

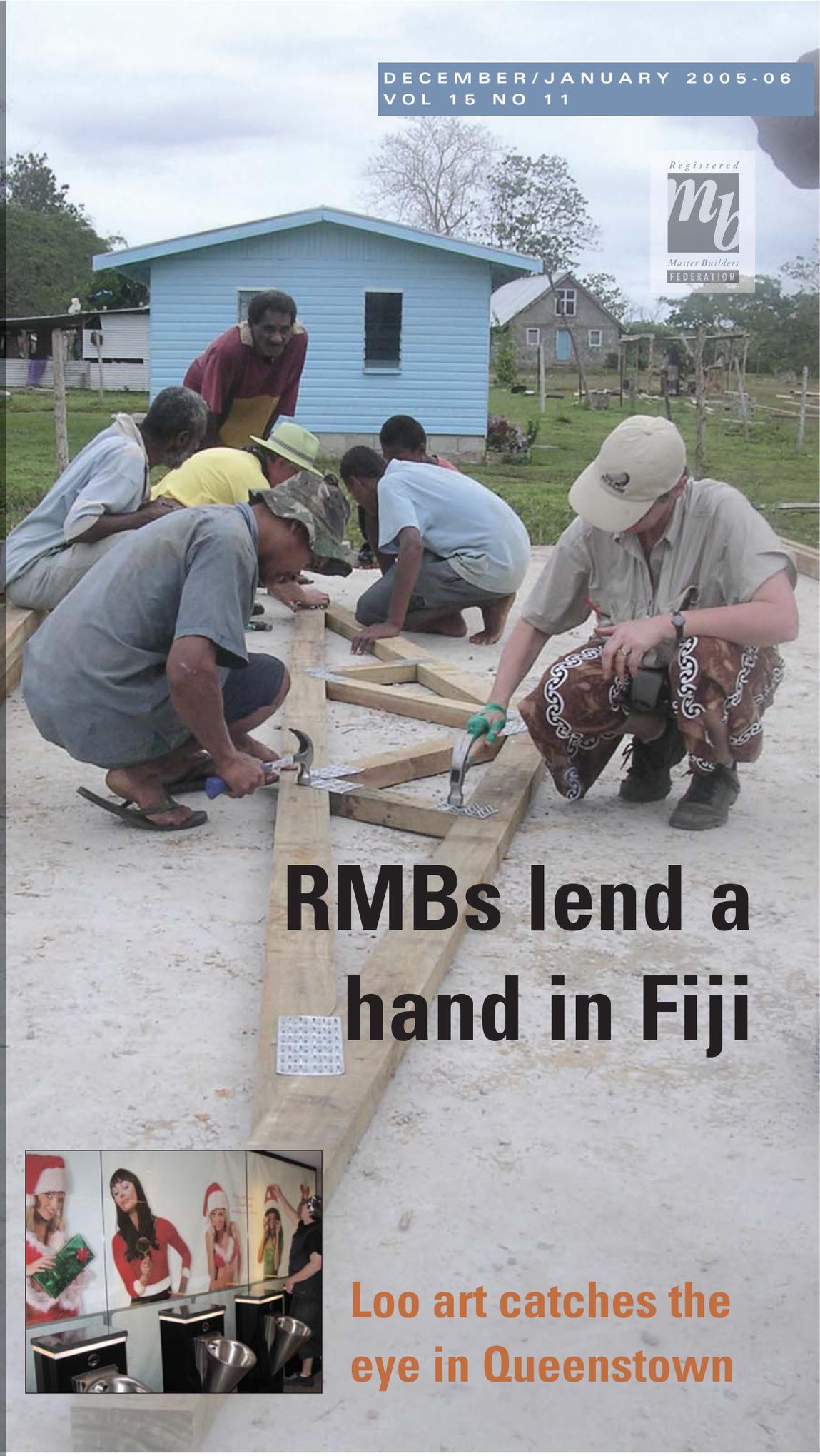
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Master Builders
FEDERATION

building today

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS FEDERATION



RMBs lend a hand in Fiji



Loo art catches the eye in Queenstown

inside this issue

RMBF News p4-8

Chris Yeats profile, Registered Master Builders in Fiji

Industry News p9-12

WHRS statistics, Nelson Pine Industries celebrates

Vehicles p14-15

Ford's latest offering

Products p16

Encos Global Systems' newly-released "Trade Tools"

People p17

BCITO News p18

Columnists p20-22

Gareth Hoole on business performance management

Builders Tips p23

building today

Well, that's it — another year almost done and dusted. It'll go down as a busy one for the New Zealand construction industry and, as you'll see from RMBF chief executive Pieter Burghout's column on page 4, next year won't see much let-up.

Building Today wishes all its readers, editorial contributors, advertisers, the RMBF and other industry organisations a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and Happy New Year.

We look forward to bringing you more news, views and information on New Zealand's construction industry in 2006.

So until then, take a well earned break, re-charge the batteries and we'll see you in the New Year.

Andrew Darlington
Editor



cover story p6-7

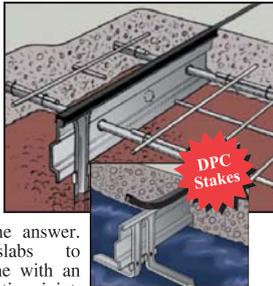
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MARKHAM

Pour long slabs in 1 with QUICKEY

CODE requires that slabs longer than 12m are divided by a construction joint. This means pouring in a number of pours.



QUICKEY is the answer. Allowing the slabs to be poured as one with an "insitu" construction joint, that relieves shrinkage without hidden zones that crack later.

Quick and easy-to-erect, it keys the slabs together eliminating up & down movement. Quickey is better than cutting which depends on large induced cracking.

Quickey can be used to screed off and has an optional capping for joint sealant.

For more information, enquire about



CONTROL & CONSTRUCTION JOINT SYSTEM

Aquron multi-purpose for Placemakers

New Placemakers stores in Auckland, Christchurch, Invercargill and Queenstown have utilised the AQURON providing a "light and even" appearance with surface hardening, anti-dusting and sheen enhancement qualities to the burnished concrete finish.



AQURON is easily applied to curing concrete as soon as it is firm enough to walk on, to provide complete curing assistance, ensuring even hydration of the concrete and reducing risks of slab curl, shrinkage cracking, surface crazing and delamination. AQURON treated concrete provides an abrasion resistant, easy to clean surface that develops a "sheen" with "use". AQURON is permanent and does not require maintenance, other than regular cleaning and the "more you use it, the better it gets".

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AQURON WAREHOUSE SYSTEM

Aquron control's moisture risks

High moisture levels in concrete were controlled by AQURON applied prior to fitout of tenancies at the recent upgrades of the WESTFIELD Malls in Riccarton in Christchurch and Queensgate in Lower Hutt. AQURON was applied to control moisture 72 hours prior to flooring being installed.



AQURON 2000 has been proven in New Zealand since 1996. AQURON 2000 internally sealing the concrete with a gel formation that "locks up" any free moisture allowing floor coverings to be installed regardless of the moisture readings. AQURON is a quality controlled supplied and applied treatment with a 15 year guarantee.

