

# building today

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS FEDERATION



## NZi3: Inventiveness and creativity to the fore



### Leighs Construction turns up the heat in Dili



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# building today

This month's project story serves to remind us that innovation and environmentally sustainable techniques are alive and kicking in the New Zealand construction industry today.

The NZi3 building in Christchurch — New Zealand's first education building to be awarded five stars by the Green Star NZ rating system — is a prime example of what can be achieved with seamless coordination between design consultants, structural engineers and builders.

Elsewhere we highlight the inspiring efforts of RMBF companies strutting their stuff overseas in East Timor, and helping out worthy organisations such as Hospice Waikato in New Zealand's heartland.

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cover story 24 - 26

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# chief's chat

by ceo warwick quinn

## Providing outstanding service all part of being an RMB



**T**hey say building a home is one of the three most stressful things to undertake. So what it means to be a Registered Master Builder is not just about building a quality home but also about providing outstanding service.

So what are some of the critical areas for your business to focus on so that quality service can be provided during these less than prosperous times?

Outstanding service revolves around making the client the priority, and training your staff in customer service. You need to learn how well you are doing so seek feedback, listen to it and adapt your business to reflect it.

Build trust with your clients by always acting with integrity. Establish high professional and ethical standards and do what you say you are going to do.

Continuously communicate and then communicate some more. Every unhappy client will tell 10 people of their experience. So, word of mouth, particularly in a small community, is often how business grows.

Remember how dedicated you were when you first started? Are you as dedicated now?

You can only do one thing at a time so good staff are your greatest asset. They thrive on leadership and teamwork, and it is over to you to do that well. Retain your top performers, and look after them as much as you can, as the cost of losing them and finding a replacement can be long and arduous.

Set staff performance goals and measure their performance, and provide them frequent and honest

feedback. Train them in areas that need upskilling, and support/mentor them along the way.

Plan, plan, plan. Many businesses do not undertake any strategic or business planning. They drift along and wonder where they are going.

What's that saying? An archer cannot hit the bull's eye if he doesn't know where the target is.

Set yourself some goals to achieve by the year's end. Develop a picture of it for your staff. Write it down and monitor your success against it. Set your budget against it and react when you need to. Review it and adjust your business accordingly.

Cash is king. Many profitable businesses go broke as they run out of cash and can't pay their bills. They have good balance sheets but no liquidity.

Receive cash as quickly as possible, part with it as slowly as possible, but meet your contractual and legal obligations.

Make sure your terms of payment are short, and train your clients into paying on time by making them well aware of what is expected.

Make it easy for them to pay — by cash, cheque, eftpos or credit card. Who cares, cash is king remember?

And follow up quickly if they don't pay — the longer you leave it the harder it will be. Anything beyond 60 to 90 days is tough so the sooner you get onto it the better off you will be.

It is an area that people hate but is so important during these times that it can make or break a small business.

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# Leighs Construction turns up the heat in Dili

**D**eciding that it just wasn't hot enough in Christchurch over summer, Registered Master Builders Leighs Construction headed off to central Dili — the capital city of East Timor (also known as Timor-Leste) — after successfully tendering to build the New Zealand embassy complex for the New Zealand Government.

Leighs Construction is no stranger to remote building projects, having already taken on the Antarctic on more than one occasion.

"We've been completing remote location projects for the New Zealand Government for a number of years," managing director Anthony Leighs says.

"We identified this design build project as an attractive opportunity and were excited by the challenges it held."

Not surprisingly, there were a number of logistical hurdles to negotiate to complete this greenfields development, which included a chancery building, staff residence building, ancillary building, swimming pool and guardhouse all located within a high security perimeter wall.

One of these hurdles was the time things took to happen — Dili time — from the supply of goods and equipment to the painfully slow customs processes,



not to mention the two weeks it could take to receive a courier.

Also, with most of the shops closing between 12-2.30pm daily, it took a while to get in sync with the local siesta time.

Leighs Construction directly employed a workforce of very talented Filipino tradesmen and enthusiastic Timorese labourers.

Communication was always going to be an interesting exercise, and there was a lot of drawing, sign language and, consequently, laughter that went into ensuring the successful completion of the embassy.

The tropical weather conditions that saw most days in the mid-30s in the shade, and torrential downpours in December, made the going tough for the New Zealanders there.

"This was a very different working environment for most of us Kiwis, and we all had to work at ensuring we stayed healthy and hydrated," Mr Leighs says.

Even with permanent security guards 24/7, low level theft from the site was still occurring.

"When you supply 300 bolts for a job that needs 280 and run out with 20 to go, it gets very frustrating," Mr Leighs says.

"Constant supervision of a large and enthusiastic workforce was required, and staying on top of Health and Safety could be hard work — barefoot bore hole drilling is not recommended!"

The embassy project was the first to use pre-cast wall panels in Timor-Leste. The team cast approximately 270 panels on site but not before the Leighs Construction staff did a lot of training, including teaching the local crane operator to lift and plumb tilt the panels.

The local Timorese labourers were also trained to cut and bend reinforcing steel equating to approximately 30,000kg — all by hand!

"The local workforce was fantastic. They're wonderful people with a great work ethic," Mr Leighs says.

Leighs Construction managed all the procurement and export/import of the building materials, as well as

*Continued page 6*



# Out the door and down the road — to success

By RMBF president

Brent Mettrick

**M**ost of you are two months into a new financial year. Your first month balance sheets have been and gone and the next month is looking similar.

Now for the hard questions. Is it to budget? If not, why not? Did you have a budget? If not get off your butt and sit down with your advisors now and do it! No excuses. A backdated one will still pull you through the year. Then sign in and work the plan.

If you are in the large group of people who do their balance sheets quarterly or half yearly, you risk failure in these volatile times. Most failures I have dealt with have lazy accounts. They need to be produced monthly — no excuses.

The advantage of this market is that it gives you time to plan, think and strategise. If you look back at your business two years ago, is it the same or have you made the changes that put you in a better place going forward?

Have you got the same staff? For most, this answer will be no. As I mentioned in a previous article, you should have let the Cs go, retrained or even let go some Bs and retained the As.

There is always a balance of retaining capability for another day or just making it to another day. Don't be afraid to make the cuts where leadership calls for it.

What have you done to your sales operation? Increase



exposure to build some of the 50% that is still out there, and cut the deadwood that keeps telling you "next month I will get those deals" — because, if you're honest, they won't.

Is your customer service exceptional? If not, why not? We all look to change all around us — or is it us?

If you have customer unrest, now is the time to address this. Get a group of former or current clients in a room together and listen to the feedback. It will be the most productive two hours you will spend this year.

In this time of quiet you should be working your pricing. Prices have come back. Can you build at 2005 prices, or earlier?

Some are, with margins intact. Will you be left behind when the market moves off?

Remember the buyers have set the price, so you have to set your margins to survive. The rest is the bricks-and-sticks cost or budget to complete the home.

You need to be tough and disciplined to work this way and do well. Every supplier wants their clients to prosper, so partner with them to see how you can be more efficient.

Ask yourself: "Is my product what the market wants?" Many builders are doing well in the niche they have been working in. These are generally highly respected builders who are known for the type of home or structure they build, whether it be retirement units, tilt-slab warehouses or high-end, sustainable architecture.

In this reduced market are you known for what niches you build in? How can you change that? Are there gaps emerging in the market? Who do you need to get in front of?

Many years ago I sold furniture by cold calling offices. It was a short-lived career of three months but the thing I took from it was that the hardest door to go through to get business was your own.

At the recent RMBF conference we heard from several builders of their successes and the projects they built.

For me it was inspiring how adversity can create opportunity. All too often we stay insulated within our own workplace.

The RMBF is an association of builders who are more alike than you might think. I suggest you pick up the phone and talk to another builder today and listen to their ideas on how you can do better.

## Leighs Construction turns up the heat in Dili

From page 5

heavy lift equipment and machinery. These were sourced from a wide range of suppliers and locations, including New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia.

They directly employed the workforce for all but water bore drilling, mechanical services, plumbing and painting.

Also responsible for the design of the project in conjunction with the design consultants, Leighs worked through a number of issues to ensure the design was appropriate for the local environment

while, at the same time, complying with the requirements of the New Zealand Building Code.

The project also had to be built to New Zealand's seismic standards just as if it was in Wellington.

The formal opening of the new embassy building took place on 14 May, and MFAT say it is a further expression of New Zealand's long-term commitment to Timor-Leste.

Defence Minister Wayne Mapp represented New Zealand at the opening, along with Timor-Leste Prime Minister Xanana Gusmao.

Mr Leighs says the project was quite a natural fit for the company's skill set, and it also advanced their strategic plan to deliver international projects.

"We are looking at the possibility of operations in some of the high growth countries in the Asia-Pacific region."

Beyond the building site, the not so subtle differences

were also something for the Leighs Construction team to negotiate. No such thing as a parking ticket under your wiper — try having the air let out of your tyres and your number plates removed instead!

After a while, the initial culture shock and the sights and sounds that come with a different country didn't seem so strange. Some Kiwi music burnt to disc and discovering home-made sausage rolls and frozen Mrs Macs pies at a local garage helped the guys at Leighs feel that little bit closer to home.

It's great to see Registered Master Builders flying the flag globally and taking building excellence to the rest of the world.

