

M.B. NEWS

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Manufacturing
and / or Export



Building, Renovations
& Suppliers



Highly Commended 2007
1st National Runner Up 2009

DECEMBER 2010 EDITION

"Without prejudice"

INTRODUCTION

Another year is nearly over and boy has it flown by. We have seen Collingwood take out the 2010 Grand Final, led by ex Geelong boy, Nick Maxwell. No matter how much it hurts me saying this (due to my love of Collingwood); we must congratulate Nick on his achievements and the Collingwood team.

It has been a full year with us seeing new players in the timber market, with changes of ownership and with more to come. We are looking at new grading standards, Warranty Insurance changes in the near future, the move by the Woolworths & Lowes combination to enter the hardware / home improvement market, the introduction of 6 star rating, the introduction of qualifications in the prefabrication industry and more than likely, there will be many more changes in the future.

TIMBER INDUSTRY

We have seen the new price rise in timber last month, but we are also seeing signs that it may not hold. There are "specials" of old stock going out into the market place, but the fear is that that price will become permanent. It seems at times, the timber industry can be its own worst enemy. We also have the overseas mills increasing their stock availability and in one case we have seen timber from Europe that is between 70 and 90 years old. This is something we have never seen in the past from the local product. The timber is of a high standard, having some tiny tight knots and the timber is very clean, dense and straight. We understand that FEA in Tasmania has now been taken over and we expect more acquisitions by local timber mills over the coming months. It will be interesting to see what product the giant Woolworths - Lowes combination decide to stock in their stores.

THE BUILDING INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

We heard from some areas that there has been a softening in the market. Early next year we will see some changes to the Warranty Insurance and what and when will happen in regards to the timber grading changes. Overall I believe the industry has stood firm and Victoria itself has lead most other States in the building area. I believe the industry will have a bright future.

FTMA AUSTRALIA

After some years of planning, meetings and debates, our industry is about to turn the corner in relation to qualifications, both in the factory and in the office. Until now the factory had Levels, which determined a person's pay rate in relation to their skills. Yet there were no real "formal" qualifications that were specific to our industry. In the office an Estimator or Designer could not leave school and do a course or get a Diploma in Estimating or in Designing that was specific to our industry. We see people in the building industry who are Estimators for builders and yet the relationship in regards to their type of estimating is completely different to our industry, even though we are both in the same industry. There has been no pathway for them to choose. That was until now. We are about to set up Certificates from 2 through to 5 including a Diploma course. We have now got a "Pathway" in our industry which will be introduced to schools.

A person will be able to not only look at what apprenticeships are out there, such as carpenters, electricians, plumbers, draft persons etc, but will be able to see what is available in our industry, such as manufacturing assistant, fabricators, supervisors, production managers, Estimators and Designers. Each will have different degrees of qualifications from Certificate 2 through to Diplomas and will be recognised anywhere in Australia and we hope eventually New Zealand. This is something we have never had before and this opens up new opportunities for students and others to enter and make a career in our industry. The next step to complete the whole exercise is to have an attached award to the Estimators

and Designers area with set levels, so any new person coming into the industry can see what qualification they will require and what the minimum earning potential they will be able to achieve. This is also a giant step for those that have been in the industry for a number of years but have no formal qualification.

When an Estimator or a Designer enters our industry they are generally trained in house. They will do some training with the employers nail plate supplier in relation to the programs they use, but that is it. So if you have been in the industry as an Estimator or a Designer, say for 5, 7, 10 years or whatever, you will have the opportunity to have your past experience tested by the relevant training body and depending on what level you wish to achieve, you may have to do some night schooling (which may only be one or two nights a week, for 3 to 6 months, depending on where you were accessed), to achieve a Diploma in your relevant field. So the previous knowledge that you have acquired over the years will be assessed and taken into account when you are looking to gain a "formal" qualification in our industry. We would hope that early in 2011 that things will be in place to get things started. There is obviously a bit more work to be done in relation to setting up "Levels" and for some sort of an Award to be put in place.

On Wednesday 1st December we had our Christmas dinner meeting. Reigning Collingwood captain, Nick Maxwell was our guest speaker. Tickets were limited to the first 100 and I understand they sold out very early in the piece. It was a very interesting view that was delivered in relation to what Nick went through and we had a framed Collingwood jumper to be auctioned off that night. It has been signed by the Captain, the Coach and the Norm Smith Medal winner for 2010, winners of the Grand Final. The bidding started at \$600 and very quickly passed the \$1k mark. We got to a point that there were two bidders contending and at \$2K, I asked the losing bidder if he would pay \$2K for another one, which he did. So we sold two jumpers, raising \$4K for Nick's chosen charity, "Bricks for Bears". Bear baiting in Pakistan is the world's most savage blood sport. A bear, with claws blunted and teeth removed, is tied to a post in the centre of a stadium and set upon by dogs. When the fight looks like it is about to become fatal, it is stopped. But only to give the exhausted bear time to rest before facing the dogs again. Bricks for Bears goal is to help build and run a sanctuary, a safe place for the bears that will be rescued from the cruelty of bear baiting. Attendees at the FTMA dinner had the opportunity to have photos taken with Nick and he sold some 40 odd books "One Grand Week" (he should have brought more with him), all personally signed.

