



AUSTRALIAN
SOCIETY OF
BUILDING
CONSULTANTS

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A.S.B.C News

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FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the autumn edition of your newsletter.

I hope that by this time you have reviewed our new website and have checked your listing. I would appreciate any feed back.

I read with interest a report in the Herald Sun, Tuesday April 18, under a broad headline "Housing Red Tape Slashed". In the page 12 article Acting Treasurer, Mr Theo Theophanous, announced that the Government had adopted 45 of 47 recommendations of the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commissions inquiry into housing regulation. Forty five changes will have a big impact on our industry and no doubt we will notice them as they are implemented. The report claims that these changes will eventually result in a saving of \$1500 per home, mainly due to a reduction in fees.

There are two items that I consider would be of particular interest to our

members. The first is the proposed end of the monopoly of plumbers on installing metal roofs. (Or a reduction in the skill requirements for the registration of the installers)

The other item is to give builders access to dispute resolution through Building Advice and Conciliation Victoria. I understand that this is to enable them to more economically settle differences with subcontractors. A suggestion was submitted to the commission to penalise builders' customers who bypassed the Building Advice and Conciliation Victoria and took their dispute directly to VCAT.

I would remind members that the 2006 edition of the Building Code of Australia is now out in print.

I would recommend that members also acquire a copy of the HIA booklet "A guide to Kitchens and Bathrooms". This booklet would be of assistance when reporting on bathrooms and kitchens.

Robert Quick

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome everyone to the autumn edition of our newsletter.

Our web site is up and running, but have you looked at it lately? Try it if you haven't and add it into your computer under favourites' if you are using internet explorer as a browser, www.buildingconsultant.net.

Our editor, Robert Quick, is still looking for feedback and content regarding the newsletter - rquick@bigpond.net.au. The more input we all have the better it will get.

Where is the Australian Society of Building Consultants heading in the future? A letter will be coming out to all the members and I would like each of you

to respond to it please. Input from you is very important and crucial for our future direction.

The committee is currently meeting to discuss the final draft wording of the next edition of the Building Commission's 'Guide to Standards and Tolerances'. We will provide feedback to the Building Commission as to our view of the content of the document and whether the Society wishes to have our name acknowledged as part of the group having input into the document. The document is due for release in July 2006 by the Building Commission.

Don't forget to make use of our committee members to provide feedback to the committee.

Regards Charles

MBAV NEWS

Victoria's peak building industry body have welcomed a State Government decision that would allow Victorians to choose timber flooring in new homes for at least the next 12 months. Laws introduced in 2004 made it almost impossible for new homes to achieve the State Government standard of '5 star' energy efficiency when built with a traditional timber floor. The Master Builders Association of Victoria said the announcement of an extension to the exemption on 5 star energy efficiency would allow Victorian families to choose the most appropriate flooring for their new home.

THE MASONRY CODE AS 3700 – 2001

All consultants should note the words used in the Masonry Code AS 3700 – 2001, Clause 11.4.16 – Damp Proof Courses and Flashings.

"A course upon which a sheet of damp proof or flashing material is to be laid shall be flushed up with mortar over the full width, to form an even bed beneath the damp proof or flashing material, as necessary to prevent puncturing.

NOTES

1. *This should not be interpreted as requiring core holes to be filled or that the damp proof or flashing material be sandwiched in the mortar joint.*
2. *This requirement is not intended to prevent the use of joint finishes such as ironed or raked joints.*

Where joints in the sheet cannot be avoided, the material shall be lapped or sealed against moisture penetration. The length of lapping shall be not less than the thickness of the leaf upon which the sheet is laid. Joints shall not be located at weepholes.

Damp proofing and flashing materials shall not be breached or punctured during construction, except

that they may be pierced where steel starter bars penetrate the damp proof course or flashing.

Sheet damp proof materials shall be built in to project from both faces of the wall. On completion of the construction, the projections shall be either cut off flush with the face of the wall or turned down.

Flashings, including over flashings, shall be built in with projections that are of sufficient size and orientation to direct the moisture from the masonry in the required manner.

Any render finish subsequently applied to the surface shall not be allowed to bridge a damp proof course or make ineffective any other moisture protection measures."

Of particular interest are the last three paragraphs which state that certain matters "shall" be done including the damp proof course shall be built in to project from both faces of the wall. Also, a point that John Coghlan and myself have been pushing for some years is that any render finish shall not be allowed to bridge a damp proof course or make ineffective other moisture protection measures.

Perry Setford

BUILDING TRADE AVAILABILITY STUCK IN THE RED

Despite a slowdown in the leading indicators of housing activity, the availability of key home building and renovation trades remains stuck in the red.

Figures released from the HIA-Austral Bricks Trades Report showed that after some easing in the lead up to Christmas, the squeeze on trade prices and availability has returned with prices up 0.5 per cent and availability falling.

