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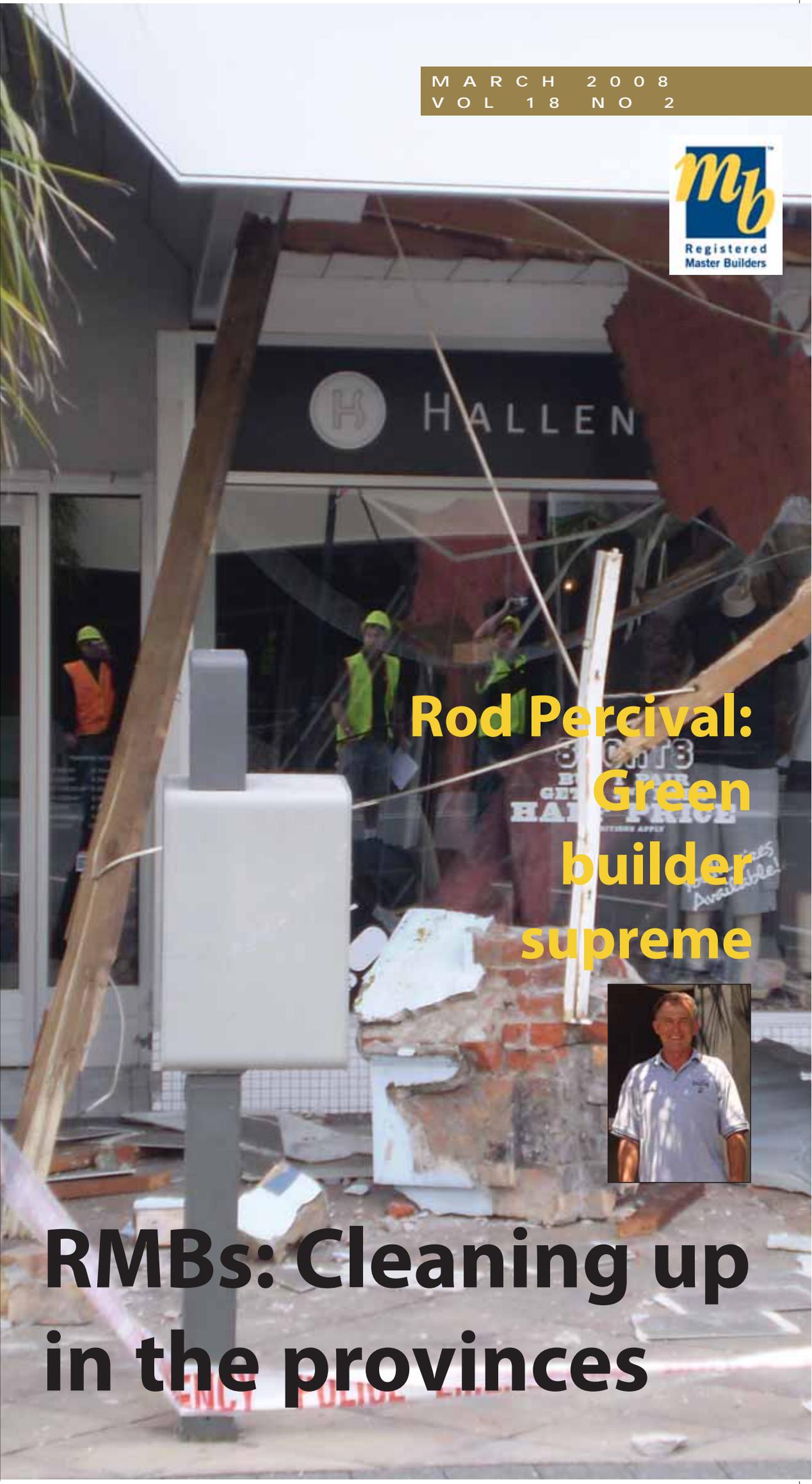
# building today

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS FEDERATION

**Rod Percival:  
Green  
builder  
supreme**



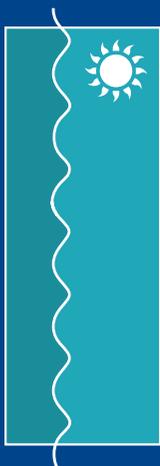
**RMBs: Cleaning up  
in the provinces**



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# building today

Sometimes it takes a look at the "Big Picture" to get some perspective on how we, as New Zealanders, are faring in our little cubby hole at the bottom of the planet.

A number of industry representatives, including RMBF chief executive Pieter Burghout, ventured out from our back yard to the USA recently to attend the biggest construction exhibition in the world. What better way to see how we're stacking up against the rest of the world!

And, despite the troubled times the industry has been experiencing here recently, they found that construction in New Zealand is, on the whole, of a higher quality than what they saw in America.

And that industry associations such as the RMBF are going to have a huge role to play in ensuring the industry is working as effectively as possible.

So don't think it's all doom and gloom out there as we charge into another year . . . !

**Andrew Darlington**  
Editor



cover story 10-11

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# chief's chat

by ceo pieter burghout

## Lessons from America



The International Builders Show run by our counterparts in the United States, the National Association of Home Builders, is the largest construction exhibition in the world.

The 2008 IBS was held in Orlando in mid-February, and the Kiwi contingent was probably the largest international one attending the event, with some 40 builders, suppliers and other stakeholders having a look around.

Carters took a bunch of builders and a couple of suppliers across, as well as Department of Building and Housing deputy chief executive David Kelly and myself.

Carters chief executive Stu Munro was a great host of his particular tour group. PlaceMakers also took a group over, mostly a mix of their joint venture partners plus some building industry representatives.

Registered Master Builders also had a few members

attend as part of a smaller group we had organised. So, all in all, it was a good New Zealand representation.

I took away five lessons from the trip:

**New Zealand high building quality:** While you might think, given the amount of money that flows around in the United States, that they would have a high quality building industry, all the Kiwi builders I spoke to said how surprised they were at the poor quality levels — even in the US\$4.8million New America Home.

So, we should be proud of the quality levels we generally build to in New Zealand, a reflection that we still have good levels of apprenticeship training and still turn out high quality builders.

### Green building is big:

Fads come and go, but green building is here to stay. While things are still becoming clear about how green New Zealand might go (particularly around where the Building Code will take things in that regard), the industry does need to get its head around how to best manage this green building phenomenon.

### A worldwide slowdown is happening:

In some markets in the United States, residential building volumes are down to 30% of what they were two to three years ago. We are seeing a softening here in New Zealand, certainly not to the same levels over there, but we do need to be cautious about the market strength over the next 12 months or so, given the international trends.

Our builders need to be actively managing their cashflows to ensure they stay on top of things.

### Market size differentials are huge:

It becomes very clear in the United States how big their markets actually are. We are 1% of their size! On the one hand the huge market size means American builders (and suppliers and designers) are able to specialise in small niche markets (eg, building houses for the "50+" market).

On the other hand, our small market size here in New Zealand means we need to be better generalist builders, and we are also better innovators. Big is not necessarily best!

### Associations have significant roles to play:

My final lesson from the United States is that industry associations have a huge role to play in ensuring the industry they represent is working as effectively as possible.

We have critical roles to play in things such as building codes and regulations, safety standards and training, industry skills and training (technical and business), green building — and the list just goes on.

Can I extend my personal thanks to Stu Munro and his team from Carters for hosting me on their particular tour. I enjoyed the trip immensely, and will be applying



One of the exhibition floors at the International Builders Show in Orlando, Florida, held in February.

Continued page 5

*Right: The US\$4.8 million New America Home — rear view.*

*Below right: The Carters tour party.*

*Below: One of the exhibition floors at the International Builders Show in Orlando, Florida, held in February.*



## Lessons from America

*From page 4*

lessons learnt from it for many years to come.

Finally, the next International Builders Show will be in Las Vegas in 2009, and we are already looking at an RMBF members tour to that event. Watch this space!



# Two RMB success stories

By RMBF president

Ashley Hartley

**T**wo RMBF functions I attended in February gave me a real buzz. One revolved around a local association, the other around a long-standing member company.

One of these events was the official opening of Project Hope (the Bay of Plenty Energy Cancer Centre) in Whakatane. My wife Denise and I, along with new RMBF membership services manager Lauren King, were very proud to attend. I recall the passion of our members for this project when I visited the association in August last year.

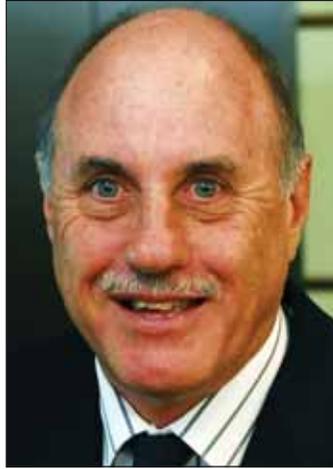
I was pleased to be asked to speak on behalf of Master Builders and acknowledge their efforts which resulted in saving the fundraising committee many thousands of dollars. Without this the project would probably still be in the fundraising stage.

Whakatane Association members (under the guidance of president John Pullar) have done themselves proud, and raised the profile of their organisation to new heights.

John tried dammed hard to shun the limelight, but it's very fitting indeed to have the main treatment lounge in the building named after him and his wife Mary. Well done to you all.

This project will be covered in more detail in the next issue of *Building Today*.

I was also honoured to be asked to say a few words on behalf of the RMBF at the opening of Foster Construction Ltd's new office and warehouse in Hamilton. This coincided with a 50-year celebration of Foster Construction.



Foster is a building company success story — a company that not only talks the talk, but walks the walk. It is a long standing and very active member of the RMBF.

Many people, including me personally, owe a huge debt of gratitude to members of this company for the free knowledge they pass on for the benefit of all.

David Beard (a previous company director) held the purse strings of the Waikato Association during very difficult times in the late 1990s when restructuring was in full flight, and he has a lot to be thanked for.

David has also been an active member of the Federation's Commercial and Contracts Committee for more than 10 years. During this time he, along with Hawkins Construction's Robert Finley, established a joint

contracts committee with the New Zealand Institute of Architects, and was also a driving force in the introduction of the MasterSpec Warranty Agreement.

