



# building today

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS FEDERATION



## RMBF Conference 2013: Summary, Pics and Honours



Life Membership

Michael Fox

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# building today

Once again the RMBF's annual conference in Dunedin last month was one not to be missed. Experiencing the innovative features of conference venue the Forsyth Barr Stadium was one of the highlights, along with the memorable social events, with the standout being the main conference dinner held at Larnach Castle.

Read *Building Today's* coverage of the event in this issue.

We also cover the RMBF Life Membership bestowed upon one of the hardest-working, and nicest, men in the industry — Mike Fox, from Wellington.

Congratulations.

**Andrew Darlington**  
Editor



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# chief's chat

by ceo warwick quinn

## Where's the risk?



It's time to do two things — two things that we have been saying now for some time that we cannot afford to dither on.

They are both on the Government's radar (so they are not new or radical), but both are essential to ensure we can operate efficiently and build the houses we need as quickly as we can without hold-up or interruption.

Those two things are risk-based consenting and sorting out Health and Safety in residential construction. This editorial will look briefly at risk-based consenting and then I will discuss Health and Safety in next month's issue

Those of you who attended our RMBF's national conference in Dunedin recently heard me talk about this. We all know why councils are risk averse when you consider Building Consent Authority (BCA) accreditation, liability, re-insurance requirements, the legacy of leaky buildings etc — so who can blame them?

But interestingly, the very buildings that are the highest risk (should they

fail) are the very ones that BCAs risk management practices default to the private sector to cover.

For those high risk and heavily populated commercial buildings, apartment complexes, hotels and the like, BCAs require peer reviews, producer statements and quality plans etc — as they should.

Why can't we self-certify certain key stages in the construction process? Why can't we introduce an accreditation regime for construction companies so that those that meet certain criteria are free to get on with it?

But we cannot continue to look through that lens as we will never make any progress.

Yet the low-rise, low-risk residential homes are crawled all over, requiring endless paperwork, umpteen inspections and too much regulatory intervention for the risk.

Now some will argue "but look at leaky buildings", and that is true.

We now have a new building code, LBPs, compulsory skills maintenance, treated timber and a whole raft of other changes to arrest that terrible era in our construction history.

It is time to move forward otherwise the Canterbury rebuild will be strangled — and we are seeing the effects of that already, with the Christchurch City Council unable to cope.

Why? Because we are trying to fix new problems with old solutions. Trying to get the hamster to run faster and faster on an ever enlarging wheel. The system was never designed to cope with such a paradigm — so change it!

The answer is already in legislation — risk-based consenting. For low-rise, low-risk residential homes, take off the regulatory reigns and let us builders get on with the job.

There is no increase in risk as these homes are low risk by design. And if other protections are in place there is absolutely no need for heavy BCA oversight, and the consumer can rest easy.

Why can't we self-certify certain key stages in the construction process? Why can't we introduce an accreditation regime for construction companies so that those that meet certain criteria are free to get on with it?

Imagine the savings it would make, and the impact on housing affordability and the speed of construction. Why can't the process used in commercial construction be used in residential? No reason at all.

The regulatory regime needs to adjust, and not treat every new home as high-risk, not check every pencil that the pencil factory manufactures, but ensure quality and compliance by other means, such as accreditation by recognising a building company's quality systems and processes backed up by home warranties, and complemented with an audit process to ensure those systems are operating.

We have to do this now, and it can be done sensibly without throwing the baby out with the bathwater — such as introducing it for all homes first with an E2/AS1 score of 8 or less and, once we are comfortable with the development of the regime, lift it to a higher threshold.

After all, most stand-alone homes in New Zealand don't exceed this risk score, so the productivity gains would be immense.

# One in three — Guaranteed

Home warranty a complex issue that insurance industry and Government is wary of

By RMBF president

David Fabish

**W**hy do one in three homes now being built in New Zealand carry a Master Build Guarantee?

Registered Master Builders have traditionally enjoyed a very strong market share of the residential building sector, and it has been interesting to watch this market share continually grow throughout the recent recessionary years.

Data from Master Build Guarantee sales indicate that more discerning clients are choosing to use a

Registered Master Builder to build their home, and one of our Guarantees to protect their investment.

The Master Build Guarantee completely dominates the New Zealand home warranty sector, with four times the market share of anyone else. So why do so many clients want this product?

There is no doubt that consumer confidence

in the building industry has been severely dented by



the leaky building saga, and clients are wary about who they engage with to build their homes — and who could blame them?

Data from Master Build Guarantee sales indicate that more discerning clients are choosing to use a Registered Master Builder to build their home and one of our Guarantees to protect their investment.

LBP scheme will, once and for all, exit the incompetent

operators out of our industry and allow the good builders to do what they do best — produce good quality homes for their clients.

Perhaps the last piece of the puzzle for ultimate client protection is a national home warranty or guarantee scheme to ensure protection, even if the builder is no longer in business.

Home warranty is a complex issue, and one the insurance industry and Government is understandably wary of.

## Consumer choice

There are proponents of compulsory home warranty insurance. I think this should be a matter of consumer choice, but every builder should have the ability to offer it to their clients.

Australia has a mandatory home warranty scheme, but it can have some unintended consequences.

I remember holidaying in Melbourne about a decade ago when the biggest Australian home warranty provider HIH Ltd collapsed.

The local papers were full of stories of multiple stopped jobs, and the entire home building industry being paralysed with no work for three months, and with no end in sight. It was terrifying reading!

Ultimately, our Government will decide which scheme we end up with in New Zealand, but it's clear that the Guarantee offered by Registered Master Builders is valued, proven and effective in looking after our clients' interests.

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# Building success with architect's own home

John Harris of Harris Builders was extremely surprised when his Nelson entry was read out as the winner of the Westpac New Homes \$600,000 - \$1 million category at the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year.

He says there were a lot of entries in this category and all of a very high calibre, but he believes the high level of craftsmanship in this build made it particularly attractive to the judges.

"The design of this home enabled us to do a lot of carpentry work that really demonstrated our skills — there was a lot of internal and exterior timber work, including cedar sunscreens and interior staircases and floors, which required flawless execution to look good," he says.

"This home is an architect's own home, which meant that standards and expectations were even higher than usual — the finishing and detailing had to be perfect in order to showcase the architecture."

Mr Harris says being a House of the Year award winner and a Registered Master Builder is a feather in his hat with clients and architects.

"Clients and architects like to see the Master Build Guarantee — and being a member increases their respect for us as a business," he says.

"I think the fact that we have previously won House of the Year awards certainly had something to do with the architect approaching us to execute this build for him.

"We've seen a definite increase in traffic through our web site since House of the Year — it's a fantastic promotional tool."

The judges hailed the Nelson home as a very worthy winner of a highly contested category.

"This is a stunning home that has it all, from beautifully finished and detailed interior elements of polished concrete and American Hard Maple floors, to superb outdoor living and entertaining options," they said.

"This comfortable home serves its family well with exceptional use of natural timber and stone, brought together with superb workmanship by a builder who is quite rightly proud of his craft."

Mr Harris says he has some exciting projects in the pipeline, and he is looking forward to this year's House of the Year competition.

"We've got a few houses on the go at the moment, and a couple of major several million dollar homes coming up in the



*This Harris Builders entry won the Westpac New Homes \$600,000 - \$1 million category at the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year.*



*From left: John and Jo Harris of Harris Builders, and clients Raphaella and Richard Carver.*

next year or so," he says.

"We will absolutely continue to enter the competition. This year, we have a renovation entered as something a bit different. Hopefully, we'll enjoy the same success we had in 2012!"

The Awards are made possible through the support of PlaceMakers, James Hardie, GIB, Nulook, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 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](http://www.masterbuilder.org.nz).

## Five-year wait to create the ultimate energy-efficient home

Allan Wallace of Allan Wallace Builders Ltd was ecstatic when he was announced as the winner of the BRANZ Sustainable Homes \$500,000 - \$1 million award at the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year — particularly after a long wait for technology to meet the client's sustainability needs.