The highest price rises over the quarter were in the trades of painting (up 8.6 per cent), carpentry (up 7.4 per cent), site preparation (up 4.9 per cent) and plastering (up 3.9 per cent). Some trades prices however did fall over the quarter, notably ceramic tilers (down 2.7 per cent), plumbers (down 1.9 per cent), and bricklayers (down 0.7 per cent).

Australia's peak building industry body, HIA, said that the forecast of a modest but consistent improvement in price and availability of building trades over 2006, is unlikely to be realised.

HIA's Executive Director of Housing and Economics, Mr Simon Tennent said that there is still a considerable amount of overhang from earlier in the decade with recent figures showing that the value of residential activity approved by councils but yet to be done re-

mains at a near record \$14.1 billion.

"It is some consolation that annual price growth for building trades has slowed to around 2 per cent and official measures of building trade availability such as the Department of Employment and Workplaces Relations Skilled Vacancy Survey show some easing in job advertisements earlier this year," Mr Tennent said.

"There are however some deep seated challenges ahead for the building industry which without the injection of more apprentices and skilled migrants, will see another round of building cost pressures emerge later in the decade," he added.

"For apprentices, this injection of new skills can only come from a major overhaul of the training network, underlining the importance of the recent Council of Australian Government's announcements of reforms to competency based training, mutual recognition arrangements for skills and licensing, and changes to apprenticeships."

"The streamlined offshore skills assessment is also welcome news for those looking overseas to fill the gaps while the addition of 6 housing and construction trades to the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL) will also be of significant benefit," Mr Tennent said.



Vice President Perry Setford addresses the February Dinner Meeting.



Members at the February Dinner Meeting.

DAVID WILSON'S HISTORY CONTINUATION FROM MARCH NEWSLETTER

Education in the 1970s

Apprentice training during this period was altered to include an option of block release for students. Prior to this apprentices attended one day a week in their first three years and one day and an evening every fortnight in their fourth years or variances thereof.

The light timber framing code was introduced to accommodate some builder's exploits. I continued with my night school studies, 2 nights a week, and total 8 hours a week. And we sat External exams, on one occasion I had to sit a supplementary exam.

The module system of teaching was introduced for apprentices during this period, a self paced form of learning. While the content changed little, external exams were replaced with module tests. Previously, a year's course of studies had to be retained as questions on external exams could relate to any topic contained in the syllabus. The module system allowed for tests each 4 weeks and the retention of subject matter became less arduous. Trade school training was reduced to three years.

During 1978 I was selected and employed by the RMIT School Council as a trade teacher. It must be related that when a group of trade teachers get together a difference of opinion on matters pertaining to method of instruction is likely. At RMIT a policy had developed over many years to ensure continuity of subject matter was taught. Calculators were not to be used to quantify materials until the early 1980s. The theory of roofing could be taught by various methods, this included the use of the steel square or the use of the little red roof book to establish rafter lengths and rafter cuts etc. At RMIT the steel square method was the determined method. All other methods were ignored as they were said to be deficient in some area or another.

In the lunchroom often instructors would discuss the merits of hip and valley development, what the shortenings were for hips and valleys and where the added height above the pitch line was to be taken.

"Does that added height allow for tile battens or not?",

"Is the ridge to project above the rafter line to ensure the roof line contains no deflection?".

In the same way roofing theory, development of hip and valley, flying hip, unequal pitched roof hip and valley development were taught by the use of geome-

try. This was then related to the steel square for practical development. Hip shortening (half mitre thickness full squared thickness)

Valleys shortening (half mitre thickness half square thickness)

It became apparent to me that some friction existed between the various education providers. On one side was the education department controlled technical schools, on the other, the colleges of advanced education who selected their own staff from the work force specifically for the skill and experiences they had gained.

As a trade instructor I was required to undertake a course of technical teacher training. I enrolled at Hawthorn Institute of Education in a group called TAFE non departmental. Later I established that the other trainee teachers in other classes were education department appointed technical secondary teachers. Two years full time training was involved, three days a week at teachers college, with two days and often nights at RMIT fulfilling a teaching commitment. While I taught night classes I also enrolled as a student undertaking many various subjects. Those two years were difficult as the majority of my teaching was to mature age night students undertaking building related studies.

Students undertook these studies to advance their career, "they were not time wasters", they sought to achieve results, and they would not pursue this form of study unless they identified the value of their achievements.

Had the class numbers dropped, simply I would have been without a job. So their interest and their participation had to be maintained, their knowledge was tested by externally set exams. Many of these students later became building inspectors/ building surveyors.

Another class I was given was building diploma, building practice, this involved full time students undertaking practical studies in concrete technology, timber technology, building surveying as a practical extension of building construction 1A,1B..