For more information, enquire about

AQURON 2000 MULTI-PURPOSE

Allen introduces hydro-rideon

Markham's introduce the most powerful ALLEN RAZORBACK Hydro-drive Rideon to complete the range of rideon powertrowell's proven in New Zealand since 1996.



ALLEN RAZORBACK is leading the revolution as more concrete spec's are demanding the use of Rideon machines for the superior finishing result.



Also used equipment & concrete saws

Markham's have the SMART CONCRETE/DEMOLITION SAW, with a powerful 2 stroke petrol motor making this machine suitable for any work site, requiring no electrical source. This robust power unit and mechanical system is still light-weight and compact making the machine easy to use.



Clear sealers for high traffic areas



AQURON Markham clear sealers have been utilised to the landscape concrete at THE BASE BULK RETAIL CENTRE in Hamilton. Markham's clear sealers are non-yellowing and suitable for high traffic areas.

AQURON Markham's clear sealers are suitable for both coloured and natural concrete surfaces including "honed", exposed aggregates, broom finish.

AQURON Markham also have clear sealers for concrete blocks / masonry and paving

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AQURON MARKHAM MASONRY SEALERS

Revolutionary twin-bladed saw

This unique saw is suitable for cutting Aluminium, Wood, Copper, Brass, Plastics, Steel. The two blades rotating in the opposite directions neutralise the reaction forces making clean burr-free cutting and eliminates kickbacks.

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Burr-free finish



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chief's chat

by ceo pieter burghout

'All I want for Christmas!'

For most of us in the construction industry we are charging towards Christmas 2005 at breakneck speed.

In the past few years we have benefited from the highest work volumes the industry has ever seen, meaning each year has been busier than the one before.

Add to this the leaky buildings issue and changes to the regulatory environment, and you begin to understand why the industry has been pretty frenetic.

'Wish list'

In this last editorial for 2005 — my third as chief executive of the RMBF — it seems appropriate to look at the "wish list" for the construction industry's Christmas stocking for 2006:

• **Steady work volumes:** The October residential consent numbers provide some evidence of the decline in building consent numbers that many in (and outside) the industry have been predicting for some time.

Conversely, commercial consent numbers continue to hold their own. 2005 will finish a quieter year than 2004, and 2006 will be quieter again, but still higher than 2003 work levels.

So, while the numbers are trending down, they should remain steady, giving the industry the chance to take a breather and to consolidate business operations.

• **Improved consent processing time frames and certainty:** The biggest gripe from members during the year revolved around the delays and uncertainties experienced during the consent process, including the issue of code compliance certificates and site inspections by local authorities.

On one hand, the industry needs to "pull up its socks"



with regards to lifting the standard and quality of the consent applications being submitted to councils.

On the other hand, councils themselves recognise the processing delays and uncertainties this year have been unacceptable. In most cases, we have seen improvements in this area during the past few months, but there is still much to be done.

• **Certainty and timeliness around licensing and other regulatory changes:** Fifteen months out from the date the licensing regime is supposed to become optional for the building industry to sign into (March 2007), we are not much clearer on what the licensing regime will actually look like and how it will work in practice.

We are aware that the Government has raised concerns that licensing is going to cost more than anticipated, and so it was worthwhile to look at ways of targeting the licensing regime to reduce its impact

and cost.

However, the RMBF is adamant that for licensing to work properly it must apply across all building categories and the component parts of the industry, rather than concentrating on one or two.

Otherwise, it will be confusing for the construction industry and consumers, and won't achieve the outcomes Government and industry are wanting from licensing in terms of lifting skill levels and professionalism within the industry.

The RMBF is keen to get early traction on the licensing issue in 2006 so we are clear about what we need to focus on during the year.

Having said that, we don't want to rush things too much so we (Government and industry) get it wrong. We need to do it once and do it right.

• **Industry leadership:** Finally, the industry is undergoing significant change and the framework we are working to build and implement will set the scene for the industry for years to come.

What we do now will affect homes, offices, schools and hospitals for the next 20 to 30 years, if not longer.

Necessary leadership

That makes it incumbent on the key industry players to ensure we exercise the necessary leadership to get the framework right — right through the industry value chain from central and local Government to researchers, standard setters, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, builders and, last but not least, clients. We all have to step up to the plate to lead the way forward.

And if all those things are in the industry's Christmas stocking this year, we should be happy enough, I think!

Can I take this opportunity to wish all the Federation's members, partners and stakeholders the very best for the Christmas/New Year period, and I hope that you all get to share quality time with your families, friends and loved ones.

We look forward to touching base with you again in the New Year.

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www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/rmbf1

Big freeze no problem for Yeats

Greymouth builder Chris Yeats became a two-time National Winner at the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2005 Commercial Awards for a challenging building project in a natural environment.

His winning property was the Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass, and it garnered praise from the national judging panel.

"This building blends into the landscape so effortlessly, it could almost have grown out of the ground it sits upon," the judges said. "Chris Yeats Builders Ltd exhibited extreme attention to detail, innovation and organisation in testing circumstances," according to the team of commercial judges.

"Despite the fact that this was a building site for some months the surrounding landscape remains untouched. This faultless property is a truly magnificent piece of construction."

The Wilderness Lodge Arthur's Pass was completed by four carpenters and a team of subcontractors who worked well together, Chris says.

"The full credit for the quality of the job has to go to the foreman, Murray Atkinson and his leading hand, Craig Schwitzer. Both are diligent operators who led a fantastic crew that were small in number but extremely capable."

The contract was to construct four new luxury units separate from the existing lodge complex. It quickly became apparent that this project would require an innovative approach as the site was extremely challenging and had no drive-on access.

All materials had to be craned in from a spot above the site, and concrete wall panels, pre-stressed floor units and timber wall framing were fabricated off-site in Greymouth, trucked in over Arthur's Pass and placed by a 30-tonne crane.

Solid concrete walls lie behind all the timber panelling. These were tailored by a structural engineer to fit the crane being used on the job and were carefully weighted to ensure they could be lifted into place. They were designed as a series of small panels that would resist cracking during transportation.

The weather was unreliable and unseasonable throughout the entire contract period, with several heavy snowfalls and lots of rain slowing progress. On two occasions the crane brakes froze, forcing the team to wait for them to thaw before resuming work.

The wall framing, while kiln dried, needed considerable heating to dry once the building was closed in. Steps



Above: The Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers 2005 QBE Insurance Commercial Award under \$2 million winning entry. Right: Chris Yeats, 2005 Registered Master Builder of the Year - Commercial.

Far right: Members of the team that worked on the winning project, from left: Chris Dalzell, Murray Atkinson and Johnny Cain.



The evening ended with Chris Yeats Builders Ltd being named the 2005 Registered Master Builder of the Year - Commercial.

Chris says the whole night was a huge shock. "We had two properties that had received National Gold Reserve Awards and we were all thrilled that one of the properties won.

"Our table was buzzing. The foreman on the winning job is a modest man who is a quiet achiever but I could tell he was elated. The whole team has been on a high ever since."