Mr Wallace says his winning Rodney home is exceptionally special, with extremely rare energy efficiency qualities that made it stand out from others in the category.

"This home really is one of a kind — it is unusual in that it has no windows and the walls are made up of 93% glass. To meet the client's sustainability needs, we waited five years for technology to catch up so we didn't compromise the home's aesthetic elements," he says.

"The brief from the client was that they wanted all the modern toys and gadgets as well as extensive energy efficiency. Coupled with a very exposed and oddly shaped site, this build required a lot of attention to detail and a lot of technical consideration."

The judges called the winning home a fabulous symmetrically planned house that incorporates a multitude of heat capturing, energy saving and power providing components.

"The owners had a very clear view on their sustainable lifestyle requirements and have set about creating a home that provides this in spades," they said.

"Thicker than normal interior concrete floors, extensive insulation, low E glazing and wood burning fires throughout provide a thermal mass requiring zero input from local facilities. This is a simple, beautifully built, uncomplicated yet ultra efficient home that is a perfect fit for the owners' lifestyle."

Mr Wallace says winning House of the Year is recognition for his team, and confirmation that his business stacks up against others in the industry.

"Winning these awards tends to be a real achievement for my son and the guys who work for me — they just love it, and they pride themselves on working for an award-winning company," he says.

"Being able to say they worked on a home that won a House of the Year award is also a fantastic testament for the younger builders' CVs, which means they really get something back from



*This Allan Wallace Builders Ltd entry won the BRANZ Sustainable Homes \$500,000 - \$1 million award at the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2012 House of the Year.*



*From left: Builder Allan Wallace, Dougal Watt (home owner), Dale Wallace (Allan's wife), Sarah Sutherland (home owner) and Pieter Burghout, the then BRANZ chief executive.*

the competition.

"In this industry, it's very difficult to judge where you sit among your peers. You can listen to feedback from clients and others you cross paths with but, ultimately, the way to gauge how you're doing is through House of the Year."

The Awards are made possible through the support of PlaceMakers, James Hardie, GIB, Nulook, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 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](http://www.masterbuilder.org.nz).

## Apprentice takes the plunge for second year running

**B**ill Harkness reckons competing in last year's Registered Master Builders Carters 2012 Apprentice of the Year has given him the edge for this year's competition, and he is looking forward to giving other New Zealand apprentices a run for their money.

After taking out third place in the Hawke's Bay region last year, Bill, of Redmond Builders and Construction, is competing in the East Coast/Bay of Plenty region in the hope of bettering his win.

He says last year's Apprentice of the Year competition has taught him what to expect this year and which areas he needs to work on.

"I definitely went harder with my entry form and put a lot more effort into my project submission this year. After last year, I felt like I needed to be more in-depth," he says.

"I don't think I realised how important the written entry is — if that's not up to scratch and you aren't prepared for your interview, you won't even make the regional final. Being a builder is such a hands-on job

that some people may think the written side is insignificant.

"This year I have a much clearer understanding of the level I need to perform at and the people I'm competing against. I'm a lot more confident."

Bill says that attitude goes a long way in the Apprentice of the Year competition.

"I know I'm very lucky to be doing something that I'm so passionate about. After nearly three and a half years, I'm still excited about getting out of bed and going to work as a builder each day," he says.

"Enjoying your work really impacts the way you approach it. I take pride in being the first one onsite and being proactive around health and safety.

"I think attitude is a huge part of Apprentice of the Year — it was this and having a great project entry that helped me succeed last year.

"This year, I'm aiming to improve on last year's third place win. I think that with anything, you should always be looking to better yourself wherever you can, and Apprentice of the Year is a platform for that."

Bill says any apprentices who are eligible to enter Apprentice of the Year next year should do it.

"The competition is well worth entering — it's such a valuable experience. You learn some great skills, and even just looking at some of the prizes you can win makes it worth it.

"And best of all is the exposure — it really gets your name out there."

Regional awards ceremonies kicked off in the East Coast/Bay of Plenty region on August 23. The 2013 national Apprentice of the Year will be announced at a gala dinner in Auckland on October 11.

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](http://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).

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# 'No worthier recipient' receives Life Membership accolade

**R**egistered Master Builders Federation president David Fabish was thrilled to present a Life Membership to Michael Fox, a long-standing contributor to the organisation both locally and nationally, at its recent AGM.

Joining the Wellington Association as a probationary member in February 1982, his original company was M J Fox Construction. Twelve months later he was confirmed as a full member.

Mr Fox established Primesite Homes Ltd in 1989, a company which he still operates today. In 2007 Mike also launched a Stonewood Homes franchise in Wellington.

He joined the Wellington Association executive in 1996 and became Wellington Association president in 2002. He served a total of 13 years on the local executive, and was awarded a Life Membership of the Wellington Association in August 2011.

In 2004, Mr Fox's interest in politics drew him to Victoria University where for the following 18 months he took papers in political science.

This stood him in good stead when, in 2003, he started his involvement with the Registered Master Builders Federation as junior vice-president, becoming vice president in 2004 and national president a year later.

In 2007 Mr Fox was elected as chairman of the Federation Board. He stood down from this position in 2012, and retired from the RMBF Board after nine years' service.

He was also appointed as a Master Build Services Board director in 2006, and still holds that position today.

Mr Fox has been involved with other construction-related organisations, including BRANZ, where he was a director on the BRANZ Board from August 2007 to August 2011. Also in 2011 he was appointed a member of the Construction Strategy Group.

## Reflection of high regard

This was an individual appointment and a reflection of the high regard in which other key industry individuals value his leadership.

It goes without saying that he has been a strong advocate and supporter for Registered Master Builders, at the Federation and Association level. He has been on his local Association executive and Federation Boards for a total of 23 years — and counting.

Mr Fox has been heavily involved in advocacy work for Registered Master Builders internally and externally, particularly with central Government and wider.

He is highly respected by his peers, government officials and Ministers, and his tireless efforts to make the construction industry a better place to work are second to none.

Mr Fabish said the Federation could not think of a worthier recipient for the honour of a Life Membership.



RMBF president David Fabish (left) presents Mike Fox with his Life Membership.

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# RMBF annual conference a hit in Dunedin

**D**unedin turned on picture perfect winter days for the Registered Master Builders Federation annual conference at the Forsyth Barr Stadium in July.

Themed “Keep Calm and Carry On”, attendees were treated to what is being touted as the best speaker line-up seen in a very long time, and backed up by memorable social events in historic places.

Once again the conference opened with an address from Minister for Building and Construction Maurice Williamson. Always grateful for his ongoing support, Minister Williamson is somewhat of a fixture at the RMBF Conference.

Builders and sector representatives always enjoy his honest, up-front approach and humour, while bringing us up to date with the Government’s plans for the industry.

This conference saw a slightly different approach to the educational sessions through the Carters Seminar Series which ran across the Thursday and Friday. Topics covered were:

- Building Your Business, by Richard Carver, RMBF director: A particularly well received session about achieving what is important to you out of your business.
- The Building Act, by Warwick Quinn, RMBF chief executive: Bringing delegates up to date on the impending changes to the Act and how they will fundamentally impact on all building businesses.
- Health and Safety, by Warwick Quinn, RMBF chief executive and Marcus Nalter, MBIE: Covering the recent work undertaken by the Construction Safety Council to provide a structured framework to H&S, as well as the charter recently launched by MBIE, and an update on the Falls from Heights work currently in progress by MBIE.

• Lean Building, by Scott Sedam, TrueNorth Development Inc: In New Zealand from the USA, Mr Sedam imparted his extensive knowledge on building smarter and leaner by demonstrating how to improve product, process and profit without compromising building supplier and trade relationships.

