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building today

This issue features *Building Today* writer Roy Kane's report on innovative new earthquake engineering technology used on the Three35 Lincoln Road office building project in Christchurch by consulting structural engineers Ruamoko Solutions.

It's technology the company says it's happy to share with others who need to know. See the full story on page 30.

And another earthquake engineering expert visiting these shores says the industry needs to take a new approach to make it more affordable for property owners to meet new earthquake strengthening standards. Read more on page 10 of this issue.

Andrew Darlington
Editor



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chief's chat

by ceo warwick quinn

Vocational Pathways a clever way to get kids interested in construction



I recently attended a launch for Vocational Pathways, a joint initiative between the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Industry Training Federation (ITF), and found it to be a clever way to get kids interested in construction at school.

What on earth are Vocational Pathways, I hear you ask? Well, it is a very simple and clever way of helping our kids at school, who are studying NCEA, understand how the subjects they take relate to potential careers.

It also helps employers see how the studies the students did at school contribute to the job you may be thinking of employing them for.

In essence, it helps students see how school learning and achievement will be valued in the real world when

they look for a job and start their career.

When they achieve enough credits from the standards recommended by the sector, they are well on their way to showing potential employers that they have the strength and abilities they will be looking for.

If a student hasn't decided on a career but is thinking about the future, the Pathways can help them see how their strengths and interests match up to the range of jobs available, and can provide great guidance for them.

I can remember being made to take French at school and, for the life of me, couldn't see its relevance. I wish Vocational Pathways was around in my day.

So how does it work?

Below is a diagram depicting how it operates.



Five Vocational Pathways have been identified, including one for Construction and Infrastructure. At each level of NCEA, the relevant subjects and achievement standards have been identified that, combined, contribute to the required credits needed for that level.

Of course, some subjects are generic — for example, numeracy and literacy skills — but if your NCEA Level 2 includes these and enough credits from recommended Construction and Infrastructure standards, a student can have Construction and Infrastructure awarded as their Vocational Pathway on their NZQA Record of Achievement. Simple but clever.

Vocational Pathways provides insight and guidance, and is a fantastic way of linking school subjects and careers.

It will not only help us as employers make better sense of NCEA and use it to our advantage, but allows school kids to better understand the relevance and importance of subjects and how they contribute to their future.

The MoE and ITF, and all the others who assisted in this advancement, should be congratulated for their achievement.

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Profitability and training for growth

By RMBF president
David Fabish

The construction industry is historically very adept at expanding and contracting as necessary within economic cycles. Generally, most of our firms have survived what has been a brutal five years of record low building activity surprisingly well, although I often wonder how much the industry collectively has borrowed to survive — hundred of millions of dollars perhaps?

The good news is that the New Zealand economy grew by 2.5 % in 2012, the best year since 2007. Many economists are now predicting up to 3% to 3.5% of GDP growth for 2013, and with interest rates not expected to rise this year, we can be sure that our workloads will increase.

The economy is actually looking for our industry to drive this growth, as every dollar spent on construction translates into three dollars of economic activity in New Zealand.

This all sounds very promising, but just what shape are we in to successfully fulfil this expected increase in demand? Have we got enough financial stability and, most importantly, capital, within our businesses to fund this growth? And do we have enough skilled staff to do the work?

Firms can't grow without cash in the bank to fund asset purchases and the increase in operating expenses. After half a decade of low rates and margins, we simply have to increase the profitability of our businesses to survive through this most dangerous time in the cycle — growth after a severe and protracted downturn.

Getting cash into our businesses and keeping it there will be essential to getting through the next 18 months. To assist our members, the RMBF is reorganising itself, and over the coming months will be providing added services by way of new and improved web sites, additional staff and training specialists, and is looking to secure expertise to assist businesses develop and grow as an exciting addition to our suite of membership benefits.



Training within our industry has dropped off dramatically during the downturn. The number of workers employed in our sector has declined by 18% over the past five years after increasing by around 70% in the previous five years, peaking in December 2006.

The number of apprentices and trainees at the BCITO has dropped below 5000 for the first time in a decade — and that organisation trains more than 80% of carpentry apprentices in the country!

Increasing skilled staff numbers will be critical to satisfying client demand, and firms who embed training into their business plans will be well positioned to expand.

We farewell David Beard



David Beard

In late January 2013 we said our final farewell to David Beard, a Waikato RMBF Life Member. David worked tirelessly, locally and nationally, in a number of roles, raising the bar for the benefit of our members and the industry as a whole.

A dedicated member of Registered Master Builders, David gave generously of his time and considerable knowledge, spending many years on the Commercial and Contracts, and Technical Advisory Committees, dealing with a plethora of complex industry issues.

He will be sadly missed, and our thoughts and sympathy go out to Barbara, their three adult children and extended family.

Entries now open for Apprentice of the Year

Apprentices are being encouraged to claim their share of more than \$100,000 worth of prizes, by taking part in the Registered Master Builders Carters 2013 Apprentice of the Year.

Entries are now open for the competition, which provides a chance for carpentry apprentices to be recognised for their talent, skill and drive.

RMBF chief executive Warwick Quinn says those who enter have the potential to go a long way in the industry.

"Entering Apprentice of the Year is a great way to show your employer and those in the industry that you mean business," Mr Quinn says.

"While not every apprentice can take home the title, there are a number of regional and national prizes up for grabs. You won't know if you don't give it a go. It's a fantastic experience for all entrants."

James Poore, winner of the 2012 competition, believes those who take part in the competition will be setting themselves up for a good career in the industry.

"I learned so much from taking part in the competition. It was a fantastic event, and people do take note when you enter. I know my title of Apprentice of the Year is going to help me out a lot with my career," James says.

BCITO chief executive Ruma Karaitiana says now is a great time for young people to be getting involved in the construction industry.

"With the Government's new incentive scheme for apprentices and their employees, we can expect to see a real influx of skilled young builders and tradespeople, and a new bunch of people ready to take part in Apprentice of the Year in a couple of years' time," Mr Karaitiana says.

Principal sponsor Carters will be supporting the competition for the ninth time this year, and chief executive Paul Bull says he is proud to be involved in the 2013 Apprentice of the Year.

"Being involved in Apprentice of the Year is something Carters is really passionate about. Giving back to our industry is important to us, and backing the apprentices who take part in this competition is a great way to support the future of our industry," Mr Bull says.

www.buildingtoday.co.nz



Above: 2012 Apprentice of the Year placegetters were, from left: Adam Knott (2nd), James Poore (1st) and Ben Bersma (3rd).

Below: 2012 Apprentice of the Year finalists after the practical judging component.



Entries for the Apprentice of the Year competition are open from April 2 to June 13. For further information, or to enter the competition, go to www.apprenticeoftheyear.co.nz.

Apprentices, employers and those young people aspiring to be a part of the construction industry are encouraged to join the Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/apprenticeoftheyear.

The Apprentice of the Year competition is made possible thanks to principal sponsor Carters, the Registered Master Builders Federation, the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), and supporting sponsor the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

Too early to predict sustained uplift

The RMBF says the latest building consent figures indicate a pick-up in activity, predominantly in Canterbury and Auckland.

Statistics New Zealand figures show 1559 new homes and apartment building consents issued for March 2012, a 43% increase on March 2011. RMBF chief executive Warwick Quinn says 2011 saw the lowest level of building activity since records began in 1965, and was one of the toughest years in living memory, with a little over 13,500 new home consents issued.

Mr Quinn says a key for a sustained recovery is an increase in construction nationwide — including the non-residential market which is also weak — which relies on a strong national economy. While the 1559 building consents for March is annualised to around 19,000 per annum, it is still below the general level considered necessary to sustain New Zealand housing requirements at around 22,000 to 25,000 per annum.

Mr Quinn says with the increased activity, the sector has also experienced an increase in the level of interest and enquiries for apprentices in Canterbury and Auckland.

With an estimated 24,000 tradespeople needed in Canterbury at the height of the rebuild, attracting and retaining trainees and skilled workers is essential, he says.



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Small team stoked with their win

Andrew Klein of Klein Builders Ltd believes the biggest business advantages of taking part and succeeding in the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year are the exposure gained and the morale boost for his team.

Klein Builders Ltd took out the PlaceMakers Renovation Award up to \$250,000 for a home in Taupo, and Mr Klein says the reward of being part of the House of the Year competition is invaluable.

"Winning this award was reassurance that we are doing things right and our work is to a high standard. We've had great exposure through the competition," he says. "This year, business has really picked up for us and part of that is definitely due to House of the Year."

Klein Builders is a team of only three, and Mr Klein says this made the win all the more rewarding.