Getting to know other commercial builders and achieving recognition for his business in an extremely competitive arena are some of the benefits of entering the Registered Master Builders PlaceMakers Commercial Awards, Chris says.

To do well he feels it is vital that you pay attention to every detail and have an excellent level of finishing.

As for the future, Chris Yeats Builders Ltd is happy to continue creating beautiful properties for businesses to operate in and for the public to admire.

Chris says seeing happy clients enjoy high quality work brings him real satisfaction, and if he attends another national awards gala he will have his speech safely folded in his pocket.

were taken to speed construction and the extra effort paid off as the project was completed on time four months after beginning on site.

Chris, a four-time national finalist, had always prepared a speech to take to the national awards dinner in previous years "just in case", but had never had the chance to use it.

This year he didn't prepare anything to say on the night. His focus was on enjoying the evening with his team and fellow competitors, and marvelling at the wide range of top quality work on display.

However, things unfolded with a bang as the first award at the national event at Auckland's Sky City Convention Centre — the QBE Insurance Commercial Award under \$2 million — went to his entry.

As he walked to the stage to collect his award Chris admits: "I wondered what I was going to say, I was so nervous."

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www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/rmbf2**

Volunteer building work in Fiji

If New Zealand builders think they have problems dealing with climatic conditions at times and material supply worries in an overheated market such as New Zealand's construction industry, they should try building homes in remote jungle in Fiji.

That's the challenge that Registered Master Builders Marty van der Burg and Stephen Brown, along with two of Marty's staff and 18 other volunteer helpers, took on recently.

They went to Fiji with the Habitat for Humanity organisation — a non-profit, non-denominational, international Christian housing organisation.

It builds simple, decent, affordable houses in partnership with those who lack adequate shelter.

Since 1976, Habitat has built more than 175,000 houses, providing shelter for nearly 900,000 people worldwide. Now at work in 100 countries, the organisation builds a house every 26 minutes.

The village they worked at was 50km inland from Sigatoka, Fiji's fourth largest town half way between Nadi and Suva. After a bumpy bus trip up a gravel road following the Sigatoka River, there's an hour's walk up a 4-wheel drive track and then across the river by foot.

"It's fairly remote," Marty says with just a hint of understatement. "There's running water but it's from the local dam and there were problems with supply that a couple of the boys in the team had to fix."

The team aimed to build four houses at the village, but material supply problems beyond their control, coupled with an outbreak of dysentery, meant they didn't quite reach their target.

Marty suspects the illness was contracted from river water drunk at a kava ceremony because, apart from that, they drank only bottled water.

Delivery of materials was one of the bigger problems to overcome. "Materials — when they did arrive — were retrieved after being dropped off on the opposite side of the river. The local boys would go and pick them up by hand and walk across the river and up to the village — about a 10 minute walk. Or sometimes they would use oxen to transport the materials up to the village."

Out of level

The concrete slabs for the houses were already in place when the team arrived on site. However, they were out of level.



"They were all over the place, but we just had to work with it. We had no choice. We arrived on site and the four slabs were done. Our aim was just to get four houses built.

"They were just a basic frame construction on the outside, and no lining on the inside except the two partitions which had hardboard on one side. So you could see the trusses and all the internal framing, but that was fine.

"We had to make all 36 trusses by hand. On the first day we didn't even have a generator operating so it was, literally, by hand. Afterwards we had one generator to power two saws. We brought in all our own gear and then we left some of it for Fiji Habitat for Humanity to use themselves."

The team of volunteers included school teachers, an architect, some ex-roading engineers, a nurse and a couple of retired people.

"The four builders basically took charge of the day-to-day running of the team because we had no idea what the skill level amongst the volunteers was going to be like.

"The whole trip was undertaken on a volunteer basis, so every person that went took time off work in New Zealand, paid for their trip to go there and volunteered to work for two weeks — that's how they save on the labour cost."

The team was in the village for nine days, of which they worked eight with Sunday off. The conditions were, understandably, extremely hot and humid because of the inland location, so the team had to ensure they stayed hydrated while working.

"You just slow right down. You can't work in the heat of the day so we would have a couple of hours off in the afternoon between one and three o'clock."

Marty says the Habitat for Humanity programme is a good avenue for builders to send apprentices overseas, to give them exposure to another culture and to enable them to use their skills to help others less fortunate.

"My apprentice was in charge of a team the whole time, so he was basically in charge of building a house almost. He was helping to teach the volunteers different skills. For example, we had a roading engineer and a geography teacher making the trusses.

a 'rewarding experience'



They did a fantastic job making 36 of them!"

Marty says this type of work always results in positive feedback. "When I told my clients I was going to be away for two weeks with a couple of my guys, they just thought it was the most fantastic thing. They realise Habitat is a good organisation where you're not giving somebody a handout but a hand up really.

Cool experience

"It's such a cool experience. The rewarding part is the cross-cultural experience, going into a culture which is basically third world. You compare your own lifestyle with theirs and realise how happy they are despite not having the trappings that we have in our modern society.

"Another thing is the ability to give of yourself and your talents to help other people — I always get a kick out of that.

"My guys really did enjoy it. I had to con them into going. Part of the cost is your airfares and expenses while being there which is minimal. But you also give — in this case a \$600 donation — money which went

towards materials and that kind of thing, just to bring the cost of the housing down for the locals.

"My boys paid that part of it but the company paid the rest, and then I also paid them while they were working over there.

"That was the incentive I gave them to get them over there. And they thought two days at the resort afterwards was pretty cool.

Building relationships

"But the fact of the matter is they found it hard to leave the village. They had such an enjoyable experience meeting the locals, building relationships with them and getting to know them."

All 22 of the team were housed in a big village hall, similar to a marae. "And the food in general was

absolutely fantastic."

On the last night the villagers put on a big feast for their visitors. "They roasted up a huge pig and treated us like royalty in their own special way. It was fantastic. They really do look after you."

On a personal note, Marty's illness meant the exercise was a little disappointing.

"No, I wasn't too good. I was going in and out of consciousness, I was so dehydrated. I was on a drip for three days so out of the eight working days I only worked three days.

"The day after I got back from hospital and started working again I didn't get a hang of a lot done and I started feeling a little bit annoyed.

"But there's nothing you can do about it. You've just got to roll with the punches, that's just the way it is. You can't complain."

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The 'sleeping giant' has awoken with unstoppable momentum

By RMBF president **Mike Fox**

There are defining times in the life of any organisation and the RMBF has just experienced one. 2005 will be remembered as the year that we, as the industry leader, took stock, focused, formulated a plan, stepped up to the mark and never looked back.

