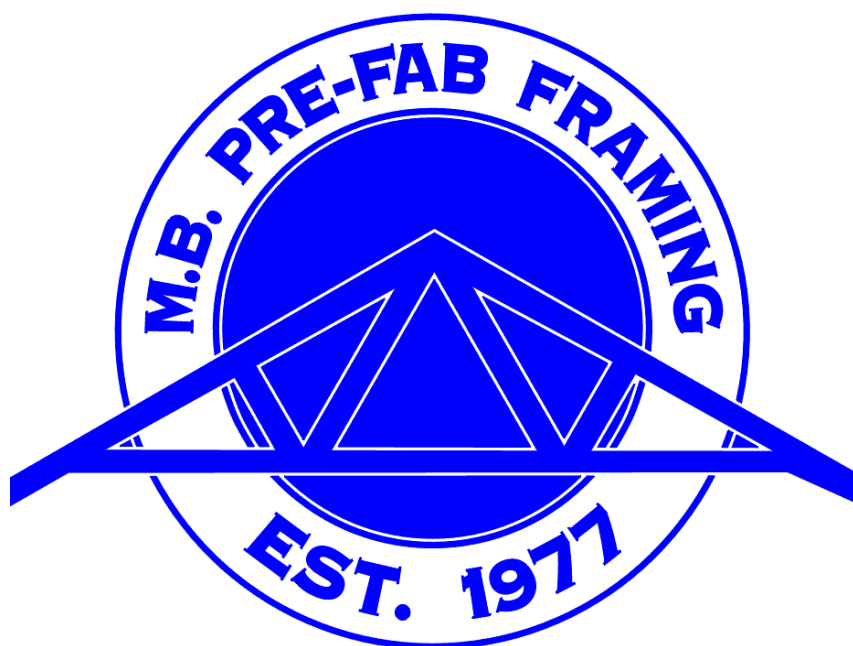


M.B. NEWS

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MARCH 2011 EDITION

"Without prejudice"

INTRODUCTION

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and are looking forward to what the New Year has installed for us. We are already well into the first quarter of the New Year and the footy isn't that far away. It will be interesting to see how Geelong performs without their best player from past years. In the NAB Cup rounds they have played a fair few of the younger players and rested a number of their regulars. It already looks like some of the other teams are going to struggle, such as Brisbane Lions, Richmond and a number of others. The mighty Bombers are showing a fair bit of improvement, but the real test is yet to come. As I write this, I am looking forward to this week end with the grand final against Collingwood. Although Nick will not be available due to the collision last week, they will have a very strong side, which will give us some idea as to where we stand as a team for this year.

Since the break there has been a number of developments gathering momentum and none more than the introduction of the new BCA changes to the Timber Code, due to come in, in May. (More on that later in this newsletter).

Already this year we have seen fires in WA, floods in Qld, NSW & Vic and earthquakes in NZ. It hasn't been a good start to the year and some would be thinking, what else could go wrong?

Not long after starting back from leave I took off on a Thursday and drove across the border to S.A., to a little community called "Keith". I visited the plant owned by Mike Read, called of all things "Keith Trusses". The first thing I was told, was that my head looked bigger and that was because of the amount of brain matter I injected when I crossed the border, so as not to look or sound out of place and of course I had increased my IQ. I would now be able to converse with all South Australians on their level. I know we all wonder what happens over the border and we hear things like, "It only proved that Tasmanians could swim" and so on. It's generally "the unknown", that is scary. I found the hospitality to be fantastic. They actually drink mainly Victorian or Qld beer. Very little South Australian beer is consumed there. I spent a number of hours with Mike in his office, discussing different aspects of our businesses and how we do certain things and vice versa. It is interesting when a view is given about something that makes you sometimes think, "Why haven't I thought of that". I always believe that when I come out of one of the engineers offices at Pryda, I always come out with more knowledge than what I went in with.

