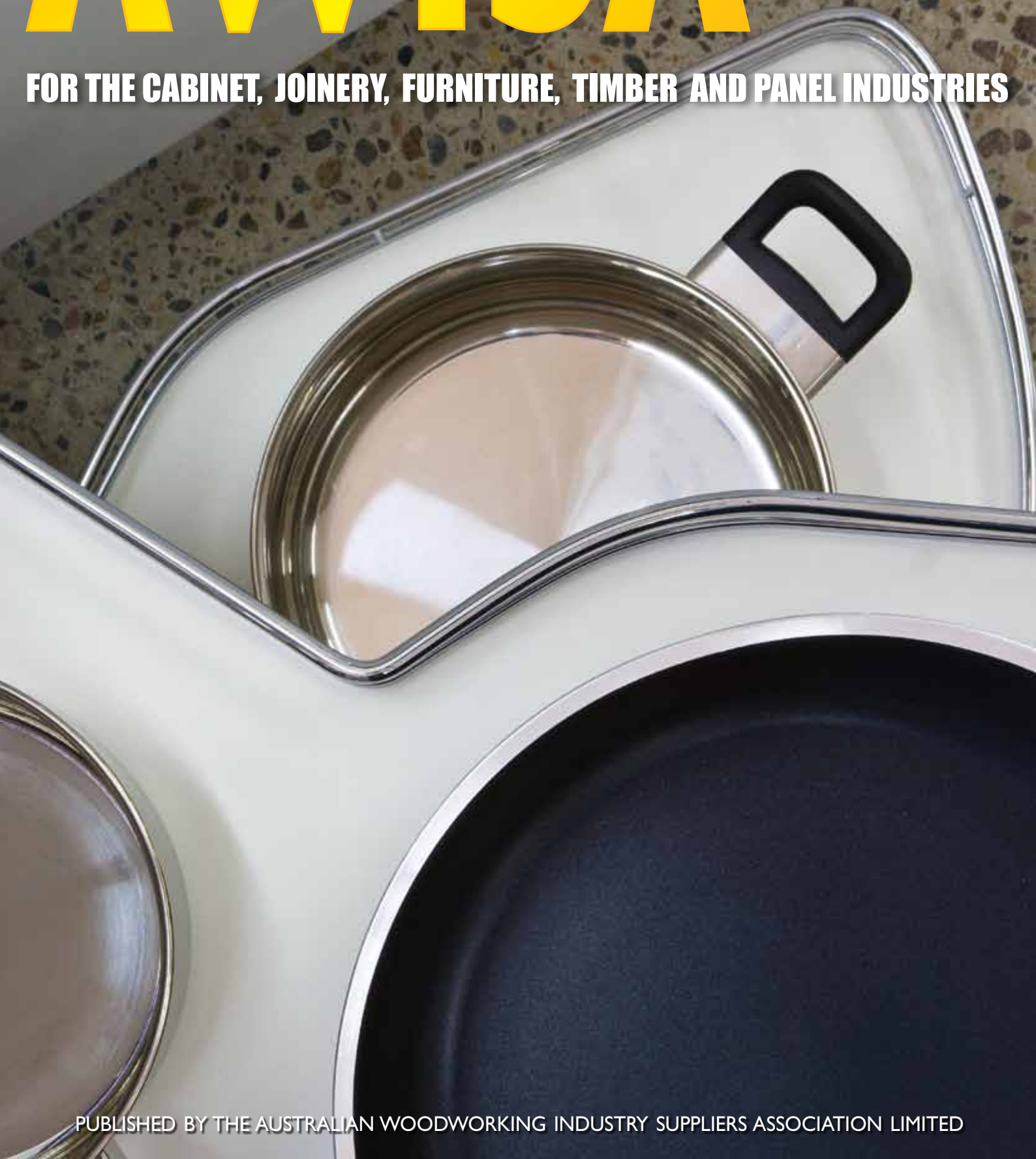


AWISA THE MAGAZINE

FOR THE CABINET, JOINERY, FURNITURE, TIMBER AND PANEL INDUSTRIES



PUBLISHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN WOODWORKING INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

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suppliers of machinery, materials, fittings,
software and services. Membership and
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AWISA THE MAGAZINE

Read **THE MAGAZINE** at www.awisa.com

DEAR READER,

Welcome to this, our tenth edition of AWISA – The Magazine. 2012 is the year that the AWISA exhibition is back to present a huge array of products and services of interest to anyone working in cabinet, joinery, furniture, timber and panel industries.

We invite you to visit the Sydney Exhibition Centre from 11-14 July this year. Some of the detail about the exhibition appears on page 7 of this magazine, but a lot more detail is published at www.awisa.com, where you can register to visit, and book accommodation and airfares.

Inserted with this edition is the entry form for the John Tiddy Memorial Award. Six apprentices or trainees from around Australia and New Zealand will win all expenses paid trips to AWISA 2012 and \$2000 towards their training expenses. We ask readers to encourage apprentices that have completed 2 years of training to enter for the award. The entry form is also available at www.awisa.com.

This edition also covers some serious issues. The Furniture Cabinets Joinery Alliance is explained on page 6, and you will read that after only a year since first discussions took place, the Alliance is making real progress. One of the many issues FCJ is attempting to address is 'the level playing field', and I encourage kitchen manufacturers to read the article by Martin Lewis of FIAA on the subject of standards. The same issue exists in other sectors of the woodworking industry.

In closing, AWISA Ltd and all AWISA exhibitors look forward to seeing you at AWISA 2012 in Sydney this July.

RICK LEE

Chairman
Australian Woodworking Industry
Suppliers Association Limited

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Plus other industry news and product news.

by John Halkett

Simon Zablotsky - grand furniture master in modern clothes



Tango soft seat
make from
huon pine and
blackwood
veneer

TRAVELLING NORTH along the F3 Motorway then hanging a right into the Lake Macquarie township of Toronto - a bit south of Newcastle in NSW - to visit master timber craftsman Simon Zablotsky is a bit like taking a journey back to the time of eighteenth century furniture makers Thomas Chippendale, George Hepplewhite, Thomas Sheraton and others, but with a modern twist.

While Simon's workshop sports up-to-the-minute, precision woodworking machinery that, for example, allows him to cut his own veneer, his one-off crafting of 'signature' pieces of furniture is reminiscent of the great European master furniture maker tradition - before the arrival of steam power and mass production techniques.

Simon's new spacious workshop and modern state-of-the-art equipment give him the capacity to produce furniture ranging from dining suites, boardroom tables to courtroom furniture fit outs.

Although fast becoming recognised as a leader of Australia's small band of fine furniture makers, his past career in engineering and industry means that he is comfortable working with a broad range of metals and composite materials.

"I like to think about my designs as being timeless, lasting for generations, maintaining value, being functional and resting comfortably in the architecture of today."

"Sensitive use of iconic timber species is something I am really passionate about and that has taken me more in the direction of a greater use of high quality veneers - much of which I produce myself."

Simon's multi-material furniture, often with electronic components built-in, is distinctive. "I like to make furniture with gadgets," he says.

This is amply demonstrated by a two-year project designing and crafting the furniture for the refurbished Federal Court in Sydney - all from a single, carefully selected Tasmanian blackwood tree.

Simon selected the tree himself and after some initial milling in Tasmania cut and dried the veneer and timber in his Toronto workshop. "The courtroom furniture design and veneer represents iconic Sydney waterside imagery, like the sandstone cliffs that jut out of the Sydney Basin. The furniture is also a celebration of wonderful Tasmanian timber."

Much of Simon's work is commissioned, one-off pieces, often for institutions like courts, city authorities

and churches. "I work very closely with clients during the design phase - thereafter it is all about quality, quality and quality. I do, however, also enjoy making household items, such as entertainment units with all the electronic bells and whistles."

Some of Simon's public art commissions can be seen decorating cities in the Hunter and Illawarra regions.

Simon has won accolades for his work and has a furniture piece in the permanent collection of the Tasmanian Design Centre.

Stepping back a bit Simon says he decided to pursue his passion for art and design and initially started a business creating sculptural metal works incorporating various timber elements. However, a growing passion to design furniture, to work with timber and an environmental awareness took him to the University of Tasmania where he studied fine furniture design and manufacturing.

"Working with timber is both challenging and extremely rewarding, but I am still excited about the possibilities of combining various metals with timber and the many design possibilities that this creates."

His industry electronics background has given him the ability to incorporate mechanical and electronic devices into his furniture concepts. In his Toronto workshop traditional fine, hand-cut detailed joinery is combined with modern CNC and laser cutting technology, often all in the same piece of furniture - a finely crafted entertainment unit with electronic television lift mechanism or an electronically operated, height adjustable church or court centrepiece lectern.

As if running a fine furniture design and manufacturing workshop wasn't challenge enough Simon also teaches wood working, but his classes are a little different.

"Really I teach fine furniture design and making skills, like steam bending, laminating and veneer making. Many of his 'students' are professional people who are also keen woodworking enthusiasts - people, like me who are passionate about the art of timber crafting and joinery and interacting with other like-minded folk in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere."

Simon's Hunter Fine Woodworking School has now been up and running for more than a year. During the year ahead he will also be running weekend master classes in sawn veneers, veneering, vacuum pressing, design and various aspects of furniture crafting. ■



“As a designer and producer in both timber and metals I am able undertake commissions of high complexity.”

Top: Refurbished Federal Court in Sydney. Furniture designed and crafted from a single Tasmanian blackwood tree.



Right: Simon Zablotsky - becoming recognised as a leader of Australia’s small band of fine furniture makers.

A pair of Simon Zablotsky signature occasional chairs made from Tasmanian blackwood.





One year on – progress with the Furniture Cabinets Joinery Alliance

ONE YEAR AGO, the formation of the Furniture Cabinets Joinery (FCJ) Alliance was announced in the pages of this magazine. A meeting was held in Sydney in February 2011 followed by another in Melbourne a few months later. The vast majority of trade associations involved in the wood, timber, furniture, joinery and cabinet industries were represented at these meetings, along with many individual major companies in these industries. The main objective of the discussions was to advance the cause of furnishing, cabinetmaking and joinery industries.