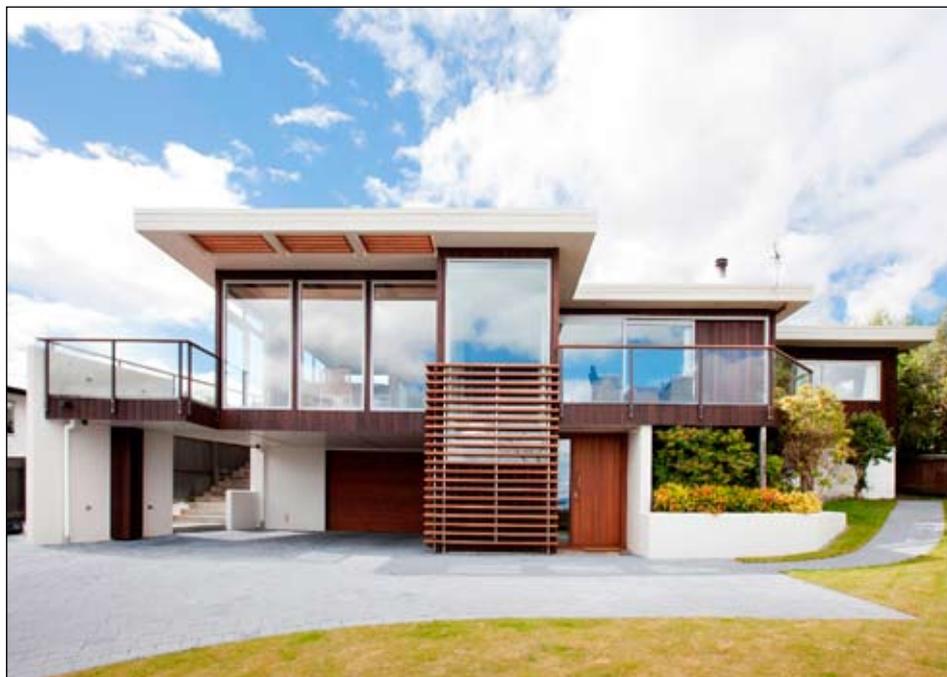
"We only have a small team, and we've only been Master Builders for the past three years. We entered House of the Year a couple of years ago and won local awards," he says.

"But we were absolutely ecstatic to win the national award in 2012. It's a fantastic competition to enter, and it was a real achievement for us all, including Fraser Cameron Architecture."

The judges saluted the Taupo renovation as delivering a cleverly thought-through facelift to the 1950s property.

"The builder has truly met the renovation challenge of turning this 'not so plumb or square' property into a modern and very functional home that will meet the needs of its owners for a long time to come," they said.

"A new angled edge, north-facing deck provides maximum sun, while the cedar louvres, lending privacy to the glazed stairwell, and floor to ceiling sliding doors, bring a modern look and feel that gives this property a new lease of life."



Above: Klein Builders Ltd won the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year PlaceMakers Renovation Award up to \$250,000.

Below: PlaceMakers national sales and marketing general manager Blake Bibbie (left) and Andrew Klein.



Mr Klein loved being part of House of the Year, and has every intention of continuing to enter.

"I'll definitely keep entering the competition, but I'll only ever enter jobs that I think have that X-factor. Hopefully, this is only the beginning for us!"

The Awards are made possible through the

support of PlaceMakers, James Hardie, Gib, Nulook, MBIE - Building and Housing, Future-Proof Building, Carters, ITM, Plumbing World, Resene and Westpac.

For more information about the competition, visit the Registered Master Builders web site at www.masterbuilder.org.nz.

Winner poses himself a new challenge

Mark Haimes of Haimes Building Ltd was "thrilled" when his Taupo home was read out as the winner of the Master Build Services New Homes \$250,000 - \$350,000 category in the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year.

Haimes Building Ltd is well versed when it comes to House of the Year, winning five national titles since 2004, but in 2012 Mark set himself a new challenge.

"Although we have been entering House of the Year for many years, we have never entered a home below the \$600,000 mark," Mr Haimes says.

"As a business, we want to continue setting ourselves new challenges. The challenge with this home was offering something that we were proud of, while also staying within the allocated budget. This was a particularly satisfying win for us, and one that we worked hard for."

The winning Taupo home was hailed by the judges as stylish and built to an exceptionally high standard, with a lot of attention to detail.

"While conventional construction methods have been employed, much consideration was given to planning and material selection to create a home that is easy to care for, allowing for maximum enjoyment of the natural beauty of the site in warmth and privacy," judges said.

"This is an incredibly well-executed build, and is a fabulous example of a superb home in this price bracket."

Mr Haimes believes the competition really boosts his company's profile, and he encourages all builders to enter.

"Throughout the year we rarely market ourselves. The publicity that comes with winning House of the Year is all we need," he says.

"House of the Year makes people aware of the work we are doing, and the quality of that work. We advertise that we are Gold Reserve winners, and the respect we gain by holding that title is incredible."

Mr Haimes is a long-standing Registered Master Builder, and believes others should get involved and utilise all that is on offer from the organisation.

"I definitely recommend becoming a Registered Master Builder, but I would also recommend being actively involved to gain the best benefits," he says.

"There's a lot of information and support available, and because of that I feel like I'm up to speed with what is going on in the industry."

"Being able to enter House of the Year is a huge benefit of being a Registered Master Builder, and I will absolutely continue to take part — we have two homes entered for 2013."

"There are so many people who work behind the scenes to ensure



Haimes Building Ltd won the Master Build Services New Homes \$250,000 - \$350,000 category for a home in Taupo.



Master Build Services chairman Kevin Stanley, Mark and Tanya Haimes, and Haimes Building Ltd contracts manager Phil Pool.

House of the Year is a success, and they get a big thumbs-up from me!"

The Awards are made possible through the support of PlaceMakers, James Hardie, Gib, Nulook, MBIE - Building and Housing, Future-Proof Building, Carters, ITM, Plumbing World, Resene and Westpac.

For more information about the competition, visit the Registered Master Builders web site at www.masterbuilder.org.nz.

Building seismic upgrade presents new opportunities for investors — industry expert

A global earthquake-engineering expert says new seismic requirements outlined in proposed legislation could present new opportunities for business investors.

An internationally recognised industry expert, specialising in high-performance earthquake engineering, disaster mitigation and reconstruction, Dr Miyamoto of Miyamoto Impact, was the keynote speaker at the first of a series of Property Council seminars being held at present, with further events planned for Auckland and Christchurch in late April and early May.

Renowned for innovative engineering and experience in earthquake zones around the world, Dr Miyamoto

says the industry needs to take a new approach to make it more affordable for property owners to meet the new earthquake strengthening standards.

"New Zealand needs to seriously consider the need to seismically upgrade building stock in an economically feasible way," Dr Miyamoto says.

"The Government's initiative to tighten building standards is absolutely the right thing to do, but there will be landlords who will struggle to find the funds to afford the upgrade.

"We need to devise an action plan that achieves the right balance, and get on with the work for our buildings that do not meet an acceptable standard, as well as new construction.

"The economic viability of industrial and commercial buildings nationwide rests on turning seismic requirements into opportunities."

At the first seminar held in Wellington recently, case studies of cost-effective and commercially viable seismic strengthening projects were discussed.

These included a Christchurch City Council heritage building — the Cashmere Hills Presbyterian Church, the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington's "Project Stronger", a six-storey Hereford Street building in Christchurch's red zone, and Napier's Co-operative Bank building.

International examples were also presented, including the California Unreinforced Masonry (URM) ordinance, and a high-tech approach in Asia and Americas.

Dr Miyamoto also discussed public and commercial projects led by the Miyamoto team, such as the University Gateway at the University of Southern California, and the seismic risk management of the Los Angeles World Airports.

Dr Miyamoto says it is imperative that any change in seismic requirements also addresses concern around return on investment, financing and insurance for building owners.

"With proposed legislation requiring buildings that fail a seismic test be strengthened or demolished, we need to look at ways that owners and investors can manage their asset, meet the new standards and protect their buildings," he says.

"The Canterbury earthquakes have prioritised earthquake strengthening in New Zealand, but the seismic dilemma is not new. By looking at global solutions, we are able to make the most of lessons learned in earthquake-prone regions around the world.

"There are various options that have worked abroad that have enabled investors to bring buildings up to requirements, while helping to manage the economic cost.

"Some of these have been Government-led, but many are examples of building owners and industry working together successfully to take a cost-effective, proactive approach."



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Standards Council welcomes discussion on future of national standards body

The Standards Council and its operating arm, Standards New Zealand, welcome the discussion document released recently by Commerce Minister Craig Foss seeking feedback on the future of the national Standards body, Standards Council chairman John Lumsden says.

"The discussion document follows a review by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) last year of New Zealand's standards and conformance infrastructure," Mr Lumsden says.