Waikato Association life member and RMBF past president Graeme Mallet is also a previous Foster Construction director. Graham still plays an integral part in various aspects of our organisation and industry as a whole.

With guys like these and a company like Fosters involved in the RMBF, you realise that we get out far more than we perhaps put in by being involved in a membership organisation.

It was great being able to acknowledge their input at the opening — well done Foster Construction Ltd.

I truly believe that the power of associations comes from what individuals bring to it. Fosters, through David and Graham, and the Whakatane Association, through John, have brought a great deal of mana to Registered Master Builders through their contributions.

On behalf of the RMBF I say "thank you" for all your hard efforts on our's and the industry's behalf.



Ashley Hartley and Foster Construction Ltd managing director Colin Wade.

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# Young apprentice thinks outside the square

**T**wenty-two year old Dunedin carpentry apprentice Blair Stuart says it came as a surprise to win the Southern regional competition in October last year, let alone win third place in the inaugural national competition.

Blair competed against nine other regional winners from throughout the country at the national event in Wellington last November, where 25-year-old Central North Island apprentice Rhys Forsyth was announced winner, and 25-year-old Wellington region apprentice Matt Sharp was runner-up.

Blair says he was encouraged by one of his bosses at Naylor Love to enter the Apprentice of the Year competition, a joint initiative led by principal sponsor Carters with the support of the Registered Master Builders Federation (RMBF), the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) and the Department of Building and Housing (DBH).

"Ewan Oats, one of my bosses, was keen for me to enter the competition, so initially I did it on his wishes, but as soon as I entered I knew it was a good decision," Blair says.

Entering the competition involved completing an entry form detailing some of his best work, as well as providing references from his employer and BCITO training advisor.

Blair was then interviewed by a panel of judges made up of representatives from the RMBF, Carters and BCITO, followed by a visit to the site Blair was working on at the time.

Carters representative on the Southern regional judging panel Maurice Blair says Blair displayed top quality workmanship, enthusiasm and a real ambition to succeed in the industry.

"I was pretty nervous about the interview process, but they asked all the right questions, so it all just fell into place. I was stoked to get that far in the regional competition," Blair says. "And then to get third in the nationals was incredible."

Blair received a great deal of positive feedback after his regional win, and admits his family, friends and employer were all rapt with his success.

"My parents came to the regional event and were ecstatic with the win. My girlfriend Alannah Compton, best friend Jonny Flockton and another Naylor Love boss Blair McGill also came to the regional competition, and joined me for the nationals in Wellington," Blair says. "After it was announced, we all had a pretty big night celebrating."

Blair admits that "heaps of good things have happened" since the competition, and is especially pleased about being given more responsibility at work.

"I've been asked to do jobs that are usually given to fully qualified carpenters. It's good to be able to make decisions on my own, and really take some initiative," he says.

"I'm committed to staying in the industry, and really enjoy what I do," Blair says. "Winning this prestigious title is great for my CV, and I'm sure future employers will take it into consideration."

## Impressed with array of prizes

Blair was impressed with the array of prizes he received for his placings in the regional and national competitions, which included an Outward Bound course worth \$2500, a \$2000 study grant, an iPod Nano, Standards New Zealand educational material, education kits from DBH, merchandise from Carters and BCITO, and a wide range of tools.

"Outward Bound is definitely the best prize of them all. I've had a number of friends and family members who have gone on the course who have said it's the best thing they've ever done," Blair says.

"I'm really looking forward to going on the course with the other Apprentice of the Year national finalists in August, he says.

"The tools I've used so far have also been very useful."

Blair initially didn't know what he wanted to do after

leaving school, but decided to begin a career in the construction industry after working as a labourer for his uncle, who is also a builder.

"I didn't know anything at all about the building industry, but I was hooked as soon as I gave it a go," he says. "I love the outdoors and thinking for myself, but the best part is seeing the end result — a structure you've contributed to. It makes it all worth it."

While Blair is still working in commercial building at Naylor Love in Dunedin, he hopes to, one day, run a small residential building business of his own.

"But I want to travel the world first and see how different cultures take to the building industry and how they do things differently to New Zealanders."

Blair says he would recommend a carpentry apprenticeship to anyone who loves being outside and working with a good bunch of people.

"You have to work hard, think outside the square and be really committed," he says. "If you've got those attributes, you can't go wrong with building."

And for apprentices entering this year's Apprentice of the Year competition? "Don't hold back. If you've got the ability and skills, put them to good use. Just go for it — give it all you've got."

Entry forms for the 2008 Apprentice of the Year competition will be available early in April, and can be downloaded from [www.masterbuilder.org.nz](http://www.masterbuilder.org.nz) and [www.bcito.org.nz](http://www.bcito.org.nz).



From left: Blair McGill, Alannah Compton, Blair Stuart and Jonny Flockton.

## Executive Wing makeover creates Beehive beauty

**M**ckee Fehl Constructors Ltd knew they had created something special when they completed work on the Executive Wing, an integral part of New Zealand's most high profile building, the Beehive.

Managing director Maurice Clark maintains that McKee Fehl's pride in their work was cemented when the company was named a national winner of the QBE Retail and Business Award in the RMB 2007 Commercial Project Awards, in association with PlaceMakers.

Winning a national title in New Zealand's most prestigious commercial building competition was a great achievement for McKee Fehl, a company with a host of commercial building projects to its name.

"Our strong relationship with Registered Master Builders was the reason we started entering the competition, but it soon became apparent it was a fantastic way of marketing our business, and boosting the morale of our team," Mr Clark says.

The Executive Wing project was in the specialised field of restoration and refurbishment, with the first four levels of the iconic, 30-year-old Beehive buildings completely redesigned and refitted to meet modern demands in the Beehive Stage II project.

Outdated linings and furnishings were removed and each level was stripped back to its bare structure so architects Warren and Mahoney could develop their vision from scratch.

There were a number of crucial elements that McKee Fehl had to keep in mind during the construction process. They had to enhance the safety and security of the structure but minimise the affect the refurbishment had on the surrounding areas within the Beehive (which were in use throughout the construction process).

They were also responsible for ensuring the restored Executive Wing fitted with the overall design aesthetic of the rest of the Beehive.

The most obvious challenge they encountered was the shape of the building. Being circular there were hardly any straight lines, which became a constant challenge for the McKee Fehl team.

When asked what is so special about the project, Mr Clark is happy to go into detail about its many extraordinary aspects.

The striking webbed ceiling with concealed lighting was fully created off site at a fibreglass

canoe-makers' shop. The banqueting chamber was also completely reconstructed using original tawa slats that were lifted, refinished by hand and re-laid in one of the most labour-intensive parts of the refurbishment.

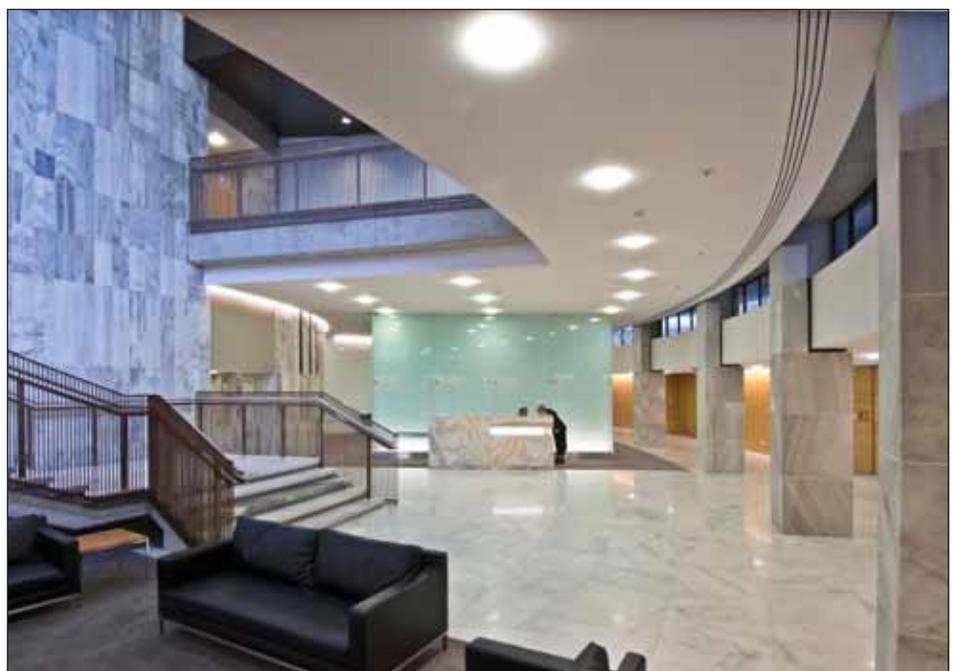
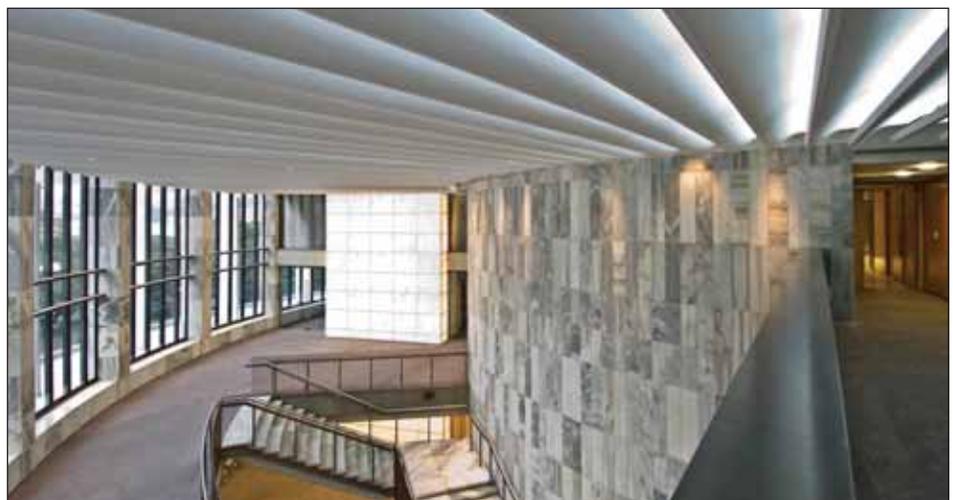
Winning a national RMB Commercial Project Award affected the company in many positive ways. After working to ensure they got everything perfect first time, the team was thrilled when their efforts were publicly recognised.

