

# M.B. NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2008 EDITION

"Without prejudice"

## INTRODUCTION

---

I don't know about you, but I have never seen a year that has been so up and down and more importantly never seen a year that we have had so many people off work, that have been affected by this flu that has been going around. I myself have not had a cold in 25 to 30 years, but I was one of those hit by this bug and I have never been so crook and to top it off, it drains you of all your strength. In the end I was grateful I didn't even have the strength to use the remote control, through total boredom of not being able to do anything. One thing I did learn is that Oprah has actually put on more weight.

It only seems like a few weeks ago that we were just starting the season and now it's all over. Congratulations to Adam Cooney from the Western Bulldogs on his win in the Brownlow Medal. There were some real turn ups in regards to some of the players such as Jimmy Bartel only getting 10 votes and Brent Harvey winning everything except the Brownlow and then there was Simon Black and Richo's (crowd favourite) performance, unbelievable. Congratulations to Hawthorn on their performance on winning the Grand Final.

All I can say is that how lucky the teams such as Geelong, Hawthorn and the others were that Essendon, who by the way were absolutely ravaged by injuries this year, didn't play a part in the finals as they would have probably been mentally tarnished for years by the experience. It would have kept Essendon's flag winning average at one in every seven and half years. Then, there's always next year!

The "global" financial situation doesn't look that good. Names that have been the "corner stones" in the financial world are crashing. Banks that have been around for 150 plus years have gone under. We ourselves, only this month have seen one financial group in Queensland fall over and another is on the brink of collapse. The US Government has now stepped in and is propping up a lot of the big boys to the tune of over 750 **billion** dollars. We are told that we are protected in a lot of ways and one is the regulations for borrowing monies that we have in this country. I hope this is correct. It does in some way effect all who have Superannuation as they will have portfolios invested in the US markets. We have all these genius advisors who invest on our behalf and the foundations of a lot of those companies are now being tested. Super Funds have had that much money; a lot of them had trouble finding places to invest such huge amounts. Some of them could have bought up *whole* countries.

When looking for somewhere to invest these funds and having others out in the market place in the same boat, it virtually became a competition to get one. It artificially inflated the real value of some of these investments and now it is coming back to bite them on the ass. Does anyone remember the film "Wall Street" and the famous line spoken by Gordon Gecko, "Greed is good" and believing in not paying too much just for the sake of owing it. I think the *imaginary* Gordon Gecko actually had more *smarts* than a majority of today's so called, Wall Street geniuses.

## TIMBER INDUSTRY

---

In our last edition we spoke about the possibility of a takeover of Pine Solutions by Carter Holt Harvey. It has happened and there have already been a number of changes made. Two of the big shocks to us were the dismissal of one of the big bosses, Christine Briggs who had been with the company for some 22 years and had worked her way up the ranks in what is a predominantly male industry. The other was the Victorian boss, John Summers. Both of these people had an extraordinary ability to converse with their customers.

Both had the ability to not only see both sides of an argument, but to come up with a solution. They wanted partnerships to work. Both will be sadly missed in the industry and if neither is picked up by another timber supplier, I believe the industry will be lesser for it. Whilst on the subject of "timber", sometime ago Gunn's took over Auspine timber. There is a rumour going around that they could possibly take over another large timber mill and if that happens there will be virtually only two major Pine players in the market place.

---

## **FUEL WATCH**

---

Fuel prices are still hurting everyone and there doesn't seem to be any relief in sight. As I write this edition, earlier today I heard that the price of a barrel of oil had dropped to \$90/ \$91 US, which has been the lowest price in probably 12 months. At the same time that cyclone off the Gulf of Mexico (Ike) apparently damaged a number of oil rigs, so why does the price drop, shouldn't it go up? Mid morning yesterday people were phoning the radio station I was listening to and the price of fuel had gone from \$1.46 to \$1.62 and one independent had it at \$1.70 (Melb) and this is for standard unleaded. Who can figure?