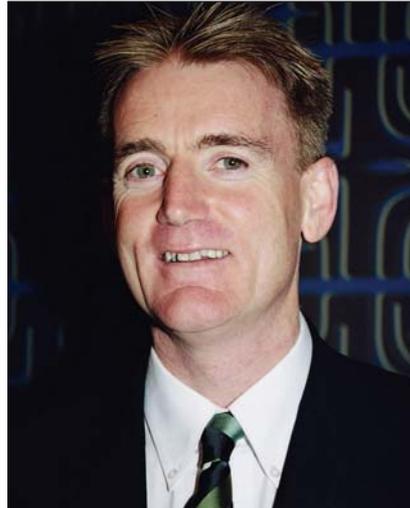
I will share with you the series of events that have set the RMBF on this journey of vision, excellence and growth, and how these events will launch our organisation beyond all expectations while providing outstanding industry leadership.

Sensible consolidation

Since the late 1990s the RMBF has had a period of sensible consolidation and rebuilding. In early 2005 the directors of the RMBF made the decision that the time was right to do some careful soul searching, to map out what our organisation was about and clarify where it needed to head.

After two uninterrupted days of brainstorming we emerged with a clear vision of our future and a plan of how to achieve it. Within five years look for the following from the RMBF:

- Quality RMBF members will lift their share of the market from the current 65% to 80% by value of construction,
- The RMBF will set, construct and help develop best



RMBF president Mike Fox.

industry practice standards,

- The RMBF will further strengthen its reputation as a quality brand in the eyes of the public and its members, and
- The RMBF will offer outstanding service to its members through leadership, networks, camaraderie, a sense of security and access to information and resources.

These two days of planning and the formation of the

steps we need to take to achieve our aims have harnessed the significant skills and resources of our organisation — through the Board, our local associations, our members and our staff — to all head in the same direction.

The resulting groundswell of support for this vision has become infectious as individual members and local associations work together on common goals.

Under the guidance and drive of our new chief executive Pieter Burghout, the first of these strategic plans is in place. The RMBF's 2006 Strategy and Business Plan sets out clear intentions as to the way the RMBF communicates its message and delivers its range of membership services.

Specialist staff have been appointed at the national office of the Federation, and they have been given the responsibility of enhancing the way we interact with, and the services we provide to, members, stakeholders and those we influence.

Every aspect of our organisation is currently under scrutiny — including our guarantee company, Master Build Services Ltd — as we strive to improve our performance and provide the service that our members and clients expect.

Mark my words, with our vision and with the Board members and staff that we now have in place, our organisation is on an unstoppable course for excellence.

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Bach: 18 years to resolve leaky homes claims

Department of Building and Housing chief executive Katrina Bach has told Parliament's social services select committee that leaky building claims to the service could take 15 to 18 years to resolve.

"We think 15 to 18 years over time," Ms Bach says. "If you keep on tracking on the current trajectory, it's got a very long tail, this problem, and it's better to think about some alternative or additional approaches to speed up resolution."

She says the system was not the best way to expedite resolution of claims and it could be improved. The department estimates up to 15,000 homes could suffer significant leaks, with cost for repairs alone of \$1 billion.

Meanwhile, 42 owners have sold their leaky homes, despite being in the middle of the Weathertight Homes Resolution Service's (WHRS) resolution process — and one has pocketed the settlement payout without doing the repairs.

The loophole has prompted warnings that buyers should ask direct questions of vendors and estate agents about whether the home has been subject to a claim to the WHRS.

Service acting manager Nigel Bickle told the committee it was possible for a leaky building owner to get a settlement payout, not fix the problem, sell the property, and for the new owner to lodge a fresh claim with the service. He confirmed there was no requirement for settlement payments to be used for repairs.

National MP Nick Smith asked whether that gave an indication that rules to require home owners receiving payouts to fix the problem were needed.

Mr Bickle replied that was one of the issues identified in a review of the service and its governing legislation that was under way.

However, Leaky Homes Action Group leader John Gray is sure the problem is a lot bigger than the 42 cases cited by the service. He says many people checked the process offered by the service, and saw it was not working. The other options were to fund repairs themselves or go through the courts.

"If they are not in a position to do either of those, their only fallback position is to quietly perhaps give it a lick of paint and try to get rid of it."

Mr Gray says it is illegal to sell a house without disclosing major defects, and in serious cases it could be classed as fraud. He says the group wants those getting settlements to be required to spend the money on repairs, except where a house is to be demolished. He suggests all home buyers should get a pre-purchase inspection.

Weathertight Homes Resolution Service claims to November 23:

- **Resolved:** 471
- **Closed:** 793
- **Remaining:** 2581
- **In mediation or adjudication:** 493

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Taranaki builder handy with wrench

The DeWalt Ford Challenge was decided in a nail-biting grand final at the Big Boys Toys expo in Auckland recently, with wildcard Boyd Stewart the surprise winner of the national Champion Driver competition.

Mr Stewart only won his ticket into the final the day before, by trying the Challenge, which involved removing a Ford Falcon XR wheel from an axle, and securing it to a different axle with an 18V DeWalt impact wrench.

After giving the Challenge a go, Mr Stewart, a builder from New Plymouth, secured the fastest time over the first two days of the expo and the right to take a shot at the 2005 title.

Eight other contenders took part in the final. Several had spent the previous few weeks practicing and bringing their times down by fractions of a second.

Daniel Lock, also from New Plymouth, was the hot competition favourite until an unsecured wheel nut disqualified him in the final's opening rounds.

That left the grand final to Mr Stewart, Mike Beer of Rangiora and Murray Pierce, also from New Plymouth. With a winning time of 26.58 seconds, Mr Stewart won a brand new Ford XR8 Ute and \$2000 worth of DeWalt tools.

"I'm seriously stoked," Mr Stewart said after his win. "I was feeling sick beforehand but I managed to keep my concentration. I can't believe it!"



Ford New Zealand sponsorship manager Jennifer Ingelby (left) and DeWalt New Zealand general manager Mark Smith (right) congratulate 2005 DeWalt Ford Challenge winner Boyd Stewart.

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Hotel unzips latest loo art

Developers of Queenstown's newest hotel, hospitality and retail centre, The Sofitel, have unzipped an eye-popping Christmas theme in the men's loos.

Bringing new meaning to the "loo with a view" theme, the second floor men's toilet set tongues wagging when a six-metre long backdrop to the six stands was unveiled.

The special Christmas backdrop features life-size photographs featuring local models in suitably seasonal dress — each with a full view of the action.

"We wanted to do something a bit different in the men's room when we opened, and hit on this idea," Perron marketing manager Peter Dallimore says.

"The reaction to the original images led to an astounding level of media interest across the world. The result is we now have world famous toilets that patrons enjoy.

"It was always planned to change the images periodically, and we thought men would enjoy a Christmas theme for the holiday season."



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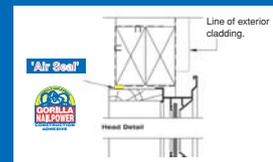
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NZ Green Building Council to have business focus

A major boost for sustainability in new and existing buildings in this country looks certain to eventuate with the establishment of a New Zealand Green Building Council (NZGBC) now at an advanced planning stage.

Already supported by professional managers from many key organisations in the building industry, the Interim NZGBC has run focus groups to secure inputs from suppliers, designers, central government, territorial authorities, investors, occupiers and corporate building owners.