The client, Parliamentary Services, who attended the national gala dinner, were also delighted with McKee Fehl's achievement.

"I would say our relationship with the client is very strong now," Mr Clark says. As for prospective clients, "we can take them to look at the Executive Wing and the work speaks for itself – the quality is exceptional and the attention to detail is clear to see."

The team at McKee Fehl has confirmed it will be entering the RMB Commercial Project Awards this year, but is yet to decide which project to enter.

Mr Clark says they will be aiming for a similar result to their performance in 2007 in the hope of again showcasing their company at the forefront of the Wellington commercial construction scene.



## Alteration Specialists stay in the spotlight

**A**lteration Specialists Ltd's extension of an elegant 1930s Georgian home in Palmerston North was the well-deserving winner of the PlaceMakers Renovation Award up to \$250,000 in the Registered Master Builders 2007 House of the Year.

In accordance with the client's brief, the charming style of the two-storey home was maintained throughout, with the use of wide rimu skirting and architraves, tongue and groove rimu flooring and wooden joinery.

"It is impossible to tell where the original house ends and the renovations begin. I am very pleased – it's as an alteration should be," Alteration Specialists Ltd managing director Steve Brown says.

The project began in March 2006, and Mr Brown says he always had a good feeling about it.

"Half way through the job I knew I just had to enter it in the House of the Year competition. When the renovation was finished in November, I walked away feeling there was nothing I would have changed or could have done better," he says.

Although the extension only increased the building's floor area by 15sq m, the alterations made a dramatic improvement to the downstairs living areas.

"We expanded and relocated the kitchen to create a space perfect for entertaining, and the awkward access through the living areas was transformed to create a seamless flow between the kitchen, dining area and family room," he says.

"We built the clients a temporary kitchen for use throughout the renovation, as they lived in the house while it was being renovated," Mr Brown says.

As many materials as possible were reused in the renovation process, including doors, windows, architraves, skirting and wooden floorboards.

Alteration Specialists Ltd faced a few minor challenges throughout the extensive renovation project, but the biggest hurdle was getting every small detail right.

Competition judges said the renovation was extremely well planned and organised, and the workmanship was impeccable.

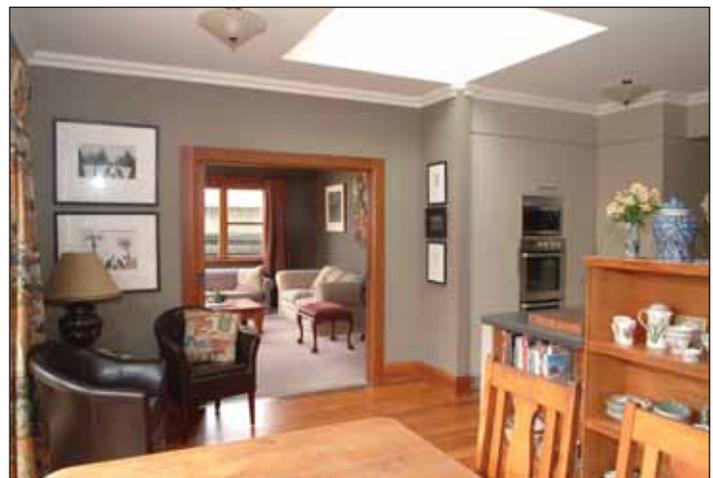
"Every aspect of this renovation fitted superbly with the original character of the house. The detail in the plaster and finish work engaged a craft that was practised 40 to 50 years ago, and the workmanship of this feature was impressive."

Approximately 12 people, including subcontractors, worked on the project, including four from Alteration Specialists Ltd.

When asked how he got into the construction industry, Mr Brown admits it was his mother who got him the job.

"I wanted to take a year off after high school, but she wouldn't let any son of hers "bum around for a year", so she went out and found him an apprenticeship in Palmerston North, where he has lived since the age of 13.

Mr Brown has run Alteration Specialists Ltd for 25 years, and says the biggest challenge he



has faced in this time was making the change from working in the business, to working on the business.

"About five years ago my wife Rachel (Keedwell) convinced me that I wasn't going to go any further continuing as we were. So she got me a business coach to help me develop the business and become more of a company owner, as opposed to being a builder," he says.

"Now, the company employs seven people and I run a really successful award-winning business. It's all due to Rachel."

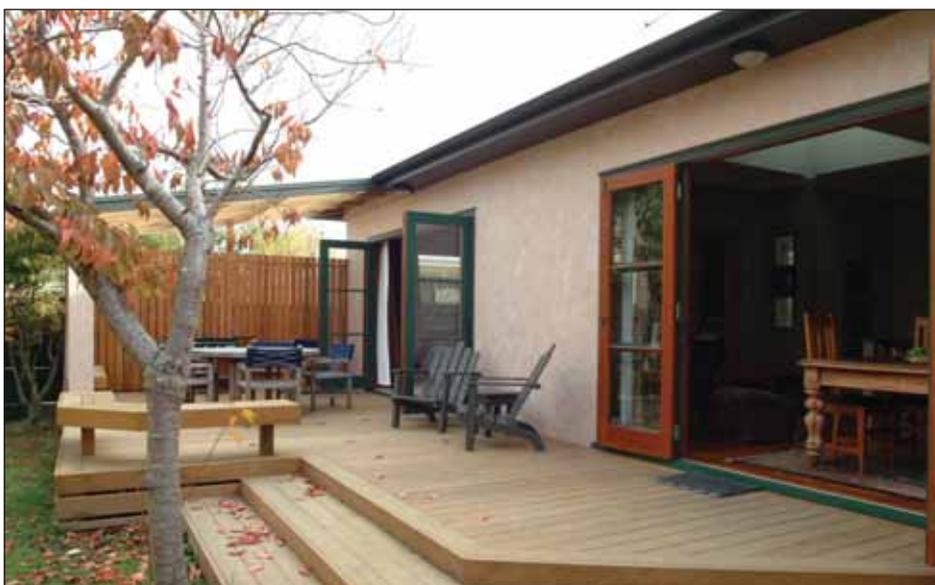
Success in the House of the Year competition is becoming a habit for Alteration Specialists Ltd. In 1999 they were the regional winner of the New Homes under \$250,000 Award and one of the first builders from Manawatu to go through to the national finals.

Then in 2006 they were a gold reserve finalist in the regional competition and again went through to the nationals.

This year Alteration Specialists Ltd will be entering a small alteration completed in 2007. "It's a quaint old extension, which really transformed the back of the house," Mr Brown says.

"I try to enter something every year to keep us on our toes. More and more people are reading the House of the Year magazines, and keeping an eye out for the winners in the newspaper.

"It's just great for the business and really gets us out there in the spotlight. We're looking forward to further success in the competition in years to come."



# Shaking things up!

Thursday, December 20, 2007. 8.55pm: Gisborne gets the shakes, thanks to a serious earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter Scale . . .

Usually, a typical summer's evening in Gisborne would have seen the city streets filled with people out eating, drinking and, just before Christmas, doing some last-minute shopping.

However, on that particular Thursday, a light rain was falling, keeping people indoors. Those drops of rain turned out to be a blessing in disguise, because once the quake hit, the brickwork from some of the town's older facades came crashing down on to what should have been crowded pavements.

It turns out that Gisborne was also relatively "lucky", because the earthquake was centred 50km offshore, 40km deep and relatively short. All these factors have prevented a major loss of life, which is great for the local community.

That said, the quake certainly did leave its mark on the town, with damage control and disaster repair continuing to keep Gisborne's builders busy even now, and for many months to come.

Builders often come into their own in disaster situations like these. Not only do they work hard to help get people's homes ready to live in and businesses operating again, they are also focused on getting the basic utilities back on line.

And many Registered Master Builders in Gisborne wasted no time in rolling up their sleeves and mucking in to get the town working again.

Noel Holden, of City Construction, was called out to Hospital Hill, where the city's water is stored.

"Our first challenge was around the water supply. These huge concrete tanks are designed with a pressure valve to keep them from ripping open when the water is displaced," Mr Holden says.

"Both the tanks that store the city's water supply had the master board blow out. We needed to replace these immediately to keep the city's water clean."

Once the water and power were sorted, it was down to work on the damaged homes and businesses.

"Most of our initial work putting commercial operations back in business was coming from people who own commercial buildings, and whom have worked with us before," he says.

"But on the ground we were dealing with the retailers, and the first step for them was getting the basics right, such as shoring up the roof and repairing things like the joinery — just to get their doors to open again.

"It's really important to get the businesses back up and running as quickly as possible. The longer a business is closed, the likelihood of them staying closed increases.

"We'll be getting on with the major structural work a bit further down the track," he says.

Before the major structural work begins, the full damage assessment process must be completed. A lot

of the builders working in Gisborne have noted that the assessment process has been undertaken by independent contractors from around the country and Australia, not from Gisborne.

The reason for this is to maximise the building owner's confidence that they are getting genuinely independent advice on how to rebuild.

Disasters such as this tend to result in improvements to building design. Former Registered Master Builders Association president Francis Yates has spotted some interesting trends developing in the aftermath of this earthquake.

**"While I can assure you I held my beer as steady as a rock and didn't spill a drop through the entire event, we have noted a few weak links."**

"While I can assure you I held my beer as steady as a rock and didn't spill a drop through the entire event, we have noted a few weak links," Mr Yates says.

"One example is the metal angle bracing used in residential building has folded like wire where it is running in the same direction as the quake — east/west.

"A solution to this could mean using a ply brace instead. Another interesting development is that we need to watch the nut on the top of hot water cylinders. These tend to be loosened, resulting in water damage during a quake.

"It's interesting from a builder's point of view to find out what happens after a quake. There's a lot we can learn. We have lost around a thousand brick chimneys, particularly in 40 to 50-year-old homes where precast sections have been used.

"We have been advising Don Clarke (ex-Gisborne mayor and disaster relief coordinator for Cyclone Bola and this earthquake) about why it is going to be so difficult to replace these before winter. Basically it comes down to a short supply of precast chimneys, and brickies to do the work."