Technical Education in the 1980s

Employers largely appeared to embrace block release apprentice training however some small operatives resisted the block release initiative, as they required the apprentice to fulfil a function on a regular basis.

I continued undertaking as many further studies, as time would allow. Industry group schemes were introduced during this period for apprentice training.

In 1980 Industry and education representatives requested I participate in building matters including dispute resolution activities via Technisearch.

Enter the Building Control Act 1981

Teaching strategies altered as changes in curriculum took place, full size training replaced some models that had previously been constructed to a tenth scale in the workshop. RMIT had a relationship with AV Jennings, students would be transported to site and they would undertake a stage of construction under supervision on a spec home that was under construction. The Timber framing Manual was introduced.

After completing my technical trade instructor's certificate I found a new teaching qualification has been developed so I commenced the long haul upgrading to Diploma of Technical Teaching. This was completed in 1983.

For 20 years RMIT had offered apprenticeship night classes for mature age building operatives that worked in the industry but had no formal qualifications. This was both a rewarding and successful initiative. Other education providers frowned on this however it appeared RMIT was the only college to obtain funding for this initiative.

Out with the UBRs and enter the Victorian Building Regulations 1983. Holmesglen College (formally Caulfield Tech) commenced offering building studies, Box Hill and Footscray also received new full sized training facilities to complement their other building studies initiatives.

An industry based full time middle level building program was proposed and the Department of Building Technology at RMIT undertook to develop this initiative with the aid of the building industry. At this time (1985) the building diploma was upgraded to degree status.

The President of the Institute of Building (Peter Cockram) identified this would be the minimum qualification accepted for registered builder status.

The Certificate of Technology Advanced Building Con-

struction was piloted at RMIT in 1985. I can recall we received over 300 applications, we offered 20 positions. (15 students that had completed year twelve were selected, the rest were mature age / trades personnel.)

The industry based course requirements included a great deal of off campus studies. Students were transported to manufacturing plants and building sites on a one day a week basis. Builders, councils and manufacturers all embraced this method of instruction as they saw it was relevant to the industries needs.

The syllabus, broken down into subject topics were adjusted to allow for the common subject study i.e.

SUBJECT TOPIC

Building Practice: topic concrete
Materials and Services: concrete technology
Building Construction 1: concrete slab on ground, strip footings etc
Building Quantities: concrete quantities.
Report Writing: report on concrete site visits.

In 1983 I became coordinator of building practice subjects and also looked after a full size training facility at Altona for the faculty of engineering at RMIT. In 1987 it was decided RMIT (formally the Working Men's College) would suspend apprentice training after 100 years servicing the community.

As a result of the successful trailing of the COT Advanced Building Construction it was resolved by industry that middle level TAFE would universally offer this course state wide. Further these TAFE colleges would self assess the learning objectives.

Our department reluctantly provided other TAFE providers with the syllabus content and methods we had developed. This was not accepted well as other TAFE providers identified they didn't have the facilities or the expertise, hence it later transpired that much of the hard work done at RMIT was to some extent devalued by other education operatives and providers.

RMIT responded by continuing with the high standards, by the late 1980s it became apparent that other TAFE providers were not achieving the predetermined objectives, thus pressure was applied by TAFE to equalise outcomes.

A central register for all TAFE students' enrolments was implemented across the TAFE network. RMIT who had previously selected their own preferred candidates would now be forced to accept only what students they were given.

BUILDING MATERIALS: Concrete Cast in a New Light

By Tony Kaye

Aerated wall panels promise cheaper, faster building and better insulation than conventional precast concrete.

A new process for making strong but very light concrete wall panels is expected to usher in a new generation of construction materials. Researchers working in a collaborative venture between CSIRO and Melbourne-based CMR Energy Technologies have developed a process for making cellular aerated-concrete wall panels that are as strong as standard concrete but far lighter, and that also boast improved durability, thermal insulation and cost savings.



HySSIL would enable builders to reach lock-up in about half the time for brick veneer

Licensed under the name HySSIL (High-Strength, Structural, Insulative, Lightweight), the wall panels will be targeted at the global housing, building and construction market. The amount spent worldwide each year on the manufacture of wall products alone is estimated at US\$125 billion.

HySSIL Pty Ltd holds the worldwide, exclusive licence from the CSIRO for use of the technology for building applications.

HySSIL is considered to have a number of advantages over existing wall building products such as precast concrete, aerated autoclaved products, clay bricks and masonry blocks. The material used for the HySSIL process creates a cellular honeycomb structure inside the panel, compared with normal precast concrete that forms a solid structure using aggregate and stone.

In addition to being half the weight of traditional concrete wall panels, the structure inside the HySSIL panels makes them suitable for both load-bearing and non-load-bearing walls.

The product also has a thermal insulation rating about five times that of normal-weight concrete. It is also fire-resistant, non-porous and has a smooth, weather-resistant surface that can be used as a natural external finish, or painted or rendered.

