

# BUILDING TODAY

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE REGISTERED MASTER BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



VOLUME 27 NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2017

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**FROM THE EDITOR**

2017 looks set to be a big year for the industry in this country. RMBA chief executive David Kelly predicts the issue of construction will be high on the agenda for all the major parties leading up to the general election on September 23.

He makes the point that elections can be unpredictable and that promises can be broken, which is why it is important for organisations such as the RMBA and others to stay engaged with the political decision-makers.

Columnist Don Bunting presents his personal wish list for 2017, and wonders why the Government tucks the industry away behind something called the MBIE. He says a dedicated construction ministry is required for an industry important and relevant enough to generate 8% of GDP and account for 10% of all jobs in New Zealand. Food for thought, surely?

**Andrew Darlington** — Editor

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# 2017 set to be a big year in political arena

## Chief's Chat

By CEO David Kelly

2017 is set to be a big year in New Zealand politics. Prime Minister Bill English, who the Registered Master Builders Association hosted at the Constructive conference in Christchurch last year, has just announced the dates for elections — ring mark Saturday, September 23.

I have no doubt that high on the agenda in the lead up to the elections for parties, whatever their politics, will be construction.

This should not be surprising. A PWC report which was jointly commissioned by the Construction Strategy Group, the Construction Industry Council (which I chair) and BRANZ underlines why building in this country matters.\*

The construction sector makes a significant contribution across New Zealand's economy. In terms of economic activity, it generates the equivalent of 8% of GDP. Over half of New Zealand investment in capital assets was facilitated through the construction sector.

Construction accounts for 10% of jobs in New Zealand. That's more than 300,000 people in construction or construction-related jobs.

To put this into perspective, the sector employs more people than the primary sector which includes agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

The construction sector also had the highest job growth between 2012 and 2015. This is expected to increase on average by 10% between 2015 and 2021 — equivalent to 49,000 new jobs in construction in the next five years.

Some reports suggest that things are expected to peak in 2017 when the value of national construction hits \$37 billion. The sector is highly cyclical so that is not unexpected.

But the demand for building will not go away if Auckland needs 13,000 houses a year for the next 30 years. Other regions are experiencing similar housing pressures.

It is fair to say that improved productivity and



profitability in the sector has a positive multiplier effect across New Zealand's economy.

But it is about more than just the economy. The industry builds the homes we live in and the places we work in. These are fundamentally important in our every day lives.

Elections, at the best of times, can be unpredictable, and all sorts of promises can be made. That is why it is important we, as an association, stay engaged with decision makers.

We have a wealth of knowledge of the sector to draw on to help shape future policy direction so the industry is able to respond meaningfully to New Zealand's construction and building demands.

\* <http://www.pwc.co.nz/services/management-consulting/publications/valuing-the-role-of-construction-in-the-nz-economy/>



# Pushing boundaries

Privately owned, but located on District Health Board land, the Kathleen Kilgour Centre Radiotherapy Unit in Tauranga is not only providing world-class specialist radiotherapy services to the people of the Bay of Plenty, but is a groundbreaking space in design and construction.

Recognised internationally as a leading-edge health complex, the Kathleen Kilgour Centre Radiotherapy Unit — the Health Category winner of the 2016 New Zealand Commercial Project Awards — is a unique public-private partnership that, according to judges, required “a project team that pushed boundaries and tackled the unknowns”.

Established by urologists Mark Fraundorfer and Peter Gilling, and named after Dr Fraundorfer’s mother who died of cancer at an early age, the centre is the result of a private-public partnership between the Bay of Plenty District Health Board and the Kathleen Kilgour Centre Ltd Partnership.

Previously, the nearest option for radiation cancer treatment was more than 100km away but, now, 500 to 600 patients, both publicly and privately funded, can use the new facility annually.

Breaking the mould of traditional Health Board buildings, the multi-storey facility, built around the time and space constraints of a busy regional hospital, houses three linear accelerator bunkers, where specialist state-of-the-art equipment is located, recovery rooms, consulting offices, meeting rooms, administration offices, and technical support spaces.



*The Kathleen Kilgour Centre Radiotherapy Unit in Tauranga is the result of a private-public partnership between the Bay of Plenty District Health Board and the Kathleen Kilgour Centre Ltd Partnership.*

Praised as an easy to navigate, warm, welcoming space with stunning design by Wingate+Farquhar, judges were also impressed by the team’s environmentally-sustainable design approach to optimise the patient experience and enhance healthcare delivery.

A distinctive “saw tooth” roofline, implemented to improve the efficiency of the rooftop solar array, is teamed with careful selection of low VOC materials and finishes for improved indoor air quality, a greenwall, and rainwater harvesting.

The judging panel said “green walls” and sensitive interior spaces encapsulate a unique number of sustainable features and elements throughout the building.

“This is a unique health-focused facility of

which the total team can feel justly proud,” they said.

Also unique is the piled raft design created to spread the weight of the bunkers over an increasingly wide footprint and, then together with the “normal” building loads, was progressively transferred into the ground.

The design uses more than 300 timber piles and 1000 cubic metres of stabilised hardfill.

“Such stand-alone buildings don’t just happen,” the judging panel said.

“They require a client that has vision, passion and drive, a consultant team that pushes the boundaries of design and interior ambience, and a construction team prepared to tackle things not achieved before.”

[COMMERCIALPROJECTS.CO.NZ](http://COMMERCIALPROJECTS.CO.NZ)



## A haven for relaxation and entertaining wins national award

Fifteen years of entering the House of the Year competition has resulted in another win for Lindesay Construction to add to their track record.

Their Whangarei Heads project was named the Carters New Home \$1 million - \$2 million national category winner at the Registered Master Builders 2016 House of the Year.

Lindesay Construction general manager Hamish Craig says he was very proud of his team, and the award was a great way to acknowledge their hard work.

"The whole reason we enter the competition is to show the guys that we are very proud of what they do — and it's always nice to be recognised amongst your peers for what you have achieved," he says.

Mr Craig says the quality of the finishing and unique blend of materials made the home stand out in the competition, but explained the shape of the building provided a challenge.

"The workmanship around the finishing details is exceptional, and the unique blend of materials with the weathering steel as a rainscreen over a full double-layer, torch-on membrane envelope is a concept that we haven't seen done before," he says.

"However, it wasn't an easy house to finish. Architecturally, the shape of the building created a challenge with no two roof planes being the same, and the joinery not being plumb or square.

"This introduced a very small tolerance around the interfaces, so the team did a fantastic job in the face of these difficulties."

The judges were impressed with the unique architecture of the build, and praised the home's precision building.

"The builder took on the mantles of builder, surveyor, precision engineer, boat-builder and co-ordinator of one of the most precise homes seen in the competition," they said.

"The comforting protective shell of the steel cladding is perfectly complemented by the crafted timber interiors, which are alive with a welcoming glow.

"The result is inspiring, providing the clients a haven for relaxation and entertaining."



*This Whangarei Heads project was named the Carters New Home \$1 million - \$2 million national category winner at the Registered Master Builders 2016 House of the Year.*



*From left: Jade Boyd and Byron Southgate at the Registered Master Builders 2016 House of the Year.*

Mr Craig says winning the award was a great way to reinforce the company's credibility and reputation in the industry.

"We have been entering the House of the Year competition since 2002 and have won two Supreme House of the Year awards in the past. It keeps you in the forefront of people's minds, especially those in the industry who we rely on for work," he says.

"Entering the competition and winning awards

strengthens our credibility amongst potential clients in the niche that we build."

Mr Craig praises the Registered Master Builders Association for the level of security they provide for clients, and their recognition of high levels of workmanship.

The Awards are made possible through the support of PlaceMakers, Master Build Services, GIB, Nulook, Future-Proof Building, Carters, Plumbing World, Resene and Bunnings Trade.

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## Small but perfect Palmerston North renovation wins award

After entering houses since the competition's inception 26 years ago, Phil Round of Avenue Construction was ecstatic to take out his first national award at the Registered Master Builders 2016 House of the Year.