Ultimately, these situations are about learning what to do in future and focusing on building a coordinated response.

Peter Steven, who has run a family building business in Gisborne for 45 years, puts the role of builders in perspective.

"Katrina Duncan at Gisborne Registered Master Builders helped coordinate the response among Gisborne builders and, overall, we have done a good job," Mr Steven says.

"As an Association, we have an active role in delivering the best assistance we can to the community in these situations.

"In our firm, the Christmas party and sharing of stories was followed up by getting a crew together to work on standby over the break. It's just about people in a small town going out of their way to help others in a time when they need it," he says.

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# Nailing it Home

News for Registered Master Builders  
March 2008

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Welcome to the first issue of 'Nailing it Home' for 2008!!  
This will be a big year for the building and construction industry, and for RMBF - and this newsletter will be a key tool to help keep you up to date with what's going on. We look forward to bringing you the very latest in news in your industry, to help you run your business efficiently and effectively.

**Conference 2008 — Keeping It Real Registration date has been extended!**  
Don't miss out on the premier industry conference of the year—Register now!!

### 2008 Seminar Series

Registered Master Builders Federation (in conjunction with Employers and Manufacturers Association and the Department of Labour) is currently running a series of seminars for members throughout the country. Further information is available on the members' section of [www.masterbuilder.org.nz](http://www.masterbuilder.org.nz)

### Nationwide Competition to build a sustainable society

A bold step towards making New Zealand houses suitable for a sustainable future has now been launched at Otago Polytechnic. The Sustainable Habitat Challenge 09 is a nationwide competition, which envisages teams of tertiary students, industry professionals, local government representatives - and others - joining forces to design and build or renovate a sustainable home.

### RMBF — Commercial and Contracts Committee Meeting

The Registered Master Builders Federation's Commercial and Contracts Committee was formed over 20 years ago to provide practical policy and technical input around issues that arise within the building and construction sector. If you would like to submit topics for the Committee to consider please email Neil Shaw.

## Benefits



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And as long as it's mutually agreed, an employer can also help their employees reach the minimum 4% contribution until 31 March 2012. But you won't be doing it alone; the government will come to the party with a tax credit of up to \$20 a week for each KiwiSaver member to help offset this. What's more, if you're already contributing towards an existing superannuation scheme for your employees, you may be able to offset the KiwiSaver contribution, subject to terms and conditions.

We've sent you a revised Employer guide with all the information. If you haven't received it, call **0800 257 773** or visit **[www.ird.govt.nz/kiwisaver](http://www.ird.govt.nz/kiwisaver)** for more information.

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# One-stop shop opens for energy-conscious

Company will oversee entire project and source correct products

**A** new subsidiary of Meridian Energy, Right House Ltd, is set to offer New Zealanders a "one-stop shop" for creating an environmentally-friendly, energy-efficient home.

Right House will provide customised solutions for people building, renovating or upgrading their homes to maximise their comfort and minimise their energy usage.

Right House consultants analyse plans for home building projects and create a free recommended solution that integrates the house's aspect, design, systems and products to achieve the greatest comfort and energy-efficiency.

The company then installs the specified products and systems, delivering a start-to-finish service for building an energy-efficient home.

Right House chief executive Hamish Sisson says the idea for the company arose out of research by

Meridian Energy that identified comfort and energy efficiency as key concerns for home owners.

"There's been a growing awareness of the importance of energy-efficient homes over the past few years, but also a lot of confusion over what you need to do to actually achieve it," Mr Sisson says.

"Right House solves this problem by overseeing the entire project and sourcing the right products and systems from the myriad of 'green' products out there, and delivering you a personalised solution," he says.

The first "Solutions Centre" opened to the public in Christchurch on March 6, followed by other centres in Botany Downs and Albany in Auckland.

## Enthusiastic response

The company has already received an enthusiastic response from the New Zealand Green Building Council, which is introducing a Green Star rating

system for homes.

Green Building Council chairman Patrick Fontein says Right House is a much needed service for consumers that will change the way New Zealanders build their homes.

"We commend Meridian Energy for taking the initiative to provide this service for New Zealanders, and encourage people to make use of it to help build comfortable homes that will also build a cleaner environment for future generations," Mr Fontein says.

An advertising and marketing programme is already under way to promote Right House, including a giant billboard on the corner of the Westfield precinct in downtown Auckland. A television advertising campaign begins this month.

Over the next few years further Solutions Centres are scheduled to open throughout New Zealand.

For more information about Right House, visit [www.righthouse.co.nz](http://www.righthouse.co.nz).

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# First building practitioners show their quality

One of the first builders to successfully register as a Licensed Building Practitioner was presented with his own "licence to build" by Building and Construction Minister Shane Jones recently.

Mr Jones awarded Craig Shorrock with a Site 2 licence when he visited Mr Shorrock at a home he is repairing in Remuera, Auckland.

More than 8000 application packs have been distributed since the scheme was officially launched on November 1 last year, and the first licenses are now being issued to practitioners who have successfully completed an application in their chosen license class.

The release of licence cards is a major milestone for the new scheme which is intended to raise standards and increase consumer confidence in the building industry.

Mr Jones said it was a pleasure to present Craig with his license. "He is among the first, if not the first, to receive one, and I must congratulate him for being prepared to stand by his skills and experience so that he receives the recognition he deserves," Mr Jones said.

"I want to take the opportunity to encourage other practitioners of whatever level of skill or experience to complete the form of their chosen licence class and to send it in for assessment.

"This scheme will bring designers and builders in line with many other skilled trades and professions, such as plumbers, architects and electricians who already have similar registration schemes. Consumers will know that these people have the skills, knowledge and experience to build and design right first time.

"I would encourage anyone who is considering building work on their homes and buildings to start asking their builders: 'Are you licensed?'

"Only in this way can we be sure of building confidence in the sector, and making sure only those who are competent work on our homes and buildings."



Craig Shorrock (left) with the licence issued to him by Building and Construction Minister Shane Jones recently.

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## news

# Weak NZ building activity to persist

But residential building recovery forecast for 2009/10

Industry analyst and forecaster, BIS Shrapnel, expects overall building activity in New Zealand to remain subdued during 2007/08 and 2008/09, before a moderate rebound in activity between 2009/10 and 2012/13, driven by a recovery in dwelling commencements and the commercial property market.

The New Zealand building sector has been mostly subdued so far this financial year, according to BIS Shrapnel's *Building and Construction in New Zealand, 2007/08 to 2013* report.

BIS Shrapnel senior project manager Adeline Wong forecasts residential building consents will decline by 7% in 2008/09 (in value terms), which will offset solid 9% growth from the non-residential building sector.

"In 2008/09, we expect the decline in the number of dwelling consents to gather pace due to a continued slide in the apartment segment and as consumers finally feel the lagged impact of recent multiple interest rate hikes," Ms Wong says.

"Home affordability will continue to be the dampening factor in the housing market during the coming year. We also expect weaker demand for new houses will be compounded by lower net migration gains.

"Given these factors, we expect growth in the median house price in 2007/08 will slow considerably, although a tight labour market and solid wages growth will provide some support to the housing market."

BIS Shrapnel expects the recovery in the residential building sector to start modestly in 2009/10 and continue out to 2012/13.

Ms Wong believes the next building upturn will be driven by a build-up of a large stock deficiency, specifically in Auckland, a pick-up in net migration inflows and an improvement in home affordability (due to an easing of the composite mortgage rate and some impact from the KiwiSaver first home deposit subsidy).

Over the five years to 2012/13, average annual net overseas migration gains are forecast to reach 10,500 persons, which Ms Wong says is reasonably strong.

This will contribute to average annual underlying demand for new dwellings of around 25,500 between 2007/08 and 2012/13, according to BIS Shrapnel.

Non-residential building authorisations over the course of 2008/09 will be supported by sports stadium projects associated with the 2011 Rugby World Cup and higher public expenditure in the education and health sectors, as well as reasonably solid levels of office, retail and hotel building.

The forecaster anticipates building authorisations in the non-residential sector will fall back gradually during the following years, but average annual activity between 2007/08 and 2012/13 will remain relatively high at around NZ\$3 billion.

Ms Wong expects strong economic fundamentals will underpin business confidence in the medium term and support further building authorisations in this sector.

New supply coming on-stream across the commercial property market — the office market in particular — between 2008/09 and 2009/10 will ease pressure on rental and vacancy rates.

But BIS Shrapnel believes strong economic growth between 2009/10 and 2012/13 will

*Continued page 17*

# Queen St upgrade makes national awards

**A**uckland's controversial Queen Street upgrade is up for a prestigious national design award.

The multi-million dollar makeover of New Zealand's busiest street is among a record number of entries competing for an award from the New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects (NZILA).

A total of 97 entries have been received for the 2008

NZILA Resene Pride of Place Landscape Awards, almost double the 50 that took part last time the biennial event was held in 2006.

Entries have been received from around the country, and range from large-scale projects such as the Northern Gateway project at Orewa and a sustainable housing project in Takanini, to residential gardens and a trio of remote baches in Pelorus Sound.

The awards have three main categories — planning,

design and student — while awards of excellence will be given out for colour and sustainability.

In addition there are two supreme awards — the George Malcolm Supreme Award for Landscape Design, and the Charlie Challenger Supreme Award for Landscape Planning.

The Pride of Place awards celebrate the best in landscape architecture in New Zealand, while the student awards provide a glimpse into the future of the profession.

There are nine judges, among them Debbie Saegenschnitter, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, who says she wants to see that the people involved have researched and understand their sites, and that their designs work with the sites and are not imposed on them," she says.

"I don't like anything fussy that tries too hard. A good design shows restraint."

Finalists were to be selected on February 29, with the awards announced at a ceremony at Auckland's Hyatt hotel on Saturday, April 5, during the NZILA's annual conference weekend.

## Weak NZ building activity to persist

*From page 16*

generate new demand for commercial and industrial space. During the next five years, the health and education building sectors will benefit from higher public spending from the 2008 pre-election pledges.

Furthermore, Ms Wong believes strong underlying demand driven by net overseas migration gains and intra-net migration will require the development of health centres, hospitals and schools, particularly in new regional areas.

A growing budget surplus will ensure there will not be any cut-back or delay in implementing these projects.