We have seen what has happened with the floods etc., well this little town of Keith with less than 1200 people have not had it so easy. They have had a local Co-op collapse with some \$18 million in debt and their biggest fight at present is the closing of the local hospital. *I could not believe that the local Ambulance service is run by volunteers.* I understand there is some 5 of them, all fully qualified. Now with the funding from the Federal Govt being withdrawn, the pressure on keeping 55 jobs at the hospital has been increased. The result in the closure will also flow on to other jobs in other local industry. The reason why I brought this up is, we all have our own worries and at times we think there is no one else around that would have the problems that we have. It can become so "self absorbing". Here is a small town going through the same financial pressures we feel every day and they are burdened with the extra pressures of loosing something as important as the local hospital. I can honestly say that I was treated as "a local" by those there. The friendliness, the hospitality and the warmth was great and very much appreciated and remember that is coming from a Victorian. I hope they continue their fight and more importantly - they win it.

TIMBER INDUSTRY

If anyone remembered the last newsletter, I stated that I would be surprised if the new timber increase would last. Well, it didn't. With pressure from the market downturn and the imported timbers we have seen a price increase that virtually hit the market for a split second and then disappeared. I believe as

long as the imported timbers remain it will continue to put pressure on the local products, both price wise and quality wise. For the end user that is a good thing.

THE BUILDING INDUSTRY OUTLOOK

In May we see the new rules in regards to timber coming into force with the BCA changes to the timber code. To give you an idea as a builder what or how this will reflect on you, is that multiple girders on a job (say, girder to girder or girder truncated) will be affected. The effect will be in the timber and possibly the plate sizes. You will find that the sizes or grades will go up and the plate sizes will increase also. What does this mean price wise? As I understand it, the easiest way to explain it would be, if you have say three girders that have a total of \$300 worth of timber and \$70 worth of plates, then the plates and the timber cost may increase around 20%. That would mean a job that had \$370 worth of timber and plates (in the girders) would now cost you \$444 (\$74 more). I understand that "mono type" trusses will also be affected, due mainly to the fact that they are usually low pitched. They could be affected as much as 3% of the cost on those products. We are not talking huge amounts, but every dollar counts.

It is imperative that everyone has the new timber tables **AS 1684.2-2010 Residential timber-framed construction - Non-cyclonic areas** as we still hear that some builders are still referring to the old Timber Framing Manual. The new copies can be bought for \$85.02 (loose leaf), \$91.12 (PDF) or \$101.24 (hard copy) at <http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/Details.aspx?ProductID=1407489>.

We see from the national figures that building approvals are down. Obviously delays in the releasing of land etc. can affect these figures. Confidence in any area is required for that industry to go ahead. We have the new star rating coming in, which I personally believe all it is doing is adding to the real overall cost of a building, with minimal benefits resulting from this.



Our next board meeting is on Thursday 24th March, at McCormack Hardwood Sales (big Collingwood supporters), in Noble Park. By this date the NAB Cup will have been played, so any non Collingwood Board Member that is going and is worried about the possibility of infection, I have arranged for special anti-bacterial wipes to assure you of fighting off any infections - "complete peace of mind".

The FTMA has had another successful year through representation on a number of committees. These include the FWPC (Forest & Wood Products Council), Forest Works, in which the FTMA played an instrumental part in the new National Qualifications as well as the development of the Traineeships for the Frame & Truss Industry. The Frame & Truss Association represented the members' needs on the Australian Standards. We had Nick Livanes represent the FTMA on the Forest & Wood Products Australia Research Committee. Phil Ladson represented the FTMA on the WorkSafe Committee and in the development of the Training for Safety in the Wood Products Industry.

The FTMA worked with the Timber Merchants Association & Victorian Association of Forest Industries in organizing the Inaugural National Women in Timber Seminar, which was an outstanding success. There has been a lot of work done to establish alliances within the Australian timber industry.