His Palmerston North renovation was named the national category winner for the Master Build Services Renovation Award up to \$250,000.

Mr Round says winning the award was a great feeling, and acknowledged the hard work of his team.

"We were absolutely rapt. It was fantastic to see our hard work pay off and for the team to be recognised by the industry and our peers," he says.

Mr Round says the new master bedroom and bathroom were standout features of the home. However, he says a challenging aspect of any renovation is working in someone's home, around the existing features.

"We built a new master bedroom and bathroom, but as it is an old house we wanted to ensure that the new additions blended in with the original details. This means we had to be extremely considered in this renovation," he says.

"Although we replaced doors, skirtings, architraves and even the external weatherboards, there is almost no telling what's old and what's new. We are very proud of the result," he says.

Judges described the renovation and addition as "small but perfect," encompassing a seamless continuity with the existing facade.

"Innovative in detail and design, the additions establish a delightful visual link through to the private rear garden," they said.

"The upgraded bathroom has all the modern indulgences whilst being tiled in keeping with the period of the house's original construction. It is a perfect example of how the new merges effortlessly into the old."

Mr Round says winning the award was a great milestone for the company's reputation in the industry.

"We have been entering the competition since it first started so we are very happy to come away with a national win. It just proves to the public and our peers that the quality we have been working on for a long period of time is there."

Mr Round, who has been a Registered Master Builder for more than 30 years, praises the Association for the quality they promote and the access to information available to members.

The Awards are made possible through the support of PlaceMakers, Master Build Services, GIB, Nulook, Future-Proof Building, Carters, Plumbing World, Resene and Bunnings Trade.



*This Palmerston North renovation was named the national category winner for the Master Build Services Renovation Award up to \$250,000 at the Registered Master Builders 2016 House of the Year.*



*From left: Phil Round, Susan Maiava, Tavale Maiava and Dianne Round at the Registered Master Builders 2016 House of the Year.*

## Third-place apprentice inspired by promising industry future



Registered Master Builders 2016 Apprentice of the Year third placegetter Ryan Tesselaar with family members, from left; Ronnie, Julie, Nathan and Hayden Tesselaar.

Morrinsville's Ryan Tesselaar was ecstatic when he was awarded third place at the Registered Master Builders Carters 2016 Apprentice of the Year competition.

The 21-year-old, employed by Foster Construction, says he was pleased with the result, given the calibre of the apprentices he was competing against.

"Apprentice of the Year was an awesome experience. It was great to see how my skills compared to other apprentices in the industry, and it was an amazing feeling to have my employer and family there to support me as well," he says.

Ryan said a highlight of the competition was getting to meet like-minded apprentices. However, the time pressure of the practical challenge proved the most difficult part of the experience.

"Building the playhouse in such a short amount

of time was definitely a challenge, but it was reassuring to know that all 10 contestants were in the same situation. While it was nerve-racking at first, we all got along incredibly well, which made the experience even more rewarding," he says.

The judges were impressed with Ryan's consistently high results across all aspects of the competition.

"Ryan gave a fantastic interview and has proved he is more than capable on site. He is currently running a massive project," they said.

"He has a strong work ethic, and is always seeking to do his best."

Ryan explains that the promising future of the construction industry and the many opportunities for tradies inspired him to become an apprentice. He says his apprenticeship with Foster Construction contributed greatly to his third place win.

"Placing in the top three of Apprentice of the Year not only strengthens my reputation in the industry, but is also great recognition for Foster Construction. It means I get to say thanks for the three years they have trained and mentored me," he says.

Ryan encourages future apprentices thinking of entering the competition to "just go for it — you have nothing to lose and everything to gain".

Apprentices, employers and young people aspiring to be part of the construction industry are also encouraged to join the Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/registeredmasterbuilders](http://www.facebook.com/registeredmasterbuilders).

The Registered Master Builders Apprentice of the Year competition is made possible thanks to principal sponsor Carters, the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), and supporting sponsors the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and APL through their Altherm, First and Vantage brands.

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# New Zealand construction sector still playing catch-up despite new highs

## Consents at their highest level since 2004

Building consent data released recently by Statistics New Zealand shows building consents are at their highest level since 2004. However, the industry needs to readdress the way it looks at skills training if it is to meet future demand.

To the year ending December 2016, 29,970 new homes gained building consents. This is the highest number since 2004 but still well below the high of 1973 when about 40,000 new homes were consented.

Almost all regions showed good growth, particularly Manawatu/Whanganui (49%), Northland (43%), Hawke's Bay (32%), Nelson (34%) and Otago (29%).

Auckland fell just short of the 10,000 mark with 9930 consents which was a 7% increase on 2015. The only regions to have negative growth were Southland (-1%) and West Coast (-17%).

Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) chief executive Warwick Quinn says he expects this upward trend to continue in 2017.

Mr Quinn says this rate of construction is at New Zealand's long-running normal rate of 6.5 builds per 1000 people, and is a response to the record low rate of construction during the global financial crisis (GFC). In 2011 the build rate fell as low as 3.1 builds per 1000.

Mr Quinn says the number of homes that weren't built during the GFC is double the number that weren't built during all other recessions combined, and New Zealand is still playing catch-up.



BCITO chief executive Warwick Quinn

While the turnaround is welcomed, Mr Quinn says 30,000 consents per annum is the new normal based on our population, but that level does not replace the shortfall developed during the GFC.

He says New Zealand built about 45,000 fewer homes over the past 10 years compared to the previous 10, yet the population grew by about 480,000.

"It is no surprise to anyone that Auckland is the worst affected, with about four to five years of backlog based on historical build rates. Other regions have significant backlogs as well, including Bay of Plenty (3.7 years), Northland (2.7 years) and Tasman/Marlborough (2.5

years)."

Mr Quinn says while the BCITO has a record 10,000 apprentices in training, more are needed to meet building demand.

"While 10,000 apprentices is a new milestone for us it is also our new normal, and must be increased if we are to successfully fill the skills gap in construction.

"We tend to get a surge in apprentice numbers each year from about March, and it will be interesting to see if that continues in 2017.

"Most of our growth comes from those firms that traditionally have apprentices, but in order to get the increase in apprentice numbers that we need, we also need to increase the number of employers who train.

"In order to do that, we need to ensure training programmes align more closely with their business and meet employees' expectations."

The BCITO has been working closely with the Tertiary Education Commission and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in order to progress this.

At the end of 2016, the BCITO got the go-ahead to pilot an alternative skills model that is aimed at increasing the number of firms that train and attract more people into the trades.

Mr Quinn says there has never been a better time to get into construction, with a strong forward work projection and great job security.

• **Latest consent figures, page 31.**

## Forecasting conference coming up in Auckland

BIS Shrapnel is hosting the company's 14th annual New Zealand Forecasting Conference 2017 at the Stamford Plaza Hotel in Auckland on Tuesday, February 21.

At the conference, BIS Shrapnel associate director, building forecasting, Kim Hawtrey, will present a concise overview of major issues influencing construction activity, including data and forecasts across a range of sectors over several years.

He will also present analysis of the macro economic environment, and

projections of the most likely scenarios, including interest rates, inflation, government policy, demographic trends impacting underlying demand and consents for residential and non-residential building by type.

Mr Hawtrey will also analyse roads/highways, utilities, airports, water and sewerage, ports and harbours.

For more information visit [www.bis.com.au/new\\_zealand\\_conference\\_page.html](http://www.bis.com.au/new_zealand_conference_page.html).



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## Engineers support council's precautionary approach to Wellington buildings

Engineers say some Wellington buildings need targeted checks in the interests of public safety.

The claim was made as the IRD building in Wellington was evacuated recently as a precaution after an engineer's report raised safety concerns around some of the floors, months on from the 7.8 magnitude Kaikoura earthquake.

Between 450 and 500 staff were evacuated from the building after an engineer's report came back raising concerns about one or two of the building's prefabricated concrete floors.