Standards Council chairman John Lumsden.

Review welcome

"The Standards Council also welcomes the review as it represents an opportunity to move New Zealand Standards development to a more sustainable footing. The Standards Council and Standards New

Zealand have worked closely with the MBIE on this review.

"Standards and the role they play in all areas of the New Zealand economy — promoting safety,

productivity and innovation — are vital, and it is imperative that the development of Standards is supported by a viable and well-functioning national Standards body.

Have your say

"On behalf of the Standards Council, I strongly encourage those who wish to ensure their national Standards body is financially sustainable and able to keep developing world-class Standards to have their say by responding to the discussion document," Mr Lumsden says.

The discussion document proposals to enhance the delivery of Standards by New Zealand's national standards body is available at www.med.govt.nz/about-us/proposals-to-enhance-of-the-delivery-of-standards-by-new-zealands-national-standards-body.

Submissions are due by 5pm, Friday, April 26.



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news

Top kitchen and bathroom designers up for awards

The National Kitchen and Bathroom Association (NKBA) celebrates its 30th anniversary this year and is calling for entries to its annual awards.

Award categories include best design, traditional/classic, creative excellence, use of small space and people's choice for both kitchens and bathrooms; best kitchen under \$20,000, best use of colour, best student design, and best drawing standards.

Regional awards for kitchen and bathroom will be presented in nine areas with chapters of the National Kitchen and Bathroom Association. The top awards are the Fisher and Paykel Kitchen Design of the Year award and a Bathroom Design of the Year Award.

Some great prizes are up for grabs and award entries close on May 6. Entry forms are available from www.nkba.org.nz.

NKBA president Ingrid Geldof says the awards are open only to members of the association, so any designers and joinery manufacturers keen to enter should investigate joining.

"Entering the awards is an opportunity to enjoy increased industry recognition. It is a fantastic way to showcase your work."

Award winners will be announced at a gala dinner at Wigram Airbase on July 20.

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news

Auckland building sector gets skills boost

Auckland's skills-hungry building sector will soon have a new source of work-ready tradespeople and apprentices.

Private tertiary provider New Zealand Management Academies (NZMA) is fast-tracking additional construction training into Auckland in partnership with experienced construction educator the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec).

From May 2013, NZMA will deliver Wintec's Level 4 Certificate in Building, accredited by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. The 40-week programme is an ideal lead-in to a building apprenticeship, and graduates are likely to be in hot demand among construction employers.

NZMA director of business development Mark Worsop says there is a huge shortage of skilled tradespeople in the sector.

"We're keen to help meet the needs of the industry," he says. "Students will graduate with basic industry knowledge and skills to enter the workforce as partly-qualified tradespeople, well advanced towards registration as builders and able to continue their apprenticeship training in the workplace to complete their National Certificate in Carpentry (Level 4)," Mr Worsop says.

Dr David Gatley, who has been appointed to set up and run the programme, spent nine years as a senior academic staff member in Unitec's School of Architecture and its School of the Built Environment (Construction and Engineering). He has also worked as a design manager, architect and project manager.

The hands-on programme includes a mix of classroom teaching, outdoor projects and construction site visits. NZMA has also partnered with prefabricated designer home company, Go-Homes, to ensure students gain the relevant practical skills they need.

"As part of the course, the students will build a Go-Homes prefabricated dwelling. This will give them experience in all aspects of construction, from start to finish. The skills they learn will definitely ensure they have a leading edge when it comes to gaining an apprenticeship," Mr Worsop says.

Although construction is a new programme for NZMA — known primarily for its hospitality and business training — Wintec has been involved in construction training for many years, and its programme is well established and aligned to industry needs. And NZMA and Wintec have a long experience of partnering to deliver programmes.

Wintec regional engagement manager Edgar Wilson says he is looking forward to working with NZMA again.

"Wintec was pleased to be invited by NZMA to provide the accreditation for the Level 4 Certificate in Building. Wintec takes pride in effectively collaborating with a number of tertiary institutes, and we are delighted that our association with NZMA will enable students to gain an essential and relevant qualification," Mr Edgar says.

NZMA chairman and joint chief executive Tim Cullinane says he is delighted to be able to help address Auckland's skills shortage in construction, and deliver quality construction training to young Aucklanders.

"As well as gaining a well-respected qualification, graduates will get help securing an apprenticeship through NZMA's dedicated recruitment services," Mr Cullinane says.

"We expect our construction graduates will be sought after by New Zealand employers, as are all our graduates. It's part of our commitment to students to leave NZMA employment-ready, with the skills, attitudes and motivation to succeed in the workplace," he says.

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BRANCH	DATE	TIME
PlaceMakers Mt Maunganui	Thursday, 11 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Te Kuiti	Tuesday, 16 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Hamilton	Tuesday, 16 April 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Morrinsville	Wednesday, 17 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Whitianga	Wednesday, 17 April 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Thames	Thursday, 18 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Ohakune	Monday, 22 April 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Wanganui	Tuesday, 23 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Hawera	Tuesday, 23 April 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Palmerston North	Tuesday, 23 April 2013	8:00am - 10:00am
PlaceMakers Levin	Tuesday, 23 April 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers New Plymouth	Wednesday, 24 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Kapiti	Wednesday, 24 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Huntly	Tuesday, 30 April 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers New Lynn	Tuesday, 30 April 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Pakuranga	Wednesday, 1 May 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Mt Wellington	Wednesday, 1 May 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Pukekohe	Thursday, 2 May 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Cook Street	Tuesday, 7 May 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Waiheke	Tuesday, 7 May 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Albany	Wednesday, 8 May 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm
PlaceMakers Wairau Park	Thursday, 9 May 2013	7:00am - 9:00am
PlaceMakers Nor - West/ Westgate & Helensville	Thursday, 9 May 2013	5:00pm - 7:00pm

Dates and times may change. Contact your local store for more information and to confirm session times.



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news

Construction begins on \$25m engineering and trades facility



The purpose-built \$25 million trades and engineering building at Wintec's Rotokauri campus in north Hamilton.

Hamilton will soon be home to New Zealand's most modern engineering and trades education facility.

Construction of the purpose-built \$25 million trades and engineering building at Wintec's Rotokauri campus in north Hamilton began recently. People studying the disciplines of engineering and trades will be taught in the facility, due to open in 2014.

Wintec chief executive Mark Flowers says there is a national need for trained and skilled engineering and tradespeople, and a facility of this calibre will help lead the changes needed to address this.

"The facility will provide more opportunities for people to learn in an environment that better reflects industry standards and uses the latest techniques and technologies," Mr Flowers says.

"Its open plan design, exposed structures and flexible teaching spaces makes it a learning facility from every angle. People will be able to see what is going on inside it.

"Thanks to the staff and industry input into its design and functionality, it will be a vibrant learning environment, with technology that students of today and the future expect."

New technologies include simulation equipment and software, particularly in electrical, automotive, welding and engineering fields, as well as increased wireless and "bring your own device" facilities.

"I'm excited about this significant development in the heart of Hamilton's industrial area. It will put our Rotokauri campus on the map and play an important role in further connecting with employers and students."

Engineering courses and the Waikato Centre for Industry Training will be operating from the facility from February next year, while the School of Trades will move to the facility in mid-2014.

Since 2003, Wintec has spent more than \$60m on its campus modernisation programme to provide students and staff with modern facilities and the best possible environment to learn the skills necessary to succeed in their industries.

Developments include the Gallagher Hub, the refurbishment of Wintec House and the new marae, Te Kopu Mania o Kirikiriroa, on Wintec's city campus, as well as the Rotokauri hub, an upgrade of the training restaurant, Windows, and a new entrance to the Rotokauri campus.

The Engineering and Trades project is one of the largest undertaken by Wintec in its campus modernisation programme.



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ITM tops hardware category in customer satisfaction awards

ITM has taken out top spot for 2012 in the hardware category at the annual Roy Morgan national customer satisfaction awards, outperforming its closest rival by a significant margin.

More than 12,000 New Zealanders were surveyed month by month, and ITM scored highest on eight of those months last year.

Debnath Guharoy, Asia-Pacific regional director for Roy Morgan, announced the awards at a presentation dinner in Auckland on March 1.

"ITM is focused on satisfying the needs of trade customers through a strong service ethic," ITM chief executive Gordon Buswell says, confirming that it's a key objective for the ITM group.

"Our store owners have been with ITM for a long time. This means their team is stable, and the retention of knowledge within the group is what makes us different.

"We see this as a real advantage. Because we are here to serve the tradespeople first and foremost, we make sure our stores have people who are thoroughly familiar with the building industry.

"Everyone in our network is delighted with the result, because it justifies all the hard work our people have put in to customer service," Mr Buswell says.

