditional masonry has been used successfully for many years in New Zealand.

However, major advances in masonry technology have resulted in traditional masonry being improved further.

Stevenson DryBlock masonry blocks are made using a water-repellent additive — Markham sealers — to build in weathertightness.

DryBlock construction is still designed to take a surface treatment — for example, paint, plaster or sealer — but if there's a failure in that outer layer, DryBlock provides the confidence of a second line of defence.

The product is easily identified by its distinctive grey colour, called Fire Ash. All the Stevenson Architectural Masonry range is made using DryBlock technology for added performance and colour fastness.

DryBlock is laid using a premix DryMortar to keep the structure water repellent. It's just like working with ordinary masonry blocks with one important advantage: there's no waiting for blocks to dry out before laying or plastering, as they stay drier.



This speeds up construction during damp conditions. And DryBlock works with most usual coatings and sealers.

DryBlock technology can help build a home that looks

good, represents a great investment and has weathertightness at the very heart of its construction.

## Bracing just got simpler

**G**ib Bracing Systems have undergone a thorough review as part of Winstone Wallboards' ongoing programme to make Gib systems simpler, easier and faster for customers to use.

The result is the new set of Gib Bracing Systems that has the following features:

- Fewer bracing elements
- A more logical naming convention
- A more consistent construction method
- A simplified construction method
- Higher bracing unit ratings
- Increased design flexibility
- Improved product and extended range
- New tools to aid specification and installation.

### New technical literature

Specification and installation information on the new

system is contained in the publication Gib Bracing Systems, dated March 2006.

Users of previous systems will notice some significant changes and should review this literature in detail to make themselves familiar with the changes.

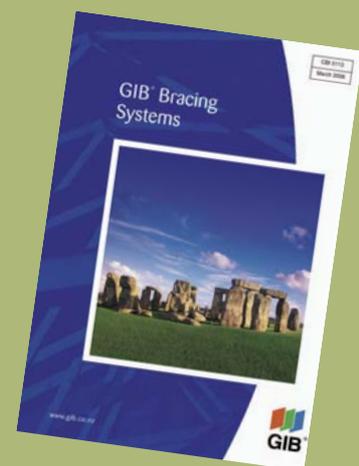
### What should you do?

Designers are encouraged to transfer to the new Gib Bracing Systems March 2006 as soon as possible because of the benefits these systems offer.

Installers should familiarise themselves with the new systems so they are prepared to install GS and BL elements when these start appearing on designs in a few months' time.

### More information

To request a copy of the new literature, to download



the new Gib EzyBrace for Gib Bracing Systems 2006 software, or for more information on key changes visit [www.gib.co.nz](http://www.gib.co.nz).

• **Note: A 4.8m length Gib Braceline sheet has been added to the Gib plasterboard range to aid horizontal fixing for an improved finish quality.**

## Apprentice of the Year competition grows

Apprentices vie for honours in **nine** regions this year

**T**his year sees the Registered Master Builders Carters 2006 Apprentice of the Year growing to include nine regions nationwide.

*This is a fantastic competition and aims to encourage people to consider the industry as a career choice, and rewards and recognises the attributes that make a good apprentice.*

The nine regions included this year are:

- Auckland/Northland Region
- Waikato Region
- Bay of Plenty Region
- Hawkes Bay/East Cape Region
- Central North Region
- Wellington Region
- Upper South Region
- Canterbury Region
- Lower South Region

### Chance for recognition

*Good apprentices are vital for the future of the building industry, and this competition provides a fantastic opportunity for apprentices as it gives them a chance to be recognised and rewarded for their hard work.*

*The winning apprentices, as well as receiving recognition in the industry, will win fantastic prizes.*

*The first prize in each region is an Outward Bound Leadership Course (worth \$3500), a study grant to the value of \$2000, and more, with runners-up receiving fantastic prizes too.*

*So start thinking now about the attributes that you, or someone you know, brings to their carpentry apprenticeship and get down to your local Carters branch and pick up an entry form.*

*Entry forms are available at local Carters branches, local Registered Master Builders Associations and the BCITO from May 1.*

[www.buildingtoday.co.nz](http://www.buildingtoday.co.nz)  
to search archived articles

REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS

APPRENTICE OF THE YEAR 2006

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **CARTERS**

## Carters building licensing roadshows —coming your way soon!

**D**uring May and June Carters will be running free roadshows around the country to provide an update on the Building Act and other important industry information.