New Zealand Society for Earthquake Engineering president Peter Smith says after completing hundreds of rapid assessments, engineers have developed a profile of Wellington buildings that suffered the most damage in the Kaikoura earthquake, or are susceptible to a similar future event.

"The council is being proactive in requiring all buildings fitting this profile to have targeted evaluations. We fully support the measures the council is taking.

"The buildings that need targeted evaluation share key characteristics. These include being medium height and having concrete frames with precast floors," Mr Smith says.

"Other characteristics include being sited on soft soils or ridge lines, having significant damage to non-structural elements, demonstrating signs of stretch in carpet tiles or ceilings, or damage to facades.

"This quake has generated severe shaking in buildings with these characteristics, and some of these buildings have been tested beyond their design loadings."

Structural Engineering Society president Paul Campbell says engineers now understand that damage from the Kaikoura earthquake in Wellington was highly selective.

"As well as carrying out hundreds of assessments, engineers have been working hard to analyse emerging patterns of damage across Wellington buildings."

Mr Campbell says the targeted damage evaluations mandated by the council will involve reviewing structural drawings, and are likely to be invasive.

This means potentially taking up some floor coverings, stripping off selected wall linings, and inspecting ceiling spaces to look for specific patterns of damage.

"How long it takes depends on the size of the building and availability of drawings, but you would normally expect the inspection component to be completed in a day."

Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) chief executive Susan Freeman-Greene says engineers remain concerned about public safety in and around buildings categorised as earthquake-prone, given the current heightened risk of aftershocks.

"The energy of the Kaikoura earthquake wasn't focused on shorter, stiffer buildings, some of which are categorised as earthquake-prone," Ms Freeman-Greene says.

"It's important to realise that earthquake-prone buildings are likely to perform poorly in an earthquake centred closer to Wellington."

Ms Freeman-Greene says structural engineers are being brought in from outside Wellington to help meet current demand.

"IPENZ appreciates the close collaboration between the council and the engineering profession."



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# Steel industry makes quality certification compulsory

The Steel Fabricator Certification (SFC) qualification will soon be mandatory for all Steel Construction New Zealand (SCNZ) fabricator members.

Launched in 2014, SFC is an industry-led quality assurance scheme that aims to reduce risk for specifiers.

It ensures participating structural steel fabricators are capable of manufacturing product to the specified quality standard by certifying that companies have the appropriate personnel and quality management systems in place.

## Unanimous vote

Members of industry organisation SCNZ voted unanimously to introduce the compulsory requirement at its AGM in Napier in September last year.

Bob Hawley, SCNZ chair and managing director of structural steel fabricator Red Steel Ltd, says New Zealand's structural steel fabricators have shown overwhelming support for the SFC scheme and to raising industry standards.

"We are committed to providing compliant product of the highest quality for building and infrastructure projects up and down the country.

"This new resolution means that SCNZ membership will be much more than simply paying an annual fee — members will first have to qualify then ensure they maintain their standard," Mr Hawley says.

Hawkins Construction Auckland regional manager Terry Buchan says compliant product

that meets New Zealand standards is of paramount importance to the company's building and infrastructure projects.

"As a major customer to the structural steel industry, we applaud SCNZ and its members for taking this positive step to bolster the quality assurance of the fabricated steelwork produced locally," Mr Buchan says.

"It's a welcome development that will give us increased confidence in New Zealand fabricated product."

Since SFC's introduction, 23 fabricators — representing 75% of New Zealand's structural steel output — have become certified.

New members must now qualify for SFC prior to being inducted into SCNZ. Existing SCNZ members now have four years to meet the new requirement.

The SFC process involves an initial audit followed by annual reviews, so this time frame will allow the industry to prepare as there are currently 64 steel fabricator members yet to be certified.

"As with many construction materials, the current compliance regime for structural steelwork relies, for the most part, on self-inspection and self-certification," Mr Hawley says.

"This approach is dependent on the expertise, ethics and quality systems of the fabricator, and on the knowledge and expertise of engineers and welding inspectors, to assess if the steel supplied is compliant."

Significantly, the SFC scheme raises the bar by providing independent, expert certification of New Zealand fabrication companies.

Independent auditing body HERA Certification has been established to audit and certify steel fabricators to ensure they have the welding and fabrication quality management systems in place to consistently produce fully compliant steelwork.

## Important point of difference

Mr Hawley says the new resolution provides an important point of difference for locally fabricated steelwork compared with offshore competitors.

"The current boom in construction activity has seen an increased amount of imported prefabricated steelwork entering New Zealand.

However, there have been cases where it has not been easy to prove the steelwork meets the required specification, leading to expensive and time-consuming testing to demonstrate compliance. The upshot is costly project delays," Mr Hawley says.

"The SFC scheme, on the other hand, provides procurers and specifiers, such as engineers, architects, quantity surveyors and building contractors with greater certainty of product quality and significantly reduced compliance risk."

SFC helps builders to pre-qualify steel fabrication companies capable of doing the work to the required standard, Mr Hawley says. And there is less effort required on the part of the engineer and the builder to manage quality.

"An increased pool of SFC-qualified fabricators also means builders and engineers can be confident there will be plenty of choice."

## About Steel Fabricator Certification

The Steel Fabricator Certification (SFC) scheme has been developed by the Heavy Engineering Research Association (HERA) and Steel Construction New Zealand (SCNZ).

The aim of SFC is to reduce compliance risk for procurers and specifiers. It recognises fabricators who have appropriate quality management systems and personnel in place to consistently produce work of the required quality.

SFC is based on a modified version of the highly regarded European system, and incorporates the requirements of existing standards and

the Weld Quality Standard AS/NZS ISO 3834.

It recognises four construction categories, allowing engineers to specify a level of quality appropriate for the risk. Participating fabricators are certified by an independent auditing authority.

Certification is valid for five years, and includes annual surveillance audits. By September 2020, all SCNZ fabricator members will be SFC qualified.

For more information visit [www.steelfabcert.co.nz](http://www.steelfabcert.co.nz).

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# NZIOB scores AB's Hansen as keynote speaker

All Blacks coach Steve Hansen will be a keynote speaker at the New Zealand Institute of Building (NZIOB) international construction conference in Auckland in March.

Hansen, who has presided over one of the most successful periods in New Zealand rugby's history, will address the topic "Building a Winning Team: Culture Development and Talent Identification".

The "Constructing our World — People, Performance, Purpose" conference will run from March 22 to 24, and is being hosted by the NZIOB in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Building (AIB) and the Singapore Institute of Building (SIBL).

Subsequent international construction conferences will occur in Australia in 2019 and Singapore in 2021.

The conference will showcase leading edge technology, construction innovation, and practices and methods that have the potential to transform the sector and improve the built environment.

NZIOB chief executive Malcolm Fleming says the Institute is delighted that Steve Hansen has agreed to be a keynote speaker.

"Under his leadership, our national rugby team has consolidated its position as the best and most consistent rugby team in the world, and built a winning record that is beyond compare in modern professional sport," Mr Fleming says.

"The construction industry, and businesses within it, will learn a great deal from Steve Hansen on how to identify talent and to build great teams."

The success of New Zealand's national team coached by Steve Hansen has seen him recognised four times in five years as World Rugby's Coach of the Year.

He joins speakers from Australia, Hong Kong, Sweden, the UK, Singapore, South Africa and the USA, in addition to leading New Zealand industry representatives.

"We've chosen speakers who are at the forefront of a global groundswell that is rapidly changing the construction industry. Across the supply chain, construction is becoming increasingly technology-rich and innovation-focused," Mr Fleming says.

"They will share perspectives on how the next wave of construction 'best practice' could transform the sector and our built

environment.

"Like the NZIOB, the AIB and SIBL uniquely represent the entire construction sector in their home countries.



All Blacks coach Steve Hansen

"This conference is therefore an exciting opportunity for the NZIOB and our Asia Pacific partners to showcase global construction trends across the supply chain.

"Constructing our World is an exciting opportunity for the NZIOB and our Asia Pacific partners. We are aiming to provide access to global construction trends that will enable our members to innovate and build 'better, faster, cheaper', and so deliver an affordable, sustainable and quality built environment for New Zealand."