**• If you are a Registered Master Builder and have an interesting story to tell, please contact RMBF marketing communications manager Tracey Bree on 04 385 5638, or email: [tracey.bree@masterbuilder.org.nz](mailto:tracey.bree@masterbuilder.org.nz).**

# Still following the dream

Taking out the Registered Master Builders Carters 2007 Apprentice of the Year was a career highlight for Taupo carpentry apprentice Rhys Forsyth, and nearly two years on Rhys is still aiming high.

Mr Forsyth was in the final year of his apprenticeship under Gary Rowe of National Park Construction in 2007, when he was named the Central North Island Apprentice of the Year, before going on to win the national title.

Today he has his own building company — Accessible Homes — which is fulfilling his dream to build just that.

“My wife Deanna is a nurse, and we’re both really passionate about building homes suitable for the elderly and people with disabilities,” Mr Forsyth says.

“It’s that passion that we have based our business on.”

According to Mr Forsyth, building accessible homes isn’t particularly difficult or expensive.

“It doesn’t have to cost the client an arm and a leg if it’s kept in mind from the start of the project. It’s the little things, such as ensuring the hallways are a bit wider than normal, making sure there is at least one accessible bathroom and so on,” he says.

It’s when people decide to make an existing home accessible that things get expensive. The price of the alterations can be much higher.”

Mr Forsyth has recently completed the house he was building for him and his wife, and is now working with his brother and another builder on a large house on Waiheke Island for his grandmother.

“It’s nice to get the opportunity to work with my family and for my family,” he says.

As part of his national Apprentice of the Year prize package, he won a trip to a trade show of his choice to the value of \$3000, which he used to attend the United States International Building Expo in Las Vegas in 2008.

“It was a great experience. I met a lot of builders and learnt about all the different projects they were working on — it was a good eye opener.”

He was also awarded two study grants, which he plans to use next year for either a small business course or a design/draftsman’s course.

“It’s hard to think about growing my company with the market the way it is now, but the idea of being able to design and build homes is something I’m really interested in,” he says.



Rhys Forsyth, winner of the Registered Master Builders 2007 Apprentice of the Year competition, in association with Carters (middle), with the 2nd and 3rd place-getters Matt Sharp from Wellington (right) and Blair Stuart from Dunedin (left).



The entrance to Rhys and Deanna’s accessible home in Taupo.

The past year in business has been a good learning curve for Mr Forsyth, especially given the current economic climate.

“I think the good builders are doing fine. It’s the cowboys who are finding the work has really gone,” he says.

“We’re just focusing on doing the best we can in the circumstances, and when things pick up we’ll think

more about growing or diversifying the business. At the moment I’m happy living the dream — just being out there on site with the guys.”

Entries for the 2009 Apprentice of the Year are open until 31 July. For further information, or to download an entry form, go to [www.masterbuilder.org.nz](http://www.masterbuilder.org.nz), [www.bcito.org.nz](http://www.bcito.org.nz), or [www.carters.co.nz](http://www.carters.co.nz). Entry forms can also be collected from Carters stores nationwide.

in association with PlaceMakers

## Luck has nothing to do with it

Taking out the national New Homes \$350,000 - \$450,000 category in the Registered Master Builders 2008 House of the Year, in association with PlaceMakers, was a special achievement for Glencoe Construction.

It was the second year running Glencoe Construction had taken out a national title in the competition, following on from their New Homes \$250,000 - \$350,000 win in 2007.

Bob Wheeler, owner and operator of Glencoe Construction, was rapt with the company's success.

"It's really special to win a national title two years in a row. We consider it a massive accomplishment," he says.

The winning property, a Rotorua home, was built on what Bob considers a "tremendous" site overlooking Lake Rotorua and a nearby reserve.

Mr Wheeler knew the home owners from a commercial project he'd previously worked on. They came back to Glencoe Construction with two requests – to renovate their existing home and to build a new house at the back of their property, which they were subdividing.

"I'd obviously done something right the first time because they came straight back when they decided to build their new home," Mr Wheeler says.

Glencoe Construction designs and builds homes, something which Mr Wheeler



feels gives them an edge in a competitive marketplace.

"It's great to be able to tell a prospective client we can take them from start to finish. We also do renovations and commercial projects – pretty much everything. Rotorua is too small for us to be a one-trick pony."

He says the new mono-pitch home was built exactly to the plan Glencoe Construction had developed, and featured extensive use of glass to maximise the site's stunning vistas.

"The bedrooms and living rooms are all situated on the reserve side of the property which is almost all glass, so they all get the

wonderful view and lots of sun," Mr Wheeler says.

While the past year has undoubtedly been tough for all builders, he says Glencoe has stayed relatively busy, and have a number of interesting projects on their books for the coming year.

"I think our success in the competition is really starting to pay dividends. We received a lot of referrals after both wins, and I think there is a real perception in the marketplace that we can deliver top quality work, which is fantastic."

Glencoe Construction does little formal marketing, and lets their entries in the House of the Year and word of mouth do this for them.

"It's interesting because we don't really do much advertising, and we certainly haven't done any more in recent times yet we are still quite busy. That's got to be a good sign."

This year the Glencoe Construction team has four entries in the competition, including a Nulook Builder's Own Home entry which Mr Wheeler frankly says is "no more special than any other home I've worked on".

Are they hoping for success the third time around?

"Of course we'd love to take home another national title, but there is no denying the competition will be tough. It will all come down to the quality of our builds, something which I am sure is up to scratch."





# Sleek, stunning and sustainable



**H**aimes Building Ltd's stunning construction of a property in Taupo was the worthy recipient of two awards in the Registered Master Builders 2008 House of the Year, in association with PlaceMakers.

Winning national titles in the GIB Living Solutions award and the Sustainable Homes over \$1 million category was an achievement that owner and operator Mark Haimes says was a credit to everyone involved.

"Winning any award in the House of the Year competition requires the right mix of people on the job, including good architects and builders, and a great relationship with your clients," Mr Haimes says.

The property was designed with an emphasis on sustainability through increased insulation, double glazing and solar heating, a process that Mr Haimes says required great attention to detail and an immense amount of preparation.

"There are always a few challenges when constructing a sustainable home, but we knew from very early on that it had the potential to be a great property."

Mr Haimes describes the Taupo project as a unique and exciting opportunity to create something different, a final result that pleased the competition's judges.

"This home has a magic feeling about it, with private wings and an internal sheltered

courtyard. It has a true organic feel to it and would be a pleasure to live in," national judge Guy Evans said.

Mr Haimes says with years of experience, Haimes Building prides itself on being versatile.

"Haimes primarily targets the top end of the market, but we are always happy to tackle any project, from a large architectural home to a deck and anything in between. You just never know what could evolve from the smaller jobs."

He adds that to achieve high quality results, Haimes Building takes a personal approach to every project.

"We always go in with the mindset of

producing the type of quality for a client that we would want for our own home. You need to have an emotional attachment to what you're doing in order to make sure you get the best results," he says.

Haimes Building has entered the House of the Year competition several times since Mr Haimes started the company. It has won many awards over the years, taking out a Gold Reserve title every year since the accolade was introduced, and winning a national award in 2004.

"House of the Year is our only form of marketing and it's a great way to gain exposure. We always aim to do well in the regional awards because, in Taupo, word of mouth advertising is very important," he says.

Haimes Building forecasts a busy year ahead, with a number of ongoing projects and an entry in the 2009 House of the Year New Homes \$650 – 1 million category.

"The goal for 2009 is to achieve optimum quality with minimal fuss for the client. It's really important that everyone enjoys the journey when creating the perfect home."



# Waikato builder steps forward for a worthy cause

**W**hen Hamilton's Downey Designer Homes (DDH) was approached by Hospice Waikato to build a house to assist in raising funds for the Waikato Hospice Building Appeal, construction coordinator Steve Elmiger didn't hesitate in putting his hand up to take on the challenge.

"I've had my own personal dealings with Hospice in the past so I was keen to give something back to such a worthy cause," Mr Elmiger says.

"And the more people I approached to help with the build, the more it became apparent that there are many people out there who have had their own lives affected by cancer in one way or another.

"Once they heard about what we were doing, they were more than happy to contribute in any way they could."

The task was to build a sound family home complete with fences, driveway, paths and landscaping on a 700 sq m section within a new subdivision in north-east Hamilton, and to market and successfully auction it off to raise money for the Waikato Hospice Building Appeal.

"To get things under way we had to design a home that would best suit the section which had been purchased at a considerably reduced cost for the cause," Mr Elmiger says.

"My job was to coordinate the entire project which was pretty much a full-time job for the first couple of months. I was busy contacting concrete suppliers, roofing contractors, heating providers, kitchen manufacturers, landscapers, fencing contractors and anyone else I could think of to help out."

"What we found amazing was that, despite the doom and gloom in these current tough economic times, I only had one negative response towards the project.

"However, as Hamilton is only a small place it didn't take long for the 'grapevine' to do its work, and that contractor soon came back asking if it was too late to be involved."

With a list as long as your arm of all those willing to contribute to the Hospice Charity House, the range of what people were prepared to offer towards the build was simply overwhelming. From a one-man-band through to large corporates, the contributions were all



relative.

The *Waikato Times*, a long standing supporter of Hospice Waikato, ran stories and updates of the building progress at no cost to the project. Also, Harcourts Hamilton kindly approached DDH wanting to get involved as well, which meant they were able to market the property at no cost.