---

## **THE BUILDING INDUSTRY OUTLOOK**

---

Most of the people I have spoken to have noticed a slump; some describe it as a softening of the market. NSW is not doing any better than it had previously been doing and in some areas it is getting worse. It has seen the biggest builder in the State fall over and it has taken the biggest Truss manufacturer with it and damaged a number of others in the process. I understand that one of the truss manufacturers who has been around for some 20 plus years is down to working only 2 days a week. If things do not pick up for them I would envisage them closing their doors, also. It is not a good sign in NSW with some 20 plus manufacturers disappearing in the past 18 to 24 months. Areas of QLD have quietened right down, but speaking to a Queenslander the other day he told me areas to the north of the State where the blocks of land are \$100,000 or under, are booming. You have to wait up to 16 weeks for an order to be delivered. The reverse is happening in Victoria. We have seen another truss plant close their doors in Sunshine. It's strange, we have a lot of land and we have a huge need for more housing, so why aren't we building more homes. I believe one reason is that we haven't released anywhere near enough land, which is not helping with the prices and the other is now *-confidence*.

---

## **FTMA AUSTRALIA**

---

Nick Livanes our Executive Officer has just completed another of the NSW Chapter regional seminar series. He and the President Peter Wines have been travelling to a number of interstate areas promoting the values of the FTMA Australia and still have a number to go. The Board has set up a committee for the National Awards Night to be held in October next year and are well into its preparation. Don't forget that the DVD "Prefabricated Timber Roof Truss Installation- Good Practice is out in the market place. If you want a copy they are available for \$15.00 each from Clive at M.B.

---

## **ADVANTAGECARD**

---

If you haven't got an AdvantageCard or you aren't using the one that was sent to you, you are missing out! There are a number of participating AdvantageCard businesses in the Geelong area where you can use your card and these will only increase. As a 30 day account customer at M.B Pre-Fab, it is easy to be eligible for reward points – simply pay your 30 day account on time! For each pre-GST dollar you spend with us you can earn one point. Points, once accrued, hold a dollar value and can be spent almost like cash at all participating businesses, including AdvantageCard Travel.

We know that a lot of members use their AdvantageCard points to take flights for holidays. Remember, there is no charge to join and you are going to spend that money anyway, so why not get some extra benefits for your dollar.

---

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

---

M.B. will be talking at the next HIA dinner meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October. We will be returning some volleys in regards to what was said about roof trusses at the last meeting, of which I was unable to attend. The

theme of the talk will be **"The myths, the truth & the crap about roof trusses"**. We will also have some interesting slides.

The regional HIA Housing Awards Night will be held on Friday 10th October at Capri Receptions. Tickets are \$85.00 per head (including GST) and include pre-dinner drinks and canopies, a 3 course meal, the entertainment & MC is Marty Fields the son of the legendary Maurie Fields and the band is a three piece known as "Snag". Enquiries can be made thru "hiageelongbranch@gmail.com". Remember you don't have to have a home being judged to go along to the awards night. If you are looking for a good night out that is real value for money, make a booking now! The committee goes to a lot of time and effort in organising this night and all they look for in return is for members to support the night. RSVP's close 3<sup>rd</sup> October.

---

## STAFF

---

This month Neil Edwards has just completed 10 years service with us. He started off on the floor in the factory and over the years stepped up and took on different roles for us. In the past twelve months he was given the opportunity to be trained as an Estimator. He has again taken up the challenge and is progressing very well. We look forward to this continuing and him developing over the next 10 years.