The NZIOB acknowledges the support of platinum conference sponsors GIB and AECOM.

# SPORTTODAY

Radio Sport Breakfast co-host Kent Johns has fronted up for Building Today to write for the magazine's new monthly sports section, Sport Today. Kent has been with Radio Sport since 1999, so there's not much he doesn't know about New Zealand and overseas sport.

He'll be presenting a thought-provoking column reflecting on the previous month's sporting events and controversies, and will be encouraging (winding up?) BT readers to share their views and opinions too.

So look out for Kent's first column in the March issue of Building Today!



Kent Johns  
Radio Sport Breakfast  
6am - 9am weekdays



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## BT's Back in Time

### 20 years ago:

- The failure to meet a tight annual report deadline of January 14, 1997, placed the BCITO in financial jeopardy. The government agency that allocated and distributed government funding to ITOs, the Education and Training Support Agency (ETSA), was withholding \$700,000 from the BCITO because it had not furnished its annual report by the deadline date.

Chief executive Trevor Allsebrook said while the BCITO had been aware of the report deadline, he said it was "quite unrealistic to expect a comprehensive annual report to be produced within 14 days".

"It's an extremely short time given the work involved and, of course, that two-week period also includes a sizable holiday chunk. I can only think ETSA's decision to hold back funds is either a punitive move or a suggestion that the BCITO is going down the tubes financially.

"If the former is the case, it's pathetic and shows a total lack of business acumen, because ITOs don't run a large float and, quite simply, won't have the money to operate and pay creditors.

"We're not broke, but we will be in big trouble if we don't get the money we're due," Mr Allsebrook said.

### 15 years ago:

- New Zealand's biggest brick manufacturer, Monier Brickmakers, claimed 42% of all new homes built in New Zealand during the past 12 months had brick veneer claddings, significantly clear of its nearest rival, fibre cement.

Eight years ago, in 1994, brick cladding's market share was just 25%.

However, Monier said it had recorded "an abnormally high" level of enquiry on the back of house weathertightness and rot issues.

### 10 years ago:

- A nationwide transparent and systematic system of quality assurance across the broad spectrum of the building industry which ensures that those responsible for failures are accountable was essential in the current leaky homes environment, according to the New Zealand Building Industry Federation.

Acting Federation chief executive Bruce Kohn said the alternative may well be an ongoing financial blood bath for ratepayers under the "last man standing" liability system.

"The encouraging factor is the great deal of work going on within territorial authorities, industry and departments to structure a system that provides a greater deal of assurance to home buyers," Mr Kohn said.

"It is essential that the system that emerges from these activities provides for assurance that building products and systems are fit for purpose, that appraisers, testers and builders are well qualified for the tasks they undertake, and that territorial councils, as Building Consent Authorities, and industry have a transparent and consistent system within which to operate.

### 5 years ago:

- The number of tradespeople applying to become licensed had increased markedly since the Department of Building and Housing's consumer information TV campaign, Build It Right, began in mid-January 2012.

Within days of the first advert running, the number of people requesting application packs more than tripled, with the licensing team sending out more packs in just a few days than what they would normally send in a month.

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Made straight and strong, it's suitable for a wide range of uses that include residential and commercial framing and truss systems.

The manufacturing process combines consistent strength, stiffness and stability, making it resistant to warp, twist and bow, resulting in beautifully straight walls.

Builders would traditionally take two days on average to straighten solid timber frames on a house 200sq m or of similar size. Builders using J-Frame have reduced the straightening of



*J-Frame is the perfect way to start a building project, being a great alternative to conventional solid timber framing.*

external and internal walls to less than half a day, ultimately reducing the build cost.

The A Bond used in J-Frame is proven to withstand exposure to moisture and weather, with long-term structural performance requirements.

With its dimensional accuracy, J-Frame makes for faster and easier installations, which makes it a great choice for kitchen and bathroom areas.

Cabinet and joinery installations are quick and easy, and plasterers have straight, even surfaces to work with.

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THOMSON REUTERS

## Overseas supply challenges

Recent difficulties with overseas supplies of goods and materials in the building industry (particularly building mesh and steel supplies from China) have highlighted the potential pitfalls in procuring products from outside New Zealand.

Concerns have arisen regarding the quality of imported product, risks, compliance and liabilities for contractors, builders or suppliers for damages after work has been completed.

Construction law specialist, arbitrator and commercial mediator John Walton highlights the first steps when importing and using overseas supplies.

“For any project the core concern has to be timely supplies of goods of the quality which meets the contract (and accepted building standards) for the agreed price.”

“While global trade has exploded over the past 20 years, the practicalities of procuring

performance have not changed. Best practice will always be ensuring performance, rather than pursuing legal rights after the event,” Mr Walton says.

“A vital first step is to clearly establish expectations, choose suppliers most likely to perform, and put the right protections in place.”

Mr Walton will be addressing the challenges of overseas supplies during the Building and Construction Law Conference on March 22, organised by Thomson Reuters.

The conference will also address a number of other topics, including the new earthquake-prone building regulations, the changes to the Construction Contracts Amendments Act, legal challenges from overseas steel and wiring supply, and the interface between the RMA and the Building Act.

For more information visit [www.thomsonreuters.co.nz/events](http://www.thomsonreuters.co.nz/events).

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# Building a single, unified information resource

## How connectivity will drive the quality of our built environment

It's becoming apparent that to compete we all need to work smarter. Our goal must be to build "right first time", compliant with Building Codes and Standards, with fewer change requests, efficient and safe work practices, and create buildings that meet society's needs.

Achieving this has been difficult due to our traditional "silo" approach — the client briefs the designer, the designer creates the vision and the plans, the builder or construction company interpret those plans as best they can, and the project is handed over to the owner to maintain over its lifetime.

Unfortunately our industry sometimes struggles with connecting all these dots.

### One document to rule them all?

The specification, in conjunction with the

plans, is intended to address many of these challenges, yet remains, in many instances, under-utilised — often regarded as just a necessary evil to gain compliance.

The project specification also operates in its own silo — physically separate from the drawings and related documents, and relying solely on physical intervention to remain updated and relevant.

Construction Information Limited (CIL) is industry-owned by the Registered Master Builders Association and the New Zealand Institute of Architects, and publishes the Masterspec specification system.

They have now accepted the challenge to develop an online system to connect and co-ordinate all documentation into a single, unified information resource.

Beginning in 2014, first with the beta version

and then the current version of Masterspec's NextGen2 online platform, specification writing moved into "the cloud".

This allowed specification writers to collaborate, working on the same specification at the same time.

The specification sections themselves are continually updated to meet the latest Codes, Standards and industry Codes of Practice. The system also includes branded sections containing product information to help specify selected products more accurately.

The Masterspec system intuitively draws products from the miproducts National Product Database, delivering links to manufacturer data in real time to the Masterspec workspace while the specification is being prepared.

"The Masterspec system supports the sharing

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of digital construction information,” CIL chief executive Rolf Huber says, “and as that information grows in complexity, Masterspec will be further developed to achieve that interactivity”.

### Connecting specifications with drawings

Next in the drive to greater connectivity is Masterspec’s new MasterKey product. MasterKey connects to a Masterspec online specification project document, confirms all the product selections and descriptions, and interacts with ArchiCAD and Revit to use the data to create matching keynotes within the drawing set.

### I thought this was BIM?

Building Information Modelling is yet to be fully accepted by the industry, although some progress is being made and implementation is starting to occur with larger projects.