During the presentation, Mr Guharoy stressed the importance of customer service in the current environment.

"Never before has customer satisfaction been so critical. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter have given customers a megaphone to broadcast their praise or disapproval," he said.



Paul Taylor, ITM support office general manager: marketing and operations, receives the award from Roy Morgan Research NZ general manager Pip Elliott.



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Go Further

Citygate certification simple for developers



The developers of a major new property set to revitalise the Hamilton CBD say they are pleasantly surprised at how cost and time effective it has been to achieve Green Star certification.

Citygate in Hamilton is being developed by national property development firm McConnell Property, which has worked closely with the Hamilton City Council, Wintec and CBD businesses in the planning and delivery of the \$20 million "smart" building.

Assessed by the New Zealand Green Building Council (NZGBC), Citygate has been awarded a 4 Green Star certified rating in a single assessment round, as opposed to the usual two.

Fully understanding the principles of the Green Star tool and applying them carefully at the pre-planning stage of the development has meant that the team has achieved a highly productive outcome in a record time, NZGBC chief executive Alex Cutler says.

"The building is a best practice result that will deliver an efficient, healthy and productive work environment — something that tenants are increasingly focused on.

"Third party confirmation with the Green Star rating allows tenants to place trust in the building, aligning their procurement decisions with organisational values," Ms Cutler says.

McConnell Property's Aidan Donnelly says everything about the 5300sq m Grade A building has been constructed with a mind to providing an efficient, light-infused workspace for up to 400 workers — "a beautiful, functional building that explicitly addresses the corner location, and one that is future-proofed so we can respond to our customers' changing needs," he says.

The six-level building will have four levels of office space and ground floor retail, opening out into open landscaped space, with art displays and cafe seating

on the paved courtyard planned for the new public area.

The building, due for completion in early July 2013, features extensive use of low E double-glazed glass with high U-value and shading co-efficients, thermo mass insulated panels and a fresh air VRV heat recovery system that enables smart temperature control and allows energy to be transferred within the building.

Some of its other green features include a Building Management System, energy efficient lighting systems, recycling facilities and bicycle parking.

It is expected the design of the building will lead to a reduction of energy usage of about 5% to 10% annually — a cost saving to tenants that is expected to be significant over time.

Mr Donnelly says despite extensive pre-planning, he was still pleasantly surprised that the building achieved its four-star rating with a minimum of fuss, and believes that the rating will become an increasingly important tool as the property and construction industry moves to keep up with new codes and regulations around building green.

"We wanted certification because it provides certainty to the occupiers at Citygate, and they can take comfort that McConnell Property has delivered on what we said we would in terms of the building's design and sensitivity to the location.

"As a result, I think Citygate will prove to be more flexible and adaptable to change, and more productive for these businesses.

"We are confident it was the right thing to do for our firm, the staff and people who will occupy the building and, ultimately, the people of Hamilton, who will have something striking, innovative and efficient for decades to come."

Citygate is the fifth Green Star certified building in the Waikato, although it is the first in a CBD location.



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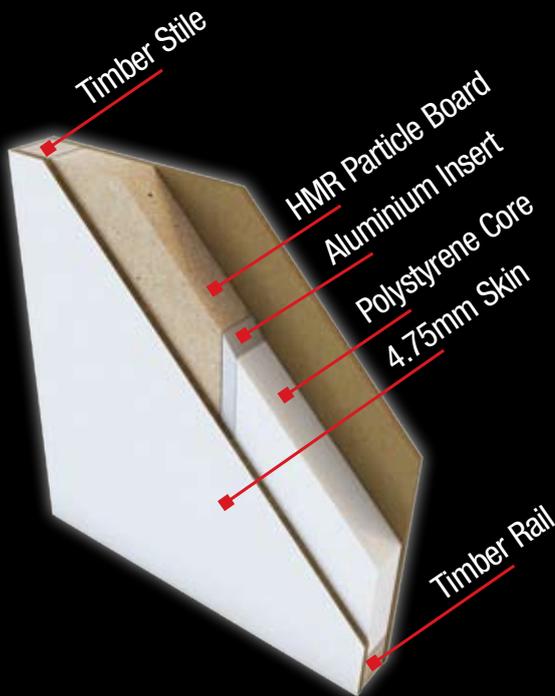
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news

No change to how Skills Maintenance is recorded

While the Skills Maintenance process is currently under review, Licensed Building Practitioners are still required to submit your Skills Maintenance Record points every two years in order to get relicensed.

Learning activities, for which LBPs earn points, demonstrate to the Registrar that you are keeping current with your skills set and sector knowledge.

The only change is that the Registrar no longer approves activities or lists these on the web site. The responsibility lies with the LBP to identify learning activities that will aid career development and demonstrate competency.

One hour of learning = 1 point

Learning activities must provide you with knowledge and experience relevant to your trade. This includes reading informative articles that aid in your learning development.

To relicense you must:

- Earn the minimum number of points specified in your licence class.
- Record your activities and claim one point for every one hour of learning.
- Seek out self-directed learning activities relevant to your licence class(es). These should enhance your skills, knowledge and/or productivity.
- Consider the competencies that are relevant to your licence class(es) in Schedule 1 of the LBP Rules. Check online at www.dbh.govt.nz/lbp-rules-2007.

The points allocated to your personal record inform the Registrar that you remain active in your personal skills development, and are keeping current with sector knowledge.

Keep a record of your progress

- Sign and date your evidence (receipt, notice, etc).
- Keep printed information of the seminar/workshop/presentation you attend. This can include flyers, mail notices, emails or a meeting agenda.
- Make a photocopy and/or keep details on materials you have read, eg, magazine issue and title, web site address, series of articles and author. If possible, print the page from the web site that you have read, studied or researched.
- Get written confirmation and documentation about job training, eg, induction, mentoring, supervising and apprenticeship.
- Use the online system. The simplest way to record and submit Skills Maintenance activities is online. The information is easily accessible, and can be reviewed by the Registrar. The online system acts like a diary that records activities "as you go". Avoid last minute panic to remember what you did during the past 24 months in this way.



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Market your business to me!

By Lifemark ambassador
Graeme Sinclair

It's no secret that the building industry has had a tough couple of years bearing the brunt of the economic downturn, but things are looking a little rosier, consumer confidence is up and New Zealand's faith in bricks and mortar investments is returning.

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Lifemark accreditation singles you out as a professional who can identify and build in features that allow a home to adapt to the changing needs of its occupants — which, let's face it, is common sense.

The Lifemark Design Standards are just that — common sense and easy living for a lifetime. Simple features such as level entry access, wider doorways, lever handles, even a bedroom on the ground floor which, when included in the design phase, cost no more than a standard build, but provide your clients with peace of mind that the home you've built them will last their lifetime.

If you want to stand out from the crowd and grab the opportunity to place your business ahead of the rest, call 0800 Lifemark, or email www.lifemark.co.nz today to find out more about becoming Lifemark accredited.



A level entry access home is one of the common sense features of the Lifetime Design Standards.



Lifemark ambassador Graeme Sinclair.

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\$2000 grants for BCITO apprentices and employers

The Government's recently released Reboot scheme will hopefully give the New Zealand construction industry a much needed lift.

So what's the deal?

The first 10,000 new apprentices who sign up for training after March 6, 2013, will be eligible to apply for a Government grant to help pay for tools and off-job training costs.

Employers will receive a grant equal to that of the apprentice, for as many apprentices that are signed up.

This deal is only available through Industry Training Organisations such as the BCITO. It is not available through polytechnics or any other training providers.

Given the 10,000 grants are across all industries in New Zealand, it is impossible to say how long they will be available for.

How much is it?

The grant will be either \$1000 or \$2000 depending on the trade it is in. BCITO Level 4 apprenticeships which attract the \$2000 grant include carpentry, tiling, masonry, brick and block laying, concreting and plastering.

How can you claim a grant?

Apprentices will need to be in a registered training agreement for 90 days before applying for a grant. This means the earliest that new apprentices can apply is June 4, 2013. Employers will apply for their grant alongside their apprentice.

Success will depend on whether an applicant meets the conditions set by the Government. As a general rule, if the apprentice doesn't qualify for a grant, neither will the employer.

After the 90-day period has lapsed, apprentices and employers will need to visit www.tec.govt.nz for instructions on how to claim the funding. This will involve filling out an application form and sending it in.

The BCITO will also notify eligible apprentices and their employers via mail when the time comes, and will do its best to get funding for as many eligible people as possible.

Rules

Please note that this is a government initiative, and is not being run by the BCITO. Therefore, the BCITO cannot guarantee grants for anyone. Full terms and conditions are available on the Tertiary Education Commission's web site at www.tec.govt.nz.

