

M.B. NEWS

October 2006 Edition

THE SECOND HALF

The footy season is over. The Grand Final has been won by West Coast. The Brownlow was won by Adam Goodes. Like a number of teams, Geelong did not fare well. The coach, "Bomber" Thompson has survived and is going to keep his job with the proviso there is to be a few changes to take place. We now have some 6 months or so to prepare for the next footy season. Their Seconds did well to come from wooden spoon position last year to get in the Grand final this year, but did not look like winning the Grand Final. When Sandringham took their foot off the pedal to catch their breath, especially in the last quarter, Geelong made a last effort ditch for victory, but Sandringham then put the foot down to take back control of the game. Xmas will be next and it will be upon us before we know it.

FUEL

We have seen fuel prices drop considerably, but the main type used by most carriers has not, that being diesel. I can't fathom why there is such a discrepancy between diesel and petrol. I suppose the question could be asked of the gas prices. This is a product that used to be burnt off. It is sold overseas to the Japanese for a pittance and then they value add it and resell it back to us for an arm and a leg.

We have been informed by some timber suppliers that there is now a fuel charge on all deliveries, which used to be free into store. I wrote in the last newsletter the amounts being spent for no return on deliveries, so we can't begrudge some of the mills trying to keep their heads above water.

TIMBER

Speaking of mills, Doug and I were at a HIA breakfast in Melbourne the other day and our host of the table informed us he was finishing up with his company, Pine Solutions at the end of the year. This was not a retirement, but a decision to let him go. He was the Managing Director of the company and I understand there will be further cuts to come. Everyone in the timber industry is really feeling the pinch.

The SP grades that the A3P (of which Pine Solutions are a member) have been talking about introducing have now been put back to January 2007 for their introduction. They have come up against a few obstacles one being the biggest users of the product, the truss and frame manufacturers. This new grade was to be thrust upon the market without the proper consultation that it rightly deserved. The same thing happened with the introduction of the MGP Grades. When I sit down to write these articles it is usually over a period of some two to three weeks. In doing so things can change with things needing to be added, changed or deleted.

STOP THE PRESS! Today, Friday 29th September we have just been informed that Pine Solutions who are owned by Weyerhaeuser has just announced that they will be suspending the introduction of the new SP grades indefinitely. This morning I was at a FTMA board meeting and the subject came up and how they were not in some cases meeting the code requirements. The mother company has probably looked at what has been spent (and we are talking millions of dollars) and the way it has been done to introduce this

product and found the backlash against it has been damaging their business and have decided to cut their loses at this time. As individuals we may not be big, but as a group we can be powerful. If this had been introduced we would have seen timber that we could not recommend for use in trusses, being used, much the same as it is not recommended that HI (heart in) studs not be used in roof trusses, but unfortunately have been found to be, due to either the competitive nature of the industry or being driven by greed. Then it would be only a matter of time before something went wrong.

The FTMA has fought this from the start and only last week sent letters to all the nail plate manufacturers asking that they enforce the withdrawal of SP4 from the engineering in roof trusses. If necessary the FTMA were prepared to go to the ACCC with the Nail plate suppliers to voice the concerns the FTMA had with this product. Hopefully now it will not be necessary and the A3P have seen what they are up against.

It can be confusing enough for draft persons, builders and inspectors now, without having another grade introduced to have three grades out in the market place; F grades, MGP grades & SP grades. I don't think this has finished yet. I believe the A3P will go back and lick their wounds, regroup and then look for another avenue of approaching this to get it out in the market place.

NAIL PLATES

We have seen a considerable decrease in the cost of steel over the past months, yet we have not seen a reduction in the price of nail plates. Could this be taken as profiteering? It's funny how quick they were to increase the price by some 22½ % to 27½ % when steel was going up.

Their argument may be that they have not increased their prices this year by the usual 4%, so that acts as a decrease in the cost or that the decrease in prices has not been yet passed on, even thou it has been a number of months since the decrease in steel prices!