---

## LIGHT HEARTED

---

### Why We Love Children

1. A nursery school pupil told his teacher he'd found a cat, but it was dead. 'How do you know that the cat was dead?' she asked her pupil. 'Because I pissed in its ear and it didn't move,' answered the child innocently. 'You did WHAT?' the teacher exclaimed in surprise. 'You know,' explained the boy, 'I leaned over and went 'Pssst' and it didn't move'

2. A small boy is sent to bed by his father. Five minutes later..... 'Da-ad....' 'What?' 'I'm thirsty. Can you bring a drink of water?' 'No, You had your chance. Lights out.' Five minutes later: 'Da-aaaad.....' 'WHAT?' 'I'm THIRSTY. Can I have a drink of water??' 'I told you NO! If you ask again, I'll have to smack you!!' Five minutes later..... 'Daaaa-aaaad.....' 'WHAT!' 'When you come in to smack me, can you bring a drink of water?'

3. An exasperated mother, whose son was always getting into mischief, finally asked him 'How do you expect to get into Heaven?' The boy thought it over and said, 'Well, I'll run in and out and in and out and keep slamming the door until St. Peter says, 'For Heaven's sake, Dylan, come in or stay out!''

4. One summer evening during a violent thunderstorm a mother was tucking her son into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he asked with a tremor in his voice, 'Mummy, will you sleep with me tonight?' The mother smiled and gave him a reassuring hug. 'I can't dear,' she said. 'I have to sleep in Daddy's room.' A long silence was broken at last by his shaky little voice: 'The big sissy.'

5. It was that time, during the Sunday morning service, for the children's sermon. All the children were invited to come forward. One little girl was wearing a particularly pretty dress and, as she sat down, the minister leaned over and said, 'That is a very pretty dress. Is it your Easter Dress?' The little girl replied, directly into the minister's clip-on microphone, 'Yes, and my Mum says it's a bitch to iron.'

6. When I was six months pregnant with my third child, my three year old came into the room when I was just getting ready to get into the shower. She said, 'Mummy, you are getting fat!' I replied, 'Yes, honey, remember Mummy has a baby growing in her tummy.' 'I know,' she replied, but what's growing in your bum?'

7. A little boy was doing his math homework. He said to himself, 'Two plus five, that son of a bitch is seven. Three plus six, that son of a bitch is nine....' His mother heard what he was saying and gasped, 'What are you doing?' The little boy answered, 'I'm doing my math homework, Mum.' 'And this is how your

teacher taught you to do it?' the mother asked 'Yes,' he answered. Infuriated, the mother asked the teacher the next day, 'What are you teaching my son in math?' The teacher replied, 'Right now, we are learning addition.' The mother asked, 'And are you teaching them to say two plus two, that son of a bitch is four?' After the teacher stopped laughing, she answered, 'What I taught them was, two plus two, THE SUM OF WHICH, is four.'

8. One day the first grade teacher was reading the story of Chicken Little to her class. She came to the part of the story where Chicken Little tried to warn the farmer. She read, '.... and so Chicken Little went up to the farmer and said, 'The sky is falling, the sky is falling!' The teacher paused then asked the class, 'And what do you think that farmer said?' One little girl raised her hand and said, 'I think he said: 'Holy Shit! A talking chicken!' The teacher was unable to teach for the next 10 minutes.

9. A certain little girl, when asked her name, would reply, 'I'm Mr. Sugarbrown's daughter.' Her mother told her this was wrong, she must say, 'I'm Jane Sugarbrown.' The Vicar spoke to her in Sunday School, and said, 'Aren't you Mr. Sugarbrown's daughter?' She replied, 'I thought I was, but mother says I'm not.'

10. A little girl asked her mother, 'Can I go outside and play with the boys?' Her mother replied, 'No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough.' The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, 'If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?'

## 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	Deliveries / Orders / General Enquiries	5223 2888
Lauren	Accounts / General Enquiries / Orders	5223 2888
Tim	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0407 232 884
Paul	Customer Development Officer / Estimator	0409 940 757 or 5249 4419
Davin	Truss Designer	5249 4410
Matt	Truss Designer / Estimator	5249 4409
Andrew	Wall Frame Designer	5249 4415
Neil	Estimator	5249 4407
Ryan	Trainee Wall Designer	5223 2888
James	Estimator	5249 4408
Elliot	Trainee Estimator	5223 2888