Growth in engineering construction activity during the next five years will continue to be underpinned by the construction of several major road and highway projects such as ALPURT B2, Newmarket Viaduct, Waterview Connection and Manukau Harbour Crossing.

BIS Shrapnel forecasts average annual real gross fixed capital formation over the five years to 2012/13 will be more than 25% higher than the preceding five-year period.



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MAIN IMAGE: SOFITEL, QUEENSTOWN

# Steel an upright world

Steel as a building material is traditionally associated with high-rise buildings. Used routinely in the low-rise market for building envelopes, it is now becoming more widely used for structural applications. In view of the spotlight on sustainable building, what are steel's credentials, how smart is the resulting structure and how does steel as a building material impact on a structure's operational energy requirements? Jenny Baker reports.

**S**teel is as in demand today as in the 1880s, when it first took centre stage as a building material — but much water has gone under this bridge in the intervening years.

New Zealand Steel (NZS) market manager Chris Kay says steel's strength and durability remain its trump card, but the focus on sustainable building puts these characteristics in an interesting new light.

"Steel is a keeper — and there are good reasons," he says.

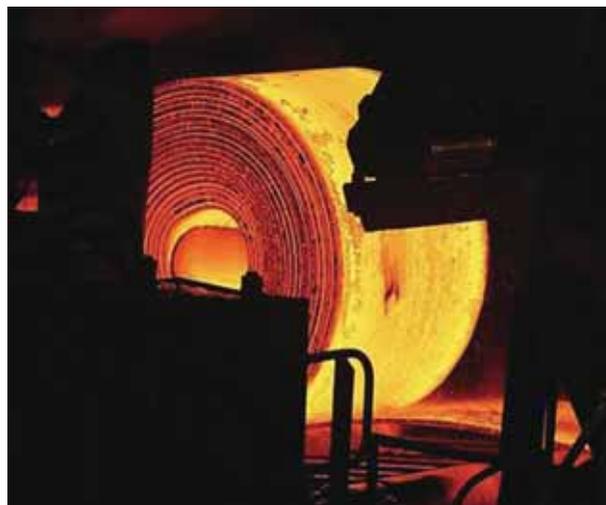
Situated 60km south of Auckland, NZS is the country's biggest steel manufacturer. It is unique in its use of locally mined ironsand rather than iron ore.

Incorporated in 1965, it produces 600,000 tonnes of steel a year and contributes around 1% of New Zealand's GDP. It is a subsidiary of Bluescope Steel, which has 91 manufacturing sites in 17 countries.

According to the International Iron and Steel Institute (IISI), in 2006 global steel production reached 1.24 billion tonnes, an incredible 50% growth from 2000, the fastest growth rate in history. However, Mr Kay says, steel is a building material with a past, too.

Steel became economically viable for large-scale use only in 1855, when British inventor Henry Bessemer patented his Bessemer Converter. The machine could "mass-produce" an unprecedented 30 tons of high-grade steel in half an hour from molten pig iron — and builders saw the opportunity.

In 1889 the French erected the 300m-high Eiffel Tower. The United States followed with the 319m-high Chrysler building in 1929, making a quantum leap to the 442m-high Sears Tower in 1974. The highest



*Steel has the highest strength to weight ratio of any building material.*

building in the world today, at 448m, is the Taipei 101 in Taiwan, completed in 2004.

Steel was integral to the development of industrialised nations and high-rise construction. The resulting connotations left it in danger of becoming a victim of its own success, in particular since the 1980s, when sustainability credentials started to become a global public conscience issue.

In fact, Mr Kay says, NZS has actively managed sustainability since the 1970s.

"When comparing building materials, I encourage a close look at the credentials of the material's sector and manufacturer, as well as the credentials of the building material itself, in terms of a building's embodied energy content and operational energy requirements.

"Then it becomes clear that steel is a competitive sustainable building material," he says.

Steel's application possibilities in buildings go much further than its traditional role as the structural

element in high-rise buildings and the building envelope in low-rise buildings, he says.

Builders today use it for many applications in high and low-rise buildings, including fastenings, foundations, framing, cladding, roofing, flooring, down pipes and decorating.

He says steel offers builders many intrinsic advantages. A good example is to consider a steel framing system for a low-rise building such as a residential home. In this context, its advantages are it does not absorb moisture and will not twist, rot, grow moulds nor emit gases. Vermin or insects cannot infest it.

Lightweight and strong, yet not rigid, it resists the impact of earthquakes. It conducts energy straight to the ground, providing a

building with extra lightning protection. In a house fire it may deform but will not burn. Its maintenance requirements are low, and it can be designed to be thermally efficient.

## What comes around, goes around

"When sustainability is factored in, many of these advantages achieve a multiplier effect. Add to this technological advances that enhance its appearance, and steel comes out a logical preferred material in various applications," Mr Kay says.

He argues that construction using any building material, including steel, impacts on the environment. Effects can occur through obtaining or extracting the raw materials, processing the raw materials and manufacturing the building material, issues such as waste and disposal thereof via landfill, transport and distribution of the product, the building process, and how smart the resulting building is and will remain in the future.

The life cycle, or "cradle-to-cradle" approach for

# citizen

measuring a building material's environmental impact takes into account the abovementioned modelling parameters.

"Industry role players must not be misled by isolated snippets of information given out of context. A number of agents around the world have performed life-cycle analyses on the environmental impacts of using steel. Based on the results, well-informed architects freely specify steel products in their various forms for projects of all sizes," he says.

The global steel industry has actively improved its environmental record in mining, processing, dealing with waste products and recycling. It has never laid claim to a green image yet the issues of other sectors, such as destroying native habitats and environmental degradation so they can mine or grow, harvest, aggressively manage pests on the product, and dispose of toxic by-products and waste, are often conveniently ignored.

"Our issues and the way we deal with them are transparent and continuously improving. That's why it's important to compare building products with a cradle to cradle approach using the same modelling parameters for the analysis. Experts acknowledge the latter as the fairest way of assessing potential environmental impact," he says.

He explains New Zealand Steel's initiatives to remain in sustainable production. Even before achieving ISO14001 accreditation following the 1997 establishment of the ISO Standard, it already had environmental management systems in place. As a member of the IISI, NZS also actively participates in IISI policy commitments.

One such policy commitment is NZS's zero waste vision. Steel generates minimal production,



*Construction of a steel-framed barn.*

manufacturing, construction site and demolition waste. "Steel can be engineered off site to precise specifications, requiring minimal on site cutting.

"And all steel waste has scrap value — steel's second most endearing feature is that it's 100% endlessly recyclable and suffers no product degradation in the process. More than 90% of commercial steel construction waste is recycled, and the average recycled content of the steel NZS produces is 10% to 15%," he says.

ways to reduce waste.

"We've reduced the waste stream going into the on-site landfill by 60% in the past three years owing to targeted recycling and reduction programmes."

The company also tries to keep the utility bills down. By recycling hot gases from the manufacturing process, it generates 70% of its electricity needs. Only 1% of the water it uses is discharged each day after being treated, while the remaining water is recycled and recirculated.

## **Smarter for starters, smarter for longer**

Home owners want low utility and maintenance bills, too. Mr Kay says the codes and standards that govern home building in New Zealand stipulate homes must be designed and constructed to last a minimum of 50 years.

"The frame's contribution to the durability and longevity of the home is immense. It provides the strength, stiffness, geometric stability and load bearing



In the past five years NZS added co-products to its portfolio. "This resulted in markets for what was previously steel manufacture waste and by-products such as slag, vanadium and iron dust. We recycle, reuse or resell nearly 80% of the total waste from the iron and steel process, and actively pursue new

*Continued page 22*

# Waste not, want not

The value “waste not, want not” is making a huge comeback. Exhumed from the consumerist graveyard of the 80s and 90s, it is now marketed to the world as “sustainability”. However, Whitianga builder Rod Percival learned it from his parents as a way of life and established a successful business in the process. Jenny Baker reports.

One of New Zealand's first designer “green” show homes not only has a range of environmentally friendly features, it is also beautiful and comfortable, and secured its owner a brace of awards.

The Whitianga house is a dream come true for its builder, Rod Percival, owner of Rod Percival Builders Ltd. Last year, it won the James Hardie Show Home Award and the Future Proof Building Award in the Registered Master Builders 2007 House of the Year competition.

“Environmentally friendly buildings don't have to be basic grass huts, and this house proves it,” New Zealand Green Party leader Jeanette Fitzsimons said at the opening ceremony in September last year.

Just what Rod wanted to hear. Describing the house as healthy, future-proof and a home with a conscience, he says it is an undeniable fact that mankind's way of life has had devastating environmental costs for our planet.

## Entering a period of consequences

“Al Gore said it right — we're entering a period of consequences,” Rod says.

“But of late there's been an awareness to begin minimising our environmental impact on natural systems and other living organisms. Green building principles, spearheaded by industry leaders, are part of this movement and are slowly changing the way New Zealanders construct homes.

“Construction causes around 35% to 40% of carbon emissions. International and local demand for green homes is growing fast. And I'm right there in front, I'm dedicated to green building, and intend on being green-smart when and where I possibly can,” he says.

Although Rod has always been meticulously careful with resources — both his own and those of his customers — green building became a real passion for him after returning from the Santa Fe Design Week and the Parade of Homes in Albuquerque in the United States in October 2006.



Rod Percival and his son spent a night in this Registered Master Builders 2007 House of the Year James Hardie Show Home they built. The outside temperature was 5°C and, without any heaters on, it was 15°C inside — the result of smart design.

He also used the time in the States to research green building techniques, among others, and discussing green building with other environmentally aware builders and architects.

“Building isn't just about putting up a house, it's about creating homes that are safe, that keep the environment protected and our families healthy. Their building methods and ideas were a huge inspiration to me.

“They're streets ahead of New Zealand in green design and technology, but I must say more and more suppliers here are coming on board, and so are our customers,” he says.

Back in the Land of the Long White Cloud, Rod and the Rod Percival Builders Ltd team committed themselves fully to go ahead with green building principles. Rod, his son Brad, and designer Lynda Vugler then put their heads together to design the green show home. They adapted their new ideas to suit the New Zealand environment and resource capability.

They also did their homework, finding responsible suppliers and eco-friendly products.