From these meetings a FCJ Council was formed with representatives from the Furnishing Industry Association of Australia, the Australian Furniture Association, the Australian Window Association, the Cabinet Makers Association of Victoria, Australian Shop and Office Fitting Industry Association, the Window and Door Industry Council and the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association.

In February 2012, the FCJ Alliance held another general meeting to

report on progress. The meeting was opened by co-chair, Ron Scott, with an overview of the industry including various industry statistics including that the gross industry value is almost \$30 billion (at prices to end-users) with an approximate direct employment of 117,000 employees. Ron listed the major issues facing the industry as:

- Flat economy compounded with the relentless flow of imports.
- Enterprises with fewer than 20 employees are an impediment to productivity.
- Management expertise in marketing, supply chain management and export development could often be improved.
- Unlike highly concentrated industries such as the motor vehicle industry it is hard for a diversified industry like FCJ to get a strong, clear government and public focus.

Ron explained that the way forward was the recognition of the FCJ Council as a primary representative body. The next priority is the urgent development and execution of a prioritised strategic plan that addresses opportunities that will deliver maximum benefits to the industry at the least cost.

Rohan Wright, co-chair of the FCJ Alliance also addressed the meeting. Rohan explained that four industry reference groups, or sub-committees, had been formed and that Peter Kreitals of Kreitals Consulting Group has been appointed as a consultant. Peter has a strong background doing similar work for industries such as the Textile, Clothing and Footwear industries.

Rohan explained that the FCJ Alliance had submitted an introductory paper to the current federal government and that talks had been held with a number of opposition frontbenchers.

The focus will be on skills and training and the dumping issue, followed by the level playing field issue. In the long term, design and innovation and

supply chain issues will be looked at. Rohan also explained Kreitals Consulting Group's involvement and that this involvement would come at a cost. Currently, costs are being shared by the seven member associations, although to see FCJ through the next election the Alliance will need further support. The Council believes there will be long term return on investment.

Peter Kreitals also addressed the meeting and reinforced the need for one voice. Obtaining outcomes requires a collective approach. The government has seen the creation of the FCJ Alliance as a positive move. Peter stressed that it is not all about government and that associations will need to play a role.

Tracey Gramlick, chair of the FCJ Level Playing Field industry reference group explained that the committee's mission is to create the conditions to maintain and grow the market share of the existing highly skilled Australian furniture, cabinetmaking and joinery industries. The key focus will be to identify regulatory processes, trade agreements and Australian compliance regimes to ensure that Australian manufacturers have a fair opportunity to compete against imports. The committee would develop a formal lobbying plan to articulate the key messages with supporting hard evidence.

Richard Abela, chair of the FCJ Skills, Training and Labour industry reference group explained that his group's critical issues were inconsistency in training programmes, the fact that the current structure does not allow progression of qualifications, skills shortage, lack of incentive for business owners to invest in training, and the need to promote careers in FCJ industries.

Readers of AWISA – The Magazine who are interested in contributing ideas or time to the FCJ Alliance are welcome to make contact with any of the trade associations listed in the second paragraph of this article. ■

Ron Scott, co-chair of the FCJ Alliance, addresses the February 2012 meeting.

Some of the attendees at the February 2012 meeting.





The AWISA exhibition on again this July, refreshed and improved

When the woodworking industry attends AWISA 2012 visitors will see a show with a different layout to previous AWISA shows. The exhibition is Australasia's international exhibition of machinery, materials, hardware and services for cabinet, joinery, furniture, timber and panel industries and takes place from 11-14 July 2012 at the Sydney Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney. For the first time the show will have machinery separated from the hardware and decorative materials exhibits.

The latter will be in a Hall 2 of the venue under the AWISA-Design banner, and the exhibits will be arranged around a central café. Panel processing machinery will be in Hall 2, and in Halls 3 and 4 will be more panel processing machinery plus solid wood and timber processing machinery.

"We are very pleased with the reaction from exhibitors to this new floor plan," said Geoff Holland, general manager of the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association Limited. "The products marketed by suppliers of hardware and decorative products have increased in sophistication over the years. Coinciding with this has been the increased importance of the design community to this sector of the show, and the creation of the AWISA-Design area will put emphasis on the exhibition's strong design component, and will make the show more attractive to architects and designers."

"And, as always, AWISA will be the place to see a huge range of woodworking machinery, from the basic though to the world's latest technologies including the best in CNC equipment," he said.

Admission and registration

AWISA 2012 is a trade-only exhibition and all visitors are asked to register. They can do so on arrival at the exhibition, but it is preferred that

they pre-register. Pre-registrations can only be done through the AWISA website, www.awisa.com. As in the past, children over 6 months of age and under 15 years of age are not admitted, but AWISA provides a professionally run children's hospitality suite with activities and entertainment to suit the various age groups.

Accommodation

Special rates have been negotiated at a number of hotels around the venue, and enquiries should be directed to the Lido Group on 1800 817 339 or 02 8585 0888 or at www.awisa.com.

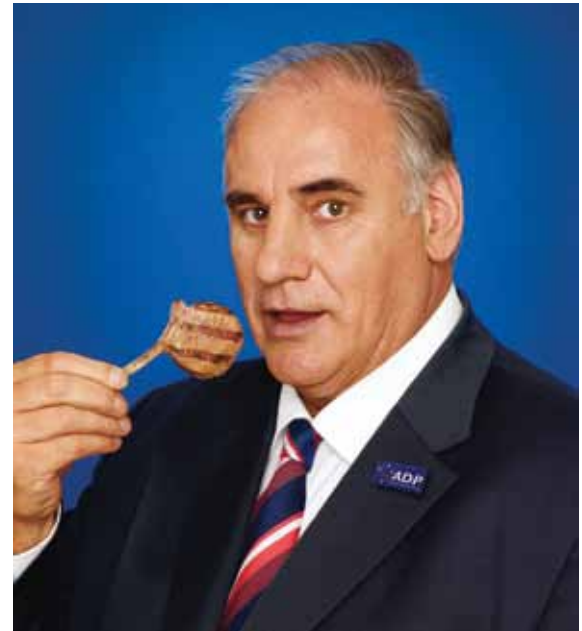
Airport shuttle buses

A fleet of 48 seat coaches will provide a complimentary shuttle service between the two domestic terminals and AWISA 2012, running every half hour from 8.00am each show day, with the last service leaving the exhibition one hour after the close of the show each day. For full details on the pick up point at the airport visit www.awisa.com. International visitors can connect to the AWISA shuttle by taking the airport shuttle to the domestic terminals.

The John Tiddy Memorial Award

AWISA established the John Tiddy Memorial Award in 2008 to commemorate the late Mr John Tiddy's contribution to the Australasian furniture and woodworking industry, and his contribution to AWISA.

The award is for six apprentices from around Australia and New Zealand to receive all-expenses paid overnight trips to AWISA 2012, plus \$2000.00 towards their training course fees. The application form was mailed with this magazine, but is also available at www.awisa.com. AWISA encourages all readers of this magazine to get any trainees or apprentices in their businesses to apply for one of these awards.

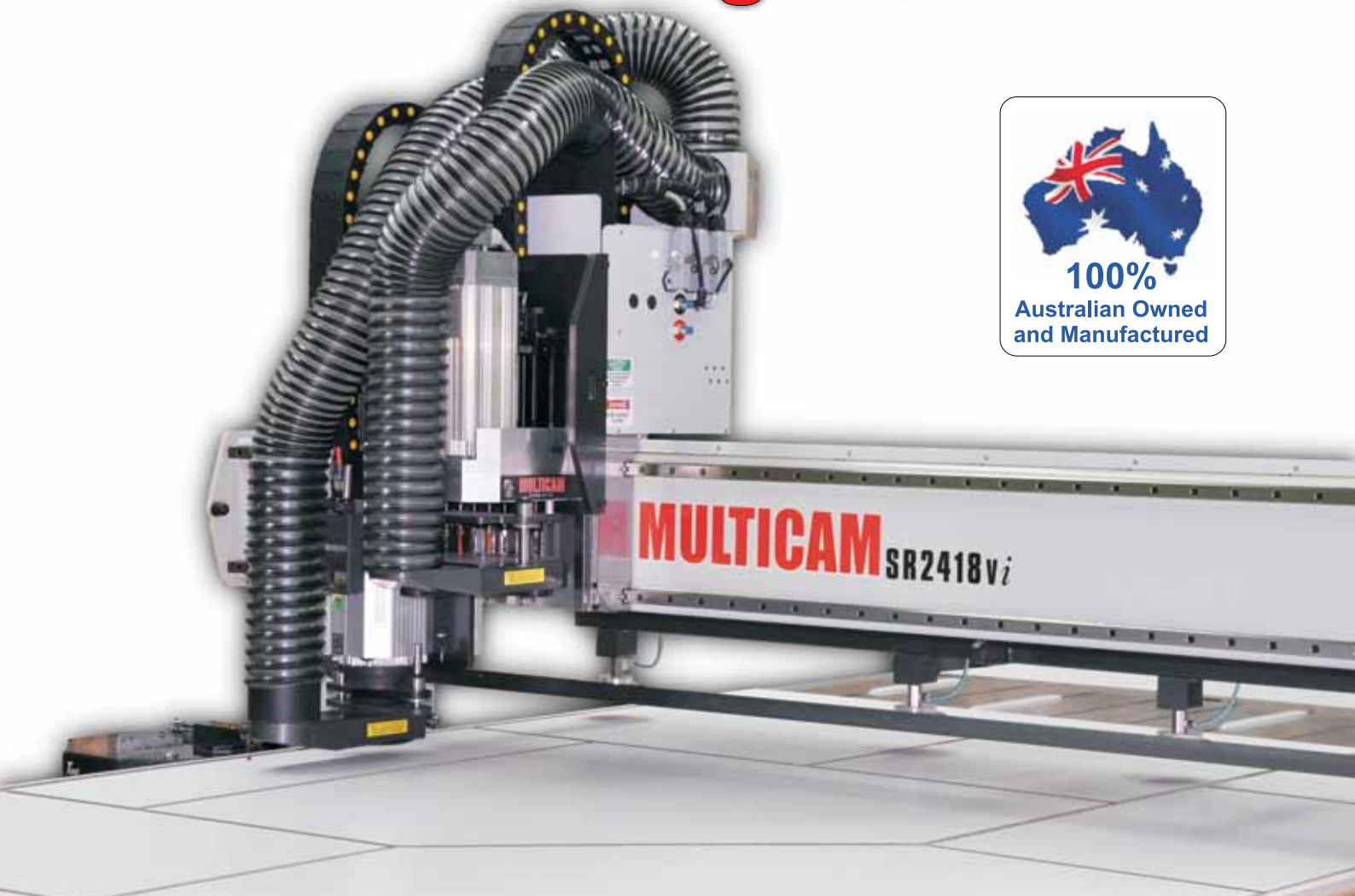


"Breakfast with Sam Kekovich"