Interim NZGBC Establishment chair Peter Dow is adamant that green building "is not an abstract technology playpen with gimmicks".

The council will encourage promotion of green building based on hard business facts, not emotion.

"The evidence is out there now," Mr Dow says. "Our

focus and challenge is to demonstrate the benefits in a way that will withstand a rigorous business case review.

"It must make good business sense to get buy-in. We'll put it together with a big education programme which will withstand rigorous scrutiny".

A primary function of the NZGBC will be to bring together and strengthen the diverse perspectives and energies of organisations currently involved in the green building movement.



Peter Dow

Mr Dow insists there are simple worthwhile green things that people can do even with existing buildings — for example, conducting an energy audit.

He'd like to see property owners achieving three worthwhile and financially viable green outcomes over the next three years, rather than getting bogged down trying to focus on 100% green solutions.

"Depending on where you are located, there are some green tracks you can go down today that are very relevant," Mr Dow says.

"The NZGBC will help inform people where the biggest gains can be achieved. We want to provide information for people to make decisions that are commercially sound and environmentally responsible."

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to: www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/innews4

World-renowned NPIL celebrates 21st

One of New Zealand's — and the world's — biggest wood processors celebrated two major milestones recently — Nelson Pine Industries Ltd's 21st birthday coincided with a visit from one of the company's major European plant suppliers.

Four senior executives from the Austrian company Berndorf Band, a world-renowned supplier of steel belts for continuous presses, visited Nelson to mark the purchase of NPIL's 50th steel press belt.

"We now have four continuous presses on site, three for medium density fibreboard and one for laminated veneer lumber," NPIL managing director Murray Sturgeon says.

"Each press has a set of two belts that carry the product through the press. Each set costs us over half a million dollars to replace every three or four years, and over the 21 years since we set up here we have now used 50 belts."

The delegation from Berndorf arrived for meetings and a site tour, as well as a fishing trip to the Marlborough Sounds.

Berndorf Band president Franz Viehboeck is a business leader in Austria, and in 1991 was selected

as an Austrian representative on a voyage to the Russian space station Mir.

He says the trip was a once in a lifetime experience and his memories of the space voyage are kept alive.

"I am still Austria's only space traveller so the media always ask me for comment — as with the space shuttle voyage earlier this year," he says.

From small beginnings 160 years ago as a cutlery manufacturer, Berndorf has been through its ups and downs, but since the 1980s has flourished in niche markets, producing specialised steel products such as drills for oil wells and industrial steel belts.

Nelson Pine is one of Berndorf's biggest and "most appreciated" customers. "Nelson Pine is the first name to be mentioned in regard to high quality production of forest products," Mr Viehboeck.

Nelson Pine Industries was established on October 2, 1984, with the signing of a joint venture agreement between the original partners, Newmans Group Ltd, Nelson, C A Odilins Ltd, Wellington, and Sumitomo Forestry Co Ltd, Tokyo, Japan.

The aim was to add value to the Nelson region's

radiata pine resource with a medium density fibreboard plant sited near the existing chipmill owned by the two New Zealand shareholders.

Landmarks of expansion since that date include:

- May 1986: The first MDF line is commissioned, and was opened on October 1 by Prime Minister David Lange. Development of domestic markets and export to Australia, Japan and Asia begins.
- March 25, 1991: Line 2 is commissioned to meet the growing global demand for MDF, and was officially opened on September 4 by Prime Minister Jim Bolger.
- January 1993: NPIL became a 100% owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Forestry Co Ltd, Tokyo, Japan.
- October 1997: Line 3 positions NPIL as one of the world's largest manufacturers on one site.
- 2000: NPIL announces plans for an \$80 million laminated veneer lumber plant at its Richmond site, and is officially opened by Prime Minister Helen Clark in November 2002.

NPIL now employs close to 300 staff, and is recognised worldwide for the quality and consistency of its product range in MDF and LVL.

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to: www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/innews5

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New BF Falcon brings major improvements

By Motoring Correspondent **Ray Willmot**

I don't know about you but I have this feeling that, no matter how high the price of fuel goes, or how short the world supply becomes, we big car lovers are going to keep on paying the price right to the bitter end.

It's just the way we are and what we have in our petrol heads. It seems to have little to do with our own physical size. To us "big is beautiful", and I suspect car manufacturers understand this only too well. Why else would they keep on improving the Falcons and others of this world, leave alone keep producing completely new big machines?

So, let's just take a little look at the truly magnificent range of new BF Falcons Ford let me hoon around what seemed like half of Australia a couple weeks back.

We even got to the legendary Pub with No Beer made famous by that great Aussie Slim Dusty. Boy, Slim would have been proud of this piece of Australian motoring brilliance — and I do mean that!

As Ford managing director Richard Matheson said over the huge outback lunch at the famous pub: "We are delivering on the key wants of customers with the new Falcon range — economy, performance, refinement and safety."

An auto saving fuel? Sound strange? Well, it does it by having a computer that learns very quickly how you drive and changes gear at what really is the optimum point.

There are many good things about the new BF but, for me, undoubtedly the very best is the astonishingly smooth new six-speed automatic transmission which, among other things, helps produce fuel savings of up to 11%.



Toxic Green: The most startling of the colours in the new BF Falcon colour range — believe it or not, it really grows on you!

An auto saving fuel? Sound strange? Well, it does it by having a computer that learns very quickly how you drive and changes gear at what really is the optimum point — only better and quicker than you and I can do it.

However, it's not that which really impressed me. For example, it was things like not changing gear half way through a corner (just when you wouldn't do it but an older auto would).

There are lots of little touches like this that an experienced driver can appreciate and which a not so experienced driver might find saves his or her skin at tricky moments. This is truly a great gearbox.

The reworked Barra 190 4.0 litre six cylinder engine

offers significant increases in fuel economy, power and torque, and there's a 5.4 litre V8 230kW, 500NM motor available too, complete with a superb Performance Brake Package.

The BF is quieter and even more refined than its predecessor, yet it still keeps that wonderful V8 note we all love so much. Traction control is now standard on all the petrol models and, for the first time, on the XR Utes.

So much that's new, so little space, but we must mention the prices which range from \$44,790 to \$87,900 for the LTD. For my money the XR6 sedan at \$50,990 takes the prize and, of course, there's the full range of utes from \$42,990.

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New heights



A joining kit now completes the Easy Access Mini Mobile scaffolding range.

It means that modules can be quickly added to increase the platform height.

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to: www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/products1

Groundbreaking new 'tool' saves time and money

As every tradesman will know, the process of turning a job into profit can be as laborious as the job itself, with so much time being spent on completing and processing the paperwork involved in any trade.

Trade Tools is a revolutionary product that has just been released in New Zealand. Specifically developed for tradesmen, Trade Tools works on a PDA or Smart phone on the Vodafone and Telecom networks.

You can perform all your day-to-day business functions, such as purchase orders, quotes, invoices, expenses and OSH reports, on site, from any location.

Gone are the days of having to return home or to the office to be faced with hours of paper work that needs to be completed before the cash starts flowing in.

