

# M.B. NEWS

## 2006 JULY Edition.

### THE FIRST HALF

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In the last news letter I congratulated Geelong on their win and hoped they didn't get too carried away with the result and remained focused on the *main* cup awaiting them at the end of the season. Well I should have sent them a copy of the newsletter, because I don't think they have done too well since. They will have to win every game from now on to make it into the final 8. Not an impossibility, more an improbability.

It has been in comparison to other years, pretty dismal as far as being busy is concerned. I have spoken to a number of fabricators and some have said they have been steady, but they are only small fabricators, some have been working a four day week, and the majority of others have been finding things tough. This is from the NSW border, across Central Victoria, back through the Melbourne suburbs and along down to the Warrnambool area. We are looking for a better second half, but there doesn't seem to be too many holding their breath. They are predicting things to improve in the 2007 year.

Last month saw the Frame Australia Conference, which was held at the Sofitel Hotel. This is held now every two years and it can have international speakers from as far away as America. Some of the things that were covered at the conference were the introduction of the new SP timber grade, Managing for Performance, new standards for the on-site construction, future developments on roof truss installation, OH&S issues, manufacturing equipment systems, efficient manufacturing operations, treated timber, emerging technologies in timber framing and some six other issues. It is a pretty full on two days.

I would like to give you a brief outline of one of these items that indirectly at this point affects the building industry. One is the new SP grades of pines. The new grade was developed to combat the problem of material being not up to standard even though it was graded as MGP 10. It was mainly in this grade that manufacturers were finding the problems. Now they have introduced SP 1, 2, 3 & 4. The SP 3 will be the grade to replace MGP 10 (eventually). SP 3 is now graded to a 9200 factor rather than a 10,000 factor. This means that it has to be a better product; it has a higher standard to meet this grades requirements. Rather than bringing in a completely new grading system, they should have just introduced extra grades such as MGP 9.2. Over all we are expecting a higher quality of timber with less down fall.

As with the introduction of MGP, we could not substitute an "f 5" grade for MGP 10, but we could substitute a MGP 10 grade for an "f 5" grade. The same rules will *virtually* apply here in *most* of the circumstances. You cannot use MGP 10 to substitute SP 3, in *most* circumstances, but the reverse is possible in *all* circumstances. The objective of the review was to create one system for all structural pine that would be compatible with the users requirements, and the elimination of the "f" Grades for lower range pine (well that's what we have been told). It will now have three grades, "f", MGP & SP. Some mills are sticking to the MGP grades and are saying they are not going to introduce the SP Grades. It is going to be a headache for a lot of timber yards.

### TIMBER & FUEL

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Since the last letter, pine has gone up and again come down. The market overall has been down which has now produced a glut of pine. The Pine producers are having stocks building up, which will then have them

trying to discount timber to clear their yards. The only problem is, if you don't need it, why buy it? We have been for some time now seeing pine prices at a price we have not seen for a long, long time. Their warehouse costs have gone up and their fuel costs have increased by some 72% over the past two and a half years, but they still don't charge to deliver the timber. It is free into store. One timber supplier I spoke to in S.A. now has a monthly fuel bill of over \$300,000. That's over \$3.6 million a year. One other timber manufacturer said that they now spend over \$750,000 a month on fuel, which is \$9 million a year. Things are about to change. We understand that they cannot keep operating this way and that they will introduce a "fuel levy" in the next few weeks. The fuel levy will be based on a "cubic" rate of some \$5.00 a cube. If the price goes to \$1.60 and over a litre then the price per cube could be as much as \$10.00. To put this in perspective, \$5.00 a cube works out to be .018 cents per metre for 90 x 35 pine (rounded up to 2 cents per metre). If it was \$10.00 a cube it would mean \$0.038 cents a metre (rounded up to 4 cents a metre). So we are not seeing any huge increase here, but there is a *justification* for the increase.

### **WARNING – PLEASE READ THIS**

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We are not sure if you are aware of what happened some 3 or 4 years ago in South Australia, where at a Golf Club a girder truss failed. This failure was not something that just happened. It took some period of time to get to the stage when it was to fail. It was over a number of years. When it did fail it was a matter of hearing some cracking sounds and then collapsing, killing two people.

The reason why it collapsed was determined after an extensive investigation and a court case. It was determined that one of the main contributors to its failure was due to the roof battens being spliced in short lengths along the entire girder truss. The short lengths created a problem and the splicing on the girder truss also contributed to the problem. It was not helped either by the fact that the truss being a double truss, the roof battens were only nailed to one of the laminations rather than both of them. The splicing was done in such a way that the timber had split ends and once any movement had started they had little if no holding capacity.

Why are we telling you this? You probably think that it is the only time you have heard of some thing like this happening. You probably think that this could not happen, let alone happen to you. Well, we have just seen an example of a girder that *potentially* would have done the same thing. The roof battens, some 6 or 7 rows on each side, with only one (1) row nailed into the girder truss on one side and two (2) rows nailed on the other side. What is holding it in a vertical mode and what was stopping any lateral movements? We implore you to inform your roofers or who ever is responsible for the roof battens to make sure that the roof battens are nailed correctly to all girders at each point they cross a girder, and if it is a double girder make sure that both laminations are nailed. Also ensure that the splicing is to regulation and the battens are in *long* lengths, *not* short *off cuts*.