From the TEC web site

To be eligible for the Re-Boot subsidy, apprentices will:

- have signed a new industry training agreement commencing on or after March

6, 2013, and have been actively training for at least 90 days, and be either:

- an apprentice/trainee enrolled in a programme of study of at least 120 credits at Level 4 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF),
- or
- a Modern Apprentice enrolled in a programme of study at Levels 3 or 4 on the NZQF (for 2013 only),
- and
- not be in employment subsidised by a Ministry of Social Development (MSD) wage subsidy or other government funding, and
- have not already received, or have applied for, other government funding for tools and equipment.

For more information or to sign up an apprentice, call the BCITO on 0800 422 486, or speak with your BCITO Training Advisor.



**I reckon I was a good builder.
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If you are in a similar position to Peter, you may be eligible for the BCITO's Experience Recognition Process. To become a **qualified professional**, call the BCITO on 0800 422 486 to discuss your circumstances.

0800 422 486

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back in time

BT's Back in Time

Welcome to Back in Time, where we delve into our magazine archives and discover what was making news way back when . . .

20 years ago:

- Agreement was reached between the NZMBF and the ANZ Banking Group, which included Postbank at the time, on a home mortgage finance scheme enabling Master Builders members to refer their customers to the bank for mortgage assistance.

The scheme was established in response to builders losing business when, after discussing building projects, customers left the builder's office to unsuccessfully seek mortgage finance.

15 years ago:

- Gisborne builder Francis Yates was elected president of the NZMBF at the Federation's annual conference in Sydney.

Mr Yates was keen to continue the membership growth of the organisation, to promote the use of its logo by members, and to build the prestige of the House of the Year competition.

10 years ago:

- Minister of Commerce Lianne Dalziel opened the 2003 RMBF conference with promising words for the future of the building industry, and confirmed the release of the Building Industry Authority draft solution addressing the issue of treated and untreated timber.

RMBF chief executive Chris Preston welcomed the Minister's comments, saying the Federation was, like the Minister, focused on delivering a long-term solution to systemic failure, highlighted by the weathertightness debate.

5 years ago:

- Iconic New Zealand building company Lockwood launched a new range of EcoSmart homes to address increasing concerns about climate change and the impact construction has on the environment.

The first prototype in the range, the Gullwing EcoSmart show house on display at the company's headquarters in Rotorua, was officially opened by Leader of the Opposition John Key.

Lockwood chief executive Bryce Heard said moving into eco homes was a natural progression for the company which is already well known in New Zealand for building natural solid timber houses.

"Lockwood homes are already built using timber from fast-growing plantation trees which absorb more carbon than slower growing indigenous forests. Solid plantation timber is a sustainable renewable building material," Mr Heard said.

www.buildingtoday.co.nz

A Business Hub near you

The past two years has seen a roll out of Telecom Business Hubs throughout New Zealand, with Hubs in 29 regions servicing Northland right down to Southland.

The Business Hubs have been set up to service business customers at a local level — they are staffed by business telecommunications experts, and their job is to further understand their customer's business needs and ensure they are getting more value for money from their telecommunications services.

Their advice is free, and their services include:

- One-to-one conversations at their premises, at a time that's convenient to the customer.
- Helping select the right landline, mobile and online data back-up solutions.
- Regular business communication health checks to make sure customers are always on the right plan.

The Telecom Business Hub community is an energetic group of like-minded Kiwi businesses, passionate about realising their ambitions and sharing successes.

It is their job to understand your business, and how they can tailor the right telecommunications tools to help you succeed.

Giving a "face" to Telecom business customers and being their one point of contact in the region has already proven to be a success.

To find out more, and to book in for a free telecommunications health check, call 0800 BUS HUB (0800 287 482) or visit www.telecom.co.nz/business to find a Telecom Business Hub near you.

First business consultation winner found

McCallum Sharp of Leading Architectural Builders in Queenstown has won a free consultation with a Trades Coaching New Zealand consultant, where they will be able to receive advice on any aspect of the running and management of their business.

Building Today has partnered with Trades Coaching New Zealand to provide the small to medium businesses that make up the bulk of our readership the chance each month to win a free business consultation.

Just send us your contact details to go into the draw for a free consultation with a Trades Coaching New Zealand consultant.

The consultation could include anything to do with owning a business, including marketing strategies, financial reporting and management, planning, team strategies, implementation and communication skills, and motivational solutions.

To go into this month's draw, just email andrew@buildingtoday.co.nz, with the words Trades Coaching in the subject line. The winner will be drawn at 5pm on Tuesday, April 30, and be announced in the May issue of *Building Today*.

We'll catch up with the winner after their consultation and find out how their session went, and what they got out of it. So make sure you get your name into the draw now!

Company's excellence opens door to building new partnerships

Corinthian Doors' distinguished quality and service has earned further recognition in the New Zealand market after being specified by another key industry player, group house builder Dixon Homes.

Corinthian Doors New Zealand will supply doors through PlaceMakers to projects by Dixon Homes, one of Australia's largest group home builders which has begun to franchise in New Zealand, with operations in Mt Maunganui, Oamaru, Dunedin and Christchurch, along with other areas to be franchised during 2013.

"We are delighted we have been specified to supply Dixon Homes Mount Maunganui," Corinthian Doors New Zealand manager Douglas Stockenstroom says.

Corinthian Doors, Australia's largest timber door manufacturer, and part of the internationally-renowned JELD-WEN windows and doors family, is a premier manufacturer in New Zealand's building landscape.

The company creates synergy in its relationships with builders and building product distributors, including PlaceMakers, for the benefit of users of its quality door products.

With innovative design, its extensive range of interior and exterior doors, and its international reputation for quality, Corinthian Doors provides a boon to the product offering in New Zealand.

"We are excited about the new 2013 range that will be



made available mid-year that will include a number of innovative door products not currently available in the New Zealand market," Mr Stockenstroom says.

The company is pleased to be associated with key industry players in New Zealand who are committed to Corinthian's quality and service.

"We remain very optimistic about our long-term relationship with PlaceMakers. Corinthian Doors has an outstanding relationship with PlaceMakers, especially the Mount Maunganui branch previously managed by Wayne Minnell, who is now co-owner

with his brother Keith, of Dixon Homes.

"This relationship with Wayne Minnell assisted with the Corinthian Door brand being specified by Dixon," Mr Stockenstroom says.

Mr Minnell says he is eager to bring to Dixon Homes the strong relationship he had enjoyed with Corinthian Doors New Zealand while with PlaceMakers.

"During our tenure with PlaceMakers we had our own door hanging plant. Corinthian Doors was a great support to both our business and our customers," Mr Minnell says.

"PlaceMakers and Corinthian make a formidable partnership. For that reason alone, I would use no one else for hanging the doors for Dixon Homes."

Lee White of PlaceMakers Mount Maunganui says the relationship with Corinthian Doors would continue and expand.

"We deal with Corinthian Doors because of the excellent service from time of order to delivery. They are always happy to listen to any issues we have, and the company moves very quickly to solve any issues.

"They are always very approachable, right up to the manager," Mr White says.

"Dixon Homes and Corinthian Doors are future thinking companies who are moving ahead of the times. PlaceMakers wants to be aligned with forward thinking companies."

Industry-specific software has come a long way

Plusfactor wrote its first program for the construction industry in the mid-1980s — a very simple job costing application for Hartner Construction Ltd.

From that simple beginning, the company evolved initially into a complete suite of software written for DOS (remember that?) and, more recently, for Windows.

The latest edition of the software bears little resemblance to its predecessors.

There is a very powerful new Progress Claim routine that caters for residential, commercial and civil contracts, with fully detailed contract amounts, variations, retention handling, and items such as margins, materials on/off site etc.

There is also a smart routine for invoicing Charge-up Jobs that ensures every item that is charged to the Job gets invoiced to the client — thus guaranteeing full

margins are made.

Likewise, the program caters for Self Billing Invoices, with Variations and Retentions also correctly catered for. Both types of Retentions are detailed separately in the General Ledger from Debtors and Creditors, and GST is not charged until the Retentions are finally invoiced when released.

Withholding Tax on labour-only subcontractors is also catered for, and automatically returned to the IRD along with PAYE from the Payroll module to the irFile electronic system. No system can claim to be totally comprehensive if it does not feature its own Payroll fully integrated to the Jobs Ledger.

Plusfactor is designed so that if a Job is priced using the Quoting module then the relevant Purchase Orders are electronically created in the Purchase Ordering module. And when receipted, the Creditor Invoice is also created electronically in the Accounting module.

Eliminating multiple keying of data means faster, more accurate processing.

Plusfactor is very "web-aware", and all documents such as Quotes, Invoices, Purchase Orders and Payslips can be emailed direct from the package, and the Cash Book features electronic payments through any New Zealand bank.