Encos Global Systems Ltd has developed Trade Tools with small-to-medium contracting businesses in mind. The company has worked closely with leaders in New Zealand's trade sector to ensure Trade Tools caters for all tradesmen's business needs.

Encos Global Systems Ltd chief executive Greg Evans says the company has developed Trade Tools to meet the ever-growing demand for "real time" processing of paper work.

"Trade Tools is a world-first. This is the first time tradesmen have been able to process so much information, without leaving the job," Mr Evans says.

"With Trade Tools you can order materials and arrange to have them delivered, produce a quote to present to a customer, invoice the job once it has been completed, keep track of your expenses and keep your vehicle log book up to date, all on site.

"In working to develop this product, we also learnt that there was a definite demand for a way in which formalities, such as OSH reports, could be completed on site, so we have built this function into the product as well."

While Trade Tools works on an electronic device, Mr Evans points out that tradesmen can still issue printed quotes and invoices. To print the forms created on the PDA or Smart phone, users simply log on to Encos' secure client portal where the invoices and quotes are ready and waiting in formatted style for the printer.

Today's advances in technology mean that these forms can even be printed on site. Now that's smart!

"This on-the-spot processing means tradesmen can even collect payments before they leave the site, improving their cash flow while, at the same time, saving hours of work at the end of the day," Mr Evans says.

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to: www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/products2

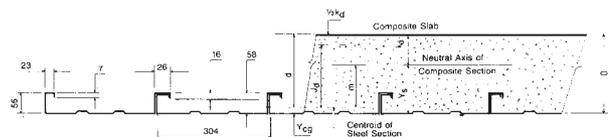


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Fig 1 TRAY-DEC 300 — NOTATION FOR COMPOSITE SLABS



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Atkinson joins Generation Developments team

Kevin Atkinson has been appointed general manager of leading developing company Generation Developments.

Mr Atkinson's experience lies in finance and property management, and he's looking forward to establishing new markets and leading Generation's expansion throughout the North Island.

Generation Developments is a home and land package company based in Tauranga, with residential developments in Papamoa, Rotorua, Hamilton and, most recently, Taupo.

In the past few years Generation has grown considerably, last year building more than four times as many houses than in 2000.

The company is well known for its two customer promises — a guaranteed fixed-price contract and move-in date.



Kevin Atkinson

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to: www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/people1

Institute seeking new CEO

The search is on for a new chief executive of the Property Institute of New Zealand (PINZ) following the resignation of Conor English, who has managed the organisation since its inception almost six years ago.

The Property Institute has more than 3000 members who, directly or indirectly, influence decisions made on New Zealand's \$500 billion property asset base.

Institute president Gerard Logan says Mr English has contributed significantly to the Institute's professional development in his five and a half years, leaving it in a strong position to tackle future challenges as it continues to evolve.

Mr English is moving to a senior position with The Property Group.

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to: www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/people2

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The year in review

2005 has been a busy year for the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) which has continued to meet industry demands for skilled workers, and is on track to meet its target of 10,000 apprentices in training by early 2007.

More than 8000 apprentices are now registered in training, up from 6500 in 2004. These increases prompted BCITO to expand its operational structure and open a regional office in Albany, Auckland, and a satellite office in Hastings.

Industry licensing

The BCITO is up to date with proposed industry licensing requirements and is working to ensure its qualifications meet the final license criteria.

It is also establishing pathways for those in the industry to obtain a national qualification and take steps towards getting the appropriate class of license.

Qualifications

Several new qualifications have been registered by the BCITO as it continues to raise the bar on the quality of training available in the construction sector.

Numbers in training

The number of apprentices in training increased across all construction sectors during 2005.

A record number of 557 sign-ups were recorded in March, and in April the BCITO celebrated its 7000th apprentice in training, David Angus from Astor Construction in Auckland. As at October 31, there were 8109 apprentices registered with the BCITO.

Marketing and awareness campaign

The inaugural Building Careers Week was held from September 17 to 25 to raise awareness of careers in the construction industry.

The campaign centred on two key concepts — “The Future is In Your Hands” and “The Choice is Yours” and included a nationwide billboard campaign, radio advertising, posters, articles in local newspapers and a school building competition.

A highlight of the campaign was a school building competition involving nine secondary schools nationwide. Students designed and built dog kennels and the finished product was then donated to the local SPCA.

As a direct result of the activity during September the BCITO noted a 75% increase in web site hits and an increase in calls to its 0800 number.

The BCITO's web site, www.bcito.org.nz, was re-launched with a fresh new look. It is now more user-friendly and provides simple access to relevant, accurate information on qualifications in the construction industry and up-to-date BCITO news.

Customer Service

Staff recruitment has continued to meet the servicing requirements of an increased client base. The number of field staff increased from 45 at the end of 2004 to 55 at the time of writing.

Continued page 19

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Carters ladies live it up at Spending Time!

In November, more than 30 lucky Carters Advantage ladies headed to the high streets of Melbourne for five days of entertainment, relaxation, pampering and, of course, a healthy dose of shopping!

Like all Advantage trips, everything on Spending Time was taken care of by dedicated tour managers, letting the ladies concentrate on enjoying themselves.

Throughout the trip, the little touches that are synonymous with Advantage were evident, including special room gifts and a few surprises for the ladies.

Arriving at their five-star accommodation at the Westin Melbourne, the ladies enjoyed welcome drinks while guest speaker Clair Maxfield, a Melbourne Image Consultant, entertained and educated with tips and tricks for looking your best — with special emphasis being given to hats, in recognition of our excursion the following day to the Crown Oaks Melbourne Cup Ladies Day.

The Crown Oaks day was an opportunity for the ladies to get dressed up in their finest. They enjoyed a glass or two of champagne while travelling in limos to their three-course lunch at the Victoria Racing Club.

By the following day, everyone was ready for some serious shopping and headed out to Chadstone Shopping Centre, Melbourne's fashion capital.

Spa appointments were interspersed throughout the day, alleviating tired feet and aching backs brought on by several hours of shopping.

The trip ended on a high note with dinner on the Southbank overlooking the Yarra River, followed by a cabaret show at the Crown Casino.

Carters would like to thank the ladies who attended,



and preferred suppliers Tasman Insulation and Winstone Wallboards, whose support made the Spending Time Ladies Trip such a success.

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to:
www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/adveritorial

The year in review

From page 18

Off-job training

The BCITO has a comprehensive off-job training strategy, providing eligible trainees with assistance for the theory component of their qualification.

During 2005, the BCITO contracted 21 providers at 26 venues nationwide to offer training for some 1100 trainees at a cost of approximately \$750,000 (up 36% from 2004). Twelve providers now offer the programme which is a mix of day release and night classes.

Research commissioned

As part of its commitment to being a leader in industry training, the BCITO commissioned research into key areas during the year, including:

- BRANZ econometric overview,

- Workbase Literacy and Numeracy Report,
- CBA Consulting focus group research on trade choices, and
- Spreading the word on construction careers/training.

The findings of the research provided valuable feedback for the BCITO and interactions with schools going forward in 2006.