"It was a fantastic experience to see the support of the Hamilton community, and even better when people approached us wanting to be a part of it rather than being asked," Mr Elmiger says.

The build began in the middle of 2008, with the auction planned just in time for the new owners to move into their new home for Christmas 2008. It was a fantastic effort to have the job finished on time during some very wet weather months.

"We held a special breakfast for around 120 people at the site on the morning of the auction as a way to show our appreciation and thanks to all those involved, and most of them stayed to watch the auction proceedings.

"When it came time for the auction to start, the road

and neighbouring sections had become a mass of 600 to 700 interested watchers and, hopefully, bidders.

"It was definitely standing room only, with the auctioneer conducting proceedings from the back of one of the DDH utility vehicles parked on the driveway in front of the house."

As well as the main drawcard of the house auction, DDH also managed to secure a Grand Slam All Blacks rugby jersey, signed by all 36 touring players, coaches and management, which was auctioned off for a very generous \$5000 and donated to Hospice Waikato.

The bidding for the home started with seven interested parties but that soon became two as the bids continued to rise. The new owners, Mark and Lea Callan, bought the house for \$565,000 and were over the moon, after admiring the home for some time.

It was a very successful day for everyone involved and, in light of the current economic woes, a result to be very excited about and proud of.

Once the project and building costs had been met, DDH was able to present the Hospice Waikato Building Appeal with a donation exceeding \$200,000.

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# Recession – manage your people resources

In the current economic climate it is more important than ever to manage your resources, including people resources, to best effect. Hard times can bring issues that have been simmering in the background to a head, and raise new ones that you may never have dealt with before.

If you're recruiting you need to ensure you get the right person. Prior to the downturn people were able to move on if they weren't satisfied with their job for some reason.

But now they're likely to stay put, and resist being moved on. As financial pressures increase there's potential for misconduct issues such as theft or fraud. Stress can take its toll and manifest itself in staff performance issues and compatibility issues between staff.

However workplace dissatisfaction arises, employers bear the brunt of it. Managing it and the demands of keeping the business running can be a challenge.

In the second of a three-part series of articles, RMBF in-house counsel [Leoni Carter](#) looks at [managing existing employees](#), and some things to consider at the beginning, middle and end of an employment relationship.

**Y**ou may have to deal with issues you've never confronted before, such as performance, compatibility, misconduct (such as fraud and theft) and personal issues and stress.

Whichever it is, deal with it promptly, thoroughly, carefully and fairly.

**Promptly:** Don't let issues fester, and don't let people think you really don't mind if they do, or don't do, certain things.

**Thoroughly:** Make sure you investigate any issues and record any evidence and discussions you have had.

**Carefully:** Don't take anyone's word for it, ensure that you have made all the enquiries that you reasonably can and don't jump to conclusions. Get expert help with possible fraud or theft issues as these are a legal minefield.

**Fairly:** It is essential that you always give the employee an opportunity to be heard, and that you take the time to consider what they've said. Make sure they know they can have a support person with them.

Put all your information in front of them so they know



*RMBF in-house counsel Leoni Carter*

exactly what it is you think has happened. Don't use slang or "beat around the bush". Use plain language so there's no possibility of being misunderstood.

If a compatibility or stress issue is involved, consider whether you might wish to offer assistance, perhaps in the way of a counselling session.

The stress may not be being generated through work

but at home, and people can't always leave home at home.

## Managing staff vs work volume

If work drops off you may be considering letting some staff go. If you have a great team and think the situation may only be temporary, you might wish to suggest to your staff that they move to a four-day work week, or perhaps take a day's annual leave a fortnight, until work improves.

Try to agree on a time frame — perhaps two or three months — and then look at it again.

## Staff morale

Don't underestimate the impact of morale. It helps to maintain a positive workplace culture. That doesn't mean you ignore the issues, but that you don't let the "doom and gloom" talk that goes with recession to take hold in your workplace. Remember to have fun!

**Next month: Part 3 — Restructuring and Redundancy**

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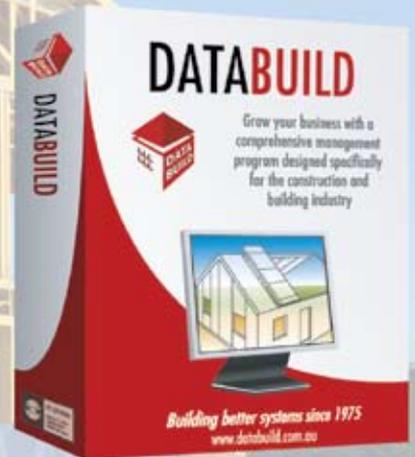
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# Home rating tool will help drive improvements to NZ housing

Research reveals homes with performance ratings sell quicker and for a higher value

**A** residential rating tool is vital to help address New Zealand's poorly performing houses, research organisation Beacon Pathway says.

"If you can't measure you can't manage," Beacon Pathway general manager Nick Collins says.

In the wake of the recent Budget announcement, National's plan to provide incentives for all New Zealanders to upgrade insulation and heating in their houses through loan and grant schemes is an encouraging start, Mr Collins says.

Funding provided to Housing New Zealand to renovate existing homes is another step in the right direction.

But further action is required, and not simply by Government. Banks, the real estate industry, landlords and home owners each have a part to play in improving the performance of the nation's homes.

"Given the scale of the problem presented by our existing housing stock, we all need to pull together to deliver the standard of housing all New Zealanders should enjoy," Mr Collins says.

New Zealand's homes are, on average, 6° World Health Organisation recommended minimum temperatures, and 45% have mould issues.

Insulation estimates (based on the Census, BRANZ House Condition Survey and Environment Canterbury's Clean Heat Scheme) indicate that 250,000 houses either have no ceiling insulation or insulation in less than half of the roof area, 700,000 houses have no (or little) wall insulation, and 740,000 houses with suspended floors have no underfloor insulation.

What's more, our homes are seriously resource inefficient, consuming vast quantities of water and energy to operate at less than optimum levels.

"A residential rating tool will provide the extra momentum necessary to convince New Zealanders to take action and improve the performance of their homes.

"It will allow home owners to assess their home's performance and, importantly, reflect the value of improvements."

There is presently an industry initiative, led by BRANZ, the NZ Green Building Council and Beacon Pathway, to develop a single residential rating tool for new and existing homes.

Home rating tools are gaining popularity in other nations such as Australia, the USA, Japan and Britain. Many of these countries are operating multiple rating systems which focus purely on new builds.

"What we're proposing is unique — a single residential rating tool for all New Zealand homes, both new and existing," Mr Collins says.

The intention is to go beyond a simple rating tool. A star rating from 0-10, coupled with a scheme that delivers credible independent advice about what needs to be done to a house to improve its rating, will assist home owners in prioritising those interventions that improve the quality and performance of their homes.

"A home rating tool of this nature will help to unlock private investment to renovate New Zealand's poorly performing housing stock."

A simple, free self-assessed version of the rating scheme, offering 0-4 stars, will be available online.

Recent international research reveals that homes with performance ratings sell quicker and for a higher value than non-rated homes.

Beacon says steps outlined in the Budget should be underpinned by a residential rating tool which would:

- provide a prioritised plan of solutions to improve the performance of the home,
- be an independent and credible system to compare the performance and quality of a home at the point of purchase, upgrade or rental,
- provide an incentive to invest in upgrading a home to achieve higher performance levels, giving an indicative value to the upgrades undertaken,
- reduce the demand on precious energy and water resources, and
- generate data to assist Government in understanding the challenges that exist in the current housing stock, and target solutions.

Finally, much of this change must be driven by consumers who need to value a home's performance as much as they do its location and aesthetics," Mr Collins says.

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# Kiwi quality keeps kicking

## Innovation to the fore at premier NZ trade show

**b**uildnz designex 09 is New Zealand's premier industry event for the building, design and related industries.

For a small country, New Zealand punches above its weight when it comes to innovation in many fields. Visitors to buildnz designex 09 will see that New Zealand is as ahead of the world as we always have been.

Just one example is highlighted by Karen Warman of Resene Paints.

"This year has been great. Colour makes a difference. Resene's Whites & Neutrals has been a popular colour tool for the selection of varying strengths of Resene colourways," she says.

"Previous fandecks have provided for up to five colour strength variations of one hue. The new The Range Whites & Neutrals increases this choice to up to six colour strength variations, so hues such as Resene Tea, Resene Spanish White and Resene Napa span from triple strength through to eighth strength, providing more options on each colour spectrum to create a tone on tone look.

"Colours such as Resene Perfect Taupe, Resene Craigieburn and Resene Gargoyle join the collection, which now includes 360 whites and neutrals hues spanning from white through to black."

Ms Warman says Resene also has AutoCAD and ArchiCAD electronic colour files available at no cost.

With hundreds of other companies — of all sizes — also going all out to make buildnz designex 09 truly exciting, there's no reason not to attend, according to Rob Lavender of organiser dmg world media.

"But to make the event even better, we've got a

fabulous seminar series carefully designed to provide visitors with relevant ideas and concepts to keep business alive and growing.

"Seminars are tailored to the build and design sectors. Particularly exciting is keynote speaker John Mainwaring of JMA Architects.

"John is an internationally-recognised architectural authority whose recent work includes the fantastic Cooroy Art Temple that was a finalist in the World Architecture Awards."

Attendees at his seminar can also claim continuing professional development points.