Plusfactor has a user base extending from Kerikeri to Invercargill — all supported 24/7 from the company's offices in Auckland.

The company provides obligation-free, on-line demonstrations for any prospective buyer with a web browser. No software is required for this.

Plusfactor staff have accumulated a wealth of knowledge on the idiosyncrasies of the construction industry, and their latest software fully reflects this knowledge. If your current software is beyond its use-by date, give Plusfactor a call.

Ruamoko offers to share new advances in seismic design

By Roy Kane

In Maori mythology, Ruamoko is first and foremost the god of earthquakes: Ruamoko Solutions, established in Christchurch in 2006, is a firm of consulting structural engineers specialising in structural design solutions that mitigate the damage occurring in buildings subjected to major earthquakes.

Its founders are Grant Wilkinson, previously a director of Holmes Consulting Group, and Julian Ramsay, also formerly of the Holmes Consulting Group, and Ruamoko's senior structural engineer.

Mr Wilkinson has won several industrial awards, including the New Zealand Engineering Award for the Christchurch Women's Hospital building.

"We are passionate about earthquake engineering," Mr Wilkinson says, "and have strong ties to leading edge research which enables us to pioneer seismic design for the Christchurch rebuild."

Research initiated by a post graduate student at the University of Toronto attracted attention from Ruamoko, as Mr Ramsay explains.

"In 2010, Nabil Mansour was testing his thesis that a shear link designed for an Eccentrically Braced Frame (EBF) could be replaced after a major earthquake," Mr Ramsay says.

"His removable link featured a bolted moment endplate connection, which would allow easy removal and replacement on-site. Nabil's link successfully demonstrated satisfactory levels of ductility, as well as an ability to contain the damage safely.

"Spurred by the Christchurch quakes, the Ruamoko team felt strongly motivated to carry out further research and develop connection design procedures for the link.

"We worked closely with Steel Construction New Zealand. SCNZ manager Alistair Fussell also engaged Dr Charles Clifton, Associate Professor of Civil Engineering at the University



The links to the columns at the edge of the structure.

of Auckland, to help produce design guidelines based on the Canadian research but with adjustments for New Zealand standards and practice," Mr Ramsay says.

The design and build contractor, Armitage Williams Construction, which has a reputation for applying creative solutions to its projects, decided to incorporate the new EBF technology in two new office buildings it wanted to erect on Christchurch's Lincoln Road, hereafter referred to as Three35.

Director Ben Harrow was pleased with Jasmox Ltd's architectural design, which included a 185-space car park building, kept separate according to the principles of modern urban design.

He stipulated that in the office buildings, the structure should be in steel to take full advantage of the latest earthquake damage avoidance technology.

Mr Ramsay says the principle is essentially similar to a fuse in an electrical fuse box. "The weakest link is chosen to yield in a ductile manner by way of special steel detailing. As it yields, it absorbs and dissipates energy from the earthquake and, thereby, protects the adjacent steel elements from being damaged.

"Thus, repair is minimised to the replacement of the bolted shear link — a vast improvement over what used to happen with earlier design systems when yielding was less concentrated, adjacent steel members were weakened and had to be cut out and replaced for the building's structural integrity to be restored.

"Invariably there was extensive on-site welding, and the building's return to use was delayed. Today, this can be avoided and the building promptly returned to full use," Mr Ramsay says.

Pegasus Engineering Ltd won the sub-contract for the fabrication and erection of the steel. Production manager Brett Dodds gives his first

impression of the Ruamoko engineering design: "At a glance it looked pretty straightforward, a simple K-frame design that the Pegasus fabrication team has done many times. But when we examined Ruamoko's design closely, it raised questions about weldability that told us this was no ordinary old K-frame," Mr Dodds says.

"Full penetration welding was required on 95% of the frames. This meant we would need to pay particular attention to the welding procedures and the sequence of operations, as well as distortion and shrinkage. Pegasus has proven experience in heavy welding, so we had no difficulty with the required welding procedures.

"Likewise, with the sequence of operations, the EBFs were comprised of floor beams, columns and braces which could each be fabricated separately and combined into sub-assemblies.

"The challenges that presented themselves involved the amount of shrinkage in the sub-assemblies and the distortion of the main frame

Continued page 33



The nearest frames show the links at the apex of the EBFs.

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The accuracy of the assembly is checked on the Pegasus workshop floor



A Pegasus welder does some back-gouging.



The Pegasus collector beam is spliced to the active link.



The steelwork is moved on site, ready for erection.



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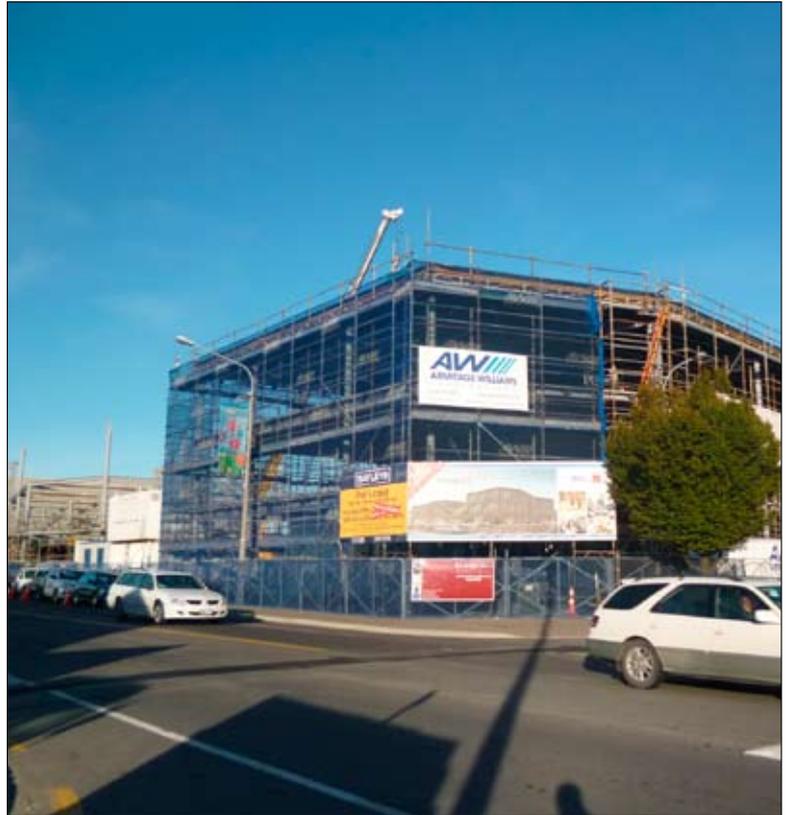
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Third party ultra-sonic testing passes only 100% welds.



The first building nears completion and, to the left, construction of the second building makes rapid progress.

From page 31

assemblies after these had been fully welded.

"It was only by dint of on-the-job trial and error that we were able to predetermine length changes and pre-sets. As we progressed along this learning curve, we were able to up the tempo of our throughput while maintaining the highest levels of quality assurance.

"All the frames and their adjoining assemblies (columns & link members) were trial-fitted in the Pegasus workshop to ensure that the on-site fit-up would go smoothly. Once all the welding was completed, the final third party 100% ultra-sonic test and the visual weld examinations were carried out.

"Day after day our welders proved that they were at the top of their game. This was a very intense fabrication and welding project with many long hours for our teams, yet very few defects were detected and repairs were minimal," Mr Dodds says.

Armitage Williams' Ben Harrow was impressed. "We're very happy with the design, and see it as the best way to build in an area where seismic activity can be expected, in Christchurch or any New Zealand city similarly

Continued page 34

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Render of the entrance to Three35 from Bernard Street (provided by Jasmax).

From page 33

prone to earthquakes. This kind of structure will last for at least the next 80 years," Mr Harrow says.

Jasmax architect Richard Hayman says once the decision to go with steel was made, "it was logical that expressed steel elements should become part of the architectural design".

Mr Ramsay says his company's first priority as structural engineering consultants is to design buildings that give the people who work in them protection from drastic collapse.

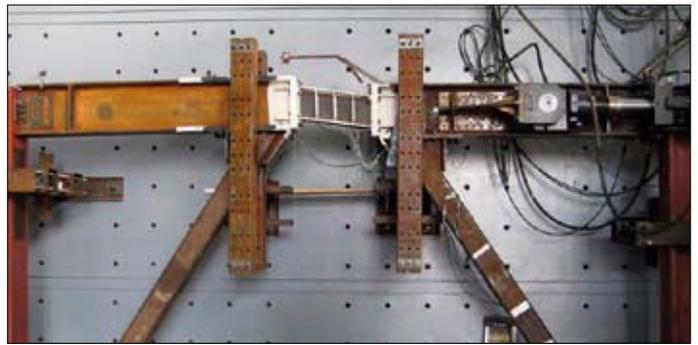
"In recent times we've seen the technology make great progress in this direction, addressing the danger from fires, wind and, of course, earthquakes.