To read this article on-line, and for related web site links, go to:
www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/bcito

The Politics of Kulture

Dr Kerry Rodgers ruminates upon Charlemagne's Carolingian Chapel.



Charlemagne's imperial Palatine Chapel at Aachen, Germany, is perhaps the single greatest example left to us of the cultural renaissance that swept Western Europe in the late 8th and early 9th Centuries.

This masterpiece of Carolingian architecture, with its intricately designed core, now forms the centrepiece of Aachen Cathedral. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978, and provides an object lesson for architectural students — and politicians — everywhere.

Emperor by design

Charlemagne, King of the Franks, was crowned Emperor of Rome in the West by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day 800AD. With one eye fixed firmly on the lessons of history, he sought to secure his position by demonstrating that he was the legitimate heir to the great rulers of the past.

At the top of his To Do list was the restoration of the Roman Empire in the west. For many years his armies had been busy accomplishing this in the normal run-of-the-mill imperial manner. By 800, Frankish-ruled territory covered a great swathe of Western Europe.

Charlemagne, himself, went after the minds and hearts of his people by encouraging a revival in classical learning and culture.

By imperial decree, Carolingian architecture, arts and crafts sought to emulate the artistic achievements of early Christian Rome and the Byzantine Empire.

Charlemagne led from the front. He commissioned Frankish architect, Odo of Metz, to build him an imperial chapel styled after some of the great

Christian churches of the past.

Odo based his design on the octagonal Byzantine churches, in particular the 6th Century martyrium of San Vitale in Ravenna built in 547.

This model enabled Odo to provide a symbolic link between Charlemagne's empire and that of Justinian, the last great Roman emperor, universally acknowledged as a strong ruler and a superb administrator.

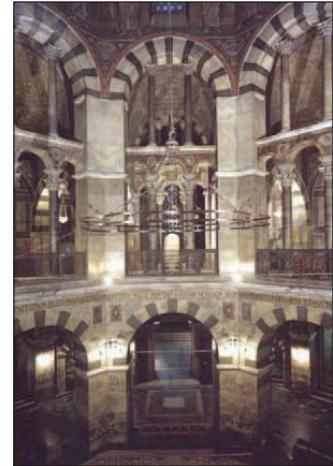
The chapel was constructed between 792 and 805 on the site of an earlier, smaller house of worship. Its basic structure is a domed, double-shelled, two-storeyed octagon, surrounded by a 16-sided ambulatory.

Numerous architectural echoes from the past occur throughout the structure but, whatever its architectural pedigree, the interior design was structured on a cunning plan to display the great cosmic order of Charlemagne's government.

To the glory of God — and Charlemagne

For starters it was a double church with strict segregation of masters and servants. On the ground level servants attended divine service at the altar of Mary. The nobles for their part assembled in the western choirs of the octagon around the emperor's seat and looked directly across the octagon to the altar of the Saviour in the eastern choir.

This separation of east and west is the bee's knees when it comes to ecclesiastical architecture. The altar lies in the sacred east, while the faithful assemble in



their stronghold in the west.

The arrangement at Aachen also meant that the altar of Mary, the Lord's servant, was below that of her Son which just happened to be on a par with that of the emperor. The symbolism was not lost on the unwashed masses.

The cupola soared above both people and masters. It was the sphere reserved for God alone. Here Odo outdid himself. The dome rose to a height of 30.9 metres, making Charlemagne's personal chapel not only the first completely vaulted building in western Europe but also bestowed on it the highest vaulted interior of any northern European building for centuries. Odo covered the inside of his cupola with golden mosaics that illustrated the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse. Christ was shown enthroned among the

twenty-four elders along with the four symbols of the evangelists: lion, ox, man, and eagle.

As a consequence, the heavenly splendour of the dome outshone the spectacle of earthly pomp offered on the middle floor with its gilded bronze railings and polished pillars.

From the ground floor the servants and the common people could only gaze up in awe at the totality of this splendour — while they stood among plain pillars of ordinary stone. They were never left in any doubt as to their place in the scheme of things!

In the event, Charlemagne only got to use his completed chapel for nine years. He died in 814 to be buried in the Charlemagne Shrine now situated in the Cathedral choir.



Volcanic eruption in High Court



The High Court in *Volcanic Investments Limited¹ v Dempsey & Wood Civil Contractors Ltd* has signalled a departure from the conservative approach of the court in *Rapaki Property Group v Energysave Ltd²*, now reinforcing the protections afforded to payees under the Construction Contracts Act 2002 (“the CCA”).

In *Volcanic Investments*, a failure by Volcanic to make payment of an amount claimed under the CCA was referred to adjudication. The adjudicator determined that Volcanic was liable to pay Dempsey the total amount by February 24, 2005.

Volcanic failed to make payment as required and Dempsey issued a statutory demand under the Companies Act 1993.

Volcanic applied to have the statutory demand set aside under section 290(4) of the Companies Act on the basis that it had a claim arising from alleged delays by Dempsey in carrying out the contract works that could be set-off against the sum due to Dempsey.

Dempsey grounded its opposition to Volcanic’s application on section 79 of the CCA.

This provides that in any proceedings for the recovery of a debt under the CCA, the court must not give effect to any counterclaim, set-off or cross-demand raised by any party to those proceedings other than a set-off of a liquidated amount where judgment has been entered for that amount or there is not, in fact, any dispute between the parties in relation to the claim for that amount.

The court held that the meaning of section 79 was plain, and that it was forbidden from giving effect to Volcanic’s cross-claim because judgment had not been

entered for the amount of the cross-claim and there was a genuine dispute between the parties as to the amount of the cross-claim.

Crucial issue

Having made this assessment, the crucial issue for the court was whether the provisions of section 290(4) of the Companies Act (which allows the setting aside of statutory demands where there is a cross-claim) trumped section 79 of the CCA.

Following established guidelines to statutory interpretation, the court expressed its view that there was no doubt that Parliament intended section 79 to prevail. The court gave the following reasons for its decision:

- Section 290(4) is a provision relating to the recovery of debts generally. In contrast, the CCA is special legislation dealing with the recovery of specific types of debt under specific types of contracts. The usual rule of statutory interpretation is that later, specific legislation should prevail over the earlier, general enactment.
- There is a clear statutory intention that payments due under construction contracts should be paid and disputes resolved quickly. To permit an unproven set-off to be raised as a means of avoiding payment of an established debt would be inconsistent with the purpose and intention of the CCA.
- Volcanic was not prevented from pursuing the set-off in separate proceedings. Section 79 simply required that the set-off may not be given effect to in recovery proceedings from the amount due to the contractor.

The decision in *Volcanic Investments* will, no doubt, provide some level of comfort to payees following the approach taken in *Rapaki v Energysave*.

In that case, the court failed to give effect to the protections afforded to payees under section 60 of the CCA, which provides that an adjudicator’s

determination shall be of full effect even though a party has applied for judicial review.

Instead, Associate Judge Gambrill allowed the striking out of the payee’s statutory demand on the basis that the judicial review proceedings signalled a substantial dispute as to whether the debt was due or owing.