“I spent more time than ever questioning what chemicals are in products, do they save energy, minimise water usage, reduce waste and so forth. Very often you just have to read the labels — it's a long journey, but very satisfying,” he recalls.

The result? “The unique, elegant, high quality, up-to-the-minute show home in Whitianga — a green-smart work of art,” Rod says with pride.

He explains some of the house's 54 green credentials.

The house has above-the-code natural wool insulation, double glazing to windows and doors, and solar energy for hot water and under floor heating. Its tapware products reduce water use, as do the smart flush toilets.

The house is also fitted with water and energy efficient whiteware and electronic equipment, as well as energy-saving light bulbs.

All excavated soil remained on site for garden landscaping. The garden has a grey-water irrigation system to reduce impact on the sewerage system and a water-tank for the organic garden and as a water restrictions back-up.

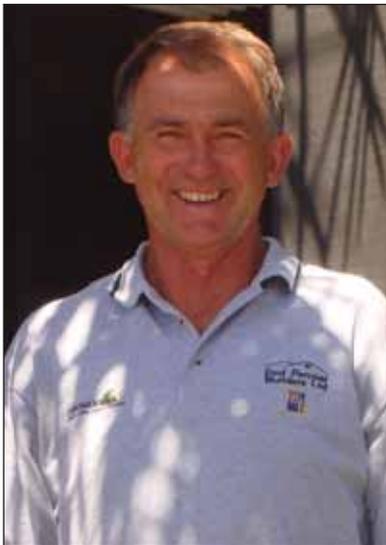
The team used New Zealand plantation-grown cedar for the cladding and lawson cypress for the posts and beams for the pergolas and rafters to the lounge. These timbers require no treatment.

In addition, they used recycled timber pegs and untreated boxing, as well as recycled rimu trim throughout and for the vanities.

“It irks me that we are cutting down rainforests when there is sustainable plantation timber available, when there are recycled products available,” he says.

The pod floor system reduced the need for high embodied energy hard fill, and provided better insulation.

Inside, the house has American clay plaster on the walls, and the builders used non-solvent-based glues,



Rod Percival



The show home's dining room — the house uses solar energy for hot water and under-floor heating.

low VOC paints and non-toxic oils. The interior design relied on eco-friendly materials where possible, including bamboo and sisal wallpapers.

Rod says the team also used local businesses and material where possible, rather than outsourcing products and services. And, finally, all gib waste was composted on Rod's farm. "Our goal is to reduce our waste going from Whitianga to Auckland by 80%!"

Rod says response to the award-winning show home has been "overwhelming to say the least. We've been designing new homes continually since we opened it. Attention to detail is the key.

"Also, I believe in the importance and power of setting written goals, allowing yourself to dream — it grew my business, and it helped me achieve this show home," he says.

Rod finds it interesting that living by the principles his parents instilled in him suddenly gave his building skills a major competitive edge.

**Rod finds it interesting that living by the principles his parents instilled in him suddenly gave his building skills a major competitive edge.**

### Environmentally conscious

"I was raised to be careful, to be environmentally conscious. We recycled everything. I remember sorting out nails and timber in my father's shed, and collecting those fizz bottles and getting 3d back was great.

"Waste not, want not were the catchwords — not very fashionable concepts during the past 30 years or so, but always true, and people are beginning to realise it again," he says.

His first real project was a beach bach he built for his young family at Turakina Beach when he was just finishing his apprenticeship with his builder father in Marton 36 years ago.

"All the windows were second hand and free. They all had to be re-glazed, and the front door was 100 years old. The kitchen, bath, hot water cylinder, taps, and even the water tanks, tank stands, fences and cladding on the shed were recycled.

"With a total spend of \$1000 we had a bach where my wife Sue and I spent years having fun with our growing family."

With the show home having proven its mettle, he now plans to focus on building for commercial and private residence clients who care about the footprint they are leaving on the planet.

"It's not that difficult. It's essentially about being aware of the environment

and materials around us, sensitive to the products and services we use, with the aim to reduce fossil fuels and non-renewable resources," he says.

He also plans to encourage the use of sustainable materials in all Rod Percival Builders Ltd projects

through consultation with and green-smart guidance to the client, architect, his 22 staff members, subcontractors and suppliers.

This is because "a green mind-set is needed from the start of development decisions and needs to involve the whole team."

He is well placed to make a difference — with customers from around the world, Rod Percival Builders Ltd has an international reputation for quality, servicing and innovation.

The company has been placed consistently in the Registered Master Builders House of the Year competition since 1993, and over the years has walked away with two PlaceMakers Supreme Awards.

### Fundamental head shift critical

Rod is a member of the New Zealand Green Building Council, and has held several offices in the RMBF, including president of the Auckland Association.

"It's critical that we all do a fundamental head shift for our grandchildren to enjoy life like we have — we've got to put greed aside and go for it," he says.



The show home's garage doors are insulated.

## sustainability pt 2°

# Steel an upright world citizen

From page 19

capacity of the building. It supports the cladding, lining materials and most fixtures. Failure of the frame to fulfil this function may have grave consequences.

"Steel framing is dimensionally stable and will not settle over time, which is vital to prevent superficial nuisance defects in everything attached to it, such as sticking windows and sagging roof lines.

"Such defects will push up the overall cost of ownership and may cause a loss of value," he explains.

In his opinion, adding the time, labour, the effect of availability on the price, and the long-term cost to operate a structure as a secure and comfortable home make steel framing economically viable.

Steel is a heat conductor but the informed application of insulation and thermal breaks in the house's design will address this concern.

"Steel frames are flexible and enable the design, orientation and construction of thermally-efficient buildings to provide healthy, comfortable indoor environments and minimise total energy consumed in heating and cooling over their lifetime.

"The versatility of steel permits the integration of active and passive energy saving measures. All these save the householder money, and just as important, lessen the impact on the environment.

"Designing for efficiency may be more costly than using a lower priced building material, but from a life cycle perspective the total costs will usually be lower because the long-term benefits will continue over the life of the home."

Mr Kay says what is true for steel framing is true for other steel building products. But direct comparisons between building materials remain difficult.

However, he says if all else fails, one argument stands persuasively above all others: "Lightweight steel frames mean less strain on installers, and provide safer work sites."

- For more information on steel framing visit [www.nashnz.org.nz](http://www.nashnz.org.nz).

International expert Dr Michael Sansom, Sustainability Manager with the Steel Construction Institute in the UK, will be the guest speaker at three one-day seminars to be held in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington on April 1 to 3. More information is available at [www.scnz.org](http://www.scnz.org).



The New Zealand Green Building Council's Green Star NZ rating tool requires steel to have a 60% recycled content to gain points, but due to its durability, steel demand is far greater than the availability of scrap steel.



New Zealand Steel has invested considerable capital in its environmental management systems, in particular emission control, at the Glenbrook site.



Beacon Pathway's NOW Home in Rotorua. New Zealand Steel is a shareholder of Beacon Pathway. The company also sponsored the Sustainable Build '07 conference.

Image courtesy of Craig Robertson Photography for Beacon Pathway Ltd



Replanting Marram grass on mined-out sand dunes at New Zealand Steel's Taharoa mine site, part of the rehabilitation programme. New Zealand Steel is unique among world steel producers in its use of local iron sand to make iron and steel. After extracting the titan-magnetite concentrate, unwanted material is returned to the areas that have been mined, to begin the process of returning the land to its original form.

# Into Orbit: The Rinnai Solar Heating Launch

**T**hrough many years' experience Rinnai has become the reliable and trusted name in energy-efficient hot water systems, demonstrated by the market-leading Rinnai Infinity and Efficiency hot water heaters.

We are now excited to announce the expansion of these successful ranges with the launch of Rinnai Solar Water Heating.

Not all solar heating systems are the same — neither are your requirements, so we have deliberately avoided a one-size-fits-all approach. By utilising quality systems manufactured and sourced by our sister company Rinnai Australia, we are able to provide a scalable customisable solution for Solar Water Heating.

## Pre-fabricated Solar Systems

To take the hassle out of specifying the right solar system we have designed a number of total system options for you to select from, each in a range of three sizes and with a choice of standard or Frost Tolerant panels.

We are now offering the first two of our new Solar Solutions. Both of these split systems come with tanks, panels, choice of boost, pump and fittings kits. (These initial systems are best suited to areas that experience minimal or light frosts.)

Also, to suit those with more experience, all components can be ordered individually, allowing you to



specify and design your own system utilising quality Rinnai components.

In upcoming months we are launching additional systems, and components to further fulfil the needs of the market.

## Product range

Our initial product range consists of:

- Centurion premium stainless steel solar tanks, available in three sizes
- A choice of two types of panels to accommodate differing budget and performance level requirements, both available as standard or with Frost Tolerant protection.
- Rinnai Infinity Solar gas boost — the most energy efficient boosting option
- In-built electric boost

## Hassle-free installation

Each system comes with Panel Installation kits and Tank Installation kits, ensuring you have all the parts necessary to fit a system.

Plus comprehensive installation manuals and supporting documents (available online) make installation and managing the council approval process that much faster and economical.

Further, to assist those new to solar water heating we are running a comprehensive installation training programme.

For more information on this or Rinnai Solar Water Heating visit your local retailer, go to [www.rinnai-tradesmart.co.nz](http://www.rinnai-tradesmart.co.nz) or call us on 0800 RINNAI.

# CSSP software continues national growth

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With the present worldwide construction boom, CSSP continues to develop CHEOPS and the team of professionals supporting it throughout the world.

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for the CHEOPS solution, and ensure a timely and comprehensive implementation so that customers enjoy the benefits from day one.

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# Lion Red Carters Beach and Boat Competition

**"A**bsolutely fantastic" would be the best way to sum up this year's Lion Red Carters' Beach and Boat tournament.

While the weather was overcast for much of the competition, the rain and wind didn't deter the keen fisho's from heading out on the water or down to the beach to try and catch the big one (or the tagged one!).

This was the third year of the Whangarei Racecourse-based competition, and with the Lion Red \$100,000 snapper up for grabs a record field turned out, with 2000 senior and 100 junior anglers taking part and 700 boats out on the water.