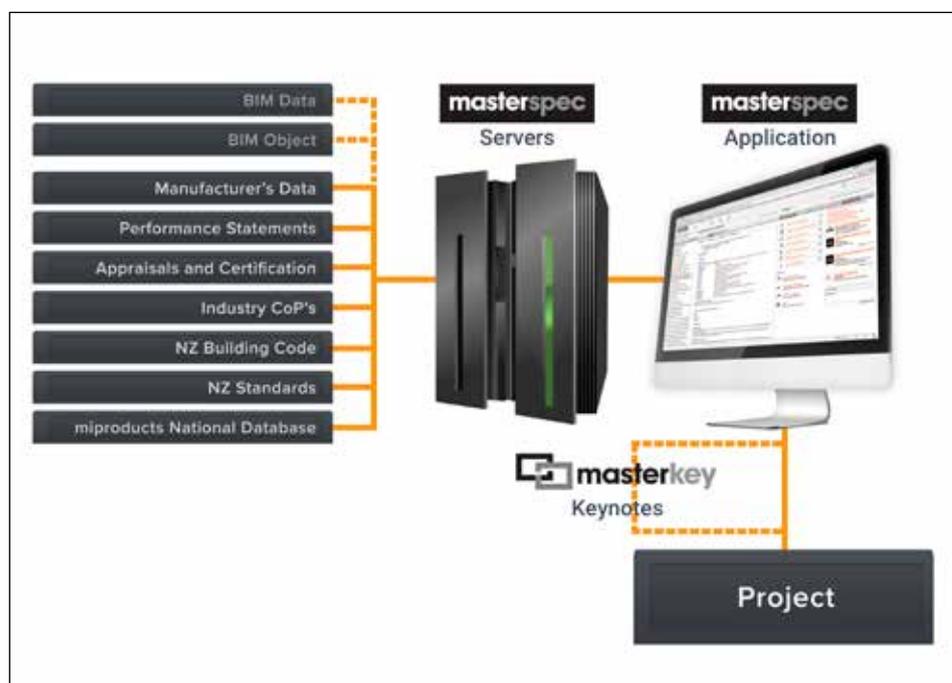
“New Zealand is now moving beyond the first steps stage,” Mr Huber says, “with real interest being shown in the construction industry. However, BIM itself is still being developed from a concept and set of rules to an industry-wide technology.”

So while BIM is part of the future of how we will design, build and maintain, if it remains a stand-alone system it will be just another silo.

Imagine that it interacts exactly as it should with the products around it. And that every product on every page of the drawings and specifications worked in exactly this way.

“When we were designing the new Masterspec platform we knew right from the start that connectivity was going to be key — that updates in one area needed to be updated across the project, that new sources of information would need to be stored, sourced, linked and be able to interact with each other,” Mr Huber says.

“The Masterspec platform has been designed by the industry to facilitate that connectivity, and we will continue to develop and adapt our system to meet industry needs and work practices.”



Masterspec’s servers connect to many data sources to provide a “one-stop data delivery service” to those using the Masterspec specification system.

MasterKey continuously monitors the Masterspec specification. If or when a specification product choice is changed or updated, MasterKey signals that a keynote needs updating.

On accepting the change, the keynotes will be updated throughout the entire drawing set.

Patrick Clifford, director of Architectus and chairman of the CIL Board, says this is the beginning of quite a fundamental change — convergence.

“Before there was a clear separation of text and drawings — these can now be communicated in the same form.

“The user response has been incredibly positive — it is intuitive.

“They’ve done very well in bringing complex user requirements into the application.”

It needs to connect to, and interact with, all other data in the project to be truly effective and deliver on the promised gains.

### Connectivity — driving the quality of the built environment

The Masterspec team believes that connecting all these data sources in a live, accessible online environment is key to delivering performance gains within the industry, and enhancing the way we live and interact with our environment.

Imagine a project where exactly what is envisaged is designed and specified, is purchased and delivered to site exactly when and where it is needed, fits exactly where it’s supposed to, and comes with exactly the right installation instructions and performance characteristics.

### Connected digital data

To remain relevant, everyone in the construction industry must be developing strategies to adopt connected digital data systems and practices within their field.

Take your specifications into the digital world. If you are still hand writing your specifications or, worse, copying an old Microsoft Word specification, you are putting yourself, your clients and your business at risk.

Not only are councils and BCAs insisting on project-specific specifications, the specification must refer to the correct Codes and Standards at the time of writing the specification.

When looking at any digital system consider carefully its ability to connect and interact with the other systems you are using.

Train yourself and your staff to get the most out of the technology, and keep it digital.

On site, have the drawings and specifications on your laptop or tablet. By noting the drawing keynote reference and clicking on the matching work section in the specification index, the PDF will jump to exactly the right work section — there’s no searching required.

Masterspec has further connectivity innovations in the pipeline, and is actively working with ArchiCAD, Revit and international partner organisations to ensure data interactivity is maintained and developed.

You and your industry association need to have a policy and be actively engaging with others to push for change.

Connectivity means clarity of communication between all information sources and industry players.

As the industry moves towards a data-based future, increasing connectivity is an essential element.

# BCITO committed to helping businesses succeed

The BCITO supports employers to provide training and employment in the construction industry in many different ways.

If you're currently training a BCITO apprentice, you're eligible to apply for a grant so that the BCITO can assist you to upskill yourself or another senior member of your team, and help your business be successful long-term.

The BCITO has 15 Employer Development Grants up to a maximum of \$3000 each (excluding GST) available for employers in 2017.

Applications opened on February 10, 2017, and can be made at any time, but once the 15 grants have been allocated, there's no more available until 2018.

## What are BCITO Employer Development Grants?

The BCITO wishes to give employers within the construction industry access to study programmes which will help them develop and grow their business.

As such, funding in the form of grants is now being offered to employers of current BCITO trainees.

The BCITO believes this support will help employers run successful long-term businesses, better placing them to provide ongoing investment in training and employment.

## How many grants are available and what are they worth?

Fifteen grants are available nationwide in 2017. Individual employers or employing companies can only be awarded one grant each per calendar year.

Each grant covers the cost of a course or seminar chosen by the employer, up to a maximum of \$3000 excluding GST.

## Who is eligible to apply?

Any employer of a current BCITO trainee may apply. This also includes supervisors and managers of an employing company. Employers must have a current apprentice at the time of application and at the time the grant is claimed.

## What can the grants be used for?

Employers can select any training or development assistance which best suits their personal or business development needs. Some examples include:

- BCITO higher level qualifications such as the New Zealand Certificate in Construction - Supervisor, or Diploma in Construction Management.
- Consultation with a business advisor.
- Short courses or seminars on small business management, estimating or contract management.
- Higher level business-related qualifications.

## When should applications be made?

Applications can be made at any time. However, once 15 grants have been awarded in a calendar year, further applicants will need to reapply the following year.

You can check the number of grants still available at any time before applying by calling 0800 4 BCITO or visiting [www.bcito.org.nz](http://www.bcito.org.nz).

## What do past recipients say about this opportunity?

"Using a business mentor service has helped me triple my turnover and business size during the past three to four years, and the BCITO helped me out with this expense last year.

If you're a tradesman with no real business background, the BCITO Employer Development Grant is of great assistance if you want to take a step in the right direction and improve your business skills and systems."

Craig Coogan, Craig Coogan Builder Ltd, Whangarei

"In 2016 the BCITO Employer Development Grant helped me complete the remaining credits for the National Diploma in Quantity Surveying. I find my contract administration skills becoming more and more important with every job we do, and this training has helped immensely.

I recommend anyone in a supervisory position or running a business apply for this grant."

George Pringle, G D Pringle Builders Ltd, Cambridge.

## How do you apply for a BCITO Employer Development Grant?

To apply, visit [www.bcito.org.nz/edgrants](http://www.bcito.org.nz/edgrants) to download and complete the application form.

## TRAINING = PROFIT



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# Get Set

## Architect Don Bunting sets out his personal wish list for 2017.

**F**act: The word with most entries in the Oxford Dictionary is “set” — a word able to be used as a noun, adjective or verb, as well as part of colloquial expressions like set off and get set.

And Get Set seemed an appropriate title for my first blog of 2017, particularly after so many breathtaking changes and dramatic events during 2016, including being the only country to change its flag to the same flag.

An old Chinese curse says: May you live in interesting times — referring to the inevitable upheaval arising from change, be it personal, political, positive or negative.