Significantly, the outcome of the judicial review proceedings would determine whether the payment claims were, indeed, covered by the CCA (and therefore could trump the provisions of the Companies Act).

Further complication

As a further complication, even if the Associate Judge’s approach was incorrect, it was found that the statutory demand was issued before the “due date” for payment had arisen and may not, therefore, have even been valid.

The *Volcanic* decision emphasises the precedence to be given to the protections offered to payees under the CCA in accordance with its stated purpose of facilitating regular and timely payments between the parties to a construction contract.

In doing so, it demonstrates greater cohesion with the principles expressed in other judgments under the CCA to date.

¹ High Court, Auckland, CIV-2005-404-1320, 24 May 2005, Randerson J

² High Court, Christchurch, CIV-2004-409-000991, 1 June 2004, Associate Judge Gambrill

Stuart Robertson
Senior Associate
Kensington Swan
Auckland
Ph: 09 375 11 51

Performance management

Gareth Hoole of Staples Rodway chartered accountants discusses ways to ensure your business is performing as well as it should.



We have examined several business principles and if you have managed to address and apply all the issues and recommendations in those previous articles, congratulations. You have a head start on most other business owners and have set the foundations for the growth of your business.

Unfortunately, there's no time to sit back and rest on your laurels. "What now?" you say. To give you a clue, a more correct title for this article might be "Continual Performance Management".

We have emphasised that your business operates in a constantly changing environment. To survive, you must rely on more than the basic financial information presented in your accounting system.

A well constructed performance management system draws on financial and non-financial information to ensure the longevity of your business and to always strive for improvements.

Performance management is the process of continually measuring areas of your business that are critical to improvements and success.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) form the basis of performance management. They are any measure that can impact on the profitability of your business.

Financial KPIs should be balanced with non-financial KPIs to give the most meaningful information to you in your capacity as manager of your business.

Financial KPIs

Your annual financial statements and internal accounting records should provide the basic data to compile financial KPIs. As part of your year-end accounting service, your accountant will be able to provide and explain the various financial KPIs.

However, as your business grows, an annual review will not be timely enough. Monthly or bi-monthly reports will become necessary for you to react to short-term changes in your business.

As a business manager, you should at least have a basic understanding of financial KPIs. That way, you can take ownership of the way your business is being run, and really make your financial advisers work by asking difficult questions.

There are numerous ratios and KPIs, and the business manager should avoid becoming too bogged down in calculating dozens of ratios.

What is more important is to regularly analyse a set of ratios, comparing current performance with budgets and historical results. This will allow you to note the development of trends and to take remedial action where it is necessary before it becomes too late.

Also, measuring the business' performance against benchmarks set by similar businesses can provide some very useful management information.

Any business textbook can provide the variety of ratios which are available, but it is important that you measure the liquidity of the business, its profitability and productivity and the return on equity (ROE) it is providing to you.

Return on Equity

This indicates the return the owners are receiving from the capital they have invested in a business, expressed as a percentage. You can compare your ROE to the interest rate you would have earned had you simply put your capital into a bank deposit.

Ratios such as current ratio, number of days sales in stock, average collection period of debtors and number of times profit covers interest are just a few of the useful KPIs you should be considering regularly.

Another important KPI to measure is the business growth rate. An important point to note — a faster growth rate does not mean you are doing fine and no further analysis is required.

Bigger is not necessarily better — it may indicate that you need to revise your cash flow forecasts to determine if more operating capital will be necessary

to fund the rapid expansion.

Whatever analysis you choose, the ratios must be recorded at regular intervals to provide trends. An analysis of trends does not require you to be a financial whiz kid, but does enable you to point out movements in ratios and ask your advisers why things have changed.

Non-financial KPIs

The performance management of your organisation cannot be based solely upon financial indicators.

Measurement of non-financial KPIs is more likely to lead to increases in profit through efficiency or cost improvements. Although not measured in dollars and cents, these indicators have a direct impact on your bottom line.

Applying non-financial KPIs could be as simple as looking at the quantity of waste produced each month, the number of defective items produced, customer defection rates, production system outages, vehicle breakdowns and stock shortages. These are just a few statistics which will help you to run a more efficient business.

Effective KPIs are:

- Objective and measurable,
- Financial and non-financial,
- Agreed upon by management and staff,
- Able to be compared or to be benchmarked against other organisations,
- Reported with other monthly reports.

The KPIs should drive staff remuneration and performance measurement.

KPIs are a useful tool for continual performance management. This article has outlined a basic illustration of the application of KPIs to your organisation and how you might go about using them.

You will be aware of the benefits of KPIs and the assistance they provide in monitoring and improving your organisation. Discuss with your financial adviser how these tools apply to your organisation. Merely by raising the issues addressed here, you are bound to come across some key success factors that your organisation can apply and benefit from.

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Tip 22. Floor/ceiling noise control

Noise is often difficult to control though walls and floor/ceilings within dwellings.

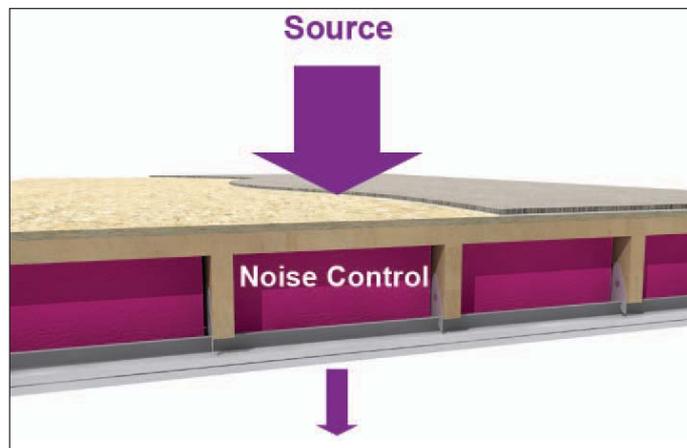
Airborne sound, such as that resulting from people talking or from a television, is generally more easily controlled than impact noise.

Controlling impact sound, such as that resulting from people walking on a floor above or doors banging, can

be much more difficult.

Minimising sound travelling from one space to another requires forward planning, both at the design stage and construction stage.

Some basic rules must be followed but the best results will come from following a proven system and the correct installation of the prescribed components within that system.



Typical floor/ceiling noise control.

Tips

- **Locate floors with hard surfaces over rooms where noise transmission is less important. For example, locate bathrooms over bathrooms or laundries.**
- **Use high performance insulation, such as Pink Batts Silencer, in the floor/ceiling cavity.**
- **Install metal ceiling battens on resilient GIB Quiet Clips. Resilient separation is desirable for noise control, particularly to muffle low frequency sounds.**
- **Install two layers of high density plasterboard such as GIB Noiseline.**
- **Seal around the perimeter with GIB Soundseal.**
- **Use carpet in upper floor applications as much as possible.**
- **Use good quality carpet on waffle type underlay.**

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www.buildingtoday.co.nz/december05/tips

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and had a cracker Christmas
and a Happy New Year.”**

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