"Our second priority is to protect the economic life of a building, so that even after a violent earthquake it has the ability to recover quickly and return to business as usual.

"There are people who want to know if Three35 is a first for New Zealand, or even a first in the world. For Ruamoko, what's more important is that other structural engineers, developers and building owners will be prompted to look closely at the technology we've used, and recognise the advantages it offers for new buildings and for the retrofitting and earthquake strengthening of existing buildings.

"We leave medal honours to sport, and would be more than happy to share what we know with others who need to know," Mr Ramsay says.

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University of Toronto research shows a bolted shear link that has yielded under stress testing.



On the corner of Bernard Street and Lincoln Road (rendering by Jasmax Ltd).



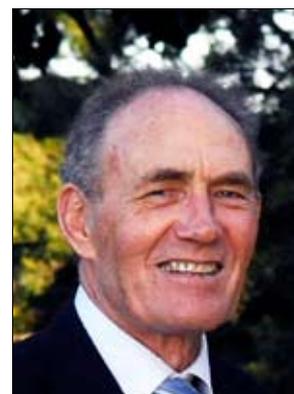
An artist's rendering (provided by Jasmax Ltd) of Three35 on Lincoln Road, Christchurch.



Interior showing a café tenancy (already booked) in which the steel will be left expressed (site images provided by Armitage Williams).

Home sweet home?

Architect **Don Bunting** rattles off some more random observations about the construction and associated industries. This month: Will the Government ever come up with some answers — and incentives — for affordable housing?



I started my career as an architect — using the word in its narrowest sense — designing council housing in Manchester.

At that time “public” housing was strictly controlled by central government but delivered via local authorities. The method of control was simple — you must design housing in accordance with government guidelines if you want access to cheap funding.

Public housing built in the UK in the 30 years from 1950 was a mix of two-storey terraces, maisonettes (2/2 storey units above each other) 4-6 storey estate blocks (check out *The Bill* on TV) and a relatively small number of tower blocks.

By the late 1960s and 70s, tower blocks were falling out of favour due to some spectacular structural failures and growing social problems arising from high-rise living.

The key drivers for this UK boom in housing activity were the Second World War, to replace housing destroyed by bombing, responding to the post-war baby-boom and the growing employment needs of a recovering economy.

People needed a reasonable standard of affordable housing — to rent or buy — in close proximity to where they worked. A small number of “new towns” were created, but most rebuilding occurred near existing city centres and places of employment, as brownfields rather than greenfields developments.

This kept a city’s residential areas reasonably compact, and reduced infrastructure costs — including roads, public transport, water, power and waste services.

This leads on to the current political debate around the rebuilding of residential Christchurch, meeting the needs of a rapidly expanding Auckland population, and the current inter-party battle of creating so-called “affordable” housing.

For some reason, a magical figure of \$300,000 is the benchmark. With the average cost of a new or existing house in greater Auckland climbing over \$500K, our political masters must be considering alternative housing options.

So why are land and building costs as high as they are? It’s a fairly obvious formula — the purchase cost of raw land, plus ridiculously high development levies and fees by local authorities, plus high standards of

infrastructure (roads, footpaths, services, required reserve areas), plus a high ratio of expensive, imported building materials. And then add in a relatively high wage economy. Result? Expensive housing.

Add on market pressures from a shortage of the right housing in the right areas, plus residential property being seen as an investment, and the result is an inflated housing market.

There is also the increasing expectations of the home owner — houses are becoming bigger and are constructed to higher standards — for example, insulation levels, higher quality services and appliances, and double glazing.

A related issue is that because of the high cost of purchasing and developing inner city land, developers need to build larger, more luxurious and, therefore, more expensive houses to make a profit.

Stonefields in Auckland is a good example of a new, inner city, brownfields development. Even with a mix of stand-alone and terrace housing, all on small sites, the average cost per dwelling starts above \$700K. That’s a lot more than the apparently politically-acceptable figure of \$300K for affordable housing.

In the mid-1970s, when the average annual wage was \$5000, a typical inner-city suburban home was worth around \$45,000, or nine times a single annual income.

And back in those dark ages, single income families were the norm. Using the same ratio, to afford an average Auckland home of \$500K, you would seem to need an annual income of \$55,500. This seems quite close to today’s average single income of \$45K to 55K but, unfortunately, life and lifestyles have moved on.

Taxes, especially indirect taxes (GST, tax on luxuries and petrol), have increased exponentially, as have our core expectations of a good lifestyle — mobile phones, computers/internet, pay TV, eating out and international holidays.

I’m no economist but I suspect that \$55K today won’t support anywhere near the same relatively comfortable lifestyle as \$5K did in 1975. Even two-income households earning in excess of \$100K are struggling to afford today’s house prices.

So what is the answer? Accepting lower levels of home ownership (ie, more rental housing)? Higher density developments and/or apartments rather than

single, stand-alone homes? Lower land prices? Lower infrastructure standards?

All are probably part of the mix, but where is the innovation? Where are the proposals for the factory building of houses, either as whole dwellings or as a series of modules?

Where are the new approaches to how we subdivide, including shared car access, shared parking areas and shared open space — check out Auckland’s Star flats — on smaller (say 200sq m per unit) building sites?

Where are the designs for simple, compact dwellings of 100sq m rather than McMansions of 250sq m or more, complete with multiple heat pumps and \$60K kitchens?

But more important, where are the government incentives to build better but more economically? Where are the housing subsidies, tax breaks and affordable mortgages via the Super fund?

I wish our politicians would stop bitching and come up with a few answers. I’m guessing they won’t.

House inspectors’ liability

From page 38

negligence to the damage to the property at 50%.

- The judge found that the inspector had breached section 9 of the Fair Trading Act as his report was capable of misleading, did in fact mislead the plaintiffs, and it was reasonable for the plaintiffs to be misled in the circumstances.

We invite any persons interested in discussing these issues further, or obtaining a copy of this case, to contact the offices of Legal Vision.

Note: This article is not intended to be legal advice (nor a substitute for legal advice). No responsibility nor liability is accepted by Legal Vision or *Building Today* to anyone who relies on the information contained in this article.



The world's largest greenhouse

Dr Kerry Rodgers gets down to earth with the Eden Project

The world's largest greenhouse is the brainchild of Tim Smit. He wanted a way of showing the connection between plants and people. The upshot was the Eden Project in Cornwall, England.

The complex at Eden is dominated by two vast dome-shaped enclosures. Each contains an artificial replica of a natural biome — a geographical community of plants and animals defined largely by its climate. Conditions within one dome replicate a tropical climate, in the other a Mediterranean environment.



Panoramic view of the geodesic dome structures of the Eden Project.

The entire Eden Project is housed in a 160 year old exhausted china clay quarry. The ground is irregular, and domes were chosen to house the biomes because of the manner in which bubbles mould themselves to any surface on which they sit. The principal architect apparently got the idea while doing the washing up.

The steel frames of the domes are constructed from tubular steel (hex-tri-hex) formed into hundreds of hexagonal and pentagonal cells.

The cells vary in size up to nine metres across, and the largest are at the top of the structure that is essentially geodesic and, as such, completely self-supporting.



Geodesic cells as viewed from inside a dome.

Most of the external panels are clad with thermoplastic ETFE. Glass was not used due to its weight and the potential hazard it posed.

Each cladding panel was formed from several layers of thin UV-transparent ETFE film, sealed around their perimeter, and inflated to create a large cushion. These cushions provide a thermal blanket for the entire structure. Any punctures are repaired by ETFE tape.

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The ETFE plastic is dirt-resistant, with any residue washing off in the plentiful English rain. When required, external cleaning is done by abseilers.



Inside the Humid Tropics Biome.

The project was constructed as one of the UK's Landmark Millennium Projects. It was designed by architect Nicholas Grimshaw, in collaboration with engineers Anthony Hunt and Associates. Construction was by Sir Robert McAlpine Ltd and Alfred McAlpine. It took two and a half years to complete, and was opened to the public on March 17, 2001. In December 2010, the Eden Project received permission to build a geothermal electricity plant that will generate some 4MWe, enough to supply the needs of Eden and about 5000 households.



Bruce Munro's Field of Light installation, made up of more than 15,000 separate lights, was installed at the Eden Project in 2008-09.

If you wish to examine the greenhouses close up, they have been accessible on Google Street View since December 2009. And fans of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* will wish to learn that, in 1981, the former clay pit provided the surface of the planet Magrathea in the TV series.