The AWISA 2012 celebrity breakfast will take place on Friday 13 July in the Parkside Ballroom at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. "Breakfast with Sam Kekovich" will be an entertaining start to what is always AWISA's busiest day. Sam Kekovich is one of the real personalities of AFL football and since his playing days has become a media identity, most recognised as the Australian Ambassador for Meat and Livestock and is seen on multi-award winning advertisements for Australian lamb as "Sam the Lamb Man." Tickets cost \$60.00 and can only be booked online at www.awisa.com through the registration page.

For more information on all aspects of AWISA 2012, including the list of exhibitors, and to pre-register, visit www.awisa.com ■

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The Julie Burgess Project - restoring an historic sailing ship

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT about restoring a derelict historic ship? Wondered what sort of tools you might need? Ponder no more. What follows is the story of the Julie Burgess Project, an ambitious plan to restore a historic sailing ship and put her to use once again, no longer as a fishing vessel, but as a pleasure craft taking people on voyages along the Tasmanian coastline. And the most important tool for the restoration of an historic wooden vessel? Of course, a chain saw. Other major tools used were, a docking saw, drills (electric and portable), a hand held electric planer and the usual carpenters' hand tools.

Up until the early 1950's wooden sailing ships were common in Tasmanian waters. This was particularly the case in the early days of Tasmania's settlement as roads were few and most trade around the island was carried by boat. With an abundant supply of excellent boat building timber on the island, it was natural that a boat building industry to meet the demands for transport and the fishing industry was quickly established. Devonport, on the Mersey River on the central north coast of Tasmania is a city which played a big part in that history, tracing its involvement in trade and fishing back to 1835. Today Devonport is best known as the home base of the Spirit of Tasmania, the Melbourne to Devonport ferry.

Around nine years ago Devonport City Council entered into discussions with Tourism Tasmania about developing Devonport's profile as a tourist destination, not just a landing point for travellers to the island. It was suggested that Devonport could benefit from a tourist icon and in view of its maritime history the suggestion was made about finding a 'tall ship' which could then be used for short tours and as a figurehead for the city.

Great idea, but where would Devonport find its tall ship? Alderman Graham Kent told the meeting that he knew of one moored on the Mersey River, but wasn't sure that its owner would agree to sell. Even if the owner could be persuaded to sell, the cost of the vessel and its restoration was far beyond the financial resources of the council. The ship was the Julie Burgess, a vessel with a long connection to Devonport and the north west Tasmanian coast.

The Julie Burgess was a significant part of N.W. Tasmania's maritime heritage and one of many trading and fishing vessels owned by the Burgess family over several generations. Commissioned by Harry Burgess in 1936 and built by well known Launceston shipwright Ned Jack, she was a beautiful 64 foot, 17 foot beam, 65 tonne ketch rigged vessel. The Julie Burgess was originally operated as a fishing vessel, but at the outbreak of World War Two she was chartered by the Commonwealth Government to carry

out maintenance work on the undersea telephone cable between Tasmania and the mainland.

After the war, the Julie Burgess continued to operate as a cray fishing vessel with Harry Burgess as captain until his death in 1956. After Harry's death his son Dick Burgess took over the ownership and captaincy of the vessel and continued fishing until his retirement in 1987. In 1988 the Julie Burgess participated in the Tall Ships' race from Hobart to Sydney, a part of the Australian Bi-Centenary celebrations. After the Tall Ships' race the Julie Burgess returned to her mooring on the Mersey River. And there she stayed, exposed to the elements and slowly deteriorating.

An offer to purchase her was made to Dick Burgess, but he initially declined to sell. Some five years later Dick changed his mind and gave the council 12 months to raise the funds. Fortuitously someone came across the federal government's Jobs for Heritage scheme and a submission for funding was put together in just 19 days. This was a remarkable achievement, particularly because the condition of the





Julie Burgess was unclear and until she could be 'slipped' it was anyone's guess as to what she would cost to restore. Funding for the project, which included extensions to the Devonport Maritime Museum and for the construction of a pontoon wharf for the Julie Burgess (\$1.8 million in total), was approved and the restoration began just over two years ago.

Shipwright Rudy Dahms was contracted to undertake the restoration with assistance from other shipwrights, Ken Jones and Ron Heddle, together with a number of volunteers. Getting the Julie Burgess onto the slipway revealed that she was in very poor condition. Much of the timber on the vessel needed replacement, including the hull, deck, bulwarks and aft cabin. However, in as poor condition as she may have been, the restoration has made her stronger and much more seaworthy.

Around 90% of the hull planks were rotted and these were replaced with new 8 inch wide by 2 inch thick celery top pine planks. When fixing the new planking it was discovered that many of the Julie Burgess's ribs were in such poor condition





- ▶ that the fixings wouldn't hold. This problem was solved by cutting new ribs out of green celery top pine with a chain saw and fitting these next to the existing ribs. The steam bent planking was then fitted using ½ inch galvanised coach screws (installed by Pommie Dave, Chief Screwer), alternated with 4 inch bugles. The fixings were countersunk and the holes plugged with timber dowels drilled out of left over boards.

Once all the planks were fixed the hull below the waterline was painted with red lead and tar. The section above the water line was sealed with timber preserver and given several coats of marine paint. Both original stringers (longitudinal internal members that are fixed to the ribs and add stiffness to the hull) were refastened and four additional stringers were installed, providing extra strength to the hull.

Most of the deck beams and deck was rotted and was replaced entirely. Removing the deck also allowed the catch tank to be removed and four new watertight bulkheads were installed. The deck beams were obtained through an arrangement with Tasports Devonport, which had some well seasoned 12" by 12" lengths of timber which it agreed to 'swap' for similar sized pieces of green timber. These lengths were cut down to 12" by 6" (again through the use of a chain saw), dressed with an electric planer and cambered to fit the deck. The deck is made up with two layers of 19mm marine ply glued together and covered with 30mm strips of celery top pine glued to the marine ply. No fixings of any sort have been used on the deck. Expansion joints between the celery top pine have been filled with DeckFlex and sealed with several coats of a water based timber deck treatment.

As a fishing vessel, the Julie Burgess was originally built with a large tank, known as a 'wet well' amidships, into which its catch was put. The wet well was open to the ocean and kept the catch fresh. As the wet well held 16 tonnes of water plus the weight of the catch a considerable amount of ballast has been installed to compensate. A steel ballast 'shoe' filled with steel balls and concrete was fitted to the keel to strengthen it and give extra protection to the keel timbers. In addition a large amount of lead has been placed under the galley/wardroom and aft cabins.

Fortunately the original Oregon masts were able to be refitted as finding replacement lengths of Oregon would have been a costly and difficult exercise. The original mizzen mast had been broken and poorly repaired, so a new section had to be spliced in (glued and dowelled). All the rigging was replaced, but the suit of sails made for the refit prior to the 1988 Tall Ships race is still usable.

Most of the materials used in this extensive restoration have been sourced locally. Notable exceptions to this have been the screw (propeller) which came from Japan, and the three to one ratio Dong-I gear box from South Korea. The original engine a Gardner 6LX marine diesel from England, was reconditioned and up rated to a 6LXB.

With her new configuration the Julie Burgess now has a forward cabin which will sleep eight people and an aft cabin with two bunks for the crew. Removal of the catch tank has made space for a galley/saloon, toilets, machinery and water and fuel tanks.

In all the Julie Burgess was on the slipway for 21 months and was re-launched in November 2011. Currently she is undergoing an internal fit out after which she will be surveyed and undertake sea trials. If all goes according to plan the Julie Burgess will make her 'first' formal appearance at the Hobart Wooden Boat Festival in February next year. She will then return to Devonport and start earning her keep once again, no longer as a fishing vessel, but as a beautifully restored and very original ketch showing her passengers the delightful coastline of Tasmanian coastline.

The Julie Burgess will be used primarily for short two to four hour trips accommodating up to 12 passengers, but she will also be available for private charter for trips of up to 14 days. The charter trips will allow passengers to sail to iconic Tasmanian destinations such as King and Flinders Islands, Port Davey and Bathurst Harbour or down the east coast to the Bay of Fires and Freycinet. To find out more, or follow the progress of the Julie Burgess restoration simply go to www.julieburgess.com.au

The website will be updated with information about booking a charter voyage or a day trip once surveys and sea trials have been completed. ■

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by John Halkett

Victorian fire risk mapping to hit house prices



THE VICTORIAN government recently enacted the Building Amendment (Bushfire Construction) Regulations 2011. This action follows the decision of the government, after Black Saturday, to take over the role of providing the state's bushfire risk mapping.

The mapping was released the day after the new regulations came into force. The mapping exercise had been kept secret up until this date, without any advice as to the implementation arrangements or the extent of the mapping. The bad news for the building industry is that the fire risk mapping extends over nearly 85 per cent of the state, including grassland areas, so most green fields estates will be designated as "bushfire prone".