Also, throughout the two and a half days a stellar line-up of speakers proceeded to keep the theme alive with their real life stories of meeting challenges through perseverance, hard work and, at times, failure — ultimately leading to success. On day one they were:

- Murray Thom (sponsored by BCITO): From school drop out to managing director of CBS Records New Zealand, Murray also introduced personalised number plates

www.buildingtoday.co.nz



*Delegates went on a tour of the conference venue, the Forsyth Barr Stadium.*



*The haggis ceremony at the PlaceMakers Braveheart Gala Dinner at the legendary Lamach Castle, with “chef” Graham Coe looking on.*

into New Zealand, and went on to create the *Great New Zealand Songbook* and the *Great Australian Songbook* among other things.

His high energy and amusing presentation left delegates feeling positive about the future and, as he puts it, ready to “live each day in order to receive a standing ovation!”

- Sir Ray Avery (sponsored by Mitre 10): Proud Kiwi, Sir Ray took us from his less than humble beginnings in Britain through to his world-leading approach to global healthcare. Within 24 hours of arriving in New Zealand he knew this was the place for him because “Kiwis don’t understand the word impossible!”

Basing an extremely successful career on the power of observation — seeing what’s really needed and then going about achieving it — Sir Ray overtly counts the days he has left, and consciously goes about using every one of them to make a difference.

A bit rebellious by nature, his witty delivery of “his days so far” had the delegates in stitches, without losing any of the seriousness of what he’s about — changing the world!

Day one was wrapped up with the ITM Welcome Function which started with a departure from the historic Dunedin Train Station on the Seaside, and up the Pacific Coast to the Waikouaiti Hall for a good old



Enjoying the PlaceMakers Braveheart Gala Dinner at the legendary Larnach Castle.



Minister for Building and Construction Maurice Williamson.



The Conference Trade Area.



Sir Graham Henry.



The ITM Welcome Function which started with a departure from the historic Dunedin Train Station on the Seaside, and up the Pacific Coast to the Waikouaiti Hall.

Southern hoedown!

Leaving early enough to take in the fantastic scenery with the carriages decked out in ITM bunting, the outstanding hosts from the Otago Registered Master Builders Association kept everyone fed and watered on the journey. And the entertainment at the hall (The Possum Pickers!) had folk up on the dance floor in no time.

Day two kicked off with a presentation by Andrew Holmes of Hawkins Construction about the creation of the Forsyth Barr Stadium (sponsored by Telecom).

Mr Holmes took delegates through the process of

bringing a New Zealand-first in stadia to life in a tight time frame to meet the requirements of the Rugby World Cup in 2011. The presentation was then followed up with a tour of the stadium — with some delegates managing to get out on to the pitch before being “guided” back off the hallowed turf to the sidelines.

Closing out day two was Kevin Biggar, extreme adventurer and co-host of the current *First Crossings* series (sponsored by NALCO).

Going literally from the couch to what some might call crazy adventures across oceans and frozen continents

(and against his Mum’s wishes), Kevin’s achievements were inspirational, and delivered with good humour and poignant messages.

Key to his, and his adventure partner’s, success was meticulous planning and, in particular, preparing for the “bad days”. This is precisely how they achieved their win in the trans-Atlantic rowing race (the time they gained on a bad weather day was the exact time they won the race by in the end) — basically they “kept calm” and carried on.

That evening saw the PlaceMakers Braveheart Gala Dinner at the legendary Larnach Castle. Piped in on arrival in true Scottish fashion, all 300 delegates were free to roam throughout the castle before official proceedings commenced.

Some professed sensing the ghost of Kate Larnach in the piano room as the temperature dropped in there

## More pics, page 12

*Continued page 12*

# rmbf conference

From page 11

— one keen observer (clearly not buying into the haunted room thing) reckoned it was only because that room hadn't been double glazed yet like most of the others!

Either way, a fantastic night was had by all, complete with an enthusiastic haggis ceremony and fantastic band to dance the night away. Graham Coe's Queen's Honour was also recognised at an event with so many of his peers in attendance.

Leading into day three of the conference and AGM was an address by Sir Graham Henry (sponsored by BRANZ). The delegates were treated to a no holds barred, honest account of the good, the bad and the ugly of his career so far.

Delegates heard about the fundamental changes to the All Blacks coaching approach required to get them to that nail biting final in 2011 — an approach that was not too dissimilar to Kevin Biggar's, as in "prepare for the worst", which is exactly what happened to the team with the injuries sustained.

Key to Sir Graham's session was man management and team development — including some gems for delegates to take away. The audience also discovered why he's called Ted!

Closing the conference for 2013 was the RMBF AGM where a Life Membership was bestowed upon Michael Fox, as well as recognising Kevin Stanley who is soon to stand down as MBS chairman. The contribution of both of these gentlemen to Registered Master Builders has been outstanding and greatly appreciated.

It was a very successful conference that couldn't have happened without members and sponsors — a big thank you to you all.

Next year sees the Conference heading to the Wairarapa.



The Otago RMBA crew.



The PlaceMakers team at the Braveheart Gala Dinner.

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## news

# Residential companies targeted for European study tour

International consultant on timber prefabrication Johann Betz is urging New Zealand companies operating in the residential construction sector to benefit from a study tour to Germany and Austria that he is organising for later this year.

According to Mr Betz, the tour will improve their knowledge of prefabrication and construction productivity.

"For companies wanting to future-proof their business performance, this trip will equip them with transferable skills and a new dimension of business performance," Mr Betz says.

Mr Betz, an expert on emerging wood technologies, highlights that once alternative building practices and the associated incremental productivity gains are witnessed first hand, it becomes difficult to justify remaining with the status quo.

"If the design is done with prefabrication in mind then the actual construction time can be dramatically reduced.

"Assembling completed wall and floor panels onsite rather than individual sticks of timber for framing is a huge time saver. Panelised prefabricated homes can be weathertight within a day or two, meaning that only interior outfitting and finishing is needed," Mr Betz says.

"The tradition of outdoor onsite construction with scaffolding, dust nets, noise and materials being stacked and unstacked and often exposed to the climate for long periods at a time continues to plague not only the building industry per se but also anyone living within a 1km radius of the construction. This method is costly, slow, and beset by onsite delays," he says.

He refers to health and safety trends as providing further reason to look out for cleaner, faster, greener construction methods.

Mr Betz emphasises there are significantly better options for all builders and home owners who want to witness productivity increases, along with their customers settling into their "dream homes" more quickly.

By shifting from onsite stick framing to prefabrication of wall, floor and roof panels in a controlled environment, the exterior wall panels can be pre-insulated, pre-clad, pre-wired and, in some cases, even pre-plumbed.

This ensures rigid quality control and plenty of scrutiny in the factory, and removes the need to "police builders" working all over the construction site.

Mr Betz has organised a study tour to Germany and Austria later in the year to assist visionary New Zealand companies to connect with prefabrication construction techniques.

The trip will include visits to a show home village showcasing 55 high quality homes built offsite, and a visit to several panelised prefabricators, among them Baufrizt GmbH, Germany's most sustainable company of the year 2009. The tour will cover the spectrum from small manual prefabrication operation requiring very little capital investment to larger prefabrication operations, and from detached family homes to multi-storey medium density housing.

The trip is timed to coincide with the 19th IHF – International Timber Construction Forum in Garmisch, Germany. This is the largest and most relevant conference on prefabrication and construction of timber buildings, attracting more than 1500 delegates from around the world.

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# Building industry discovers the

Consultant **Tony Street** stresses the importance of a “business case” approach to bidding, in order to aid accuracy in costing and QS assessments.

**F**ollowing the collapse of Mainzeal, Construction Industry Council chairman Pieter Burghout said the shock news showed the fickleness of the industry. “When you’ve got the third largest construction company in New Zealand with an order book worth billions...and it can collapse, that’s a reminder to the whole industry that you have to run your company in an absolutely bulletproof way.”

Actually, for at least six straight years, Mainzeal annual reports showed an average profit margin of just 1.2% — leaving scant funds to absorb cost overruns such as the \$22.2 million incurred on the Vector Arena roof, and for fixing various leaking buildings.

In the wake of Mainzeal, the Solid Energy debacle and a litany of project failures, companies have discovered the importance of business cases.

These days, construction costings and QS assessments simply must be accurate, and a “business case” approach to bidding is imperative.