Our industry has had to cope with fallout from recent natural disasters, as well as the public’s lack of confidence in political answers to issues of the day, be they climate change, housing costs or financial meltdowns.

New Zealand seems incapable of providing a quick and meaningful response to something as basic as building enough houses — in particular, houses people can afford.

Our government’s and our industry’s response to recent natural and created disasters — such as the weathertightness issue — has also been less than stellar.

I’ll therefore give a personal list of possible improvements for our industry in 2017 and beyond. Some may be tongue in cheek. Or are they?

### 1 Discard all acceptable solutions to the Building Code

Acceptable solutions are “cookbook” answers to minimum levels of compliance with the building code’s performance statements.

It was never the intention of the Building Industry Commission that “deemed to comply” documents be used by professional designers or builders. But they are now used by most designers, with the downstream effect that minimum standards have become the only standard. We should be aiming higher.

This is illustrated by the serious downside of expensive but non-life-threatening damage to buildings during recent earthquakes. And whatever happened to lifecycle costings?

### 2 Acceptable principles

Prior to the concerns raised about rotting

timber frames and defective claddings in the early 2000s, the then Building Industry Authority was investigating how best to review the acceptable solution for claddings.

A number of reports were prepared on replacing the fixed “cookbook”-type approach and introducing a series of acceptable principles — for example, how to manufacture and install a window, or how to install various cladding types.

Manufacturers would then be encouraged to produce their own “branded acceptable solutions” to match the principles set out in the code documents.

This still seems a better approach, but the initial panicked response to the weathertightness issue left the idea on a dusty top shelf.

In 2006, the then Department of Building and Housing produced a guide document entitled “Principles of Weathertightness”, so the idea was not completely forgotten. Might be worth another look.

### 3 A single, central, building consent authority

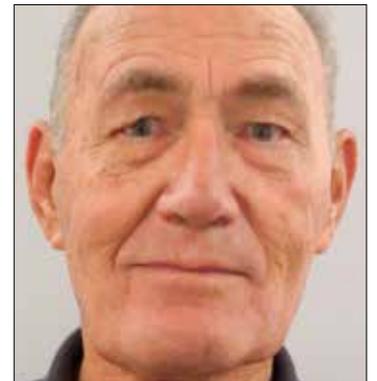
This has been talked about in recent years, particularly as a way of introducing online consenting, greater use of technology in the approvals process and being able to direct challenging designs to more technically astute BCAs. It never happened, and now seems to be firmly in the too hard basket.

### 4 A national database of code-compliant materials, products and systems

Almost every month there is another example of substandard building products or problems of products in use. Under-strength concrete, defective reinforcing and structural steel, glass with false standards markings, defective plumbing pipe work.

Having a national database of code-compliant materials, products and systems seems a no-brainer. This is especially true as the acceptable solutions do not mention or cover branded products.

Come on industry organisations — BRANZ, NZIA, IPENZ, RMBA, etc — it is in your best interests to insist — yes insist — that the Ministry step up to the mark on this critical issue.



A national database would also provide a resource for building owners on matters such as ongoing maintenance requirements, or appropriate end of life product replacement.

### 5 A dedicated construction ministry

I think there is a Minister of Building and Construction and I think there is even a government architect and government engineer hidden away somewhere in the MBIE — probably in the same small office they now hide Standards New Zealand and Housing New Zealand.

Sadly, we lost the real value of having a Ministry of Works a long time ago. But surely the industry is big and important enough, and the issues are important enough, not to be tucked away behind something called a Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

### 6 A serious engagement with Building Information Modelling

We are now well behind countries of similar size such as Norway and Finland on this technology, technology that has been around for more than 25 years.

The advantages in terms of reduced cost and increased quality are huge, but without serious engagement by government — and I concede there is some engagement — those practitioners and builders already using BIM are left at the “bleeding edge,” needing, but not receiving, legislative support. It’s. Just. All. Too. Slow.

### 6 A ban on the use of the phrase “the build”

The Oxford Dictionary allows the use of “build” as a noun, but not in the manner first promoted by Kevin McCloud on the TV programme *Grand Designs*.

It is now seriously overused in any conversation about construction or design. It may or may not be grammatically correct, but it is certainly annoyingly overused and pretentious. Please stop!

# Building boom — a bonanza or potential

*Building Today* columnist and industry stalwart Mike Fox outlines a few important steps to help builders avoid financial ruin during the industry boom times.

It is often naively said that builders make a fortune in the boom times. If that's the case, why is it that so many builders go broke when building activity is at its highest level for years, especially in the Canterbury and Auckland regions?

So be warned, because other regions are now entering this territory, with the highest consent numbers ever predicted on the horizon for the next few years.

The answer is not simple, but with hindsight it is clear and consistent. Builders find it easy to make sales in boom times. The problems come when they set about trying to complete their projects, only to find themselves fiercely competing for sub-trades and labour that are in short demand, and who will now not honour their original quotes or rates.

The builder is then faced with trying to find alternative suppliers and sub-trades — often of lesser quality — to work within their original budget.

Finding alternatives can be difficult — in fact, in Auckland's overheated and fragmented market it is highly unlikely.

In boom times the builder becomes the much-squeezed meat in the sandwich between highly expectant home owners and an equally demanding set of sub-trades and suppliers who turn mercenary as they pick and choose who they wish to work for.

A Canterbury contact of mine recently confirmed to me that one accountancy firm they were dealing with had six of their building clients in liquidation.

It's a very sobering and timely warning shot for the rest of the builders around the country.

## What can be done to avoid a similar fate?

The following steps may help you to avoid financial ruin and enable you to maintain your original margins and a successful, sustainable business:

### 1 Do your homework on clients

First, do your homework on clients carefully, especially if they have built with others before or seem to be doing the rounds of the local



Mike Fox

builders.

Most clients are wonderful to work for. However, others can be a nightmare or serial confrontational junkies. Avoid them at all costs.

Remember, you are not obliged to work for anyone and are completely within your rights to decline a job. It could be the best call you make, so trust your instincts.

### 2 Set expectations correctly

Set your clients' expectations correctly from the beginning. In boom times, everything takes longer and tends to be more expensive.

Having a frank discussion about the reality of the market conditions and the impact of those on the build experience could save you from having an avoidable dispute or a disgruntled client.

### 3 Avoid fixed price contracts

Discuss the reasons for this with your client, and they should be more understanding of the idea. Failing that, in overheated markets it is your right to refuse this condition or, at the

very least, cap the amount of your risk.

### 4 Don't get locked into unrealistic delivery time frames with liquidated damages clauses

Let someone else get beaten up busting a gut to meet unrealistic time frames, only to get financially penalised for falling short in market conditions that are outside your control.

### 5 Allow sufficient contingency

Allow a contingency over and above the normal to cover unforeseen budget overruns. Many builders are reporting extraordinary cost slippage, due to increasing costs as high as \$8000 to \$15,000 per standard house.

### 6 Deal with reputable sub-trades and have them fix their prices and contracts

Have sub-trades fix their prices and contracts prior to your commitment to the client. This is easier said than done, but your very survival may depend upon it.

### 7 Keep your payment terms current

Falling for the lure of extended credit or using your suppliers and sub-trades as an unofficial and unwilling overdraft facility are often fatal mistakes.

The builder who operates in this area plays a foolhardy game, as do the naive suppliers and sub-trades who allow it to happen.

Professional builders pay their accounts current so they can keep a watchful eye on actual cash flow, and deal with problems as they occur, not when it's too late.

### 8 Don't let clients take possession of unfinished projects

It's a mistake to let clients take possession of an unfinished project or hold a retention in their own bank account, even when faced with extenuating living circumstances.

The results of this are often that the home will be difficult to finish around the clients, and any financial retention may be contested as

# graveyard for builders?

goodwill diminishes, along with the builder's reputation being tarnished.

## 9 Manage growth carefully

Many good builders have failed when expanding their business too quickly and/or spreading themselves over too wide a geographical area.

The transition from a "hands-on builder" to managing staff and multiple sites in many locations requires a totally different skill set, strong systems and large amounts of working capital.