Any dwelling built on land so designated will require a minimum of Bushfire Attack Level (BAL)-12.5 construction. This minimum is made mandatory by the new regulations and exemptions under AS3959-2009 will not apply. So even if a dwelling is located in the middle of a built estate, if covered by the mapping it must comply with the BAL-12.5 rating.

The Victorian building industry fears that potentially tens of thousands of planned homes in outer Melbourne will be hit with additional BAL-12.5 compliance costs because they are wrongly considered to be in bushfire prone areas.

Housing Industry Association (HIA) state executive director Gil King says

that the boundaries include home sites that would normally not be considered a fire risk and buyers will face thousands of dollars in additional costs.

"If there is a genuine bushfire threat, we support the appropriate construction standard, but clearly the mapping hasn't been done with common sense," he says.

A Victorian Building Commission guide released after the Black Saturday fires estimated that it would cost an extra \$11,535 on a \$280,000 house to comply with the new building standard.

The chief executive of the Timber Merchants Association, Peter Roberts is taking the lead for a consortium of building industry-related organisations in an attempt to improve the situation. Peter's efforts have included meetings with HIA's Gil King and others. Gil has met with the Victorian Minister for Planning, Mathew Guy. Also represented at that meeting with the Minister were the Master Builders Association, Urban Land Institute of Australia and the Department of Sustainability and Environment.

The major concern communicated to the Minister was the assignment of 85 per cent of the state's land as bushfire prone and therefore attracting a minimum BAL-12.5 construction rating. It was pointed that Google maps had been used for the mapping exercise and some were out of date by more than five years.

As an interim measure the Minister has agreed that sites can now be re-classified on an individual basis. Effectively that means that some sites can be reassigned by the builder and surveyor from BAL-12.5 to a BAL-low rating if such action can be justified.

It is now planned to write a letters to the Minister for Planning; the Minister for Innovation, Services and Small Business, Louise Asher, and Treasurer, Kym Wells, reconfirming the building industry's concerns. The letter will be sent on behalf of a range of industry associations and will include reference to the substantial commercial impact the rezoning will have on building-related manufacturing such as window and doors and on suppliers of timber products to these manufacturers. ■

Top left: Fire risk mapping covers nearly 85 per cent of the state, so most green fields estates will be designated as "bushfire prone".

Above: Ministers to be advised of commercial impact on building-related manufacturing, such as window and doors and on suppliers of timber products to these manufacturers.

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by Geoff Bills

outlook

Managing in tough times



Geoff Bills

Geoff Bills is an independent economist with long experience analysing and forecasting economic activity in Australia.

WORLD OUTLOOK IS SHAKY

Growth in the world economy slowed from 5.2 per cent in 2010 to 3.8 per cent in 2011. With recovery from recession faltering in both the United States and the Euro area, growth in the advanced economies halved, falling from 3.2 per cent to 1.6 per cent. Growth in the developing economies slowed too, but only slightly: from 7.3 per cent to 6.2 per cent.

Throughout most of 2011, world financial markets were unsettled by fears that high levels of debt in major countries could provoke a financial crisis similar in size to that of late 2008. Those fears, and recurrent episodes of heightened financial instability, damaged business and consumer confidence and slowed growth.

Because of these developments, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in January revised downward its projections of world growth. In September 2011 it had forecast growth of 4 per cent in 2012 and 4.5 per cent in 2013. These were revised to 3.3 per cent and 3.9 per cent respectively. As average growth over the past 15 years has been 3.7 per cent, the forecasts suggest a world growth recession this year, with recovery in 2013.

Outlook in Australia

In Australia, the Reserve Bank has lowered its forecasts of both inflation and economic growth, and, in the last two months of 2011, cut the cash interest rate from 4¾ to 4¼ per cent. In February, it forecast economic growth of 3¼ per cent in 2011/12, 3-3½ per cent in 2012/13, and 3-4 per cent in 2013/14.

As Chart 1 shows, we are in basic agreement with these forecasts. Real risks remain; but despite recession in Europe, world growth is most likely to stay quite strong; and, driven by a massive mining boom, growth in Australia will accelerate to around trend levels in the years ahead.

In his Opening Statement to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics,

on 24 February, Reserve Bank Governor, Glenn Stevens, summed up the present situation well:

'Perhaps what is most noteworthy about the Australian economy is the way in which the drivers of growth have changed in recent times. The Bank has spoken at length before about the terms of trade, and the resulting resource investment boom, which is still building and which will take the share of business investment in GDP to its highest level in 50 years. We have spoken also about how, on the other side, household behaviour has changed – people are saving more and borrowing less. Spending is growing in line with income, but people are spending their money differently. The retail sector is finding it has to adapt to this changed environment. Some other industries are struggling with the high exchange rate. Meanwhile certain service sectors are growing quite smartly. Hence, while the economy overall has recorded average growth, few sectors are in fact experiencing average performance themselves – some are clearly quite weak relative to average, while some others are much stronger.'

Chart 2 says it all: while engineering construction to build mines and their infrastructure is booming, building of all kinds is going either nowhere or down.

So too, of course, is the demand for furniture and fittings needed in new and renovated homes and in new offices, shops and factories.

What to do in such tough times?

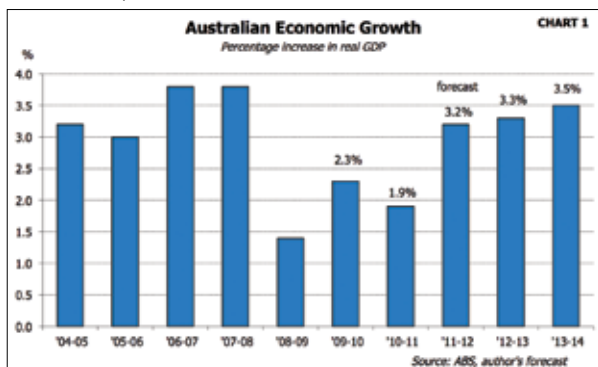
Some ideas about this were put forward three years ago by Geoff Colvin, as the United States was sinking into recession. (*See How to Manage Your Business in a Recession*, Geoff Colvin, Fortune, 19 January, 2009)

Colvin began by pointing out just how dire the outlook was for most American businesses, and the merits of acting quickly. 'It's human nature to avoid confronting bad news and to imagine that today's troubles will pass more quickly and easily than they really will. Virtually everyone Fortune spoke to recommends the opposite: assume conditions will be worse than you expect.'

He then offers ten ways to weather the storm: nearly all just as relevant in many non-mining industries in Australia today as in the United States early in 2009.

Re-set priorities

In good times, top priorities might be expanding into new markets, hiring enough people and increasing profits. To change direction suddenly may seem drastic, but it must be done. Colvin quotes Jamie Dimon, CEO of J. P. Morgan Chase, one of the few remaining strong



the building cycle has swung lower than most expected, it will surely swing up again

major banks: 'I am shocked at the number of people who are still worrying about their strategic plan for 2009. We cancelled all that stuff – all of it – meetings, travel, you name it, to focus on the fact that we're in the middle of a real crisis.'

Past assumptions about growth have to be abandoned. 'The new era requires a different mindset – we have to be more frugal, to think about every expense, every capital investment – because we won't be bailed out by growth.'

Keep investing in core strengths

Recessions end, and when they do your company needs to be more, not less competitive. The most successful companies never stop funding their most critical competencies: product innovation, customer service, or whatever they happen to be. For virtually all companies, a critical part of the core is a well-trained staff. 'Yet it's remarkable how many businesses cut training and development in a recession. The best never do.'

Communicate like crazy, balancing realism and optimism

The instinct of most executives in uncertain times is to keep quiet until they have some answers. That's the opposite to what's needed. In tough times employees are worried about their jobs, suppliers that they won't be paid, customers that quality will fall or prices rise, investors that their shares will become worthless, and communities that operations will close. Silence makes them worry more.

Good managers respond by communicating even more than usual. They needn't have all the answers, they just need to say what they are thinking and be honest about conditions. And accentuate the positive: every good company has strengths which can be emphasised.

Your customers face new problems, give them new solutions

The best performers understand their customers' businesses and can respond in sophisticated ways. 'For example, McKinsey reports that when the economy was booming, a client company that sells plastic resins developed a fast-curing resin for customers that wanted maximum productivity from their injection moulding machines. But when the economy turned down and clients no longer needed as much output from their machines, the company developed a less-expensive slower-curing resin. Customers are happy because their costs have fallen, and since the new product is cheaper to make, the company maintains its profit margins even when selling at a lower price.'

Re-evaluate people – and steal some good ones

Working hard at knowing who is performing well and who is not is essential. You may have to lay people off and must do so wisely. And if compensation needs to be cut, don't spread the pain evenly. Make sure your best performers are rewarded well, even in recession. Then scout for competitors that are

sharing the misery equally and steal their best performers.

Don't rush to cut prices

Demand is generally not responsive enough to lower prices to make the cut worthwhile. Now, however, is the time to study price sensitivity in your markets more closely than ever before.

Focus on capital – how you are getting it and where you're using it

Maintaining good relationships with bankers and other suppliers of funds is especially important in this downturn, when all lenders have become more averse to risk. So, too, is managing stocks and debtors to ensure that their levels are at a minimum.

Re-examine compensation – what are the incentives for?

Make sure it is not encouraging too much or too little risk-taking; and encourage long-term thinking and results.

Think twice about off-shoring

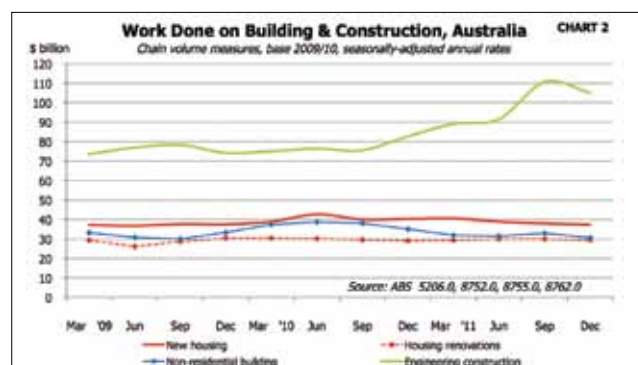
Changing costs and exchange rates have changed the advantages and disadvantages of sourcing material and products from abroad.