We have copies of the DVD "Prefabricated Timber Roof Truss Installation - Good Practice" for sale. You may not think that you or your subbies need something like this, as you have been doing it for a long time. What we have seen in the past is that some are not installing trusses correctly. This is a cost effective way of maybe picking up a thing or two that you either didn't know before or were not sure of. It can be watched while sitting around having a BBQ & beer. It is definitely a "must" for apprentices. When the new updated DVD comes out, anyone that has bought the current version will receive a free of charge copy of the updated one. If you want a copy they are available for \$15.00 each from Clive at M.B. *All monies will go to charity.*

PRE-FABRICATION INDUSTRY

It seems that Victoria is still the place to be in relation to the building industry. We are seeing new areas developing and the Armstrong Creek development finally starting to move. The Geelong area should see strong growth over the next 5 or more years and I would expect anyone that has a house in this area, will see strong growth in the value of their properties, especially when we see what advantages there are with the new ring road and the potential for those that work this side of Melbourne, but cannot afford Melbourne prices, or the cost of living there or the hustle and bustle.

We have seen a couple of plants close their doors in Queensland and we have seen a couple of the larger plants in Victoria either opening up new manufacturing plants to increase their output or take over smaller plants for the same reason.

We have now after some time waiting on power, got our new Hundegger saw up and running. This new saw now gives us the ability to not only cut rafters to lengths, say in a cathedral roof area, but we can mitre the end and provide birds mouths or scarf cuts for those rafters. Obviously there is a fee for this,

but for what it saves you time on site (no sorting lengths, no measuring, marking, docking, etc) as well as working out the hips, creepers, jacks & rafter lengths and the time taken to do the takeoff. The cost is minimal.

AN “IMPORTANT” REMINDER – THINGS TO WATCH ON SITE

This was in the last newsletter, but we thought it was important enough to include it again, especially if for some reason you missed it last time. Some builders have informed us that they have had some frame inspections knocked back, due to the fact that they have been using coil nails to nail the multigrips on. What has been happening is they have been nailing beside pre allocated holes, sometimes partly nailing the sides of these holes, which means there could be movement and the nail loses its holding capacity. The coil nails are slightly narrower than the supplied single clouts. We have spoken to Pryda about this and they have informed us that if a person is using the correct coil nails, they have to nail *away* from the holes (do not use the pre punched holes) and they have to put **20% more** nails in. That is, a metal roof requires 10 clouts normally; using the coil nails they will require a **minimum of 12** nails. In a tiled roof situation and your normally required 4 nails, then you would have to put in 5 nails (20% more).

ADVANTAGECARD

Don't forget to use your Advantage Cards, get the rewards points and take advantage of them in other businesses.

ANNIVERSARY

On the Thursday the 23rd December it be 12 months since Jason Richards, a long time employee in our transport division, passed away unexpectedly.

LIGHT HEARTED

This was sent to me by one of our readers, Dianne.

The Lord contact Noah and commanded that he build an Ark, because in one year's time a flood would cover the earth. Specifications were sent and Noah accepted the task. Exactly one year later the Lord returned to find a grey haired Noah, but no Ark. "Where is my Ark?" he enquired. "I have tried Lord", replied Noah, "but there have been problems. Your plans did not meet the standards and I had to have them redrawn. The department of OH&S wanted fire sprinklers added". My neighbour objected, claiming I was violating zoning laws by constructing the Ark in the back yard. I have lodged a rezoning application with the local council and it has been referred to the Land and Environment Court.

I have had problems getting wood, as there is a ban on cutting wood to protect the kookaburra. I finally convinced the department of Conservation that I needed the wood to save the Kookaburras, however the National Parkes & Wildlife will not let me catch kookaburras, so there will be no kookaburras on the Ark. The Carpenters Union went on strike and I had to negotiate with the Department of Industrial Relations. I now have 16 carpenters but still no kookaburras. I did start to collect other animals, but I am now being sued by the RSPCA. The EPA has advised me that I now have to lodge an environmental impact statement re your proposed flood. They have some objections to your claim of absolute power. The Department of Lands and Water Conservation want a detailed map of the proposed flood plain. I have sent them an atlas. The Equal Opportunity Commission claims I am discriminating if I don't take on board, non-believers.

The Taxation Department is claiming I will need to pay fringe benefits and State Rivers is claiming I need to register the Ark as a recreational watercraft and that I will need a boat driver's licence. I have appointments to see Work Cover and the plumbing industry want to do an audit. Yarra Valley Water is pushing for back-flow protection. I think, with my luck, I may finish construction in a year or two. The Lord replied, "never mind, a flood is not needed to destroy the Earth. Bureaucracy will do it!"

RETIRING

After nine years with M.B., Matt Lauder has resigned. He and his wife and two boys (Sam & Harry) are moving to Orange in NSW, where they are looking at running a coffee shop. We thank Matt for the past nine years and we wish him and his family all the best in their new life.

THANK YOU

From Doug, myself & everyone here at M.B., we thank you for your support throughout the past year and we not only look forward to being able to supply your needs next year, but we hope you and your families have a happy, joyful and wonderful Christmas and New Year.

DIRECT LINES

If you need to know something or require any assistance please do not hesitate to use the contacts set out below. Remember if you need a set of plans picked up; give one of the C.D.O.'s a call or call our office. We will arrange a time and place convenient to you.

Contact	Area	Phone Number
Doug Maxwell	Longreach Floor Trusses	5249 4411 Direct Fax 5223 1022
Clive Martella		5249 4412 Direct Fax 5223 1022
Darren Benn	General Manager / Logistics Manager	5249 4403
Anne Preston	Deliveries / Orders / General Enquiries	5223 2888
Lauren Barrow	Accounts / General Enquiries / Orders	5223 2888
Tim Watson	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0407 232 884
Paul Christie	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0409 940 757 or 5249 4405
Andrew Graham	Wall Frame Designer	5249 4415
Davin Pate	Truss Designer	5249 4410
Ryan Darling	Truss Designer	5249 4419
James Compston	Truss Designer / Estimator	5249 4420
Elliot Connell	Estimator	5249 4421
Tim Blosfelds	Estimator	5249 4406
Jess Sferco	Trainee Estimator	5223 2888
Zach Napper	Trainee Estimator	5223 2888

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