The proposed dates and locations are:

- Christchurch: May 2
- Dunedin: May 2
- Queenstown: May 3
- Napier: May 10
- Gisborne: May 10
- New Plymouth: May 16
- Hamilton: May 16
- Tauranga: May 17
- Auckland North Shore: May 18
- East Auckland: May 23
- West Auckland: May 24
- Whangarei: May 24
- Nelson: June 20
- Wellington: June 20
- Palmerston North: June 21

For more information on the roadshows contact your local Carters branch.



# RCC helps tradespeople gain qualification

Process will prepare builders for the changes that new **legislation** will necessitate

**T**he Recognition of Current Competency process has been developed by the BCITO to assist skilled and experienced tradespeople gain a nationally recognised qualification.

As licensing for building practitioners comes into effect, the need to have a formal industry qualification is likely to become even more important.

The BCITO continues to work closely with the Department of Building and Housing (DBH) on the proposed licensing system, with the DBH recently suggesting that licensing should link to national industry qualifications.

RCC is currently available for tradespeople who have a minimum of seven years' experience in carpentry or five years' experience in the interior systems sector of the industry.

It focuses on recognition of current skills, and requires the applicant to perform to the required industry level in commercial conditions.

There are two steps to achieving RCC in the given trades. An applicant's knowledge of their trade is evaluated through a multi-choice assessment paper, and on-site practical skills are evaluated by an independent assessor.

Recognition of the importance of upskilling has grown since the pilot programmes were launched, and the BCITO currently has seven tradespeople registered to achieve RCC in interior systems and 75 tradespeople registered for RCC in carpentry.

John O'Toole from BR Hansen and Son Ltd in Wellington is completing the RCC process in carpentry.

He has more than 20 years' experience in the industry, and has worked in New Zealand and abroad on a variety of commercial and residential building projects.

He was prompted to gain a formal qualification by the proposed licensing changes.

"I've never needed a formal qualification



before and my work has never been questioned so it's not something you automatically think of," Mr O'Toole says.

"But the proposed licensing regime will change that. It's likely that to get a code of compliance you will

have to be licensed, and for that I'll need to be qualified."

He was also motivated by the personal satisfaction of having his skills formally recognised. Having recently undergone the theory evaluation, he thinks many builders will perceive this as a big hurdle.

While he found the assessment challenging, he says he knew it was a necessary part of the process so thought he would just give it a go — and it actually wasn't too difficult.

"A lot of the stuff you know because you do it every day, but you just don't put it into words."

In fact, he found it satisfying to have the depth of his knowledge confirmed, and also to come up to speed with the right terminology.

He says the process has given him confidence, and completing some of the unit standards has raised the bar in terms of his knowledge.

"It's always good to raise your skill levels and learn new ways of communicating what you know. Now if I had to discuss a technical question with, say, a concrete supplier, I could talk the talk."

Mr O'Toole looks forward to completing the RCC process and getting his National Certificate — and when he does he'll be ahead of the game and ready for the changes that the new legislation will necessitate.

If you would like to know more about the Recognition of Current Competency process contact your local BCITO office on 0800 422 486 or visit [www.bcito.org.nz](http://www.bcito.org.nz).



*John O'Toole of B R Hansen and Son Ltd, Wellington, says the Recognition of Current Competency process has given him confidence and raised the bar in terms of his industry knowledge.*

## The Auckland regiment honours its fallen

Dr Kerry Rodgers ruminates upon a new memorial in the Queen City



**A**nzac Day 2005 saw a new memorial unveiled in the Auckland Domain. It is a simple cairn commemorating the service and sacrifice of soldiers of the Auckland Regiment in 21 campaigns since the Anglo-Boer War of the late 1890s.

It stands forward of the oak grove on the lower slopes of the knoll of historic Pukekaroa Hill to look across the playing fields towards the cricket pavilion.

Since the Regiment's centenary in 1998, past and present soldiers have wanted a memorial sited in the lower domain, an area that holds strong ties for them.