## Risk appraisal methods

Alternative development options must be considered, client due diligence undertaken, and assumptions must be rigorously tested.

Risk appraisal methods such as Monte Carlo simulations are now commonplace, and company capital expenditure (capex) programmes must be subjected to the same disciplines.



Perhaps the reason that companies used to take a casual approach to preparing business cases was due to inflated confidence levels by senior management.

When preparing business cases, incorporating input from others can enhance decision quality, yet often senior managers do not effectively utilise advice, according to US research in 2010.

A study into organisational behaviour prepared by See,

Morrison, Rothman and Soll explored the detrimental effects of power on confidence, advice taking and accuracy. Results from a series of experiments found that although higher power participants had greater confidence in their final judgements, they had significantly less accurate final judgements and took less advice.

Aware of this phenomenon, the New Zealand Treasury has prepared a series of guidelines for preparing business cases, with the aim of improving the quality of analysis and decision making around capex.

## Key aims

Key aims of business cases are to promote informed decision making, innovative thinking, and facilitate benefits trajectory monitoring. They provide the essential link between strategic plans and the company’s operating budgets and targets.

Business case processes form an important sub-set of an organisation’s capital management infrastructure which, among other objectives, will identify the entity’s cost of capital.

In his book titled *Corporate Governance & Wealth Creation in NZ*, former Regional Investment banking head Joseph Healy pinpoints poorly specified or non-existent return on capital objectives.

American quality control champion Edward Deming (1990) believed that poor capital allocation occurs when a business lacks a well-designed capital allocation system disciplining management to optimise

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# importance of business cases

shareholder value.

Some astute New Zealand companies have, for many years, embraced such systems.

For example, Winstone Aggregates is a large quarry operator within the Fletcher Building Group. Since 2001, this entity has systemised the compilation of their business cases so that health and safety, environmental considerations and the like form an integral part of the process.

Port of Tauranga (POT), on the other hand, has achieved a stunning 24% compounding return for shareholders over the past decade, compared to the 5.6% NZX Index average.

POT is the best performing share on the NZX over the past 15 years. Judged the most efficient port in Australasia, POT's key has been to back innovation-driven capital investment with rigorous economic and financial analysis.

Fourteen years ago, POT implemented capex software to assist in business case compilation and priority setting. Their CFO manages capex as a limited resource and rejects ad-hoc spreadsheet building as inconsistent, time-wasting and error prone.

Even plant replacements undergo rigorous financial analysis. POT refuses to spend hard-earned capital resources on "gut feel" or doubtful "strategic" projects.

## Robust capex infrastructure

As a specialist consultant in the field, I applaud both companies' innovative approach to capital spending.

The need to rigorously evaluate alternatives, test assumptions, systematically assess risk and carefully analyse (and then monitor) true value are essential

elements to a robust capex infrastructure.

It is very concerning that such a disciplined approach so often falls through a crack in the floor.

Sadly, a 2010 KPMG study of 100 New Zealand companies and their project planning practices raises serious concerns. It found that many companies begin projects with only a vague hope of achieving a return.

## Major project failure

Seventy per cent of companies experienced at least one major project failure in the past year, and only one third of companies always prepared a business case.

Sixty per cent do not measure project benefits, so cannot determine whether their investments prove worthwhile.

KPMG's conclusion: Many firms are unable to translate project investments into valuable returns.

Today, more than ever, the Board should ensure appropriate financial management information systems are used to monitor profit margins from development projects and assess returns on invested capital.

It must insist that management use a robust capital management and business case infrastructure based on current best practice.

And it's also about improving productivity. For example, the capex workflow, collaboration and reporting process in many organisations can be streamlined, saving considerable management time.

• **Tony Street is a consultant with Capex Systems Ltd, a Hamilton-based consultancy formed in 1999. Capex Systems Ltd (CSL) provides strategic**

**advice to corporate clients in the areas of capital expenditure, investment, procurement and business cases.**

**CSL coaches team members in preparing Better Business Cases (BBC), provides help with developing business cases, and supplies capex and business case software solutions.**

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# Construction finance provider adopts flexible approach

**A**SAP Finance Ltd started trading in 2004 and has grown steadily over the past nine years to become a prominent non-bank property lender.

The company has built up an excellent reputation among builders and developers looking for funding outside of the mainstream banks by offering a product that is simple, efficient and is not burdened by the rigmarole associated with mainstream lending.

The company also recognises that every situation is unique and, therefore, has a very flexible approach and is able to offer customised solutions depending on the client's requirements.

Over the years the company has funded hundreds of houses and many subdivisions in various locations, and has a very good understanding of the processes involved.

It takes a much more practical view of the client's requirement than focusing purely on the numbers, often enabling funding of projects that do not tick the boxes for mainstream lenders.

The company offers loans from \$150,000 to \$15 million. Some of its biggest clients are builders and developers who require funding for completing "spec builds" and subdivisions. The typical loan is for three to 12 months, and is structured so that there are no fees for early repayment.

Recently funded projects include:

- 33 unit premium apartment complex in Parnell, Auckland (completed value of \$36 million),
- 33 unit apartment complex in Flat Bush, Auckland (completed value of \$12 million),
- 50 lot subdivision in Flagstaff, Hamilton (completed value of \$11 million),

- Spec build facility for 30 houses in Flat Bush, Auckland (completed value of \$22 million).

Unlike a bank, it does not require pre sales to approve funding and, therefore, the client can complete a project and realise full market value of the finished product rather than having to achieve presales at discounted prices.

For standard residential house builds, it is often able to provide funding without requiring valuations or reports from quantity surveyors which are standard requirements for most banks. Typically, this translates to savings of \$4000 to \$5000 per house.

The company can also provide underwrites for developers and builders as an alternative to "pre-sales" for obtaining bank funding.

ASAP Finance Ltd is based in Auckland, but lends across the country in all the major cities and towns. For more details see advert, page 9.

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## 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:

- James Hardie Building Products launched one of the most eye-catching and innovative advertising campaigns for building products in New Zealand. Models wearing high fashion garments took to the catwalk before 200 top architects, designers, developers and building merchants at Auckland's Aotea centre.

The company was previewing its television and print commercials and customer brochures, which matched the textures and hues of fashion garments with images of architectural shapes and details.

### 15 years ago:

- The RMBF allocated \$100,000 to improve its representation of commercial builder members, with the money funding a business development manager. Chief executive Trevor Allsebrook said the initial six-figure sum reflected the Federation's commitment to commercial builders who "warrant greater representation than they have been given".

### 10 years ago:

- The RMBF launched a new 7 Year Guarantee after extensive consultation with members. The guarantee extended cover and insurance for member builders, while encompassing a range of new benefits for home owners.

The new guarantee featured a deposit cover up to \$20,000, non-completion cover up to \$30,000, a two-year workmanship structural and materials cover to the home owner, and an additional five years structural defects cover for the builder and the home owner.

The guarantee remained compulsory for all work worth \$25,000 and over, but optional for work under \$25,000.

### 5 years ago:

- The inaugural building forum "Leading for the Future" held in Auckland laid down the foundations for the long-term future of the industry, according to Building and Construction Minister Shane Jones.

He said industry leaders were enthusiastic about being given a platform to express their ideas and views on a number of big issues the construction industry was to face in the long term.

"The summit will create a road map for the industry as the economic and climatic times change around us," Mr Jones said. "Construction has an important role to play in the housing affordability question but, like everything else, it is subject to global and local factors which will need to be anticipated, considered and addressed."

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# Game-changing system revolutionising



**A** game-changing work platform system is revolutionising the New Zealand building industry. Intaks is an innovative, light-duty work platform solution that is lightweight, flexible (15+ different configurations) and keeps ground space and lower walls clear, so multiple trades can work together, uninterrupted.

As demand for this game-changing system hots up around the country, Intaks is looking for regional agents to manage the increase in enquiries and orders.

## Demand skyrocketing

The demand for work platforms has skyrocketed, with Department of

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# industry

Labour regulations now requiring roof edge protection and platform systems on all builds — even on single level homes.