### **WORK COVER & POWERLINES – “SPOTTERS”**

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New laws have been introduced due to a number of people being killed from coming into contact with power lines. The rules that apply are that you are not allowed to operate a crane within *6.4 metres* of powerlines, without a qualified "spotter". Doug went out to site the other day and he parked on the opposite side of the site and he was still closer than 6.4 metres from the powerlines. Now, you will only find this in the areas that are in the old areas that have narrow streets, such as Geelong West. New estates usually have underground power now, which will not be a concern to us. But, when we have extensions or old homes that have been bulldozed and replaced with new ones, and they are in the older estates, we can come across this problem.

We have sourced a qualified "spotter" who is prepared to do the job based on \$40.00 per hour (plus GST), *but* with a *minimum* of 4 hours. This apparently includes his travel time to and from the site and the JSA he does when he arrives.

We have three people booked in to do this course in Melbourne and once they have become qualified, we will be able to do this job from here. We will price the job on an hourly rate with no minimum hours. We have a number of builders when they have the soil test done or the site surveyed, they get the information as to where the power lines are and if a spotter is required or not. It is then put on the plans for all to see. When we receive the plans to quote we can allow for a spotter. At the present we are having an extra sheet (quote) done separately, stating what the cost will be for the job *if* a spotter is required. To be on the safe side, any jobs in the Geelong, Surf Coast, Bellarine type areas, you should allow a minimum of \$160.00 plus GST. Outside these areas will be a little more. Work Cover has let it be known anyone found to be flouting this law, will have them coming down on them like a ton of bricks. What we will be doing is if there is no information on the plans, we will provide a separate quote for the cost of the "spotter" if he is required.

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## **HIA GEELONG AND WESTERN DISTRICT BRANCH**

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The Housing Awards will be held on Friday the 8th of September this year. There will be a change of venue, and a change of band. You will be kept abreast of this and other information such as times, venue and cost at your local HIA meetings. Make sure you keep that date free and come along and enjoy the night. You don't have to have an entry (although that would be nice) to go to this event. Come along and support your local HIA, as they are there to support you.

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## **GEELONG ADVERTISER BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

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After several months of preparation putting together a written submission and having judges visit on two occasions we were delighted to be presented with the Hardings Hardware Building, Renovations and Suppliers award at the awards presentation function on 26<sup>th</sup> July.

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## **LIGHT HEARTED**

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Who said footballers aren't smart

1. I owe a lot to my parents, especially my mother and father." (Shane Wakelin)
2. "Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein." Mick Malthouse – Collingwood.
3. "I'm going to graduate on time, no matter how long it takes." Peter Bell - Fremantle - on his University Law studies.
4. "You guys line up alphabetically by height," and "you guys pair up in groups of three, then line up in a circle." Barry Hall Sydney Captain at training.
5. Brock Maclean (Melbourne) on whether he had visited the Pyramids during his visit to Egypt: "I can't really remember the names of the clubs that we went to."
6. "He's a guy who gets up at six o'clock in the morning regardless of what time it is." Kevin Sheedy on James Hird.
7. Jonathan Brown, on night Grand Finals vs. Day Games "It's basically the same, just darker."
8. Ron Barassi talking about Gary Cowton "I told him, 'Son, what is it with you. Is it ignorance or apathy?' He said, Barassi, I don't know and I don't care.'
9. Barry Hall (Sydney) when asked about the upcoming season: "I want to kick 70 or 80 goals this season, whichever comes first."
10. "Luke Hodge - the 21 year old, who turned 22 a few weeks ago." (Dermott Brereton)
11. "Chad had done a bit of mental arithmetic with a calculator." (Mark Williams)
12. "He scored that goal after only 22 seconds - totally against the run of play." (Dermott Brereton)

13. "We actually got the winning goal three minutes from the end but then they scored." (Ben Cousins, West Coast Eagles)
14. "I've never had major knee surgery on any other part of my body. (Luke Darcy)
15. "That kick was absolutely unique, except for the one before it which was identical." (Dermott Brereton)
16. "Sure there have been injuries and deaths in football - but none of them serious." (Adrian Anderson)
17. "If history repeats itself, I should think we can expect the same thing again." (Andrew Demetriou)
18. "I would not say he (Chris Judd) is the best centre man in the AFL, but there are none better." (Dermott Brereton)
19. "I never comment on umpires and I'm not going to break the habit of a lifetime for that prat." (Terry Wallace)
20. Garry Lyon: "Have you ever thought of writing your autobiography?" David Swartz: "On what?"
21. "Well, either side could win it, or it could be a draw." (Dermott Brereton)
22. "Strangely, in slow motion replay, the ball seemed to hang in the air for even longer." (Dermott Brereton)

## **DIRECT LINES**

If you need to know something or require any assistance please do not hesitate to use the contacts set out below.

Contact	Area	Phone Number
Doug Maxwell	Longreach Floor Trusses	5249 4411 Direct Fax 5223 1022
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Davin	Truss Detailer	5249 4409
Steve	Supervisor / Estimator	5249 4405
David	Estimator	5249 4406
Matt	Estimator / Truss Detailer	5249 4407
Lisa	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0409 940 757
Tim	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0407 232 884
Gary	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0409 818 287
Cameron	Wall Detailer	5222 6188
Andrew	Wall Detailer	5222 6339
Anne	Deliveries / General Enquiries / Orders	5223 2888
Lauren	General Enquiries / Orders /Accounts	5223 2888
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