Be smart about mergers and acquisitions

If you happen to be financially strong, follow Warren Buffett's advice to be greedy when others are fearful. There are plenty of bargains out there for those with cash.

I would add these comments:

- This is sound management advice and much of it is just as relevant in good times as in bad.
- Be careful about cutting prices. If you cut prices by 10 per cent, a 30 per cent rise in sales is needed to maintain profit. In some circumstances such an increase can be achieved; but usually it can't. As many retailers are now finding, discounting prices is often a fast track to bankruptcy.
- Although it is wise to plan for the worst, it is also wise to remember that although the building cycle has swung lower than most expected, it will surely swing up again. Just be sure you are still here to enjoy the recovery! ■



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by John Halkett

potential to supply a vibrant long-term industry

Timber supply certainty for Victorian furniture makers

GOOD NEWS for the furniture industry was the assessment of the Victorian Government's move to guarantee the long-term future of Victoria's timber industry, ending decades of a protection bias towards native forest management.

In announcing the change in policy direction, Victoria's Minister for Agriculture Peter Walsh, claimed the new timber industry plan would substantially boost the power of VicForests, the government-owned commercial timber agency.

He said the policy would allow VicForests to sell timber in a more flexible way other than auction. "Forestry companies will be offered native timber contracts lasting 20 years, up from the current maximum of five – a step to encourage investment in new mills and equipment.

"Victoria's native forest timber was a magnificent and renewable resource with the potential to supply a vibrant long-term industry."

The government will also indemnify VicForests against the cost if a contract is broken. Mr Walsh said the policy changes were also designed to compensate VicForests' customers if future changes in government policy affected timber supply.

"There is absolutely nothing sinister in this. It is about, in the areas that were going to be logged, giving certainty to the industry and making sure forests are managed."

The chief executive of the Australian Furniture Association South West Rohan Wright welcomed the policy with its emphasis on resource security. "Without that, our manufacturers will struggle."

"The policy will support jobs in downstream processing in industries like furniture," he said.

The chief executive of the Victorian Association of Forest Industries Lisa Marty said the government's policy provided the timber products industry with better regulation and greater resource security.

"Longer-term wood supply contracts, more flexible sales arrangements and mechanisms to compensate VicForests' customers for impacts on their contracts from changes in state government policy will provide a basis for improved business confidence, investment and innovation," she said.



Under the plan, VicForests will become solely responsible for calculating the amount of timber that can be harvested sustainably from Victoria's native forests and will also determine the location and timing of timber harvesting operations.

The timber industry policy also includes planning amendments that will allow plantations greater than 40 hectares to be planted in farming and rural activity zones without a permit. The government will also develop a farm forestry plan that aims to help boost the supply of hardwood timber.

Victoria's native forest industry has an economic value of \$3 billion, employs directly 23,000 people and indirectly supports up to 52,000 jobs. About 730,000 hectares of public native forest is currently available to industry. This represents just under 10 per cent of the state's 7.9 million hectares of native forest. ■

Move to guarantee the long-term future of timber industry, ends decades of protection biases towards native forest management.

Emphasis on resource security will support jobs in downstream processing in industries like furniture.



Homag Australia: 10 years and going strong

Experience, innovation, and a wide range of services are the calling cards in the development of Homag Australia's success.

What was born as a small family business in Germany has grown into the world's leading woodworking machinery manufacturing group with an estimated world market share of 25% and a workforce of around 5000. While the company can trace its corporate roots to 1960, it was Homag's decision to broaden its international base from a very early stage of its development that is paying dividends today.

As long ago as the seventies, Homag launched the expansion of an effective, closely meshed sales network in all the world's most important sales regions. Today, the group works with around 60 exclusive sales partners, and operates 20 of its own sales and servicing companies.

Homag Australia is one of them.

From now and through AWISA 2012, Homag Australia celebrates the past 10 years ... and the future.

Success or failure is determined by the customer

Homag Australia was established in 2002 when Homag AG was further globalising the business and formed a joint venture with NZ-based company Advantech, that represented the Homag Group in Victoria and Western Australia, while the other states were serviced by independent distributors.



In July that same year, the national woodworking exhibition AWISA marked the beginning of a new era and Homag Australia was formed. "The reaction at AWISA was outstanding, which took us by surprise, because our competitors had been well established in the Australian market for a long time," remembers Homag Australia managing director Ross Campbell. "The other suppliers had a huge market share at the time and we had to fight our way into the market."

2002: Homag Australia was born and grew rapidly

But the joint effort paid off and Homag Australia substantially increased its sales until the end of the year, which was only possible with a group of good people, Mr Campbell says. Over the next decade, the company grew into a reputable supplier of industrial machines for the Australian woodworking and furniture industry.

"Success or failure is determined by the customer," Mr Campbell says. "10 years of successful corporate history demonstrate that customer satisfaction and investment in the future really pay off. We are determined to create a Homag spirit that keeps the customer at the centre of our activities at all times. We do everything with passion to ensure that the customer is satisfied, and to keep customers satisfied – for a profitable and constructive future on both sides."

But it was sometimes a stony road to success, and Homag Australia invested a lot of effort and money into restructuring the company and building up a local service organisation. Hence, it wasn't until about five years ago, when the company identified its true claim to fame with a working service structure. Today, 25 of the 41 members of staff work in the service department, because the critical factor for success is delivery of service.

Mr Campbell knows that and is proud of the brand loyalty created amongst Homag Australia's customer base. "Brand loyalty was almost unheard of in our industry about 10 years ago," he says. "Now there is a significant amount of brand loyalty out there. But it wouldn't exist without good service. We know that if our customer's machine breaks down, his business soon stops. That's why we focused strongly on service, both in spare parts, but also in quality of the human asset, quality and speed of delivery. Service is key in the industry and we have great people, we have done some great things along the way, and yet still have a long way to go."

Investment in service paid off

A major contributor to the company's success story was Thomas Frey, who took over the reins in 2006 as managing director, turning the company upside down together with



We are serious about what we do, we are not just here for the short-haul.

handling of big projects to meet the customers' individual demands," Mr Frey says. "Homag will always be the technology leader of this industry and our customers share our success by always being a step ahead of their competitors."

One of the major developments includes the introduction of CNC nesting cells into the woodworking industry, which gave companies a competitive advantage, especially with the installation of automatic loading and unloading technology, including labelling for easy and fast material processing. Today, Mr Frey observes a move towards complete project management globally, but also in Australia. More and more customers decide to install several machines, such as Weeke nesting cells, and interlink them for efficient and accurate material processing.

Mr Campbell, responsible for the strategic direction and management of sales and service at the time. They knew the Homag Group had a great range of products to offer, and the management team was determined to convince Australian customers to work with Homag Australia.

A move towards resource-saving production

"Investment in our service capacity and capability was the most important task at that time," explains Mr Frey, who is now responsible for the Asia-Pacific region. "We hired and trained ten additional field service representatives in one shot and we ensured that all our technicians were up-to-date with the newest technology of the complete Homag product range. The next task was to integrate Homag Australia into the "Homag World" by implementing the philosophy and the IT systems. We implemented SAP in finance and for the handling of our spare part business."

Jürgen Koepfel, member of the board Homag Group, agrees and welcomes the positive development in Australia, where more and more manufacturers realise that they have to invest in high-tech equipment in order to work more efficiently and compete with cheap imports from China. Moreover, local customers are increasingly demanding energy-efficient machines, because everyone knows: Energy, time, materials and labour are all precious resources.

"Today we have 20 highly qualified field service representatives and maintain a great team spirit, where the customer is always in the focus of everything we do."

"The new technology package from the Homag Group, EcoPlus encompasses a whole raft of innovations designed to permit energy savings of up to 30% and reduce operating costs," he explains. "Because it helps to reduce carbon emissions, EcoPlus also has a part to play in saving the