But conventional scaffolding is one of the biggest causes of disruption on building sites, restricting ground and wall access. Intaks was developed precisely to overcome these frustrations.

In his 25 years in the trade, Bay of Plenty roofer and scaffolder Lew Cleveland experienced first hand the shortcomings of traditional scaffolding structures.

“I knew there had to be a better way, so I set about designing it,” Mr Cleveland says. And over the past 13 years, that’s exactly what he did.

## Fully certified

The fully certified and patented Intaks system is now being used on sites around the country, delivering benefits to building and roofing companies, subcontractors and home owners.

Being 80% lighter than steel, Intaks takes far less time, truck tonnage and manpower to install.

It also achieves very wide spans and can be installed with no footprint, so ground space and lower walls stay clear.

Multiple trades can work on site together and access is no longer restricted. And with more than 15 different configurations, the system will adapt to virtually any job or terrain.

All this adds up to reduced costs overall, and a building site that can progress much more quickly and efficiently.

Intaks can also remain an integrated part of the framework of the building, for easier, lower-cost future maintenance.

Intaks NZ manager Joel Warren says the response has been phenomenal, and the company is now looking for agents around the country.

Mr Warren says there is now a proven market, and a great business model.

“We are offering a chance to get in on the ground floor, so to speak. Agent areas throughout New Zealand are being quickly snapped up, but there are some regions where we still need agents.”

The Intaks system is certified as complying with AS/NZS 1664.1, Department of Labour Best Practice Guidelines for Scaffolding in New Zealand, AS/NZS 4994.1.2009 Temporary Roof Edge Protection and AS 6001 Working Platforms for Housing Construction.

## Saw bench aiding progress for The Temple for Christchurch

**O**n the site that used to house the Christchurch Convention Centre there’s a curious site that’s attracting a lot of attention.

Unlike most of Christchurch’s CBD construction sites, there’s no large crane, no scaffolding and no queue of concrete mixers.

Instead there are a couple of containers doubling as office and storage, a strange sculpture of vertical strips of wood, a very large collection of reclaimed timber, and a wooden canopy over a saw bench. The only familiar sight is that of workers in high-vis vests.

This is the site of “The Temple for Christchurch” — a “large scale interactive art installation that seeks to provide a mechanism for emotional healing alongside the physical rebuilding of the city”.

Constructed from wood recycled from demolished houses, when finished it will become a place for people to share their earthquake stories and experiences by attaching photos, poems, mementos, letters from insurance companies, or whatever they feel will help them heal and move on.

At the end of the project, the Temple will be taken to a site outside Christchurch and ceremonially burnt.

The Temple for Christchurch is run from donations and grants, and staffed entirely by volunteers — many of whom have been associated with “Kiwiburn”, New Zealand’s annual equivalent of the United States’ popular Burning Man Festival.

The Temple design comes from Christchurch artist Hippathy Valentine. A visual interpretation of an earthquake’s movement through the ground, it’s based on the seismic data of the February 22, 2011 earthquake.

At completion, it will be around 40m long and 25m wide, rising to around 6m high at the peaks. But to construct it, the Temple team have around 8 cu m of timber to process.

The volunteer team has a big building job to do, especially considering the timber is all recycled — so it’s either wet or hard, or both — and full of nails.



*Chris Hawkins (right) and Troy Janson working their Avola saw at the Temple for Christchurch site adjacent to Christchurch’s damaged Town Hall.*

The Temple itself will be made up of frames covered with long thin strips, ripped down from old framing from demolished houses.

Turning 8 cu m of wood into 15mm wide strips on a tiny budget is quite a task, but fortunately the Temple crew have invested in a saw bench that’s proving up to the task — an Avola TZV.

Designed and built in Germany, the Avola is a sturdy, dependable and portable saw. Avola has been making saws since 1938, and while the TZV is the smallest saw in its range, it’s perfectly suited to the New Zealand residential construction industry, especially given the ever-popular German-made Scheppach TKU is no longer available.

With a 315mm blade, 90mm cutting height and powerful 3hp motor, the Avola is no lightweight. A torsion-resistant, galvanised frame means the rigours of a building site are no problem, and options include a wheelkit or a large extension table which gives a full 1200mm rip capacity. Crane hooks come as standard!

For several months now the Avola has been proving itself on the variety of timber the Temple team are receiving from the demolition yard. Given it’s a jobbing saw rather than a high-production machine, the Avola has stood up to the long hours and heavy workload with ease.

Even the odd nail that’s been missed by their metal detector doesn’t hold the Temple team back. A quick blade change and they’re back into the rhythm, high-vis vests glinting in the sun as the Avola rips down another strip of timber destined for Christchurch’s healing fire.

# Steel Retrofit for Wellington's McKenzie Building

By Roy Kane

The McKenzie Building at 222 Willis Street, Wellington, has undergone earthquake strengthening in preparation for a new lease of life.

Built in reinforced concrete during the 1930s as a department store with warehousing, additions were made in the 1960s that now comprise the current structure of four buildings surrounding a four-storey atrium.

Although they are adjoining, they are structurally independent, and have been given a predominantly structural steel seismic strengthening retrofit.

They will now be leased by WelTec as off-campus student accommodation, with budget short-stays during the summer university break.

Some limited strengthening work was carried out in 2010 when it was decided to bring the building up to approximately a 40% equivalent of the Building Code seismic strength. This put the McKenzie Building just above the minimum required by Wellington City Council.

Since the floor levels had all been built to the same height, it was deemed expedient to tie all four buildings together by bolting adjacent concrete beams across the coincident floor plates, and thus leveraging the relatively higher strength of the 1960s portion of the building.

The current strengthening was motivated by the new tenant, WelTec, who wanted to bring the building up to 80% of the New Building Standards seismic design capacity. This complements the existing structure by adding new bracing systems that increase the overall seismic resistance and, thereby, improve safety.

Two new four-storey eccentrically-braced steel K-frames were added in the atrium space to increase seismic capacity in the North/South direction. Bracing for the East/West direction was increased by adding a five-storey eccentrically braced steel K-frame to the southern exterior of the building (see drawing



The McKenzie Buildings at 222 Willis Street, Wellington, where traffic presented a challenge for craneage.

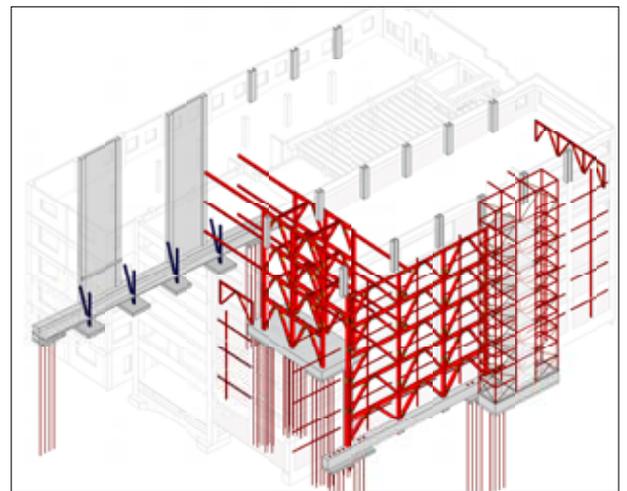
at right by Dunning Thornton).

The original buildings had a reinforced concrete wall running along the northern boundary. This existing brittle element was de-stiffened and replaced by two new ductile reinforced concrete walls to the inside of the northern boundary wall.

Dunning Thornton design engineer Gareth Alley says several bracing options were considered.

"In this case, steel K-brace frames were selected because of their relative stiffness, which complements the low drift capacity of the existing frames. Steel braces are also relatively open and help to avoid creating obstructions to windows and interior spaces.

"The K-braces were made up of relatively heavy members (such as 350WC230 columns and 530UB82 beam sections). Where



One of the drawings produced by design engineer Gareth Alley of Dunning Thornton. The red columns and beams indicate the steel used in quake strengthening.

possible these have been detailed for bolted connections in the steelwork erecting. This was particularly important for the two frames inside the atrium space, as these have to fit in and around the existing concrete frame structure."