UPDATE

Do you remember our last newsletter with "Warning – Please read this"? This was about the collapse of the golf club roof, which resulted in deaths. The Master Builders of South Australia have put out a letter to their association re to sit on a Ministerial Taskforce which has been established due to this unfortunate accident. They are to investigate the construction, installation and inspection regime to assess the structural integrity of pre-installed and installed trusses. The Taskforce has already identified a procedure for assessment of truss installation and inspection of installed trusses.

Through the Truss Taskforce they will develop a best practice procedure with an accompanying checklist as a means of ensuring a formalised process is in place to determine all correct information is provided to the Council of Certifiers. Reading through the letter there is no actual mention of a "truss manufacturers" involvement in this, which I hope is just an oversight and they are involved, as they are not just the ones that manufacture this product, they would know better than just about any group about the correct way of installing trusses. Its great to see this happening, but it's a pity it took a tragedy such as this to make it happen.

HIA GEELONG AND WESTERN DISTRICT BRANCH

The H.I.A Housing Awards night was held in September at The Sands, Torquay. We had a good turn out of over 160 people. Some of the award winners were, Pivot Homes, Hamlan Homes, M.G. Design, Malishev Homes, Burbank Homes & King Homes. We congratulate those and all the other winners on the night. The entertainment from Andrew Startin was excellent. Like most things in life, success comes from support. These awards nights can only get better due to support from the members.

LIGHT HEARTED

FIRST - A couple were going out for the evening. They'd gotten ready, all dolled up, put the dog out etc. The taxi arrives, and as the couple start out, the dog shoots back into the house. They don't want the dog shut in the house, so the wife goes out to the taxi while the husband goes upstairs to chase the dog out. The wife, not wanting it known that the house will be empty explains to the taxi driver, "He's just going up stairs to say goodbye to my mother."

A few minutes later the husband gets into the cab.

"Sorry I took so long" he says, "Stupid bitch was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat hanger to get her to come out! Then I had to wrap her in a blanket to keep her from scratching and biting me as I hauled her arse downstairs and tossed her in the back yard! She better not shit in the vegetable garden again!"

The silence in the cab was deafening.

SECOND - A United States marine was attending some college courses between assignments. He has completed missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the courses had a professor who was an avowed atheist and a member of the ACLU.

One day the professor shocked the class when he came in. He looked to the ceiling and flatly stated, "God, if you are real, then I want you to knock me off this platform. I'll give you exactly 15 minutes." The lecture room fell silent. You could hear a pin drop. Ten minutes went by and the professor proclaimed, "Here I am God. I'm still waiting."

It got down to the last couple of minutes when the marine got out of his chair, went up to the professor, and cold-cocked him knocking him off the platform. The professor was out cold. The marine went back to his seat and sat there, silently. The other students were shocked and stunned and sat there looking on in silence.

The professor eventually came to, noticeably shaken, looked at the marine and asked, "What the hell is the matter with you? Why did you do that?"

The marine calmly replied, "God was too busy today protecting America's troops who are protecting your right to say stupid shit and act like an asshole, so He sent me."

NEW WALL FRAME FACTORY

In the next month or so we will be moving into the wall frame factory we built last year. This will give us greater space and allow us smoother loading of wall frames and roof trusses.

STAFF

Cameron Barker (Camo) after seventeen and a half years with us has decided to hang up the detailing pad and try his hand at something new. Camo started with us as a 15 year old in the factory. He was taught a number of things before taking on the plate cutting. After a few years of doing this he was given the chance to be trained as a wall detailer. He took this challenge on and over the years developed into a very good detailer. We worked it out that he had spent some 54% of his life with us.

Camo was into Holden's, so we bought him a framed authentic Peter Brock piece of memorabilia. It had three pictures, one of him and two of his cars, along with his racing history and signed by Peter. Things can

be spooky, as the day and time I purchased it, one hour later Peter Brock was killed. We wish Cameron all the best in his future endeavours.

Brad Tedford has replaced Cameron. Brad has worked with us for a number of years and has always shown ability, not just in the manufacturing area, but also in the area of being very capable in communicating with people. He will be trained in-house over the next twelve months or so and we look forward to him to continuing to step up to the plate and to develop the skills required to be extremely competent in this field.

ELECTRONIC NEWS

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DIRECT LINES

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

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