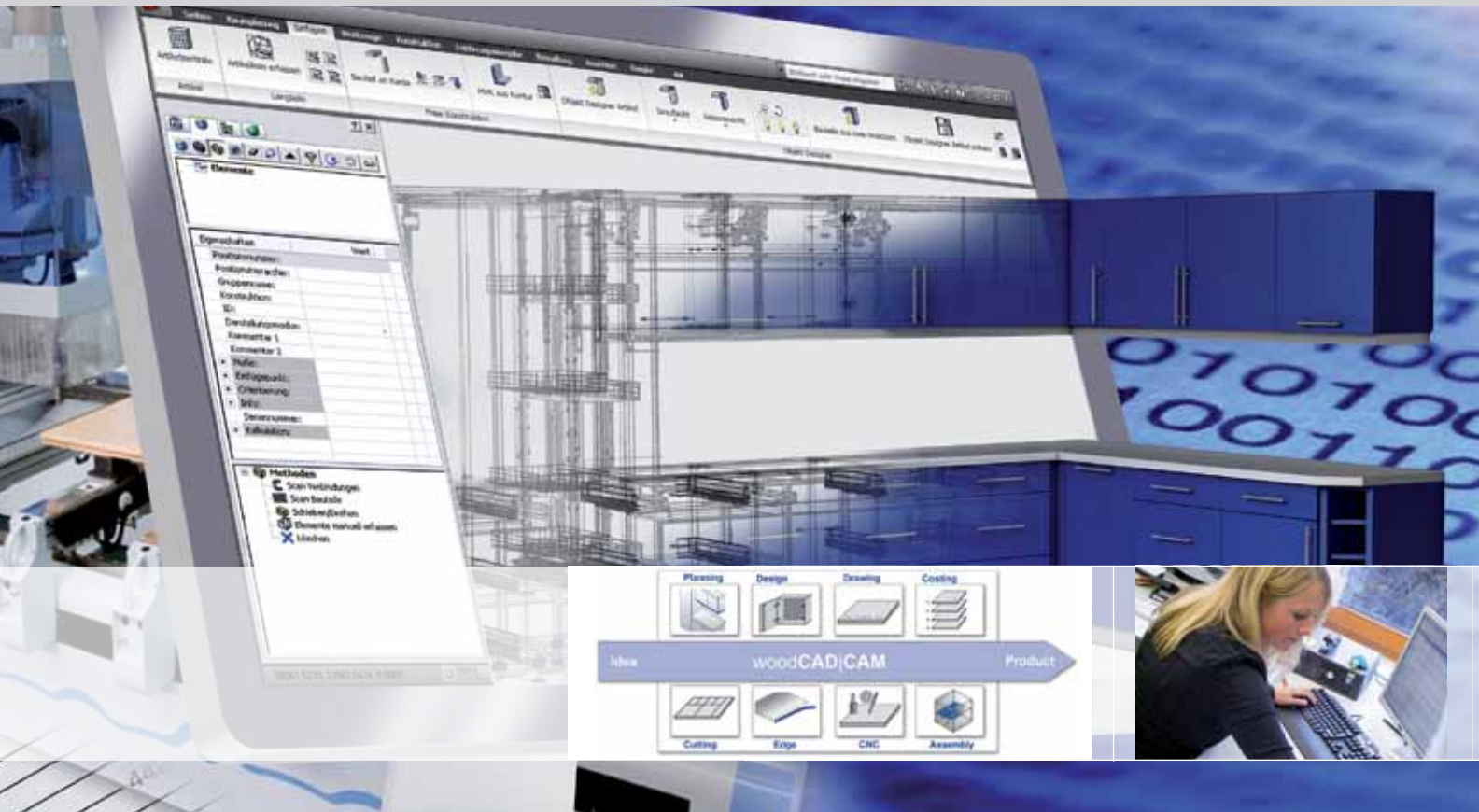
Devotion to innovation

Homag wouldn't be what it is today, however, without its genetic devotion to innovation.



As long ago as 1962 while still in its infancy, the company caused a tremendous stir in the sector with a totally new type of edgbanding machine using a patented hot-cold technique which it presented at the fair in Hanover, Germany. In 1967, Homag went on to revolutionise the furniture production sector with a combined sizing and edge banding machine, of which over a thousand were sold.

And Homag has never been satisfied to rest on its laurels. To stand still is to move backwards, and there is always room for improvement. "We can offer our customers the full range of products, from entry-level machines to the planning and



woodCAD|CAM: 3D software for furniture and interior design

The software woodCAD|CAM creates reliability in the order and manufacturing process from the first sketch to the final product for companies, which are producing with machines of HOMAG Group. Layouts of individual furniture or complex room planning can be created within a very short time and impressively presented. Details or complete part groups can be modified, immediately calculated and displayed. At the push of a button manufacturing lists are available directly after creating the design. Design data will be transferred to HOMAG Group machinery automatically.

design-to-machine:

- Free and parametric 3D design
- CNC data for HOMAG Group machinery
- Including 5 axis processing
- Integrated data flow
- BoM, cutting, costing, Barcode
- Photorealism for sales talks



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▶ planet. I am very pleased with the increasing demand for energy-efficient products in Australia.”

Today, EcoPlus is included as a standard feature in almost all the machines of the Homag Group at no added charge. Environmentally conscious customers can recognize machines equipped with this innovative resource-saving feature by the EcoPlus sign.

A milestone: Affordable automation for everyone

For Mr Campbell, the advent of automation – affordable automation – marked another milestone for the company. “Australian woodworking companies have to be very, very efficient to compete with imports today,” he says. “Import tax and natural barriers such as distance have fallen, and the furniture and kitchen industry has moved towards modular furniture, which opened up the market for imports and standardised constructions. To compete with that, you need a good design, good marketing and a very efficient manufacturing process.”

“While ten years ago it was a struggle to sell automation solutions to customers, there is an increasing number of companies investing in state-of-the-art automation today,” he says.

The development of advanced CNC technology led to the launch of intelligent warehousing systems like the Bargstedt storage and retrieval system. Production machines can be integrated into and managed by the intelligent warehouse. This permits just-in-time processing with all of the benefits of high volume production to be combined with economical methods for the manufacture of minimal batch sizes down to as low as one.

Stimulating the industry with new ideas is a key responsibility for Homag Australia who regularly organises trips to Homag Treff and the Ligna exhibition in Germany to expose local customers to the latest technology and developments. Since high-end automation technology has become affordable, many customers have returned from Europe and installed an intelligent warehousing system. One of those is Michael Madden, general manager at Furniture Concepts Queensland, who decided to invest in the Bargstedt storage system in November 2009 after touring various factories during a Homag Open-House event in Germany. “We have increased our production capacity by 60-70%,” Mr Madden says. “Cash flow has also improved because the system’s coordination of job planning and purchasing means you will

order only what you really need. There is no over-ordering happening anymore.”

Systems like these are certainly what make Homag the pacemaker for innovation in the woodworking industry, driving it forward to be first to market with new developments a competitive market such as Australia needs. The local furniture industry employs about 120,000 people, and unlike other industries, does not receive any funding or support from government. As a consequence, all of the many manufacturers trying to survive and remain competitive rely on innovative technology and service from companies like Homag.

Homag Australia will continue to meet these market demands with cutting-edge technology and fairplay, building on a legacy of commitment to its customers. “I think the market is starting to recognise that we are serious about what we do, and we are having a lot of fun doing it; we are not just here for the short-haul,” Mr Campbell concludes. “Our recipe for continued success is fairly simple: Reputation. And reputation is built on doing as you say and saying as you do.”

AWISA See us at AWISA 2012

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Homag cares

With “Homag Cares”, the Homag Group wants to help the community and its customers in difficult times. After the commercial joinery Furniture Concepts was totally immersed in the Queensland floods last year, the company recovered back to production thanks to the great Aussie spirit which saw more than a hundred volunteers help to get the business back on track. Homag Australia was among the major supporters, donating engineers and loan machines to make sure the company got back into production as soon as possible.

Moreover, Homag donates all furniture especially made for tradeshows, including AWISA 2012, to local hospitals, schools or other publicly-funded institutions.

by John Halkett

Kitchen – yes, but everything else as well



Featured in this edition of AWISA – The Magazine are two members of the Cabinet Makers Association of Victoria (CMA), H&H Cabinets, and Orana Custom Built Furniture and Joinery.

The CMA membership base covers the whole range of cabinet making, including commercial and domestic fit-outs and renovations, as well as most suppliers to the industry.

The CMA exists to help cabinet makers to do business and to keep them up to date with changes in the industry. The CMA also helps consumers with advice on their projects and assists in choosing the right cabinet maker for the job.

CABINET MAKERS ASSOCIATION INC

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NOW ONE OF VICTORIA'S larger cabinet making enterprises, South Dandenong's Orana Custom Built Furniture and Joinery was formed in 1963. Today the family-owned business has earned a well deserved reputation among its peers and clients for creating quality award winning kitchens and for a wide range of other cabinetry-related work.

The company also has a separate design division at Mornington, dedicated to kitchen design.

Director Mark Hornstra says their Orana designer kitchens are a flagship component of the company. "We consider that kitchens are the most complex room in any home and therefore the most important to get right as families have to live and work with the results for years to come."

Orana Custom Built Furniture and Joinery has won numerous awards for kitchen design, cabinet making, commercial furniture and fit out and joinery-related awards over the years.

"We think that our many kitchen design and manufacturing awards justify the emphasis we place on getting the design and functionality kitchens right," says Mark.

"We believe our combination of innovative design, coupled with our ability to individually manufacture every cabinet to our exacting specifications and client needs set this business apart."

"Looking to the future, we are confident that our attention to every detail of design, manufacture

and installation, plus the level of commitment of our staff have been and will continue to be the key to our success," he says.

Kitchens aside for a moment, Orana Custom Built Furniture and Joinery are also comfortable with designing and making everything from bookcases to full fit-outs of commercial companies.

So in addition a complete range of cabinets and joinery for new homes and renovations in the middle to upper house value range, the company undertake a wide assortment of other work, including a substantial amount commercial work, such as government office furniture and fit outs and schools

The company covers the field by working closely with architects and building designers, as well as having established relationships with home builders and a range of commercial builders.

Mark says the company's diversity is its strength. "Our extensive and diverse work provides the company with good insulation against fluctuations in any particular market or building sector." ■

Left: Numerous kitchen design and manufacturing awards justify emphasis on getting the design and functionality right.

Mark Hornstra Orana Custom Built Furniture director - detail of design, manufacture and installation, plus the level of commitment of staff have been key to our success.



by John Halkett

Catering for Melbourne's top-end trendy market

WHILE H&H CABINETS, in the Melbourne suburb of Burwood, could be described as pretty much a conventional cabinet making business - with a flat bed router, edgebander and panel saw - the company has an infectious, enthusiastic and progressive attitude. Today the company can be described as a somewhat exclusive operation catering for the top-end of the trendy Melbourne metro market.

Managing director Dale Healy is well tuned into modern, contemporary kitchen design concepts and manufacture - he knows what's hot and what's not. He notes that among modern design trends is the minimalist look with finger pulls rather than handles. "Glass and hard glossy, sometimes coloured finishes are popular, and yes, even in Melbourne, alfresco dining concepts have become a feature."

H&H Cabinets was established in 1968 as a family cabinet making business specialising in the design, manufacture and installation of quality kitchens and other cabinetry. Today the company demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of kitchen concepts, including hardware availability and surface options from natural stone to laminates.

"Yes - we try hard to understand our clients' needs and match them with quality design, manufacture and complete installation. Keys to our success are aesthetics, practicality and ergonomics," says Dale.

"We know that price certainly isn't everything -

quality is critical, in the fittings, material, surfaces and finishes."