Mr Alley says one of his particular challenges

arose from having to base the initial design on archived documentation.

"Site measurements were constrained because the buildings were in use at the time. As the interior was progressively demolished, we discovered that in many instances, the built structure differed from the original drawings, necessitating many significant changes to the proposed new design.

"This is often the case when embarking on a strengthening project. When discrepancies come to light, usually at the laser site-measuring phase, it's vital that there is a close working relationship between the main contractor, in this case Arrow International, Dunning Thornton as the engineers and Stevensons as the fabricator and erector, who also detailed the shop drawings."

Arrow International's Robb Noble was the main contractor's senior project manager on the McKenzie Building.

"Our first priority was to gut the building," Mr Noble says, "so that the engineers and Archaus, the architects, could understand what they had to work with. Only after much surveying with



*When crane access becomes impossible, the riggers resort to manhandling the steel.*

theodolites and lasers were Dunning Thornton able to adapt their design, retaining what was wanted from the old structure while integrating the new.

Their design engineer then referred his drawings to Stevensons who, in turn, produced the shop drawings needed for fabrication. With limited scope for change, Archaus brought inventiveness to the layouts and kept the strengthening design habitable as it evolved.

"As the term 'retro-fitting' implies, it's building

backwards," Mr Noble adds. "We have to adjust our mindset to the idea that nothing is straightforward. For example, the drag beams that were ultimately fitted to the two internal K-braces were put into the building before the K-braces.

"In fact, the Stevensons riggers took a crane delivery of each 15m 1-tonne beam through a window and manhandled it into the building, sometimes up stairs. They would attach the

*Continued page 25*

# Resilience.

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A picture that illustrates the nature of the install — tricky, especially because both concrete and steel will be left expressed.



The drag beams were inserted into the building before the columns and attached to the underside of each floor and temporarily propped.



These graphics by Greg Shadbolt of ArchHaus Architects provide a useful insight as to the proportions and spaces of a habitat that blends old with new with improved seismic safety. Key: Fig. 1: Floor plan of level one. Fig. 2: Single bedroom apartment. Fig. 3: Interior courtyard. Fig. 4: Concrete and steel are left expressed. Fig. 5: Ground floor events kitchen.



The Southern exterior with its five-storey eccentrically-braced K-frame (scaffolding yet to be removed). Stevensons also provided steel bracing for the two lift wells.



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From page 23

beams to the underside of the floors, propping them at one end with shore loadings (heavy-duty scaffolding) and, at the other end, with a temporary Square Hollow Section frame. This provided millimetre perfect positioning of the drag beam connection flanges, pending the installation of the K-braces.

“Installing the drag beams ahead of schedule opened the floors for other trades to continue with the fit-out walls and the services. The key to the success of this project was planning and, hand-in-hand with that, communication.”

Early morning traffic in the capital meant an even earlier morning start for Stevensons. Their workshop is in Tokomaru in the Manawatu, so each steel delivery started on the road south at 3am. Because access to the site was tight, parking a loaded truck could be a problem, so rapid unloading was in order. The aim was to get the truck back on its way up north by 7am.

Stevensons senior project manager Dave Hislop says with this project they found that build and install were often at opposite ends of the construction continuum.

“On the one hand, the external K- brace we assembled horizontally by floor, each 20m long by 6m wide. That’s how it was delivered through the streets of Wellington and erected, floor by floor — a total of 36 tonnes in just six main lifts requiring 10 days on site (see image bottom of opposite page).

“On the other hand, the internal atrium K-brace was delivered in 110 component parts, shorter sections that were small enough to be lowered into the centre of the build. This required the 100-tonne mobile crane to be equipped with a 17m 40°-offset fly to reach the top of the light well through holes in the atrium roof. Each member was lowered to the 12 previously installed drag beams. Fitting to the 750 splice plates was like keyhole surgery on a giant scale.

“On site, safety was paramount,” Mr Hislop says. “Our men had to watch out for each other, with holes in the roof and holes in the floor and also around the four-storey high light well. But because all the steel had been trial-fitted in our workshop, we knew that the load-bearing ends would fit perfectly on site. It was gratifying to see all the bolts in the K-brace frames fully tensioned, with no gas cutting marks, and the neatness of the transitions in the columns (350WC to 200WC) and the diagonals (250UC to 200UC).”

So what will it all look like when finished, especially inside? The visuals shown have been provided by Greg Shadbolt, an Associate with Archaus Architects.

He explains: “There are 285 student rooms in total, typically 10 to 12 sq m per bedroom, all with kitchenettes and bathrooms. The studios are slightly larger, while the two- and four-bedroom flats have living areas as well. On the ground floor there is an events area with a display kitchen, a cinema area, plus an indoor/outdoor BBQ area.

“The idea was to express both the existing and the new structure in an honest fashion, with the steelwork adding another narrative to the building’s history. I think people inherently like to see how a building has been put together.”

In Wellington, they also like to feel assured that because modern seismic science and engineering have been combined with sound construction techniques and materials, they can be confident the McKenzie Building will reduce their life safety risk in the event of a serious earthquake.

The official estimate is that there are 470 buildings in Wellington that are earthquake-prone — meaning they are less than 34% compliant with the Building Code.

## Other Key Facts:

- Total steel used: 140 T.
- There are 285 units configured as singles, studios and four bedroom flats that also have living areas.
- The ground floor has an events area with a display kitchen, cinema area and indoor/outdoor BBQ area.
- During the summer student vacation, the accommodation will be made available to short-term visitors.
- The bolting system used in the retrofit takes cognisance of a possible fifth building. Dunning Thornton says McKenzie has been augmented by the addition of a large high tensile diaphragm that anticipates the change this would entail in the load paths of the bracing elements.
- The McKenzie Building is owned by Ingenia Communities, whose senior development manager, Nicholas Martinis, is managing this development.



### Main Contractor for McKenzie Building

Willis Street, Wellington

280 Bed Student Accommodation Facility for IGC NZ  
Student Holdings in conjunction with Weltech

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- > Design Co-ordination
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# Building confidence on the rise in Waikato

**T**he Waikato region has seen a 95% annual increase in new BCITO building apprentice sign-ups, suggesting a positive uptake of the Government's Re-boot subsidy and signs that the region's building industry is rebounding.

The announcement was made at an event in Hamilton which was hosted by the BCITO and attended by Prime Minister John Key, bringing together leaders in Waikato's construction sector.

BCITO chief executive Ruma Karaitiana said that Waikato apprentice numbers had risen in the first half of 2013 to 211, from 108 during the same period in 2012 — a truly incredible result for the region.

"Anecdotally, our training advisors report increased activity in the region, and a feeling of optimism," Mr Karaitiana said.

"Of course, Re-boot is helping to push things along too, with employers opting to train now rather than wait. The industry will need all the skill it can get in coming years, so this is a good outcome."

Mr Key said the increasing house prices in Auckland would likely see some prospective house buyers set their sights on Hamilton.

"Every time you see a housing boom in Auckland, Hamilton house prices have gone up," he said.

"At the end of the day it is cheaper here, much more affordable and better quality

of living. So you'll definitely see an increase, in my view, in house prices in Hamilton and Tauranga. It's just a natural flow-on effect to what's happening in Auckland."

The BCITO has also seen a 38% increase in apprenticeship sign-ups right across the country, with Auckland experiencing a 54% increase, closely followed by a 47% increase in Christchurch.

"These are really encouraging numbers for our building industry, and will require employers to be committed to passing on their skills and knowledge so apprentices are well equipped for demand," Mr Karaitiana said.

"With the Government committed to investing in trade apprentices and their employers, coupled with increased demand for skilled labour, career seekers are starting to recognise the opportunities available in the building sector."

Mr Karaitiana also stressed the important part that industry players had in promoting building careers to their networks.

"With a multi-billion dollar building boom on the horizon, we're going to need lots more skilled people. Our research of BCITO apprentices shows that their family networks are the key influencing factor when considering career options.