Other features of buildnz designex 09 include the plush 09 textile and soft furnishings galleria, and the integration of the Furniture Association of New Zealand show into designex.

### Great prizes

Visitors who pre-register and follow through by attending will also automatically go in the draw to win their choice of two great prizes.

The first is a Heliflight Helifishing Experience to Coromandel for four people. The package includes return helicopter transfers, fishing equipment and lunch.

If the finned ones don't float your boat, you can choose the Heliflight Golf Experience, also for four people.



The RMBF stand at the buildnz 2007 show.

You'll get return helicopter transfers to Formosa Golf Resort (including an extended sightseeing tour along the coast before landing at Formosa, and a direct flight return to Ardmore), green fees, cart hire and packed lunch.

"With an emphasis on new and innovative products, it's vital for industry suppliers and those in the trade to ensure they exhibit or visit.

"Right in the middle of the show will be the fabulous New Product Innovations Café, showcasing the latest and best products on offer in New Zealand."

Mr Lavender says as well as many returning exhibitors, there are a large percentage of new companies planning to provide visitors with an insight into what's new and innovative.

"buildnz designex 09 is shaping up to be one of the best ever. As a face-to-face business tool it's unbeatable, and it's always an experience as well, with so much that's hands-on and interactive, plus a major visitor prize.

People planning to visit can pre-register now for free at either buildnz.com or designex.co.nz."

buildnz designex 09 will be held on 28-30 June, 2009, at Auckland's ASB Showgrounds in Greenlane.

The event is expected to feature more than 150 exhibitors and to attract approximately 5500 trade visitors.

• For more info: Ph buildnz, 0900 39767



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# While others dream, the builder gets his hands dirty

The construction industry is facing a sharp downturn. During tough times, it pays to step out of your comfort zone, find new ways to do things, and form useful new business relationships. That's where **buildnz 09** comes in.

Over the years, buildnz has built a solid reputation for bringing building professionals and construction industry innovators together to share ideas, showcase the latest products, and make mutually beneficial connections. This year, attending buildnz is more vital than ever to safeguard your business as the recession starts to bite. If you've never been, now is the time to do it. This is about your business future.

Pre-register and attend **buildnz | designex | 09** and you'll be in the draw to **win** a 'Heliflight Helifishing Experience' or 'Heliflight Golf Experience' for four passengers. See website for more details.

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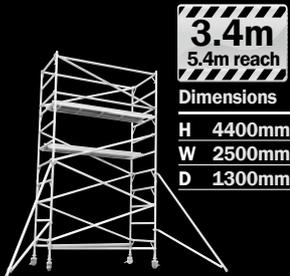
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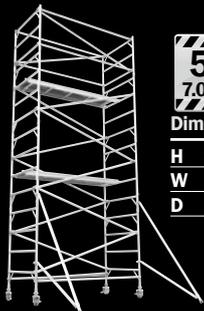
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news

## Concrete ideally suited for NZ cycleway project

The concrete sector has congratulated the Government's announcement to allocate \$50 million over three years for the New Zealand Cycleway Project.

"The development of a series of 'Great Rides' that will connect across the country will offer a brilliant recreational experience for New Zealanders and international tourists," according to Cement & Concrete Association of New Zealand chief executive Rob Gaimster.

"If the cycle network is to achieve its various economic, social and environmental objectives it will need to make extensive use of the long-term maintenance and user benefits of concrete.

"Not only is a network of cycleways paved with concrete the most appropriate option for the range of locations, conditions and bicycle types popular in New Zealand, concrete will require no maintenance over a long period," Mr Gaimster says.

"Furthermore, as a locally produced material, with both

cement and aggregate sourced from New Zealand, concrete is directly contributing to job creation."

The New Zealand concrete industry retains sufficient expertise, capacity and skills to accommodate the logistical challenges that a multiple, large-scale and geographically diverse project would pose.

"Ready mixed concrete companies around the country are able to produce the appropriate concrete mix for any application while, in partnership with master concrete placers, the supply and installation process can be comfortably accommodated."

"Using concrete to construct a New Zealand cycleway will enable the development of a competitive tourism experience with the most suitable and durable riding surface, as well as create employment," Mr Gaimster says.

• For more info: Ph CCANZ, 04 499 8820



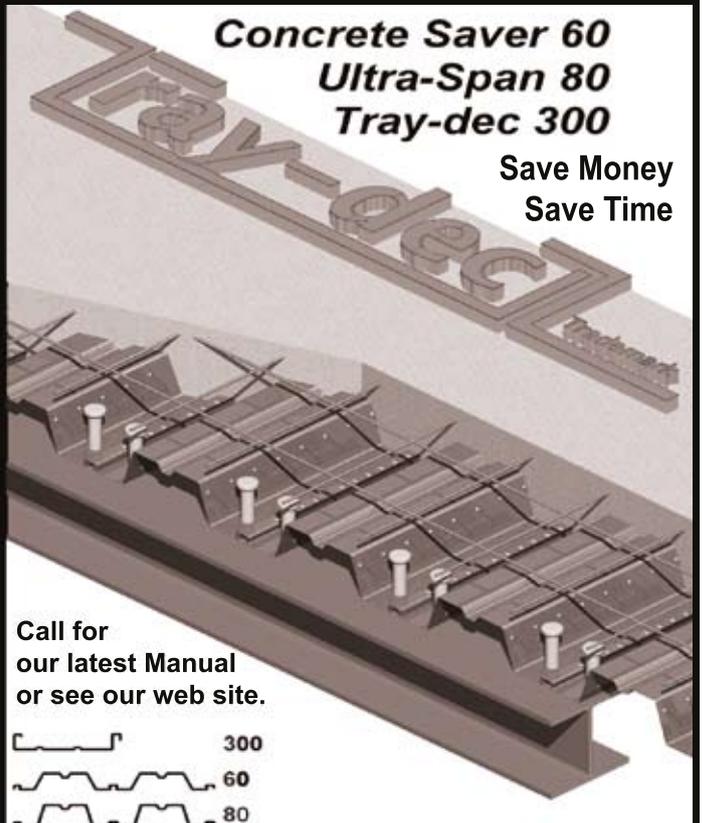
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# Solar water heating coming into its own

Solar water heating as we know it has been around since the 1950s, but with the generous EECA-initiated offers now available there has never been a better time to enjoy the energy only the sun can provide . . .



*The Longhouse property in Martinborough designed by Atelierworkshop has a long north-west facade to make the most of the afternoon sun. The orientation of the roof allows the solar water heating panel to be discreetly positioned, with the cylinder placed in a ceiling cavity.*

## The time is right for solar

Solar water heating has been around in New Zealand for several decades, but it's only now coming into its own, due to rising energy costs, concern about climate change, and improved quality of products on offer.

As the tough times bite, home and business owners want to make every dollar count – not just now, but also into the future.

New Zealanders are increasingly aware that the appliances they buy, their choice of heating systems and design of their homes make a big difference to their ongoing energy bills. Many New Zealanders now also want to make the right choice for the environment.

Builders and architects are playing an ever-increasing role, advising and helping their clients with the range of options when they build or renovate.

Not only can they help them incorporate these elements into the design of their home, but they can also make ongoing running costs a real consideration at the design phase of projects.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) has offered ENERGYWISE™ grants for solar water heating installations for the past three years, and has worked with the solar water heating industry to improve product and installation standards, and to help consumers invest in the right system for their needs.

## EECA is here to help

There are now more suppliers and installers, more competition and better standards. EECA provides independent information and advice on energy performance and choosing the right system.

We help consumers make choices about the energy efficiency options that are right for them.

The advice architects give clients is important to choices customers make. EECA is making it easier for home owners and businesses to be more energy efficient by providing quality information and research available, as well as grants and funding to help them with the costs.

## Choosing a solar water heating option — \$1000 grants available

Solar water heating systems are made up of a number of components, including the tank, solar collector (panels), pump and controller or timer.

For residential or small business use, the easiest solution is to choose a packaged system where the components are already matched together.

EECA's database of packaged solar water heating systems provides an easy way to compare the indicative performance of systems that are eligible for government grants of \$1000.

Check out the web site [www.energywise.govt.nz](http://www.energywise.govt.nz).



## \$1000 grant for heat pump water heaters

New Zealanders have embraced heat pumps as an efficient form of space heating. The same technology can heat water too, and EECA is running a pilot scheme to test the effectiveness of heat pump water heaters in New Zealand conditions.

EECA is providing a \$1000 grant to home owners who install heat pump water heaters and help them monitor the energy savings.

This is in addition to the \$1000 grant available for eligible residential solar water heating systems. For more information, see [www.energywise.govt.nz](http://www.energywise.govt.nz).



## Help to design a solar water heating system

For residential or small business use, the easiest solution for builders or architects is to choose a packaged system where solar water heating components, such as the tank, collectors and controllers, are already matched together.

For larger commercial applications, a bespoke solar water heating system is required. EECA provides free software for building designers wanting a solar water heating system to meet the specific needs of the premises.

This software enables a designer to alter aspects of a system, such as collector type, system load or configuration to see how these changes affect performance.

The software uses New Zealand climatic data. To get a free copy, contact: [solarfinance@eeca.govt.nz](mailto:solarfinance@eeca.govt.nz).



- EECA is here to help, with invaluable resources for both you and your client, with the most comprehensive independent information and advice on energy efficiency in the country. For more information visit [www.energywise.govt.nz](http://www.energywise.govt.nz).