He is pleased about the business performance of the company and confident about its future. "We have had a great past year - we have been very fortunate and are confident that even though housing starts have softened in Victoria generally that shouldn't impact on us. We are certainly not in the first home buyer end of the market."

Dale says the company is a specialist in all types of custom cabinetry. "We provide custom-made stylish cabinetry, designed to suit our clients' interiors and lifestyles."

"Whether for a period home or office, a classic finish, or a sleek contemporary look, we design, manufacture and install not just kitchens but built-in wardrobes, home offices, home entertainment units, shelves, display cabinets and a range of innovative storage solutions," he says.

"So we cover the field - from the front of the house to the back. We are proud of some pretty extravagant walk-in robes that we have designed. They have become almost the ultimate fashion statement in today's modern up-market house design."

H&H Cabinets has a tight-knit work force of twelve. Dale says the company's business philosophy includes efforts to build a safe, skilled and rewarding work environment that allows its tradesman to be continually challenged and to help create a greater sense of ongoing work achievements. ■



Known for some extravagant walk-in robes that have become the ultimate fashion statement in today's modern up-market house design.

Below: H&H Cabinets' tight knit work force: (l-r) Dale Healy, Chris Trevorrow, Kon Peroukaneas, Jeff Healy, Josh Hawkins, Andrew Fox, Ned Allen and Luke Magro.



Left: H&H Cabinets well tuned into modern, contemporary kitchen design trends - the minimalist look - glass and hard glossy, sometimes coloured finishes are popular.





Two partners - *one concept!*

We are proud to announce that IMA Klessmann, the leading manufacturer of machines and production lines from Germany and The Wood Tech Group, Australia's leading independent machinery sales and service suppliers have become partners.

This partnership now gives manufacturers in Australia the opportunity and confidence to take their production needs to the next level with fully customized solutions now so easily obtained.

Our objective:

❖ To provide consistent know-how and have your perfect production in mind!



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Western Australia
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Belmont
WA 6104

new ways for cost reduction in cabinet and furniture fabrication

IMA comes to Australia

The Wood Tech Group has announced a collaborative sales and service relationship with IMA. According to Melbourne-based director Max Shatkhin, The Wood Tech Group, Australia's prominent independent sales and service supplier and IMA, a leading German manufacturer of woodworking machines and production lines have become partners.

According to iMagazin, IMA's customer magazine the new cooperation with The Wood Tech Group, including operational collaboration has already started. An article covering the new partnership arrangement says:

The Wood Tech Group is one of the largest independent Australian sales and service specialists which has specialised in CNC machines and systems for the Australian industry.

With five locations over the entire Australian continent the new IMA partner has an excellent market overview and can offer customer proximity and fast local service for maintenance work and qualified consultation for investment projects.

Max says the new partnership offers Australian manufacturers the opportunity and confidence to take their production needs to the next level with the high through-put, fully customised IMA woodworking solutions now available.

"It represents a significant advance for The Wood Tech Group, as we now have a line of top German machinery to rival anything currently on the market in Australia at the high production, larger industrial scale end of the market."

"One of the great benefits of the IMA range is the capacity to fully customise machines and processing lines to meet specific manufacturing requirements of clients."

IMA has been associated with successful technology leadership as a manufacturer and systems provider in panel processing orientated and solid woodworking industries for more than six decades.

IMA advice indicates that industry know-how and comprehensive service not only come from the company's head office and branches throughout Germany, but also from IMA sales and service centres situated on various continents where teams of IMA engineers and technicians consult and support a wide range of industry clients, including those in Australia.

Max says The Wood Tech Group is really excited about its partnership arrangement with IMA. "The availability of sales and service support from the IMA's world network will ensure that we are able to offer optimal sales and technical back-up for clients."

"IMA is very well known in Europe and North America so it is well overdue that this global leader in woodworking machinery and technology has an increased profile in Australia."

Max adds that The Wood Tech Group has established a close working relationship with IMA sales staff and technicians based in Singapore. "We can service existing IMA machinery currently operating in Australia right now – just get in touch with us."

Max says IMA machines, processing technology and systems offer new ways for cost reduction in cabinet and furniture fabrication. "Complete machining, increased productivity, optimisation of setup times and innovative processes are all part of the IMA offering in Australia."

The IMA range to be available in Australia will include CNC routers, post forming for kitchens and new laser edgebanding technology. "Laser edgebanding is now making a real presence in Europe with major benefits over current edgebanding technology, including the absence of any visible glue line," says Max.

The Wood Tech Group will be featuring IMA machines live and working at the AWISA Exhibition in Sydney in July.



AWISA See us at **AWISA 2012**

THE WOOD TECH GROUP
Phone 1300 738 663

IMA machinery range to be available in Australia will include CNC routers, post forming for kitchens and new laser edgebanding technology.

Automated nesting cell boosts profits and flexibility

EDGEWORTH FURNITURE in Newcastle, NSW, saw the decision to diversify the business as a call to invest in an automated CNC nesting cell to revolutionise the company.

Many furniture manufacturers today are diversifying and taking on more jobs involving batch-size-one and custom work. Additionally, frequent production changes due to constantly fluctuating industry environments dictate a critical need for flexibility to quickly adjust part volumes, switch from one job to the next and squeeze in frequently occurring hot emergency or one-off jobs.

When Newcastle-based Edgeworth Furniture was looking to diversify and further expand its domestic furniture business, they turned to Homag Australia to find the best and most productive production technology for its factory because they knew: With capital remaining as a primary basis of competition, companies that get the greatest return on their capital investments will win.

Founded in the mid-eighties by Roger Green, Edgeworth Furniture has grown to become one of Australia's major domestic furniture suppliers. In 2003, two young and optimistic entrepreneurs, David and Daniel Galea, bought into the company to complement their existing coating business Eurocoat.

"We were at a point where we needed to invest in CNC machinery," remembers David Galea, director of Edgeworth Furniture. "While we were looking for CNC routers, we decided to buy a furniture company instead. Everyone thought we were crazy because at the time imports were starting to flood the country and furniture manufacturing in Australia was declining."

Investment in automation

But the brothers went ahead and bought Edgeworth Furniture with its existing machinery and 22 staff, to manufacture kitchen doors and move the domestic furniture business forward. Faced with a growing customer base and the desire to expand into other markets, Mr Galea and his partners knew it was time to invest in automation and high-end equipment to optimise their production and increase efficiency.

"About two years ago we decided to move into commercial furniture, and started taking on commercial projects because we had the capacity," he explains. "Commercial furniture is built to a specification while with domestic furniture, we do the design and sell it to the retailers. We used to be very selective in the jobs we did, but now we accept other work as well. The industry is very competitive, so you need to diversify and invest in good machinery."



"Productivity has certainly increased with the installation of the Weeke CNC gantry line," David Galea says. The system can easily process six kitchens in one single morning, and wholesale kitchens are a market Mr Galea has decided to move into in order to grow his business and remain competitive.

"If you don't have the machinery you cannot diversify," he continues. "We don't employ any tradesmen. We rely on the equipment. That's the reason we are competitive, that's the reason we have invested in top-of-the-range machinery, including Brandt and Homag edgebanders and a Weeke CNC automated nesting cell."

Today, Edgeworth Furniture and Eurocoat Industries are located under one roof in a purpose-built factory in Tomago near Newcastle, NSW, employ 67 people, and run several CNC nesting cells, including a fully automated Weeke BHP200 nesting line.

Before the line was installed in 2011, the company was running two competitor-brand CNC nesting cells, which were doing a good job, but each for its own purpose. Mr Galea was faced with the risk of losing business in case of a machine breakdown. While one machine could potentially replace the other, the cut quality would have suffered and the entrepreneur knows that this would inevitably lead to the creation of more labour.

"I first came across this system when we were in Europe during Ligna 2009," he says. "Sure we could have stayed with the competitor machines we were running at the time, but after investing in a Brandt and a Homag edgebander a couple of years earlier, we knew their engineering was the best and we were very happy with the Homag service."

As a result and part of an effort to stay abreast of the latest technology and to respond to growing just-in-time and batch-size-one demands, Mr Galea decided to purchase the Weeke CNC gantry processing centre BHP 200 with fully automatic feed-in, processing, feed-out and labelling.



Increased efficiency

“The reason we invested in the Weeke line was to be able to manufacture high quality MDF kitchen doors whilst also being able to increase efficiency when processing high volume furniture and also be more efficient when processing low volume work,” Mr Galea says. “We had Sensoflex added to the main spindle of the machine to ensure our door profiles are perfect and do not vary with board thickness whilst also reducing sanding for the paint shop.”

The Weeke BHP 200 is built for both small and large manufacturing operations. Designed for routing, boring, and grooving of flat components, that have been nested into full sheets of material, the BHP 200 is constructed on a steel frame providing a solid, vibration-free platform for the machining head. The machine weighs in well over six tons, and there is no other nesting machine on the market in this class. When reliability with extended working times and high accelerations ramps are required, then weight of steel is an absolute prerequisite. The THK linear motion guides ensure straight line tracking at high travel rates with optimum stability and performance.

The error-resistant tool loading system takes the guesswork out of loading the proper tools into the changer. The two ride-along 14-fold tool changers provide Edgeworth Furniture with the flexibility to cut, rout and drill kitchen doors, furniture or cabinets without re-setting the machine.

“All our domestic furniture which is delivered to Australia’s leading furniture retailers such as Snooze or Harvey Norman is made to order,” Mr Galea explains. “We do not keep any stock. It

is all customised furniture, because we supply many different colours and shapes with a lot of options.”

Edgeworth Furniture services some of its customers with a 5-day turnaround, otherwise delivery times are around 2-3 weeks. As a consequence, the manufacturer has to be very flexible and produce just-in-time. “There aren’t many options for local furniture makers like us,” says Mr Galea. “If you’re going to stay busy, and continue to meet the customers’ needs, you have to invest in new technology and equipment. Our future depends on modernisation, automation and just-in-time production to increase productivity and flexibility.”