Get good accounting advice and produce monthly management accounts that highlight the fundamentals of your business. It can be as simple as knowing your break-even monthly turnover and cash flow projections for the next three-to-six months. Timely information enables timely decisions about resources for your business.

## 10 Have a long memory

Any sub-trade or supplier who leaves you in the lurch cannot expect favourable treatment when things tighten up. Nothing is surer than that things will change and the tables will turn. Reward those who stick by you with the loyalty they deserve — ongoing work and prompt payment.

## 11 Have a dedicated maintenance team

Having a dedicated maintenance team who are efficient, reactive and

who are separate from the crews who complete the homes will enable you to keep on top of your maintenance obligations.

Failure to do this will severely affect your reputation and ability to get referral business. The number one annoyance for clients is when those small things are not taken care of after the build has been completed.

## 12 It's better to do less work at higher margins than lots of work at low margins

Doing less work at higher margins will mean the quality of your work increases, your income increases, your work level is more manageable, call backs diminish, stress will decrease and lifestyle and family time will increase.

Being the biggest builder in town will quite possibly make you the busiest, but not necessarily the most successful, wealthiest or happiest. Be driven by results, not your ego.

The unfortunate fact is that there have been many successful builders who have fallen for the trappings of unfettered growth, with disastrous results.

If you are operating in a market with overheated underlying conditions, you would be advised to think and plan carefully in order to avoid the builder's graveyard that awaits the naive or over-committed and ever-optimistic builder.

## The benefits of doing less work at higher margins

*I often remember talking to a builder who complained of being stressed by all the issues he was facing.*

*His business had grown from 40 to 80 homes per year, but he was now making less money, and had reached breaking point. I asked him about his best years, and he said it had been at the 40 house level mark.*

*My suggestion to him was why not put your prices up 5% to 10% and see what happens? Six months later I had a call to say his profitability had increased significantly, and the number of houses they were now building was closer to 50 per year.*

*They were turning over a similar amount of money, with fewer hassles and a better finished product.*

*The houses they weren't building were for very price-conscious clients who were buying on price alone.*

*We all know that clients like this are better off building with the opposition and wasting their time and resources, leaving you to concentrate on producing a good product for appreciative clients at sustainable margins.*

*Here was a builder who solved most of his problems by putting his prices up and focusing on clients who really wanted to build with him for his reputation! It seems counter-intuitive, but the proof is in the pudding.*

# Make Mum proud!

Terry Sage of Trades Coaching New Zealand says listen to Mum's planning advice and do her proud.

So here we are again — a year past, a holiday season eagerly looked forward to and gone so quick, and memories, just memories.

And what has changed? Maybe nothing needed to change? But if your life is that contented then most of us are miserably jealous.

Then there's the rest of us — happy, busy and always looking for that little something else. You know, that grass is greener over there feeling?

Not a bad feeling really — in fact, it could be said, a very healthy feeling.

How many times has somebody said to you "you have to have something to look forward to". So wanting that little more, something different, a bigger this, a new one of those — it's all good, really, it is.

Actually, think big, really big — why should you have to settle for a second hand one? Well, it's a new one with all the bling you might say.

## Dreams are good, plans are better

Dreams are good, but plans are even better, and if you get them in that order then there is no reason why the green grass won't grow on your side of the fence.

However, what I see far too many times is that



the dreams come without the plan to actually pay for them.

Yeah, you have the deposit — it was the trade-in value of the trusty old Hilux — so \$900 a month will be a piece of cake with that job you've got starting next week.

So all goes to plan for the first four months. Then an invoice doesn't get paid on time, cash flow is tight, you miss a \$900 monthly payment and the current starts flowing downwards towards a worrying whirlpool.

## Sounds grim?

It wouldn't have been so bad if only you had waited a while longer for those fancy wheels — and maybe it's time to cancel the new jetski too — and you wonder if they might return the deposit?

Sounds grim and maybe a little far-fetched? I only wish it was, but it's this time of year when the squeeze can come on financially, and also when that need for a dream surfaces as there's not a lot to look forward to for a long time.

Who am I to say no, you can't have some green grass? Of course you can — all I'm suggesting is think before you sign up, and plan for the slow times.

## Amateur prophet

You know as well as I do, this industry is notorious for its ups and downs. I know this project manager who is an amateur prophet (sort of), and he swears that the ups and downs come and go in a seven-year cycle.

If he's to be believed then here's another tip — don't sign up for that Ranger for a term longer than two and half to three years, just in case he's right this time.

Planning and budgeting, and, god forbid, having to wait for a toy — wait, this is all sounding way to grown up, which is something my dear old mum used to say — and if your mum was like mine she'd say it on a very regular basis.

But where would we be without the wise words of Mum? Another day older and deeper in debt, and nowhere near as many toys to play with.

So do the planning, and make Mum proud.

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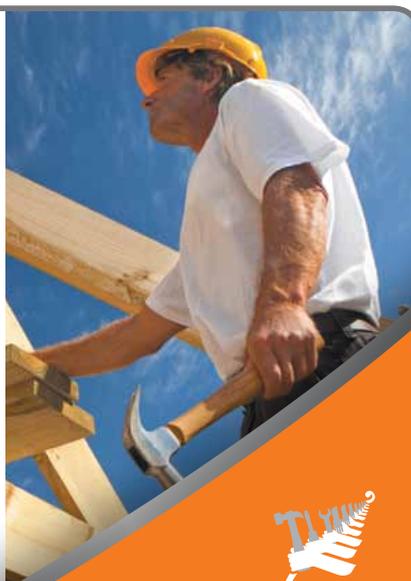
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THE BUSINESS SIDE OF CONSTRUCTION

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Carpentry apprentice: Sage bang on the nail

Just thought I would drop you a line regarding the article titled *Learn the tools — and the business* (*Building Today* October 2016).

I couldn't agree more with author Terry Sage's sentiments. I am currently a first-year carpentry apprentice and have, at the age of 41, been involved in several businesses, including the inception and successful operation of my own landscape gardening business.

I have a diploma in business management which I gained in my early 20s, and that qualification has proven to be of immense value over my working life.

I was very surprised to see no mention whatsoever of basic business skills or management skills inside the carpentry training framework.

Given the degree to which many carpenters and even some apprentices may lean towards self-employment and the vast amounts of capital at play when a project is underway,

you'd think it would be a core component in training from day one.

Surely, getting your work done accurately, on time, on budget, managing your taxes if you are self-employed and still being able to take your workmates along with you would be just as important as being able to skew nail correctly or pour good concrete, right?

I felt so convicted in my feelings on the matter that I put my thoughts forward in a recent BCITO survey of apprentices. I was particularly critical that course materials should be online as they are currently only in printed form which, to me, is unbelievable, given the internet as you and I know it is now more than 20 years old.

I also highlighted my concern over the absence of basic business and management skills in the training programme.

While it was pointed out to me in subsequent feedback through my apprenticeship co-

ordinator that some of those skills are available in the construction supervisor qualification, it was also pointed out that my feedback may result in a new module being inserted into the upcoming revamp of the carpentry training framework.

Also, I would like to tell you about Literacy Aotearoa NZ (LANZ). I have been doing some upskilling with them with the aim of getting my mathematical literacy up to a level that I am happier with.

The results have been excellent and are feeding through into my workplace and personal outcomes.

Given the challenges with literacy that the trades are facing with school leavers, perhaps your readership may be interested in learning more about LANZ in an upcoming edition of your mag.

**Steve Callagher  
Hamilton**

### Terry Sage replies:

Fifty-plus articles, and Steve you are the first to put pen to paper and comment on my rantings and ravings.

Not only comment, but actually agree with my views which, I must say, was a "phew" moment when I was told a letter was on its way to me. So a huge thanks for your words and for making the effort.

The problem we are facing, which is the lack of basic business skills taught to the trades, is not a new problem — it goes back decades, maybe back to the dawning of the Masons!