## Mainzeal nails elusive Green Ribbon Award

**M**ainzeal broke ground in the construction industry recently, receiving an award for "Businesses Making a Difference" at the Green Ribbon Awards in Wellington.

The construction company — one of New Zealand's largest — is the first in the industry to receive an award in this category in the 19-year history of the Green Ribbon Award.

Presented by Minister for the Environment Dr Nick Smith, Mainzeal received the highly commended award for its contribution to a sustainable construction industry in New Zealand.

Newly appointed Mainzeal chief executive Peter Gomm was delighted by the win, and says the award provides a benchmark for the company's achievements against what other organisations are doing.

"Winning this award will further inspire our innovative staff to implement even greener building techniques as we contribute to a sustainable industry," Mr Gomm says.



*From left: Minister for the Environment Dr Nick Smith, Mainzeal chief executive Peter Gomm and Mainzeal sustainability manager Ross Copland.*

Mainzeal has chosen to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to the environment. Examples include implementing the principles of its ISO 14001-accredited Environmental Management System, which reduces the potential for environmental spills and incidents, reducing waste and emissions, and sees Mainzeal exceed industry environmental benchmarks

and regulations.

An environmental management plan is also produced to guide every construction project undertaken.

As recognition of the importance of specialist environmental skills to the company, Mainzeal appointed a sustainability manager in 2008, and had five staff graduate as Green Star Accredited Professionals in the same year.

This allows Mainzeal to work alongside clients and architects on Green Star projects at an early stage in the design.

Sustainability manager Ross Copland has taken the company's sustainability initiatives beyond the building site.

"While our staff are very much behind sustainability practices at every step of the construction process, we have also made it a priority to extend energy efficiency programmes within our office spaces too."

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# Temporary chairman for CIC

**B**uilding Research Association of New Zealand (BRANZ) chief executive Pieter Burghout will act as Construction Industry Council chairman for three to six months while a review of the council's role and structure is completed and a new chairman can be elected.

Mr Burghout has previously been chief executive of the Registered Master Builders Federation and the Building & Construction Industry Training Organisation.

The Construction Industry Council is a forum for the building and construction sector to work on sector-wide issues and promote its interests to Government.

Previous chairman Richard Michael stepped down in April.



Pieter Burghout

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# Innovation Institute building

The NZi3 building in Christchurch is good looking, environmentally sustainable, and showcases smart construction solutions to a taxing client brief. By [Jenny Baker](#)

A key focus for Canterbury University was that their innovative new building — which houses the university's School of Engineering and the national ICT (information and communication technology) Innovation Institute known as NZi3 — would embody a high standard of environmentally-sustainable design.

However the design and construction team faced not only the future-proofing requirements, but several other challenges as well.

Two years after the university put the project out for tender, the NZi3 building stands tall, featuring several well considered solutions to these challenges, as well as a striking appearance.

In addition, Green Star New Zealand awarded the building five stars, making it New Zealand's first education building to earn this distinction.

The university engaged Beca Group to provide all engineering services, including structural, civil, mechanical, electrical, plumbing and drainage, fire engineering, and acoustic services.

Structural engineer Samir Govind led the team, also consisting of green building engineer Alan Barbour and building services engineer Andrew Jackson, all from Christchurch.

The lead design consultant was Warren and Mahoney Architects, and the main contractor was Hawkins Construction.

Located on the corner of Engineering Road and Creyke Road, the 70m long, 16m wide building measures 2400sq m over two levels. The upper level links to level two of the building that houses the mechanical engineering wing of the university's engineering faculty.

Mr Govind explains the background to the building.

"The Government recently identified ICT as one of three growth areas with the potential to make the greatest positive impact on the New Zealand economy.

"Embracing this challenge, the University of Canterbury proposed the construction of a facility to be the first



*The entrance to the New Zealand ICT Innovation Institute. Note the motorised sun louvres on the top level.*

Image: Simon Devitt

dedicated ICT Research Centre in New Zealand, and a National Centre of Excellence for Research and Training in ICT."

## Inventiveness and creativity

He says the building is a prominent feature on the campus and an iconic statement that conveys NZi3's aim to be the bridge between industry and academia, and the spirit of innovation.

"The idea was for it to provide high-quality internal space that would foster and stimulate inventiveness and creativity," Mr Govind says.

"The building services had to replicate this ideal with a sustainable, energy efficient and environmentally-friendly design that would also help stimulate questioning minds with its aesthetic visual appearance."

## Future-proofed excellence

According to Mr Govind, the client also wanted the building to set new benchmarks in flexibility and environmental performance. The team designed it to achieve a five-star Green Star rating, which it achieved with a strong 66 points.

The project is part of a pilot scheme to establish a green star rating for education buildings in New Zealand.

Beca made extensive use of 3D computer simulation analysis to target the design to specification and consider thermal comfort modelling and annual energy and water use. The building incorporates several cutting-edge, future-proofing features.

Mr Barbour is proud it became the first commercial building in New Zealand to use phase change materials (PCM), in the form of ceilings.

Imported from Germany, the lightweight PCM materials are capable of storing or releasing large amounts of energy, and enable significant energy savings.

He says the use of PCMs in New Zealand is "... revolutionary and cutting edge. NZi3 is all about innovation, and the application of PCMs is an excellent example of advanced building design".

He explains at room temperature PCMs are solid. When it becomes warmer, they liquefy and absorb heat. This cools a room.

Conversely, when the temperature drops, they solidify and emit heat which warms the room.

# worthy of its name

“PCMs actively manage room temperature by absorbing heat gains during the day and dissipating the heat to the interior at night, reducing the need for peak cooling demand and the associated energy consumption,” he says.

Other green features include a high environmental performance facade with motorised sun louvres, solar shading screens, and skylights along the building spine to achieve superior natural light levels.

Other features include automatic daylight dimming of lights, under-floor ventilation, rainwater recycling, solar water heating, and using environmentally-preferable materials.

“The system design integrated with the architecture to maximise natural ventilation, using the increased thermal mass of the building and natural daylight to achieve and promote low energy operation,” Mr Barbour says.

## Practical beauty

Mr Govind says the iconic structural solution was critical to the project to provide the large free flowing open spaces on both levels and to achieve a form in keeping with the architect’s overall vision — Bridging Academia with the Industry.

“A notable feature of the building is that the aesthetic derives from a deliberate expression of the primary

structural elements supporting the upper level,” he says.

The deceptively simple structural system allows for a column-free construction and a building interior largely devoid of structure, to allow flexibility for space planning.

It consists of a pair of 72m long trusses that run the full length of the upper storey and support the roof and first floor suspended floor system.

The steelwork trusses hang out at each end of the building. Two in situ reinforced concrete shear walls, located approximately 14m from each end of the building, provide each truss with vertical support. The walls also resist lateral loads on the building in the longitudinal direction.

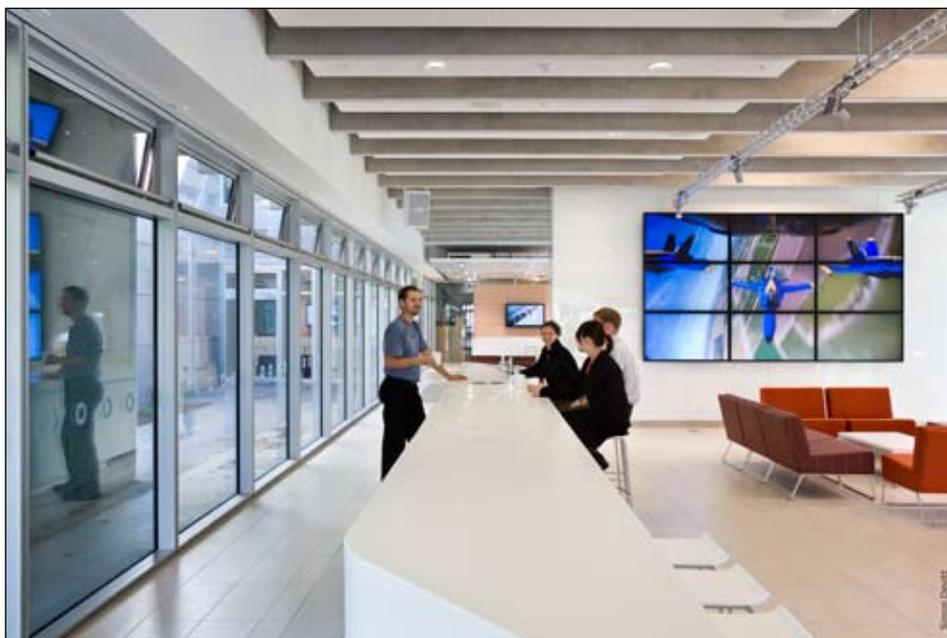
A single cruciform column is located midway along each longitudinal truss. Mr Govind says in contrast to the deliberately massive concrete walls that anchor the structure, these columns appear very slender.

“This is possible due to the reduction in axial load at midspan, the result of the compensating effect of the large cantilevers at



*The building interior is largely devoid of structure, resulting in a calm, spacious, uncluttered ambience.*

Image: Simon Devitt



*Level 1 contains a cafe foyer area which will be used for social and promotional events, as a meeting space and to display new technology.*

Image: Simon Devitt

either end of the building,” he explains.