HySSIL director Colin Knowles says talks have already been held with several large Australian manufacturers, precasters and homebuilders, and discussions have begun to secure sub-licensing agreements with companies in Australia, the US, South-East Asia, New Zealand and China.

HySSIL is undertaking a capital-raising program for up to \$4 million to complete the research and development program, including a pilot plant in Melbourne, and to develop a concentrated business development and sales and marketing program. Mr Knowles says this will take another six to nine months to complete.

The HySSIL partners have been working with CSIRO for about four years, with the initial stage of the research leading to the development of lightweight concrete panels of about four square metres. The current research is focused on producing larger panels, up to six metres by three metres.

"The technology at this stage relates to wall panels, but future research will focus on blocks and flooring systems," Mr Knowles says. "This technology has huge potential. We initially started off thinking that we could not really tackle too much in the brick-veneer housing market. But we've carried out more research and spoken to volume home builders and it's now pretty clear that we can compete with brick veneer."

Mr Knowles says the HySSIL format enables home builders to reach lock-up in about half the time of a brick-vener structure.

He says the strategy was always to develop something that was an advance on precast concrete and aerated autoclaved products, and either cheaper or at least the same cost.

"We calculate our structural product is around the same cost, installed, as precast concrete. Our lighter product for non-structural purposes can actually be cheaper than precast."

He also points out that the lower weight of HySSIL panels leads to other savings, such as reduced building foundation, structure and transport costs. Mr Knowles says the new product can be produced in any precast concrete factory with minor modifications.



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE FEBRUARY DINNER MEETING

THE TUDOR,
BOX HILL

Drew Wadsworth giving his talk on
the Changes to Building Regulations



MEETINGS 2006

The meetings of the ASBC for the year are:

June 13th Dinner Meeting---Tudor Lodge @ 6:30pm
 August 15th Dinner Meeting--- Tudor Lodge @ 6:30pm
 October 17th Dinner Meeting--- Tudor Lodge @ 6:30pm
 December Partners Night ---(TBA)

YOUR DETAILS

Have your contact details changed? If so please advise us:-

Phone: 03 9898 8760

Fax: 03 9898 4744

Email: info@asbc.asn.au

Post: ASBC, C/- P.O. Box 320, Box Hill Vic. 3128

OUR WEBSITE

www.buildingconsultant.net

SUBMISSIONS TO ASBC NEWS

If you have any articles that may be of interest to other members, they may be reprinted from other publications, or if you have the writing bug, please write about your experiences. All submissions to the Editor, Robert Quick:

Email: rquick@bigpond.net.au

Fax to: 03 9537 2339

Post to: ASBC Newsletter
 C/- Robert Quick
 307 Beaconsfield Parade
 Middle Park Vic. 3206

The deadline for submissions to be included in the next newsletter is Friday August 21st.

An elderly woman decided to prepare her will and told her preacher she had a final request. She wanted to be buried at Bunnings.

"Bunnings?" the preacher exclaimed.
 "Why Bunnings?"

"Then I'll be sure my sons visit me once a week."

MEMBER PROFILE



James Campbell, Committee Member

1. *When did you join the ASBC ?*
I joined around 1998.
2. *How long have you been a building Consultant ?*
My present consultancy business has been operating since 1997, although over my building career I have been engaged in various capacities providing advice and determinations on various building matters.
3. *What aspects do you specialise in ?*
My current business specialises in Home Warranty Insurance, defect warranty claims and insolvency inspections for a range of home warranty insurance providers.
4. *What has been the highlight of your period as a building consultant?*
The ability to operate across a number of states, joining organisations such as ASBC which opened up a new network base.
5. *What is the funniest situation that has occurred to you as a building consultant?*
There are no shortages of funny stories to tell in this industry. There was the day an elderly house owner slapped the builder a beauty knocking him off his feet!
6. *Do you believe that the building consulting industry needs improvement? If so in what way?*
I do believe the industry needs improvement. I am continually amazed at the number of building consultants, builders and lawyers who have no understanding of Domestic Warranty Insurance or implied warranties. The level of effort applied to report even the most trivial matter yet fail to detail the cause of the problems and defects identified. There seems to be a fear among consultants to tell their clients what they may not want to hear. We should never stop looking for ways to improve.
7. *What is your family situation ?*
Wife of 31 years, Linda, who is a very successful swimming teacher, two children (boy and girl), a son in law, a grandson and another one on the way. A second family in Japan that hosted my daughter in student exchange.
8. *What do you do for relaxation ?*
Relaxation, what's that?
9. *Do you have any hobbies or play any sport ?*
Hobbies include old cars, 4x4s, family, friends, photography, rock concerts.
10. *Do you have a favourite restaurant ?*
I don't have a favourite restaurant, I enjoy eating out and in particular trying new restaurants.