I can vouch for at least 40 years of this travesty as there was not a single lesson throughout my four-year apprenticeship that mentioned money, planning, communication or systems.

Cut here, nail there, dovetail that, mitre this — what I needed some six years later was, collect your debtors on time so you can pay your creditors and stay out of the liquidation court.

The important lessons are taught and learnt during the passage of life (unfortunately).

However, the question is what should be taught during a trade apprenticeship, and how far do we go? A full business degree or a two-hour basic course?

Of course, there will be apprentices that say they signed up to cut and nail, not formulate a cash flow forecast that integrates into a fluid business plan that systemises a comprehensive human resources strategy that allows a marketing strategy to give a return on investment.

And that's fine — the industry needs the cut

and nail gang, but it also desperately needs the Steves of this world to keep the industry ticking and keep the cut and nail gangs in things to cut and nail.

If the powers that be are reading this I think we should go as far as a two-day programme covering planning, systems, staff, marketing and financial reporting and structuring.

Show what is needed in a well-run business and point the way to further education on the subjects.

That way, all apprentices will gain a basic understanding, and the ones who are destined for the power jobs know where to go for help. Of course, the powers that be could also offer that help.

So, well done Steve for standing up for common sense and, hopefully, making a difference.

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# 1972 decision 'an oldie but a goodie' — for architects anyway!

Timothy Bates, principal of Auckland law firm Legal Vision, reviews a decision from 1972 heard in the Auckland Supreme Court (the equivalent of today's High Court) which, to the best of his knowledge, has never been overturned by subsequent case law.

This decision was “an oldie but a goodie” for architects in the case of *Miller Construction Ltd v Olsen & Another; Netten (Third Party)*, in which it was found that the architect was not liable for construction defects in a block of flats located at 59 Sarsfield Street, Herne Bay, Auckland.

The architect had contracted to design the 11 flats and supervise construction. The fixed price quoted to construct these units was a mere \$38,910.

Ultimately, the flats were constructed. However, some defects were identified by the principal, being Olsen. The key defect identified was the squeaky floorboards on the top storey.

It was alleged by Olsen that the distance between the floor joists on the upper storey exceeded the specifications, the floor joists having been laid at 20 inch centres and not 18 inch centres.

Furthermore, Olsen claimed that the manner in which the floor had been constructed on the upper level resulted in an irritating squeaky noise for the tenants below.

As a result of this defect plus some other identified defects, the architect refused to issue his final certificate which, ultimately, would have triggered Olsen's requirement to meet the final invoice rendered by the building company.

It was the building company that brought proceedings against the principal in the first instance, seeking payment of its final invoice.



In turn, Olsen issued a counterclaim which represented the estimated cost to remedy the defects and, in response, the builder issued a third party claim against the architect seeking that he indemnify it for any liability apportioned to it.

In time, the principal brought its own direct claim against the architect. It was alleged the architect was negligent in failing to supervise the construction with reasonable professional skill, or permitting the builder to construct the building in a manner that was not proper and workmanlike or according to appropriate standards of good building practice.

There was also a more specific allegation that the architect had failed to provide for flashings, thus allowing water to drip from the upper storey onto the doorways/windows of the flats on the lower floor.

The court ruled that it was not negligent of the architect to provide flashings in the circumstances. There was evidence that a design change was made at the request of the council which had, ultimately, resulted in this defect.

As regards the upper floor defect, Justice Henry concluded that the architect was not called upon to design more than a reasonable and functional wooden structure properly constructed with proper materials, based upon

the applicable budget.

He had done that, and the squeaky floor resulted from either poor materials or poor workmanship.

He went on to find that the architect could not be held liable for the state of the floor. Relying upon English authority, he said the architect had no responsibility to advise the builder how it was to carry out its building operations.

The architect was under no obligation to tell the builder promptly that it was building something incorrectly.

He was well within his contractual rights to draw the squeaky floorboards to the attention of the builder when Olsen discovered it near the end of the construction contract.

The architect was not in breach of his duty by failing to discover the cause of the squeaking at the time construction of the upper floor was being completed. The position may have been different had he ever passed the said work.

The function of the architect (as agent of the principal) was to make sure that, in the end when the work was completed, the principal had a building properly constructed, in accordance with the contract, plans, specifications, drawings and any supplementary instructions given by the architect.

I note the judgment remains silent on whether the said duty could have been owed to the principal, although the judgment is dismissive generally as to any claim existing as between principal and architect.

It followed that the architect was well within his rights to fail to withhold its final certificate pending the defects being remedied.

In conclusion, the architect was completely exculpated from any liability, whereas the building company was found liable to the principal for the upper floor defect.

**Note:** This article is not intended to be legal advice (nor a substitute for legal advice). No responsibility or liability is accepted by Legal Vision or *Building Today* to anyone who relies on the information contained in this article.

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# Building Consents Information

For All Authorisations, December 2016

Dwellings	\$973,023,000
Domestic Outbuildings	\$15,784,000
<b>Total Residential</b>	<b>\$988,807,000</b>
Non-residential	\$595,304,000
<b>Total All Buildings</b>	<b>\$1,584,111,000</b>
Non-building Construction	\$27,931,000
<b>Total Authorisations</b>	<b>\$1,612,042,000</b>

## Number of new dwellings consented

	Dec 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2015		Dec 2016	Nov 2016	Dec 2015
Far North District	26	36	19	Horowhenua District	17	21	16
Whangarei District	45	70	41	Kapiti Coast District	23	23	17
Kaipara District	20	27	19	Porirua City	24	27	16
Rodney District	60	55	103	Upper Hutt City	9	17	5
North Shore/Albany Wards	198	280	299	Lower Hutt City	1	13	17
Waitakere Ward	43	84	31	Wellington City	29	24	41
Auckland Wards	279	341	350	Masteron District	7	6	3
Manukau/Howick Wards	43	154	72	Carterton District	2	7	2
Manurewa-Papakura Ward	59	116	55	South Wairarapa District	10	15	5
Franklin Ward	58	126	37	Tasman District	41	32	27
Thames-Coromandel District	28	28	29	Nelson City	22	29	10
Hauraki District	10	11	21	Marlborough District	18	18	12
Waikato District	57	49	83	Kaikoura District	1	1	2
Matamata-Piako District	9	29	14	Buller District	5	1	2
Hamilton City	76	122	107	Grey District	5	0	3
Waipa District	43	41	48	Westland District	2	1	4
Otorohanga District	3	4	5	Hurunui District	8	4	6
South Waikato District	2	5	0	Waimakariri District	53	38	44
Waitomo District	0	0	0	Christchurch City	197	249	358
Taupo District	21	25	32	Selwyn District	94	103	108
Western Bay of Plenty District	40	48	44	Ashburton District	32	18	13
Tauranga City	114	143	168	Timaru District	20	31	20
Rotorua District	10	11	16	Mackenzie District	6	13	8
Whakatane District	12	9	11	Waimate District	1	1	5
Kawerau District	0	3	0	Chatham Islands Territory	0	0	0
Opotiki District	2	3	2	Waitaki District	4	5	5
Gisborne District	5	2	10	Central Otago District	26	38	17
Wairoa District	0	0	2	Queenstown-Lakes District	79	71	62
Hastings District	15	21	25	Dunedin City	50	42	37
Napier City	10	15	18	Clutha District	3	6	2
Central Hawke's Bay District	2	0	3	Southland District	6	17	4
New Plymouth District	36	49	63	Gore District	3	22	2
Stratford District	2	1	2	Invercargill City	10	10	11
South Taranaki District	11	6	5	Area Outside TA	0	0	0
Ruapehu District	9	1	2				
Wanganui District	9	16	18	<b>Total</b>	<b>2205</b>	<b>2973</b>	<b>2538</b>
Rangitikei District	1	2	3				
Manawatu District	11	15	15				
Palmerston North City	16	24	31				
Taranaki District	2	1	4				

- Based on 2006 census areas
- Each dwelling unit in a housing project is counted separately
- Figures in these tables may differ from published statistics

Source: Statistics New Zealand

## What's On the Web?

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