Graeme Sinclair from *Carters Gone Fishin* helped catch the "lucky" snapper and filmed it being tagged and returned to the sea before the event.

This footage was shown at the briefing on Thursday night to help whet the anglers' appetite.



Contestants, friends and family packed out the marquee each night.

Even with \$100,000 on its head, the Lion Red snapper managed to outwit the contestants and remained at large by the end of the tournament.

There was a great turnout from Carters customers and staff. Fishing is one of our favourite sports and this is well reflected at Beach and Boat.

If you didn't get along this time, then it would be well worth heading along next year for a great family weekend of fishing and live entertainment. Look out for information on the 2009 tournament later this year!



The Overall Heaviest Snapper winner was Jason Tarrant-Hoskins from Whitianga.

## Worldwide representation

Contestants travelled from Canada, England, United States and Australia to attend, while Kiwis towed their boats from as far south as Hokitika and Dunedin.

With beach, kayak and boat categories and five fish species to catch, there were plenty of opportunities to win a prize, along with the early bird prizes on offer.

The Carters early bird prize of \$10,000 worth of Makita power tools was won by a Carters customer, Barry Hutchinson from Blenheim.

Greg Whitham from New Plymouth took out the dead man's drop draw for the Haines Hunter boat package which was also open to early bird entrants.

Each evening of the tournament there was live entertainment, with comedian Michelle A'Court on Thursday night, the Radio Hauraki band on Friday night and again on Saturday night with Midge Marsden performing to 3000 anglers, friends and family.

A huge thank you must go to Leesa Quann of Hooked On Promotions and her team of volunteers for their work leading up to and during the event.



Some of the winning fish.

## Joint scheme raising safety awareness

It's a well-known fact — the construction industry in New Zealand can be a pretty dangerous place to work, but we all know it doesn't have to be!

To raise awareness about safety in the workplace and improve safety practices for people working on building sites around the country, the BCITO and Site Safe have worked together to develop the BCITO Site Safe Apprentice Passport scheme.

Throughout the training process, the BCITO encourages all apprentices (and their employers) to make safety in the workplace a priority, and education about safety part of their daily routine.

The introduction of the BCITO Apprentice Passport will, we hope, go a long way to ensuring that the construction industry is a safer place to work.

The BCITO has committed to subsidising the BCITO Site Safe Apprentice Passport scheme programme, which means the cost to attend the course will be \$30 — half the standard cost!

Site Safe has been working with the construction industry for nine years, helping people gain a Site Safe Passport through their national programme.

Apprentices who hold a Site Safe Passport will have a basic understanding of the health and safety hazards they are likely to face, so that no one is endangering themselves or their workmates.

At the conclusion of the four-hour training each trainee receives:

- a Building Construction Passport signifying they have successfully completed the training, and
- a pocket sized handbook containing helpful health and safety information and advice.

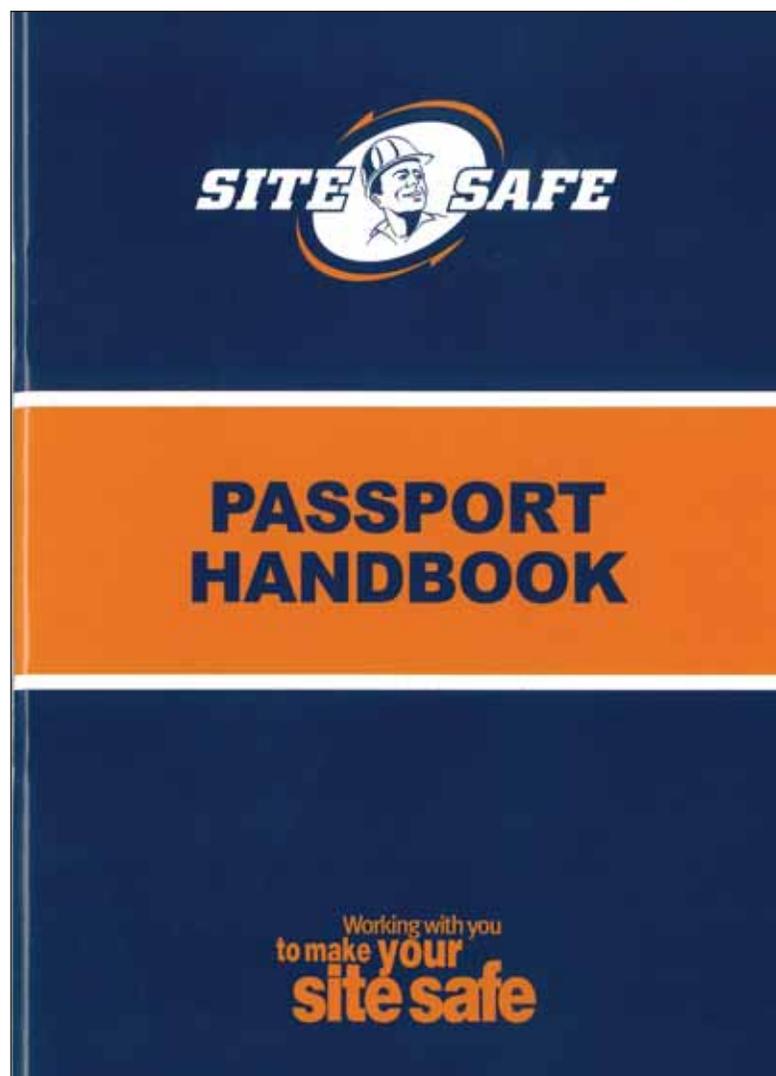
By working together with Site Safe, the team at the BCITO is sending a strong signal about our commitment to safety education in our industry.

It is also clear that the ongoing promotion of health and safety in the workplace demonstrates the commitment of an employer to establishing an effective safety management system and desirable workplace.

In recent years, Site Safe and the BCITO have devoted significant resources to assist people working in the industry with their safety needs.

And we have seen successful companies demonstrating time and again that good training programmes are the foundation for a safe, productive and enjoyable workplace.

The thinking behind the development of the BCITO Site



Safe Apprentice Passport scheme is a simple one — educated and informed workers are able to make educated and informed choices about safety practices which, in turn, protects lives and preserves our most

valuable and non-replaceable resource — people.

For more information about the BCITO Site Safe Apprentice Passport scheme call 04 499 2509 or visit [www.sitesafe.org.nz](http://www.sitesafe.org.nz).

## Innovative hold back door stops released

**M**iles Nelson has announced the addition of the new 212 range of hold back door stops to the already extensive range of quality hardware products.

The design provides a unique hold back option and quick release solution for securing doors.

The square modern design sets the new benchmark in contemporary styling. The clean architectural lines and minimalist shape fit well with the latest in modern decor.

The unique design and simple operation allow for use in commercial and residential applications.

The product is available in wall and floor mount options, and is made from zinc alloy and finished in satin chrome.



## A new perspective in glass

**C**SR Ltd has launched a new name in glass — Viridian.

Representing a \$1 billion-plus commitment to more sustainable, market-responsive building products and technologies, Viridian is the sum of the market-leading Australian and New Zealand Pilkington glass business acquired in June 2007, and the innovative DMS Glass, acquired in September 2007.

Viridian builds upon the considerable resources and heritage of the two organisations under a new brand and a new market vision, all backed by CSR.

Under the direction of executive general manager John Hodgkinson, Viridian will operate within CSR's renowned Performance Systems Group, which comprises a portfolio of similar environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient building products.

These include Bradford insulation, Bradcore panels, Hebel lightweight concrete and Edmonds ventilation systems.

"This is a very exciting time for Viridian and CSR," Mr Hodgkinson says. "The launch of the new brand provides us with an opportunity to take a fresh approach to glass and the market we are in."

"Viridian holds a prominent position in the industry and we will be looking to use this to facilitate transformation in the glass and glazing industries, particularly in the area of energy efficiency.

"Energy-efficient glazing is the indisputable next step,

after insulation, towards reducing energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions in dwellings and workplaces," he says.

"In Australasia, less than 10% of dwellings make use of energy-efficient glass, compared to around 90% in the United States. We have a long way to go."

CSR has a wider vision for Viridian, one that extends beyond sustainability.

"Viridian glass solutions bring light, views, warmth and a sense of space while offering protection from noise, glare, intruders and onlookers. We have glass that provides a resilient physical barrier even when broken, glass that transmits light yet blocks heat, and even glass that can clean itself.

"We want to raise awareness of this versatility in glass so builders, designers, architects and end-consumers can gain a new understanding of what a whole range of high-performance glass systems can do.

"Ultimately, we see our investment in Viridian reaping

huge benefits for our community — better, more flexible architectural achievements, a growing contribution to tackling climate change issues, a better standard of living for all home owners and an ongoing and rising contribution to the national economy," Mr Hodgkinson says.



CSR Performance Systems group executive general manager John Hodgkinson

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# Westminster's Chiming Clock

Dr Kerry Rodgers ruminates upon England's most illustrious icon

**T**ucked away at the north-eastern end of London's Houses of Parliament is that ultimate British icon — Westminster's Great Clock Tower. The name of "Big Ben" for the tower is a misnomer. That is the moniker of the principal Great Bell within the Tower.

The tower started life as part of Charles Barry's Victorian Gothic design for a new Palace of Westminster in the 1830s. The clock itself was ready by 1854 but the Tower was not completed until 1858, with the clock — and its chimes — becoming operational on September 7, 1859.



The 96.3 m tower is set upon a 15 x 15m, 3m thick, concrete raft, poured 7m below ground level. The first 61m of the Tower consists of brickwork clad with stone. The remainder is a framed spire of cast iron. Due to ground movements the Tower now leans about 220mm from the vertical up at the clock face.

The clock faces are set 55m up and are the design of Augustus Pugin. Each dial is set in a 7m diameter iron framework, and contains 312 pieces of opaline glass. The hour hand is 2.7m long and the minute hand 4.3m.

The surrounds are heavily gilded as is the inscription across the base of each face: DOMINE SALVAM FAC REGINAM NOSTRAM VICTORIAM PRIMAM (May the Lord keep safe our Queen Victoria the First).

The clock's precision is a tribute to the genius of its designer, lawyer and amateur horologist Edmund Denison, later Lord Grimthorpe.