In February this year they held a tour of the Tumut / Tumberumba timber mill and the Fit for Purpose dinner meeting to gain a better understanding of how Australian timber is processed. Later in 2011 we will hold the FTMA Australia National Awards. The Awards have been refined and we believe that members will benefit from being involved, at the same time having a free audit undertaken of their business.

The FTMA put out a copy of the Wood Products of Victoria Ltd, "Guide to Assessment and Repair of Flood Damaged Timber and Timber Framed Houses. It is interesting reading, covering "Timber & Moisture", kitchen cupboards, vanity units, laundry units, "Roof & Walls", "Laminated beams", LVL's, "I" beams, and structural ply. Other areas included were timber floors, timber decking, termite management

and re-building or new structures-raised timber sub floors. If any builder wants a copy of this I will gladly email them one on request.

The input that the FTMA Australia has given has been varied and strong and with this type of representation it can only benefit the members and grow the Association.

Don't forget that the DVD "Prefabricated Timber Roof Truss Installation- Good Practice" is out in the market place. You may not think that you or your subbies don't 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 doing it 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 one comes out, anyone that has bought the current one will receive a copy free of charge 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.*

ADVANTAGECARD

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

PREFABRICATION INDUSTRY

We are hearing from a number of sources that a lot of manufacturers have come back from the break and have either been delayed by the result of the rain or that some builders have taken extended leave (probably due to the weather conditions). We ourselves found that jobs were pushed back, site measures postponed, either be it due to the steel not being in and or being able to get access onto the sites. Some builders have stated that they are selling plenty of homes, but are restricted by the land developers, permits and of course something we haven't seen for a long time, rain delays.

As usual we will see in a few weeks, pressure from everyone wanting their stuff at the same time. A lot of builders are telling us that they have enough to keep them going for most of the year.

The Armstrong Creek development has been delayed yet again. They are now talking around September before they will be able to start building. It has had delay after delay, but once it is up and running, I believe this will be great for Geelong.

Since our last newsletter we have got the power we required to run the new saw and it has been fantastic. I can see why over the past few years that they have sold well over 40 of these saws into the market place. Don't forget what we said in the last newsletter, *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.

With the floods especially in QLD and of course what has happened in NZ, a number of manufacturers have been affected. Down here we probably find it hard to relate to what they and others have gone through and it must have been devastating for them to see what damage has occurred. We hope they get back on their feet as soon as possible.

LIGHT HEARTED

An elderly lady was invited to an old friend's home for dinner one evening. She was impressed by the way her lady friend preceded every request to her husband with endearing terms such as: Sweetums, My Love, Darling, Babe, etc. The couple had been married almost 60 years and, clearly, they were still very much in love. While the husband was in the living room, her lady friend leaned over to her hostess to say, 'I think it's wonderful that, after all these years, you still call your husband all those loving names!'

The elderly lady hung her head. 'I have to tell you the truth,' she said, 'his name slipped my mind about 10 years ago, and I'm scared to death to ask the cranky old bastard what his name is.'

40 years of marriage...

A married couple in their early 60s was celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary in a quiet, romantic little restaurant. Suddenly, a tiny yet beautiful fairy appeared on their table. "For being such an exemplary married couple and being loving to each other for all this time, I will grant you each a wish". The wife answered, "Oh, I want to travel around the world with my darling husband". The fairy waved her magic wand and "poof", two First Class tickets for the Queen Mary II appeared in her hands.

The husband thought for a moment: "well this is all very romantic, but an opportunity like this will never come again. I am sorry my love, but my wish is to have a wife that is 30 years younger than me". The wife and the fairy were deeply disappointed, but a wish is a wish. So the fairy waved her magic wand a "poof".....the husband became 92 years old.

The moral of this story:

Men who are ungrateful bastards should remember fairies are females.....

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	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	5249 4423
Zach Napper	Trainee Estimator	5249 4407

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