Liability of pre-purchase house inspectors

Tim Bates and Sarah Wray of Auckland law firm Legal Vision discuss a recent decision of the High Court which is a must read for pre-purchase house inspectors.



In the case of *Hepburn & Others v Cunningham Contracts Ltd & Another* [2013] NZHC 210, the plaintiffs purchased a property in reliance on a pre-purchase inspection report, but the house was later found to have significant weathertightness issues.

The plaintiffs argued (among other things) that the inspector owed implied obligations to carry out the pre-purchase inspection with reasonable skill and care. The inspector accepted that he owed an obligation of reasonable skill and care, but argued it was limited as it was in the context of a “quick check” visual inspection for a minimal fee.

What was the scope of the inspector’s duty of care?

There was no written term in the contract between the plaintiffs and inspector that reasonable skill and care was required in carrying out his inspection. Nonetheless, courts may imply a term into a certain type of contract because the term is necessary in that class of contract.

In the context of a pre-purchase inspector where skill is the point of the contract, a requirement of

reasonable skill and care will always be implied. Even without that, a duty in tort would be in similar terms. The inspector accepted this.

However, a question for the court was, what does reasonable skill and care entail in the context of a visual inspection and written report about the state of a dwelling, priced at \$284.45 plus GST?

The level of skill and care a reasonable pre-purchase inspector should display will be what is necessary for the reasonable operation of the type of contract concerned. Relevant circumstances in this case were:

- Any negotiated limits on scope: The inspector argued that there was a waiver clause attached to both his acceptance form and invoice, which meant that the plaintiffs agreed the inspector was not responsible for undetected defects.

However, as the plaintiffs never received a copy of the acceptance form, they did not see the waiver before the inspection took place and report issued. By the time the plaintiffs received the invoice the contract had already been formed and, therefore, the waiver was not part of the contract.

In any event, express and clear words are required to negate liability for negligence and the usual wording accepted by the courts as exclusionary (eg, “no responsibility whatsoever” or “no responsibility”) were not reflected in the waiver the inspector supplied.

- What was at stake for the plaintiffs: The report was the plaintiffs’ only protection against spending \$655,000 on a defective house.

- Price: The price of the inspection was relatively cheap. It only took about two hours and on the invoice was dubbed a “quick check”. It was not a Rolls Royce service and did not hold itself out to be.

- Visual inspection: The inspection was visual only, with no invasive or destructive investigation undertaken.

- The Standard: On the day the inspector undertook the inspection, he signed a certificate that he had carried out his inspection in accordance with NZS 4306:2005 — the New Zealand standard in relation to residential property inspections (the Standard).

While it is never the case that an industry standard or practice will automatically become the legal standard for litigation purposes, the Standard was nonetheless given considerable weight in establishing the content of an inspector’s legal duties — first because of the presence of the certificate, and second, because

(among other things) the Standard was a broad consensus on what kind of performance was acceptable within the industry in 2005.

Based on the judge’s above analysis, he found that the scope of the inspector’s duty in this case to be:

- To point out significant faults observable in a basic visual inspection of the dwelling, using a reasonable degree of skill and care.
- To point out the presence of other significant weathertightness risk factors where these are observable in a basic visual inspection of the dwelling using reasonable skill and care.
- To summarise the overall state of the dwelling in light of its age and construction and any major faults or other risk factors identified (“faults” including weathertightness risks that arise because of faults in construction, even where such faults have not caused observable moisture incursion).
- To summarise the foregoing in terms understandable to the client.

The judge held that the inspector did not exercise reasonable skill and care in undertaking his inspection or in reporting on that inspection to the plaintiffs. Even accepting that the service provided a “quick check” visual inspection involving no more than two hours’ work or so and costing less than \$300, the inspector failed in two key areas:

- First, he failed to identify significant and obviously observable weathertightness faults and risk features (including insufficient capillary gaps on the bottom edge of lower floor cladding columns and deck).
- Second, even in respect of the faults he did identify, he failed to communicate to the plaintiffs the full implications of those faults and, therefore, the extent of the weathertightness risk associated with the dwelling (including that the building was more than two storeys and in a high wind zone).

Hepburn is a valuable case in assessing the (potential) liability of pre-purchase house inspectors, but due to its length not all issues were able to be traversed in this article. However, two further points deserve mention:

- The judge found that the plaintiffs contributed to the deterioration of the building between purchase and remediation due to their failure to properly address some of the problems identified in the inspector’s report, and set the contribution of the plaintiffs’

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Building Consents Information

For All Authorisations, February 2013

Dwellings	\$551,969,000
Domestic Outbuildings	\$9,207,000
Total Residential	\$561,176,000
Non-residential	\$284,547,000
Total All Buildings	\$845,723,000
Non-building Construction	\$21,158,000
Total Authorisations	\$866,881,000

Number of new dwellings consented

	Feb 2013	Jan 2013	Feb 2012	Feb 2013	Jan 2013	Feb 2012
Far North District	11	7	16	Horowhenua District	8	3
Whangarei District	25	36	47	Kapiti Coast District	10	7
Kaipara District	9	12	16	Porirua City	10	13
Rodney District	69	100	65	Upper Hutt City	14	21
North Shore City	79	30	40	Lower Hutt City	8	9
Waitakere City	41	52	41	Wellington City	23	24
Auckland City	173	83	91	Masterton District	5	9
Manukau City	38	32	47	Carterton District	9	6
Papakura District	43	51	17	South Wairarapa District	2	3
Franklin District	36	33	16	Tasman District	19	21
Thames-Coromandel District	14	8	14	Nelson City	31	23
Hauraki District	3	0	5	Marlborough District	21	7
Waikato District	33	20	16	Kaikoura District	6	4
Matamata-Piako District	8	7	9	Buller District	8	1
Hamilton City	82	29	32	Grey District	4	0
Waipa District	27	21	15	Westland District	2	5
Otorohanga District	2	1	2	Hurunui District	13	14
South Waikato District	2	1	2	Waimakariri District	105	103
Waitomo District	0	2	3	Christchurch City	158	152
Taupo District	6	6	14	Selwyn District	20	58
Western Bay of Plenty District	32	25	15	Ashburton District	22	20
Tauranga City	52	54	45	Timaru District	16	14
Rotorua District	6	8	6	Mackenzie District	4	9
Whakatane District	5	1	5	Waimate District	5	2
Kawerau District	0	0	0	Chatham Islands Territory	0	0
Opotiki District	0	0	0	Waitaki District	7	6
Gisborne District	11	2	9	Central Otago District	10	10
Wairoa District	0	3	0	Queenstown-Lakes District	25	36
Hastings District	13	11	14	Dunedin City	26	12
Napier City	6	9	17	Clutha District	1	1
Central Hawke's Bay District	1	3	0	Southland District	3	4
New Plymouth District	27	28	18	Gore District	1	0
Stratford District	3	1	5	Invercargill City	9	4
South Taranaki District	3	7	2	Area Outside TA	0	0
Ruapehu District	2	1	5			
Wanganui District	9	1	6	Total	1493	1312
Rangitikei District	0	0	1			1204
Manawatu District	5	14	11			
Palmerston North City	11	12	10			
Tararua District	1	0	3			

- Based on 2006 census areas
- Each dwelling unit in a housing project is counted separately
- Figures in these tables may differ from published statistics

Source: Statistics New Zealand

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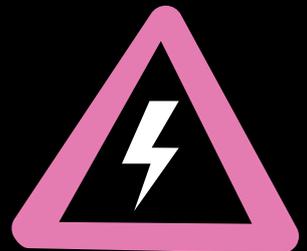
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SPEND OVER \$250^{EXCL GST} ON ANY PRODUCTS IN THE CARTERS APRIL SALE ALERT MAILER AND GET A FREE OCEAN ANGLER LURE SET!*

*Terms and Conditions: Purchases must be made during 1st to 30th April 2013. Qualifying customers must spend over \$250 excluding GST on any products from the Carters April Sale Alert mailer. Entry is automatic on invoices raised for Trade account holders. Qualifiers are based on invoice date not order date. Open to trade account holders and cash sales. Cash Sales customers will need to complete an entry form at time of purchase. To be eligible for the reward qualifying customers must meet Carters Standard Credit Criteria and have complied with Carters Standard Terms and Conditions of Sale, both during the promotion period and up until the reward is received. Maximum of one Ocean Angler Lure set per customer. The actual reward may differ slightly from that pictured. Limited stock of Ocean Angler Lure sets available, while stocks last. An alternative reward may be offered at the discretion of Carters. Reward cannot be substituted for cash or alternatives. Offer not valid with any other promotion running concurrently. Staff of Carter Holt Harvey Limited are ineligible to qualify. Reward is distributed after the promotion is completed.

CARTERS

Your **Building** Partner