Stevenson Structural Engineering Ltd from Tokomaru did the steel fabrication and erection work, using 650 tonnes of steel. Each truss was fabricated in four principal 18m-long subassemblies to facilitate transportation to site.

There, the Stevenson team erected and connected the subassemblies in situ, using site welds to ensure a homogeneous appearance.

The longitudinal truss chords and vertical web members are fabricated three-plate I sections. The diagonal web members are standard UC sections.

The suspended first floor system consists of precast concrete tees with an in situ topping, spanning the full 16m width of the building. The tees incorporate an embedded RHS member at their ends to achieve the connection to the bottom flange of the trusses.

Extensive glazing on the ground floor gives the appearance the upper structure is floating above a transparent pavilion. Locating the custom steel

*Continued page 26*

## Innovation Institute building worthy of its name

From page 25

brackets that support the ground floor glazing well back from the glazing line helped achieve this effect.

On the upper floor, the main glazing line is located inboard from the longitudinal trusses. A secondary façade built with fritted glass and supported by bespoke steel outrigger frames provides solar screening.

The site presented a robust challenge for this type of structure. Sandy gravels with a shallow layer of silt containing organic compounds at the surface underlay it. The water table is shallow, at approximately one metre below the ground surface.

Consequently, the foundations of the building are on 900mm diameter bored piles located under main structural elements such as the in situ reinforced concrete shear wall and precast tilt-up panels.

Gravity-only structural elements, such as slab-on-grade with perimeter edge footings, wind posts, support for internal stairs, and internal columns for the link structure needed shallow foundation pads only.

To minimise the effect of differential settlement, reinforced concrete ground beams linking the pad foundations were provided in places.

The ground slab overlays high density polystyrene block for thermal insulation, and the team was careful with the detailed work to prevent cold bridging effects.

Mr Govind says in addition to the usual strength design considerations, more complex serviceability issues and secondary effects such as shrinkage of the concrete floor, differential temperature in the truss top and bottom chord, deflection of the substantial cantilevers, and vibration performance of the first floor all required the design team's particular attention.

"Close collaboration between Beca and the architects during the early parts of the design resulted in a structure that's integrated with the architectural as well as functional requirements.

"The completed building offers a visually impressive and modern centre of learning for the university — worthy of the five stars it earned.

"In addition, the construction of the building required seamless coordination — the NZi3 teams did well," Mr Govind says.

• For more info: Ph Beca Group, 09 300 9000

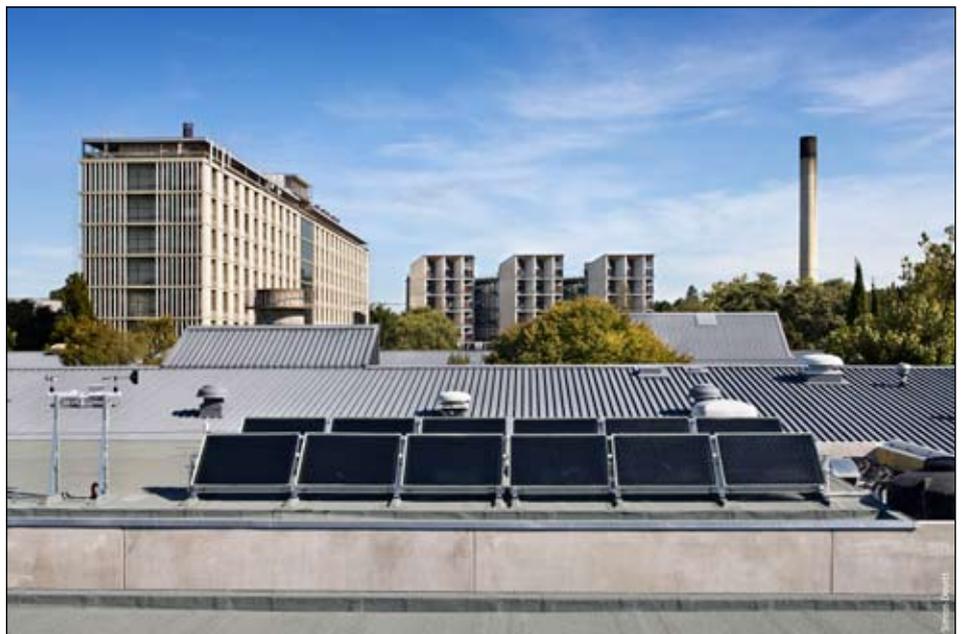
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Level two is designed for collaborative work, allowing post-graduate students from different disciplines to work in close proximity to researchers from other universities and the private sector. Level two also has meeting rooms, test rooms and secure research rooms for the development of sensitive work.

Image: Simon Devitt



Solar heating panels on the roof.

Image: Simon Devitt

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# Milestone Homes notches

By Jenny Baker

**M**ilestone Homes recently built its 200th house, representing on average 100 houses per year or around eight and a half houses per month during the two years the company has been in operation.

This is an achievement to be proud of, considering the slow New Zealand economy during the past 24 months, Milestone Homes general manager Stephen Murray says.

Milestone Homes has been part of the Jennian Homes family since 2006. It focuses on the \$150,000 to \$270,000 market segment. This is the entry level to the property market for many home owners, as well as a popular niche for retirees and property investors.

In late 2008 Jennian took the strategic decision to market it as a separate brand. Mr Murray says by January next year Milestone Homes will be a stand-alone franchise, with 30 businesses operating from Kerikeri to Invercargill.

"We know for many New Zealanders building a home is a big step — a milestone in fact — so we do everything we can to make it easier for them to reach.

"With Milestone Homes as a separate franchise, we can service its market better," he says.

## Customer is king

Mr Murray says Milestone is successful because it knows what its market wants and ensures these needs are met.

The company has 60 modern, proven house designs created by an in-house draughting and estimating team.

The company plans to increase the number of plans to 70 by early 2010. The new plans incorporate more optimised, double-level space structures to accommodate the growing trend of building on minimum sized subdivided sections.

"What Milestone means for the home buyer is we've put careful thought into every single aspect of each home design, so that our homes are affordable, comfortable, durable and practical.

"We build with the best materials available, sourced from our reputable industry partners."



Milestone Homes general manager Stephen Murray.

Image: Stephen Murray

Milestone homes are constructed from Monier Brick or James Hardie weatherboard with Gerard metal roof tiles for low maintenance. Other premier building suppliers the company uses include Carters, Pink Batts, Norman Ellison and Plumbing World."

**'Developers tend to hold on to quality land, waiting for an upturn. However, the upturn will only happen when we start building again and, without land, we cannot.'**

"Our standardised designs and long-standing relationship with our suppliers, partners, and tradesmen enable us to negotiate great rates we can pass on to our customers," Mr Murray says.

## Big enough market for all builders, but . . .

Mr Murray says another reason why Milestone

prospered and grew through the recent recession is the way the group manages boom and bust cycles within the industry.

He says the New Zealand construction industry has a \$12 billion annual turnover, so housing needs grow by the day, and the industry needs strong brands such as Milestone to service the market.

He believes managing the cycle on a national level revolves around access to money and quality land for buyers, fiscal discipline by and access to a steady labour force for builders, and consolidation of red tape.

"Banks have been very good with reducing interest rates, but buyers' access to mortgages and, in particular, the historical issue of saving up a deposit before the next price hike, remain a problem.

"Developers tend to hold on to quality land, waiting for an upturn. However, the upturn will only happen when we start building again and, without land, we cannot," he says.

## Fiscal discipline crucial

Fiscal discipline by builders is crucial. "Many builders are undercapitalised and basically trading insolvent. Some go under, leave an owner with an unfinished building, then appear again a few months later. This destroys consumer confidence."

Mr Murray says society and, in particular, schools should continue to encourage youngsters to consider the construction industry as a solid career choice.

"We're in the process of creating a gap in the market right now, and losing apprentices. But before long we'll be back in a boom situation and then we'll face critical labour shortages again."

Different councils have different procedures to process plans and deal with issues, which creates a lot of unnecessary red tape.

"The Government must take a leadership role to address these issues to even out the boom and bust effect, and ensure sustainability of the industry in the long term," he says.

Mr Murray expects Milestone Homes to complete its 300th home early next year.



On the web:

[www.milestonehomes.co.nz](http://www.milestonehomes.co.nz)

# up house number 200



Right: Milestone Homes plan designs are simple, smart, and functional. The company builds with quality materials and modern, pre-selected colours and finishes.

Image: Stephen Murray



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Builders should talk to their clients about choosing the right future-proofing options to improve energy efficiency for their homes.



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# FPB seminars heading south

**T**he remaining Future-Proof Building events and seminars for 2009 will be heading towards the southern part of the North Island and, later, in September, into the South Island.

Dates are:

Plumbing World Roadshow, New Plymouth, 24 August, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, New Plymouth, 25 August, 7 - 9am

Plumbing World Roadshow, Palmerston North, 25 August, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Palmerston North, 26 August, 7 - 9am

Plumbing World Roadshow, Wellington, 26 August, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Wellington, 27 August, 7 - 9pm

Plumbing World Roadshow, Christchurch, 21 September, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Christchurch, 22 September, 7 - 9am

Plumbing World Roadshow, Blenheim, 22 September, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Blenheim, 23 September, 7 - 9am

Plumbing World Roadshow, Nelson, 23 September, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Nelson, 24 September, 7 - 9am

Plumbing World Roadshow, Queenstown, 2 November, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Queenstown, 3 November, 7 - 9am

Plumbing World Roadshow, Invercargill, 3 November, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Plumbing World Roadshow, Dunedin, 4 November, 4.30 - 6.30pm

Future-Proof Building Roadshow, Dunedin, 5 November, 7 - 9am



RMBF member Mike Fox addresses an FPB seminar.