"Families and friends make up the building industry, so there is a great opportunity for them to spread the word about the great career opportunities available."

The BCITO has been doing its bit too, with the launch of the Get Real recruitment campaign earlier this year. For more information, visit [bcito.org.nz](http://bcito.org.nz) or [getreal.co.nz](http://getreal.co.nz).



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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.

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Above: Prime Minister John Key converses with two BCITO apprentice of the year contestants from Hamilton, Cam Downing (left) and Ryan Fleetwood.

Below: Prime Minister John Key with BCITO apprentice Justin Scarlett of Hawkins Construction.



# Planning essential for business success

Terry Sage of Trades Coaching New Zealand explains why business planning — and Business Plans — are essential for any successful business.

**T**here are certain words in business that, when they are spoken or, in many cases mumbled, behind a quivering hand, make the chin drop and eyes bore holes in the carpet.

Words such as all the tax phrases, terminal, provisional and GST. Words such as balance sheets, bank reconciliations and creditors reports.

All really nice words if used in a non-business sentence — like the word “plan” can be a great word, as in “let’s plan our holiday”.

But when I talk to clients and I put the word business in front of it, well, what do you know, it’s the “old chin droop, eye bore, time for a new carpet syndrome”.

Why does it have this type of effect? Well, I have done a very short study on it (I asked somebody) and this is what they said: “We have never done one before, we have no idea how to start it, we don’t know what to put in it, we don’t have the time and, really, what’s the point?” Then they took a breath and just stared.

Let’s take the only serious objection they had — “what’s the point?”

The point is every one of us who owns a business has a plan for the future. Now don’t think just because I said that, you can stop reading now. Because there are business plans and business plans and, for a lot of business owners, the plan is tucked away inside the grey matter, under the expensive hair job being kept warm by the winter beanie.

The objectives of a good business plan are to extract the ideas, thoughts, dreams, goals and the extraordinary entrepreneurial brilliance that is hiding in the head and get it down on paper.

“But why?” you shout, “it’s happy up there!” But if it’s written down in a well presented business plan format it will become a road map for your business to follow to achieve your goals (that sounds like something your accountant or bank manager would say).

As I said, there are plans and plans. I have seen business plans that are leather bound, kept in a box and ones written on a beer coaster.

Which is best? In my opinion neither, although they both have a place. At Trades Coaching New Zealand we use a very simple two-page template that the client fills in the gaps for.

We use this approach as it covers all the objections from the extensive client study I undertook. If you have never done one before, just follow the instructions. If you don’t know where to start or what to put in, just follow the instructions. As for time, it takes hardly any.

The first page is a quick biopsy of the business — who, where, what type of stuff. The second page covers the meaty bits — the goals, the budget (don’t get scared here, we will cover this another time), the exit strategy and the most important part — an action plan.

So to the big question — “what’s the point, do I really need one?” The truthful answer is no you don’t. The prudent answer is yes you do.

It gets the jumble in your head in a working order, and it will allow you to get external help, including accountants and business coaches. It will give you that map to follow, an action plan with key dates to work with, and the list goes on.

As construction experts that you all are, following a plan should be second nature to you. You can’t be expected to build a house without a set of plans so why should you

be expected to build a company without a plan?

One important point to always remember — your business plan is always a work in progress. Keep it a fluid document because you never know what door is going to open around the corner.

One last point to make in the favour of business plans — I come across many businesses owners that say “the bank said no”, with a wee tear starting.

My first reply is “how did you present your case?” They then say, “well I just went in and asked”. If they went in with a well presented business plan, a budget cash flow forecast and a proposal concerning why they are asking, the odds of getting a bank to say yes will increase many times over.

We have business plan templates at Trades Coaching New Zealand which we are more than happy to email to you if you need one. Please just contact us on the number below, and this will be done.



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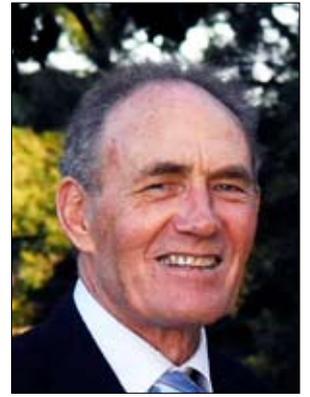
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THE BUSINESS SIDE OF CONSTRUCTION

# Softly, softly

Architect **Don Bunting** reflects upon his recent visit to Barcelona.



**T**hink of Barcelona, and other than the 1992 Olympic Games (especially the theme song performed by Freddie Mercury and Montserrat Caballé) most first-time visitors will think of architect Antoni Gaudí and his yet-to-be-completed Sagrada Família Cathedral.

In a style you might describe as Art Nouveau on steroids — although purists will say Gaudí's style is at best a close relative to Art Nouveau — the building attracts more visitors than any other tourist site in this very appealing coastal city of many outstanding architectural gems, both old and new.

To give Gaudí his due, he was clearly supremely talented and single-minded, but his style is also likely to top some people's best and worst examples of 19th and 20th Century architecture.

He arguably only managed to have his radical designs realised due to the support of his wealthy and influential patron, Catalan industrialist Eusebi Güell. But love him or hate him, Gaudí's buildings have a powerful impact on all who experience them.

Rather than being of any particular style, he and his work are perhaps best described as genius inspired by nature. His approach is certainly not quiet and unassuming, rather like entertainer Liberace, who once said: Too much of a good thing is wonderful.

Gaudí was a talented artist and draftsman. However he preferred, like Geary with his earlier designs for the Guggenheim Museum in Balboa, to develop his projects through the use of elaborate models. The mind boggles how much more elaborate his buildings might had been if he'd had access to modern computer technology.

While known in his prime as very much a man about town, he became antisocial in later life. In a strange parallel with architect Louis Kahn who, in more recent times was discovered dead and apparently destitute in Penn Station, New York, Gaudí was struck by a tram in 1926.

Because of his rough appearance and dress he was thought to be a beggar, and died shortly after through benign neglect.

Unlike Gaudí's easy-to-find and well-signposted buildings, an arguably more important building architecturally is tucked away in a quiet corner of the exposition area of the city, a short walk from the Espanya Metro Station.

This is the Barcelona Pavilion, designed by architect Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe as the core of the German exhibit at the 1929 International Exposition.

Much of Mies Van Der Rohe's later work was produced after he immigrated to the United States, but he never changed his central dictum of less is more. The phrase is borrowed from a Robert Browning poem, but succinctly sums up his approach to design in general and structure in particular.

To show how far his view of architecture differed from Gaudí's, Mies once tellingly said: "I don't want to be interesting, I want to be good."

The building was constructed just in time for the 1929 exposition and, unfortunately, was dismantled shortly afterwards. So the building you see in front of you today is a painstakingly recreated copy organised by a group of Spanish architects in 1983-86.

As many famous Japanese temples have been rebuilt on numerous occasions after fire



*The yet-to-be-completed Sagrada Família Cathedral attracts more visitors than any other tourist site in Barcelona.*

or tempest — and suffer no less importance from that fact — the building remains a masterpiece of modernist, International-style design of the 1920s and 30s — as fresh and relevant today as it was 85 years ago.

A telling aspect of the project was that Mies Van Der Rohe managed to persuade the German organising committee that the building should be the exhibit, rather than the building being the container of exhibits.

This ensured that its subtle but rich simplicity — the materials used were all of the finest, most exquisite quality — was kept at the forefront, without having to compromise to meet various exhibitors' practical needs.

Every aspect of the project was focused on the building and its very simple contents — a single nude statue by George Kolbe and three of the architect's now iconic Barcelona chairs and footstools.

There is no way of telling today whether Mies saw this as his calling card for future projects, perhaps in a similar way to Frank Lloyd Wright's design for Falling Water after such a long, dry spell in commissions. But as the centrepiece of the German exhibit

Liberace: Too much of a good thing is wonderful.

it certainly did his reputation no harm.

After all, there were probably not many commissions around in pre-Third Reich Germany for architects focused on simplicity rather than Teutonic monumentalism.