He invented the double three-legged gravity escapement used for this clock. This mechanism effectively separates clock mechanism from the pendulum that is enclosed in a wind-proof box beneath the clock room.

As such, it is isolated from the weather — and pigeons — and is, hence, able to keep remarkably accurate time, although a particularly heavy snow fall on December 31, 1962, caused it to slow and chime-in the New Year 10 minutes late.

The clock's pendulum is traditionally tuned by adding or subtracting old-style pennies to a stack borne on the pendulum. The addition or removal of a single penny changes the clock's speed by 2/5ths of a second per day.

Big Ben was the informal name given to a 14.5 tonne hour bell cast in April 1856. However, it cracked when struck while awaiting installation and was recast as the present 13.76 tonne, 2.2m high, 2.9m diameter bell. This main bell strikes A and hangs alongside four quarter-hour bells that play G sharp, F sharp, E and B, in a 20 chime sequence.

Images: Wikipedia Commons

## Trivia:

- Westminster's Great Clock is the world's largest four-faced chiming clock, but is exceeded in size by Milwaukee's non-chiming Allen-Bradley Clock Tower.
- The chimes of Big Ben broadcast on the BBC are transmitted live via a microphone permanently installed in the tower, a practice that began in 1923.
- On August 11, 2007, the bells were silenced to allow a full month's overhaul and the clock was driven by an electric motor, with the BBC having to make do with time pips.
- The clock suffered its only major breakdown in 1976 when the chiming mechanism broke due to metal fatigue.
- German bombing in WWII damaged two of the clock faces and the tower's steepled roof, but the clock continued to keep excellent time.
- The clock stopped in April 1997 and May 2005, but in October 2005 it was deliberately decommissioned for 30 hours to allow the chimes to be serviced.
- The Westminster clock face in the opening titles of ITV News is computer-generated.
- A terrorist manual found in the home of Abu Hamza al-Masri in 2005 marked Big Ben for demolition, along with the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower.

# Science is fun!

A person standing at the base of the clock tower hears Big Ben chime approximately 1/6th of a second after the bell is struck.

In contrast, a person listening to the BBC's World Service in, say, the United States would hear the same bell chime live via the microphone placed in the tower well before the person on the ground.

If the BBC listener was to immediately re-transmit the chime back to the ground-based observer via, say, a satellite telephone, the bell chime would still be heard on the phone before the direct sound reached the ground observer.

The direct sound takes 0.16 seconds to reach the ground but a radio signal can get to New York and back in less than 0.04 seconds given that the speed of light (= radio waves) is considerably greater than the speed of sound.

Try it using your cell phone the next time you are in London!

## The Clock Tower has starred in:

- *The Thirty Nine Steps*
- *V for Vendetta* when it explodes
- *Peter Pan*
- *101 Dalmatians*
- *Independence Day*
- *Mars Attacks!*
- *The War of the Worlds*
- *The Simpsons*
- *Inspector Gadget*
- *Doctor Who* — many times, including being destroyed at least once
- *The Prisoner*
- *Captain Scarlet*
- And, of course, in *Thunderball* Ernst Blofeld instructs MI6 to have Big Ben ring seven times at six o'clock to show agreement with SPECTRE's terms.



# Buyer beware principle — alive and well

Tim Bates and Francesca Collins of Auckland law firm Legal Vision analyse a case which demonstrates the difficulty of property owners relying on a sale and purchase agreement to seek contract cancellation or damages against vendors.



The recent case of *Ford & Anor v Ryan & Anor* demonstrates the very real difficulties owners of properties with water ingress issues face when relying on their sale and purchase agreement to seek cancellation of the contract or, alternatively, damages against the vendors.

In what seems like a harsh decision, an aggrieved purchaser is left empty-handed despite the obvious breaches made by the vendor.

The background to this case is that it involved a property in Whitby, Porirua, that had been constructed by, or on behalf of, the defendants as a home for themselves. The defendant is a builder and it is apparent he undertook some of the construction work himself, although he engaged and supervised contractors for other work on the property.

The defendants were approached by a real estate agent in August 2000, and later that month a sale and purchase agreement between the plaintiffs and defendants had been signed.

As part of the agreement, the plaintiffs had engaged a pre-purchase inspector to provide a report, which was received the same day the offer was signed. The report noted that a number of defects existed in the home.

Regardless, settlement went ahead, and eight months later the plaintiffs began to experience water ingress problems with the property.

The plaintiffs engaged an expert to inspect the property and it became evident through the expert's report that not only did a number of defects exist but no Code of Compliance Certificate (CCC) had been issued by the Porirua City Council at the property.

An inspection by the council had not been requested by the defendants as the original owners/builders of the property. The plaintiffs, who had not been made aware that there was no CCC, then liaised with the defendants and requested they remedy the issues at the property.

The defendant arranged a council building inspector to inspect the property with a view to issuing the outstanding CCC although, ultimately, this was determined impossible until all of the faults identified by the council were remedied.

The defendant made attempts to rectify these faults, but his efforts were to the dissatisfaction of the plaintiff and, consequently, proceedings were commenced.

With the matter before the High Court in Wellington, the judge had to determine whether the defendants were liable to the plaintiffs in any way.

While it was true that the defendants had undertaken the construction of the house while they owned the property, the agreement was for the sale of a completed dwelling. The responsibility to be satisfied as to the quality of the property purchased, which includes the land and any buildings, lies entirely with the buyer.

Therefore, the only liability the defendants could face, if any, depends upon the express terms in the contract.

Turning then to look at the various elements of the sale and purchase agreement, Justice MacKenzie determined that the defendants had, in fact, breached clauses 6.2(5)(c) and (d).

Although counsel for the defendants tried to persuade the judge that the requirement for a CCC was waived by the plaintiffs, because any perceived waiver was not in writing as is required by the agreement, this argument was not entertained.

Instead, it was confirmed that the defendants' failure to get a CCC issued for works they permitted to be done on the property breached their obligations under the Building Act 1991 and the express warranties they gave in the agreement.

After making a finding that clauses 6.2(5)(c) and (d) had been breached, it may seem peculiar or even unjust to the lay person that Justice MacKenzie ultimately found in favour of the defendant.

The remedies that the plaintiff sought from the court were cancellation of the contract, or, alternatively, damages. First, the plaintiffs purported to cancel the contract pursuant to section 7 of the Contractual Remedies Act 1979, claiming that the defendants were in breach of their agreement.

The judge quickly found that the steps the plaintiff took in seeking the defendants remedy the defects, amounted to an election to pursue a remedy for breach of contract, not to pursue a remedy of cancellation.

With respect to damages, the judge reasoned that compensation in these particular circumstances would be inappropriate. To award to the plaintiffs the cost to repair the existing cladding to the standard it should have been at in 2000 would not result in a CCC being obtained now.

Similarly, it would be inappropriate to award damages to allow the recladding work to be done in such a way that it would now enable a CCC to be issued — the Building Code requirements have changed since 2000 and it is likely that a different cladding system would now be required. This was not contracted for.

The judge ruled that it simply was not possible to perform the contractual condition and, thus, damages could not be awarded on this basis. However, he did go on to suggest that damages could be awarded on the basis of the difference in value of the house when the contract was entered into, versus the same house without the defects and with a CCC.

However, the plaintiff failed to provide sufficient evidence on this measure of damages, to satisfy the burden of proof.

In conclusion then, despite the court finding there were technical breaches of the agreement for sale and purchase, no damages award was able to be made, resulting in a lucky escape for the defendants in this instance, in the authors' opinion.



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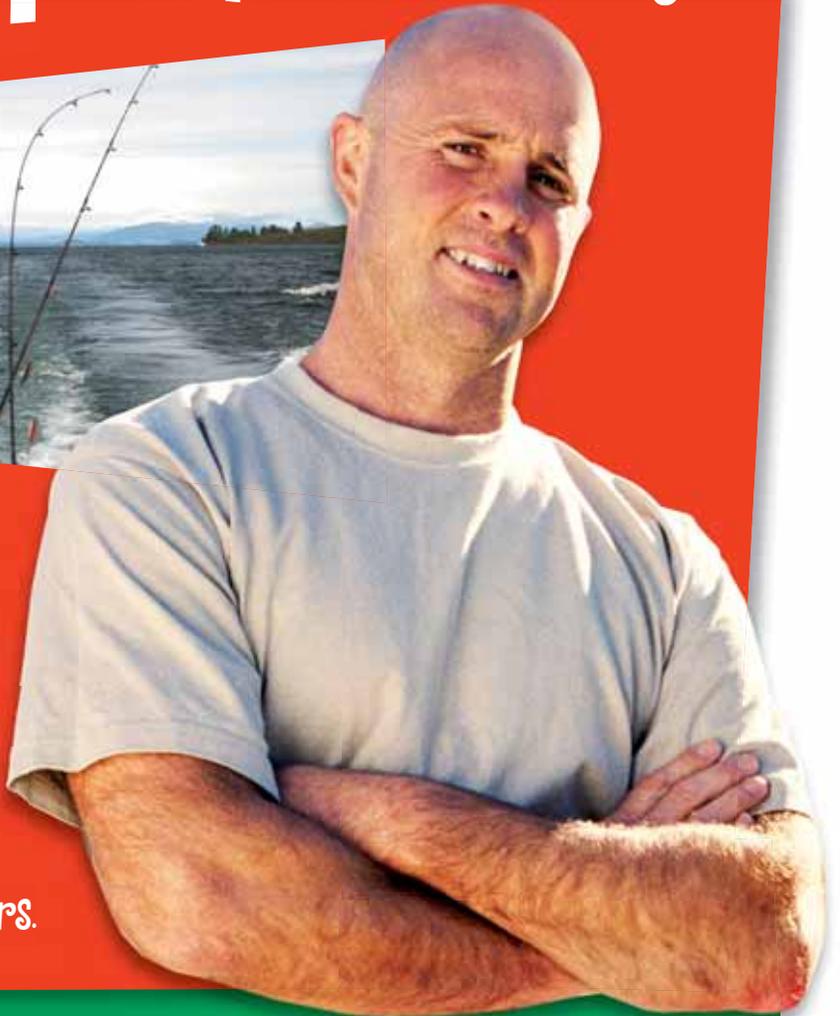
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