• For more info: Ph CMS Group, 09 589 2050 or 0508 FUTURE  
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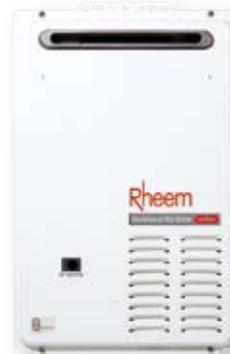
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# Building a successful business

It is a great time to review systems and procedures in your business during a slow down in the construction industry.

This can include a review of your staff and your consultants to make best use of the talent within your organisation, and searching out the right people to help you grow your business.

It is also a good time to reflect on some of those business decisions made in the past and check that the controls put in place since have helped ensure you can face the challenges ahead.

Databuild works closely within the industry, providing software to many of New Zealand's most successful builders.

Databuild and its consulting network can provide tools to assist customers to grow their business, even in difficult times.

This is done by reviewing current systems and assisting the implementation of business controls,

which include rapid estimating, accurately-costed customer quotes (no guestimating), simple price catalogue maintenance and quote request features.

A major feature to help a business is the "live" job costing, providing detailed reporting throughout the construction process.

The comprehensive general ledger accounting system for balance sheet, profit/loss and GST reporting ensures business and government reporting are easily handled.

The document control functionality and contract management systems ensure customer service issues are easily identified, and appropriate actions are taken.

If you would like to have a Databuild representative come onsite for a free business systems make contact as below.

• For more info: Ph Databuild, 0800 080 009



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# Buy one, fill it — and they'll take it from there!

**T**ranspacific Industries Group (NZ) Ltd has announced the recent launch of the Flexi Bin in Auckland and Whangarei.

The Flexi Bin provides an innovative rubbish collection service that can be used as an alternative to the rental of a steel skip bin.

It is a tough, disposable, heavy duty rubbish bag that comes in three sizes (1cu m, 2cu m and 3cu m), and can be purchased from local hardware stores.

## Practical solution

It offers a practical solution for all types of waste removal, and is particularly useful for those undertaking a DIY project (construction or demolition), garden clean-up or just getting rid of general

household junk.

The benefit of the Flexi Bin is the versatility it offers. Once the bin is purchased you can keep it for as long as required, with no rental fees incurred.

It can be placed almost anywhere on your property, provided there is access for it to be collected via a hiab truck.

## Take your time

Not only does this mean you can take your time to complete the job, but neighbours and pedestrians won't have access to throw their rubbish in your bin.

When you require your Flexi Bin to be taken away, all you need to do is enter your collection details and pay for the pick-up online at [www.flexibin.co.nz](http://www.flexibin.co.nz), or phone 0800 874 353. It's as easy as that!

Transpacific is committed to resource recovery, and will recycle as much of the waste as possible, including the Flexi Bin itself.

The Flexi Bin is available at 70 selected Mitre 10, Bunnings, The Warehouse, Placemakers, Carters and ITM stores throughout Auckland and Whangarei.

Transpacific is proud to be leaders in their field, and can claim to be the first service provider to offer this unique waste collection system in New Zealand.

There are plans to roll the service out nationally in due course.

• For more info: Ph Flexi Bin, 0800 874 353

 **On the web:**  
[www.flexibin.co.nz](http://www.flexibin.co.nz)

## Experienced operators back in the game and enthusiastic as ever!

**R**e-entering the container rental business after the expiry of the Restraint of Trade that resulted from the sale of their shipping container business in 2007, are J E (Ted) Coutts and J R Browne, two "old timers" in the container world with Tyrex.

They started the Tyrex Group together 31 years ago in 1978. Mr Coutts had come from a lifetime association in the tyre and automotive industries, while Mr

Browne's background is in road transport, tyres, farming, maritime and property development.

## Competitive supply edge

The two are enthusiastic about returning to the container rental business, believing that experience, hands-on management and low overheads will give them a competitive supply edge in the challenging times facing the construction industry today.

They welcome enquiries from builders and contractors wanting good quality 20ft and 40ft shipping containers for site work. They also offer Portabuilt site offices for sale.

So get in touch — as their advertisement says, they "will not be beaten on price!"

• For more info: Ph Tyrex, 09 424 8375 or 027 497 6407

## Payment claims and schedules

*From page 38*

held that the letter fulfils the basic requirements of a payment schedule as is more fully set out in section 21(2) of the Act.

However, as to its satisfaction of section 21(3), he determined that the letter was not a valid payment schedule. It was decided that the letter expressed some general dissatisfaction with the plaintiff's workmanship and performance under the construction

contract.

However, it did not itemise any specific matters of concern as the Act requires. "Thus, the defendants did not effectively respond to the payment claims by providing a proper payment schedule to the plaintiff under s21 of the Act."

Furthermore, no specific complaints are detailed, and the letter simply stated that there was a comprehensive report of all areas of non-compliance being prepared, which was never provided.

The judge concluded that an assurance from a defendant that more detail would be provided in the future does not make up for a lack of actual detail in a purported payment schedule.

This case serves as another strong reminder not to treat a payment claim lightly for, otherwise, a person who does may find that he or she is liable for the full amount sought.

 • For more info: Ph Tim Bates, 09 360 2415  
**On the web:** [www.legalvision.co.nz](http://www.legalvision.co.nz)

[www.buildingtoday.co.nz](http://www.buildingtoday.co.nz)

# Ronald McDonald Family Retreat gets Carters support

## Carters gets behind family retreat in Rotorua

**C**arters is proud to have been involved in the first Ronald McDonald Family Retreat in New Zealand which opened earlier this year.

The retreat provides families with seriously ill children a week's holiday free of charge and a chance to spend time with their loved ones that they would otherwise not have.

### Central location chosen

The Rotorua lakeside location was chosen due to its central location and proximity to popular family attractions in Rotorua.

It is expected to be used by approximately 100 families from across the country each year.

The stunning property at Ngongotaha was purchased in 2007 with support from a local donor, and plans were drawn up courtesy of Elliott Architects to make way for a purpose-built family retreat consisting of two family homes.

The ceremony took place on 1 May 2008 when the property was blessed by local Kaumatua Mita Mohi, followed by the turning of the sod.

During the build, Carters pledged materials and discounts in conjunction with suppliers James Hardie, Tasman Insulation, Winstone Wallboards and Carter Holt Harvey Woodproducts.

Valentine's Day saw the official opening of the retreat, and the first families to use the facility were welcomed in on Easter weekend.

### 'Unbelievable support'

Ronald McDonald House Charities Fundraising Manager Karinia Lee says "the support we received from Carters Rotorua was unbelievable. We could not have got this done without them".

Carters would like to thank Ronald McDonald House Charities for having the opportunity to be a part of this incredible project, and also the suppliers who generously gave product.

To find out more about Ronald McDonald House Charities or how you can get involved visit [www.rmhc.org.nz](http://www.rmhc.org.nz).

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# Future labour needs remain high despite current market conditions

## Large fall in residential consent value

Over the year to January 2009, the total value of residential consents fell by a significant 23%. The reasons for this fall have been well documented — a two-year period of reduced migration into New Zealand, a prolonged period of high mortgage interest rates and, more recently, tighter credit controls for borrowers perceived as higher risk.

In the past, demand for building work has been accurately forecast through the analysis of consents.

However, the heightened uncertainty about the current economic outlook has heavily discounted the reliability of this analysis. The industry is now experiencing a much larger than normal number of consented projects being delayed, altered or cancelled before work begins.

## Construction workforce contraction continues

It will likely come as no surprise to learn that the sharp downturn in residential building has seen the total workforce in construction industries fall by an estimated 11%\* over the past year. During the year ahead, it is expected that the total workforce in the industry will contract a further 5%.

However, this contraction of 5% will be overrun by the number of workers forecast to leave the industry. Each year an estimated average of 9% of existing workers leave construction industries\*\* (ranging between 4700 and 6400 workers per year).

Therefore, by mid-2010 the industry will require new entrants to maintain productivity.