It was here the Rough Riders assembled in 1898 before their departure for the Transvaal. The field provided a camping ground for troops before they embarked for Gallipoli where Aucklanders and Northlanders were

the first New Zealanders to wade ashore. For too many of these soldiers the lower domain would be their last touch of New Zealand soil.

Importantly, on the ground below the cairn, the Regiment was presented with its first Colours by the Countess of Ranfurly in 1899. Subsequent replacement Colours were received here in 1929 and 1973.

### Wellington does it differently

Yet getting the cairn built proved something of a campaign in itself. The idea of a memorial had been mooted in 1997 prior to the Regiment's centenary in 1998.

The Gallipoli connection was foremost in this early thinking, and the Government of Turkey offered gratis stones from Anzac Cove with which to dress the memorial. Wellington obtained similar stone from Chunuk Bair in August 1998, and by the year's end had mounted it on a memorial to the soldiers of the Wellington Regiment in the cathedral.

Things, however, moved more sedately in the Queen City, with the Regiment's initial 1997 proposal rejected by the Auckland City Council as neither acceptable nor possible.

Things simmered for five more years but gained some traction in 2002 at the time the late Gene Leckey, Regimental Association president, met with newly elected Auckland mayor John Banks.



*An auspicious conclusion: Captain Blake Herbert and Turkish Consul General, Nejat Kavvas, shake hands in front of the cairn commemorating soldiers of the 3rd Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) and Northland Battalion. The cairn is dressed with stones taken from Anzac Cove beach, donated gratis by the Government of Turkey. Memorial plaques acknowledge the service and sacrifice to the Regiment's colours, display the Regiment's 21 Battle Honours, and give Atatürk's words of comfort to the mothers of the fallen.*

Mr Banks notwithstanding, two further Anzac Days were to come and go before the bureaucracy would allow the fallen of the Auckland Regiment to be honoured.

### Perseverance 101

A certificate of compliance was required as well as consultations with the Community Planning Group, the Heritage Division, the Hobson Community Board, the Recreation and Events Committee, the Historic Places Trust, arborists and local iwi — to name a few.

Without the perseverance and tenacity of Captain Blake Herbert, Regimental Archivist, it is conceivable there would be no cairn in the domain today. For Blake, the project had long become a labour of love, and he received the final Big Tick from the council in March 2005.

All stops were now pulled to ensure a successful consummation by Anzac Day. Local construction firms moved more than heaven and earth to ensure that on April 25, following the dawn ceremony at the Cenotaph, Major General Mataparāe was able to undertake the unveiling.

However, it ain't over yet. The Auckland City Council already has plans to shift the cairn. It would like to place it in front of the museum when it revamps the Cenotaph area. Watch this space!



*"It stands alone on a broad grassy slope below the tree line, uncluttered by concrete paths, flower beds or other competition for our attention. Its simple form is reminiscent of the humble infantry soldier, and viewed at a distance . . . it doesn't take much imagination to conjure up a mental image of some foreign grassy slope or wooded copse, with those commemorated dug-in and confronting their mortality." — Brigadier J P O'Brien, Honorary Colonel, 3rd Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) and Northland Regiment, Christmas Message 2005. Image: K A Rodgers*

## Tip 25. Installation of steel studs

**C**onstruction methods in New Zealand have taken some dramatic changes over the past 20 years.

The changes have been particularly evident in multi-storey construction where structural shells are constructed of steel or concrete beams and columns, leaving the outer envelope and inner partitioning able to be built from lightweight, non-load bearing materials, even in inter-tenancy walls.

Because of this, steel frame partitioning is often the preferred option for its speed of assembly, minimum loading to floors and cost advantage.

However, this type of construction has brought about a whole new trade requiring different skills and knowledge to that of the traditional carpenter trained in timber construction.

### Tips

- ***Always check the maximum allowable stud heights from the stud manufacturer.***
- ***Fix top and bottom tracks at a minimum of 600mm centre and a maximum of 100mm from the end of each section of track.***
- ***Where fire rating is required always leave an expansion gap at the top of each stud of at least 15mm — and 6mm where fire rating is not required.***
- ***Friction-fit stud into the track. Don't fix them.***
- ***Use a deflection head detail where excessive deflection will take place.***
- ***10mm plasterboard is not recommended on steel stud. A minimum of 13mm plasterboard is recommended.***



*Friction-fit steel studs into tracks.*

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