Together with the Farnsworth House in Illinois and perhaps the Lake Shore Drive apartments in Chicago, the Barcelona Pavilion is today seen as a supreme example of his quiet, spare and elegant approach to architecture.

There might be a lesson here for some of the more recent architectural edifices which can tend to shout for attention.

### **Deliberately placed**

The building was deliberately placed on a low podium so that visitors approached it up a short flight of stairs and then had to turn 180° right to enter the first of the building's spaces.

The building is all about flow and vista, with new spaces slowly revealing themselves as you progress. Many spaces are unrestrained by exterior walls, but for those that are, the glazing is minimalist and virtually invisible.

The flat, almost unrealistically thin roof plane is supported on a series of chrome-clad cruciform steel columns and a number of carefully positioned vertical planes — both marble-clad and one clad in spectacularly patterned red onyx.

These cannot be accurately described as walls as they neither block nor contain the visitor's view, but merely deflect it forward.

The final elements in experiencing the building are water and reflection. Shallow pools are used, both in the large external courtyard, reflecting and accentuating the roof plane, and in the sculpture courtyard, with its much photographed reflected view of the George Kolbe statue.



*Visiting the Barcelona Pavilion after a few days of Gaudi is rather like enjoying a refreshing glass of cool, clean water after a rich, three-course meal. And with no long, hot queues to endure and only a five Euro entrance fee, it's a bargain.*



# Leaky building claim fails against vendor, council and builder

Timothy Bates and Katrin Saran Lee of Auckland law firm Legal Vision examine a recent High Court decision in which it was required to consider, on appeal, a claim in negligence against the council and the builder, and a claim for a breach of warranty by the vendor.



## Overview

This claim before the High Court (*Hooft Van Huijsduijnen & Another v Woodley & Others* [2012] NZHC 2685) was an appeal of a decision in the Weathertight Homes Tribunal.

The appellants (the owners) purchased a house in Papakowhai ("the house") from the Woodleys (the vendors) in 2002. Soon after, they discovered dampness in certain areas of the house.

A claim was filed with the Tribunal against the vendors, the Porirua City Council, the builder, the architect and the engineer. Prior to the hearing by the Tribunal, the architect and the engineer were removed from the proceedings.

The Tribunal concluded that the defects to the house were not caused by any negligence of the builder and/or the council.

The Tribunal also found that the Woodleys had not breached the warranties given to the appellants, pursuant to the sale and purchase agreement ("the agreement"). This decision was appealed to the High Court.

The issues before the High Court were:

- Whether the builder was negligent for failing to construct the house in a proper workmanlike manner,
- Whether the Woodleys breached the warranty in the agreement,
- Whether the council was liable in negligence on the basis that it failed to exercise the requisite skill and care to ensure that the building plans and specifications complied with the Building Code, when it issued the building consent, when it carried out inspections and issued the Code Compliance Certificate, and when it failed to "establish and enforce an inspection system that would give effect to the Building Code".

## Breach of warranty by vendor

The appellants argued that the fact the house leaked was a breach of clause E2 of the Building Code because the house, within at least 50 years of construction, had not provided adequate resistance to penetration by water ingress.

The High Court found that the house was built in accordance with the Act and Code at the time of its construction. It concluded that the warranty in clause 6.2(5)(d) of the agreement did not impose an obligation on the vendor to warrant a standard of construction that did not exist at the time of the warranty.

The fact that it subsequently turned out that the house may not have been watertight because of unpredictable product failure, and/or the use of building techniques subsequently found to be inadequate, and/or subsequent events outside of the vendors' control, did not constitute a breach of warranty. The claim against the vendors failed.

## Claim against the council

The appellants alleged that parts of the plans and specifications prepared by the architect were inadequate and in breach of the Building Code and, therefore, the council was negligent in failing to pick up on these inadequacies at the consent stage.

The architect was previously removed from this claim as it was found that the architect was not negligent in

drawing up the plans and specifications.

Whilst the appellant was not prevented from claiming against the plaintiff for reasons of issue estoppel, it was ruled that it was an abuse of process by the appellant to now claim that the council was negligent in issuing the building consent based on plans and specifications that were previously found adequate by the Tribunal.

The High Court then considered the inspections carried out by the council.

It analysed each of the defects and found that the council was not negligent for a number of reasons which included:

- The house was built in accordance with the plans and specifications, and there was no reason to doubt the efficacy of the plans and specifications,
- There was no breach of the relevant BRANZ guide, or the manufacturer's specifications at the time, or
- The defects would not have been obvious to the council inspector during inspections.

## Claim against the builder

The High Court upheld the Tribunal's decision that the builder was not negligent as the house was constructed in accordance with the Building Code at the time, and that the architect's plans and specifications were followed.

## Conclusion

This decision illustrates the point that in order to succeed in a claim against the council and/or other parties involved in the construction process, it is not sufficient to establish that the house leaked.

It has to be shown that there was the requisite breach of the duty of care creating a construction defect from which loss/damage flows.

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

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# Building Consents Information

For All Authorisations, June 2013

Dwellings	\$521,830,000
Domestic Outbuildings	\$8,979,000
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>\$530,809,000</b>
Non-residential	\$269,264,000
<b>Total All Buildings</b>	<b>\$800,073,000</b>
Non-building Construction	\$10,102,000
<b>Total Authorisations</b>	<b>\$810,175,000</b>

## Number of new dwellings consented

	Jun 2013	May 2013	Jun 2012		June 2013	May 2013	Jun 2012
Far North District	9	12	18	Horowhenua District	11	9	3
Whangarei District	24	26	18	Kapiti Coast District	7	14	10
Kaipara District	6	15	8	Porirua City	18	14	8
Rodney District	84	108	49	Upper Hutt City	27	7	8
North Shore City	36	107	27	Lower Hutt City	17	21	8
Waitakere City	185	49	37	Wellington City	18	33	98
Auckland City	84	192	60	Masterton District	5	4	4
Manukau City	5	85	64	Carterton District	6	6	7
Papakura District	30	54	17	South Wairarapa District	3	3	5
Franklin District	32	51	12	Tasman District	25	29	21
Thames-Coromandel District	12	13	18	Nelson City	16	21	29
Hauraki District	6	5	2	Marlborough District	10	17	26
Waikato District	22	24	23	Kaikoura District	2	3	1
Matamata-Piako District	9	12	3	Buller District	1	6	9
Hamilton City	53	123	42	Grey District	2	2	6
Waipa District	27	28	20	Westland District	5	4	1
Otorohanga District	0	1	2	Hurunui District	4	12	13
South Waikato District	1	4	1	Waimakariri District	79	103	70
Waitomo District	1	1	0	Christchurch City	166	172	93
Taupo District	5	11	11	Selwyn District	92	157	73
Western Bay of Plenty District	27	19	14	Ashburton District	6	16	31
Tauranga City	55	67	40	Timaru District	13	24	12
Rotorua District	5	5	6	Mackenzie District	5	6	1
Whakatane District	11	7	1	Waimate District	1	1	0
Kawerau District	0	1	0	Chatham Islands Territory	0	0	0
Opotiki District	1	1	0	Waitaki District	4	8	13
Gisborne District	6	8	4	Central Otago District	7	15	14
Wairoa District	0	1	0	Queenstown-Lakes District	47	48	30
Hastings District	34	17	30	Dunedin City	26	32	68
Napier City	12	15	11	Clutha District	4	0	1
Central Hawke's Bay District	1	4	1	Southland District	7	7	6
New Plymouth District	22	37	21	Gore District	0	0	3
Stratford District	4	0	1	Invercargill City	15	10	9
South Taranaki District	4	2	3	Area Outside TA	0	0	0
Ruapehu District	0	3	0				
Wanganui District	4	24	8	<b>Total</b>	<b>1487</b>	<b>1971</b>	<b>1277</b>
Rangitikei District	0	0	0				
Manawatu District	6	6	8				
Palmerston North City	14	27	14				
Tararua District	1	2	2				

- 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

## What's On the Web?

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