## Firms need to train now for future labour needs

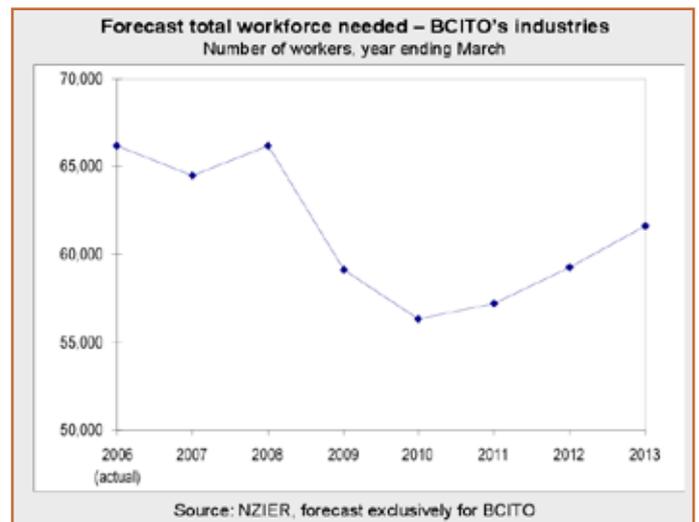
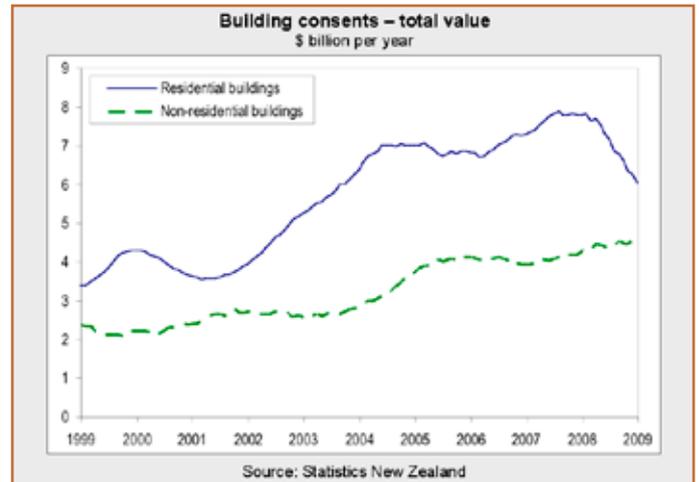
While it is difficult to think about training new and existing workers in the current economic climate, this is the only way to stave off the boom and bust cycle in the industry's workforce.

Over the coming year, construction industries will need to replace at least half the existing workers leaving and, in each of the following three years, take on more new workers than those who leave, if they are to meet the increasing demand for construction.

The reality of the situation is that 8300 new workers will be required per year by 2013 — 14% of the total workforce. The industry must start planning for this eventuality now, or it will be playing catch-up and competing with other industries for labour, as it has done in the past. Call a BCITO Skills Broker today to talk about upskilling your team or bringing on a new apprentice.

\* NZIER forecast to March 2009.

\*\* Demand for new workers is derived from growth (or in the current case, decline) in demand for new building, plus replacement of existing workers leaving the industry due to retirement, moving industries, emigration, illness and injury.



*This information has been prepared by NZIER to assist firms in planning for their future skills and training needs, by informing industry and interested stakeholders about the medium-run outlook for the economy in general, construction activity in particular, and labour needs in the industries covered by the BCITO.*



• For more info: Ph 0800 4BCITO (0800 422 486)

On the web: [www.bcito.org.nz](http://www.bcito.org.nz)

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# The Alhambra

Dr Kerry Rodgers reflects on Granada's Greatest Glory

**G**iven the Middle-eastern tensions that bedevil the world today, we may sometimes forget that for eight centuries Spain was an Islamic nation.

The dominant Moors have left the world a rich heritage. Right at the top of the list is the remarkable fortress-cum-palace combo that dominates Granada. If you ever make it to this part of the world, join the rest of the tourists and take in one of the world's great architectural wonders.



The Alhambra sits astride a hilly terrace measuring about 740m x 205m, south-east of Granada. On the western side is the original strongly fortified citadel. The present name comes from the Arabic meaning "red fortress", in reference to the red clay used in its construction — although, originally, the buildings were whitewashed.

Elsewhere on the plateau, within a fortified wall graced with 13 towers, are a number of palaces. These include the Palace of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor in 1527. The result is a remarkable blend of Islamic and Christian architecture.

The main Islamic phase of building was completed towards the end of Muslim rule in Spain in the mid-to-late 14th Century during the reigns of Yusuf I and Muhammed V. This is a time when Muslim artists and intellectuals took refuge in Granada as the Christian armies won territory.



When Moorish sultan Ibn Nasr retreated to Granada he decided to give the Alhambra a total makeover. He ordered his architects to not only strengthen and enlarge the citadel but include plans for six palaces to form a royal quarter, two circuit towers and numerous bathhouses.

Over the next few reigns the terraced hill summit was transformed into a palatine city, complete with an irrigation system. Previously, the Alhambra had depended upon rainwater collected from a cistern. The creation of the Sultan's canal turned the complex into a palace-city rather than a defensive and austere structure.



The palace decorations typify the climax of Moorish influence in Spain and, in particular, of Andalusian art in Granada. Muslims in Spain were, to some extent, isolated from the rest of Islam, and were also influenced by their contacts with Christian Europe. There is scant hint of the Byzantine influences seen in the Muslim east.



Those 14th Century tessellated tiles would provide Escher with thought-provoking inspiration when he paid a visit 500 years later.

Granada and Alhambra were finally lost by the Muslims in 1492 to the forces of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile. The Christian victors and their heirs promptly set about making changes and generally vandalising the entire site. Decorations and paintings were stripped or badly damaged.

Then in the mid-16th Century, Charles V rebuilt portions in the Renaissance style and destroyed the greater part of the winter palace, simply to make way for a new structure that he never completed. Come the 18th Century, and Philip V Italianised rooms and built a further new palace in the midst of the Moorish buildings.

And the French chimed in in 1812 with their one 'n' tuppence worth. They pulled down some towers before Napoleon tried to blow up the entire complex. It was saved only by a remarkable soldier who defied his commander and defused the explosives.



Restoration began in 1828 under the orders of Ferdinand VII and the hand of architect José Contreras.

Today the Alhambra comprises gardens, fountains, streams, a palace and a mosque, all within that fortress wall flanked by 13 massive towers. Contreras has, to a great extent, achieved a reflection of the beauty of Paradise that the Red Fort was once intended to provide.

# Construction Contracts Act 2002 — Payment Claim/Payment Schedule

**Tim Bates** of Auckland law firm Legal Vision examines another case highlighting payment claims that don't comply with the requirements of the CCA.



**T**he recent High Court case, *Invent Solutions Ltd v Chan Developments Trustee Ltd & Others* (CIV 2008-485-2834), considered whether payment claims served by the plaintiffs complied with the requirements of the Construction Contract Act 2002.

The judgment also discussed the validity of the payment schedule provided in response to these payment claims.

## Background

The plaintiff company carried on business as a building contractor and the defendant company was a property development company.

On 14 September 2008, the two parties entered into a construction contract under which the defendant would pay the plaintiff to undertake and manage construction work at the property known as the Potala Villas development project.

From 5 November 2008 to 6 November 2008, three invoices were issued to the defendant. On 7 November 2008, the parties entered into an Exit Agreement which

terminated the construction contract.

However, on 14 November 2008 Raymond Chan, the director of the defendant company, wrote to the plaintiff informing him that the defendant was dissatisfied with the work the plaintiff had carried out at the property, and that there would not be payments made for the amounts claimed in the invoices.

The letter contained a scheduled amount of "nil" which was arrived at by deducting the estimated cost of bringing up the work so that it complied with the contract, from the amount claimed in the invoices.

Following these events, two further payment claims were served on the defendant. One was issued on 18 November 2008 and the last one was issued on 25 November 2008.

## Issues

The Construction Contracts Act 2002 provides specific provisions to ensure contractors and principals follow legitimate processes when facilitating payments and contractual obligations.

Here, the court was faced with two main issues to be considered in light of the Act. First, whether the payment claims contained sufficient detail to comply with the provisions of the Construction Contracts Act 2002.

Second, the issue was whether the payment schedule contained sufficient detail and reason to justify a non payment.

Section 20 sets out the criteria that must be contained in payment claims. The defendants argued that the invoices did not comply with the section 20 requirements for the following reasons:

- there were errors in the invoices, such as referring to the "Construction Contracts Act 2003" instead of 2002,
- they failed to state the correct due date for payment pursuant to the construction contract,
- some invoices did not adequately identify the construction contract to which they related,
- some invoices did not indicate the manner in which the claimed sum was calculated in sufficient detail, and the amount claimed was not broken down in detail.

The second question was whether Mr Chan's letter fulfilled the requirements of section 21(3).

The letter reasoned that the defendant company would withhold payment until more detailed information was obtained because of the dissatisfaction with the work done, and alleged non-compliance with the construction contract.

It also suggested that the defendant calculated the scheduled amount of "nil" by deducting the estimated cost of bringing up the work so that it complied with the contract, from the amount claimed in the invoices.

The plaintiff argued that this letter did not constitute a valid payment schedule under section 21(3) as:

- allegations of non-compliance and unsatisfactory work were stated generally and did not point to particular aspects of the work, and
- the source and quantification of the estimate were also unclear and unsubstantiated.

## Decision

Associate Judge D I Gendall considered both the issues in light of earlier judgments and applied the purpose and wording of the Act.

- He dismissed the argument that the reference to the Act with the incorrect year and the error of incorrect due date for payments invalidated the invoices because "there is no suggestion in the present case that these acknowledged errors misled the defendants . . . the errors are minor technical quibbles and do not invalidate the payment claims".

- He agreed that, ideally, a payment claim would provide greater detail than seen in some of the invoices that the defendant argued were non-compliant. However, he found that ". . . the invoices are not so vague as to be clearly non-compliant with section 20 of the Act . . . not so vague that the defendant was precluded from issuing a payment schedule in accordance with the statutory regime".

- In respect of the payment claim which the defendants claimed contained a lack of detail in the amount claimed, he held this was a valid payment claim as it refers to the exit agreement which sets out liability for the amount.

As to the validity of the payment schedule, the judge

*Continued page 33*



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