Less room for error

And productivity has certainly increased with the installation of the Weeke CNC gantry line. The system can easily process six kitchens in one single morning, and wholesale kitchens are a market Mr Galea has decided to move into in order to grow his business and remain competitive.

“In order to achieve more growth in the domestic furniture industry we have to be more innovative with our designs and styles,” he says. “We are growing that business, but it is limited. Hence we have made the decision to tap into the kitchen market and become wholesale suppliers of kitchens to trade.”

Eurocoat already supplies painted kitchen doors to many kitchen companies throughout Australia, and late last year Mr Galea purchased a local benchtop manufacturing business now known as Euroform. “Euroform is geared with a Homag VFL75 flow-through and a Weeke CNC

Top left: Edgeworth Furniture: Production of one day.

Top right: Quality of a part coming straight off the nesting cell.

Lower left: Realising the Brandt edgebander was doing around 500,000m per year, Edgeworth Furniture director David Galea thought it was time to purchase a “serious” edgebander and invested in a Homag KAL210 edgebander with an integrated panel return system.

Lower right: The Weeke CNC gantry processing centre BHP 200 is equipped with fully automatic feed-in, processing, feed-out and labelling.

“The reason we invested in the Weeke line was to be able to manufacture high quality MDF kitchen doors whilst also being able to increase efficiency when processing high volume furniture and also be more efficient when processing low volume work,” explained Mr Galea

35
YEARS OF
SERVICE

35 years of service and civility

This past September saw Wilson & Bradley celebrate 35 years of operation in the kitchen hardware supply industry. Many strong partnerships and relationships have developed over this time with both customers and suppliers, including many customers who have been supporting Wilson & Bradley since the company first opened its doors in 1976.

Sourcing quality kitchen hardware has always been a major priority for Wilson & Bradley and strong supplier relationships has been an integral part of growing the company to the reputable supplier it is today, with branches in every state of Australia. One strong partnership, which has continued to grow over Wilson & Bradley's 35 year history, is that with their major supplier, Blum. More than a just a great business partnership, the relationship between the two companies has seen a strong rapport develop which allows for a great working relationship.

Wilson & Bradley thanks everyone who has made the business the success it is today, especially the support of its loyal customer base and reliable suppliers.

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processing centre to complement our door business," he says. "Add to this the installation of the BHP200 Weeke line at Edgeworth furniture and we are now in a great position to become a major wholesaler of kitchens to the trade on the east coast of Australia. I'd like all kitchen manufacturers to know that if an order exceeds their capacity, they can outsource their work to us."

The Weeke line and other Homag products not only support Mr Galea in his endeavour to expand the business into the kitchen industry, but also ensure jobs are done 100% accurate. The nesting technology optimises the cutting layouts on the router and delivers high utilisation layouts, significantly reducing the waste and maximising productivity. The required workpieces are routed out of fully-sized materials on the processing centre in one workstep, including all necessary holes and grooves. In order to optimise the raw material cut, the programmed workpieces are automatically nested via optimisation software.

Moreover, realising the Brandt edgebander was doing around 500,000m per year, Mr Galea thought it was time to purchase a "serious" edgebander and invested in a Homag KAL210 edgebander with an integrated panel return system. Homag ensures a perfect finish by the use of a radius scraper and a buffing unit – and a perfect finish is what every competitive shop needs; the less work that has to be performed after the edgebanding process, the higher the productivity.

Smooth material flow

The new Weeke CNC nesting cell also contributes to increased productivity by ensuring a smooth material flow that extends far beyond the nesting system. The finished parts are properly marked, positioned and sorted quickly ready for further processing. Moreover, Mr Galea is very pleased with the vacuum dust extraction system, which nearly eliminates cleaning the workshop after cutting operations.

Meanwhile, Edgeworth Furniture is running two Weeke CNC processing centres and the third one is on its way. For Mr Galea, Homag's local support and service is a very important factor and he also appreciates dealing with an international company like Homag who look back on many years of experience in the woodworking machinery business.

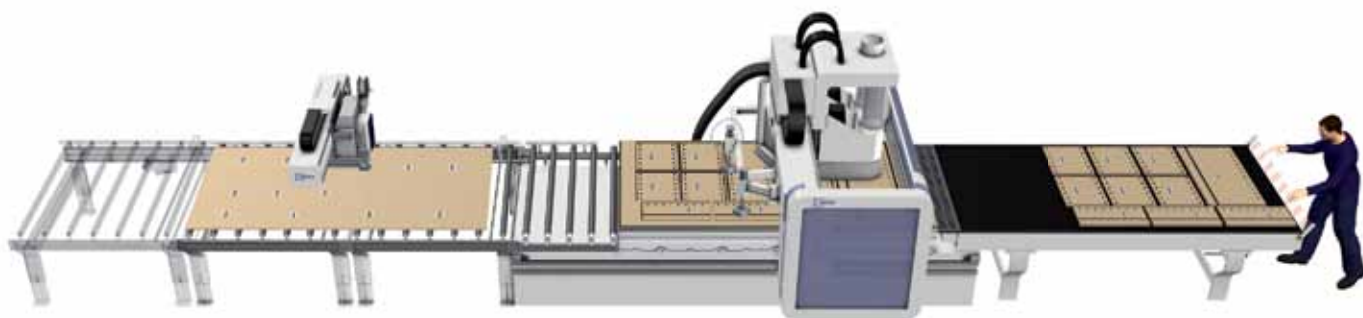
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Blum offers new Expando range for Clip top Blumotion and Aventos



Blum
Expando

The new Blum Expando range for Clip top Blumotion, Clip top and Aventos is now available. The Expando programme is advantageous in fitting the hinge or front fixing bracket into pre-drilled holes after processing has been completed.

Blum's Expando allows faster fitting of hinges or front fixing brackets into pre-drilled holes when using a CNC or nesting machine, eliminating the need to use a knock-in ram to insert the hardware. Simply screw in the fixing screws and the expanding dowels fasten the hardware into the material.

"The new Expando range will be most beneficial to large volume manufacturers because it will help reduce associated labour costs when using knock-in fittings. In saying this, cabinet makers will also benefit from the ease of installation of the Expando fittings", comments Stuart Fell, Blum product manager.

The Expando ensures gap free installation onto the material when fixing screws have been fastened into the expanding dowels. Fronts can easily be stacked without the hardware damaging finished parts and fittings can quickly be installed at a later stage of production.

The new Expando range consists of:

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- 95° blind corner Clip top Blumotion
- 155° zero protrusion Clip top
- Aventos HK-S front fixing bracket
- Aventos HS/HL/HK front fixing bracket

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Clip top
Blumotion Expando 95° profile hinge

Corelight – the waterproof WPC panel

Nover has recently launched Corelight, a wood plastic composite (WPC) panel that is lightweight, flexible, high quality, moisture and chemical resistant, and easy to handle and cut using conventional tools and panel equipment.

Corelight's main features are that the product is waterproof, moisture proof, mildew proof and corrosion resistant and it is therefore ideal for wet and damp conditions, making it particularly suitable for marine, caravan and outdoor cabinet and furniture use.

It is easy to nail, and has outstanding nail holding capabilities. It can be drilled, planed and glued and is suitable for painting. It does not need continuous maintenance. It contains

two-thirds PVC resin and this high temperature thermoplastic means that Corelight is insect-free with extensive durability. It is perfect for storage and long-life usage. It's toughness and features can outperform ordinary wood panels.

In addition to outdoor furniture, marine and caravan applications, Corelight can be used for building office, kitchen, public area and toilet/bathroom partitions, and for door blanks in bathrooms, washrooms and toilets. It can also be used for system furniture, kitchen cabinets, bathroom cabinets, and living room cabinets.

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DTA – Diamond Tooling Australia

Market development has brought big changes in the furniture and flat panel world. New materials which are very hard and abrasive for the tools are now more and more employed by the industry. The solution for this was to start to use diamond to manufacture cutters. Today Diamond Tooling Australia (DTA) offers a complete range of diamond tools to answer special demands, such as saw blades, edge bander tools, boring bits, soft and post forming cutters, laminating flooring cutters, router cutters for CNC routers and moulding machines.

Diamond tooling suppliers require both technical know-how and most of all an affordable reliable support centre for this. DTA has established a new PCD sharpening centre in Sydney using the latest advanced German electrical erosion grinding machinery with other advanced technical equipment.

Now with the use of new generation composite flat panel materials DTA offers a first-hand tested experience to assist its customers in the machining of these materials, followed by an affordable sharpening service.



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Aneka Kitchens – high productivity with smart investments

Situated in the light industrial estate of Mitchell ACT, Aneka Kitchens is a wholly family owned and operated kitchen manufacturing business with a reputation for high quality and innovative designs in the industry. For over 20 years the Canberra based business has placed great emphasis on leveraging off world class technology and streamlining production efficiency to deliver quality products on time as well as on budget.

Owner Rod Tyson has long seen the advantage in utilising high quality machinery, including the class leading Altendorf Elmo4 C.A.T.S panel saw, in providing the competitive edge. When asked about his history of adopting new technological innovations, Rod explains that the goal is ultimately to improve production efficiency, "I'm interested in making the job easier and faster for my staff... and to make less mistakes in the process."

While Aneka Kitchens operates with machinery supplied by the leaders in the industry across the board, including a

quarter million dollar CNC nested based manufacturing system, Rod had this bit of advice to give to businesses that are just starting up or operating in the 2-3 kitchen a week category, "If you are starting out, get a good quality saw, you'll always need a good saw and edgebander as your basic capital equipment in any stage of your business." Advises Rod, "the issue with cheap saws for example, is that you'll only end up with more problems."

Aneka Kitchens didn't start with a high end saw however, as it wasn't until 2004 Rod acquired the top of the range Altendorf Elmo 4 on his factory floor. "Originally I started with a cheap saw, the thing wasn't that square and chipped a lot, and took extra effort to get a good cut off it," Rod reminisces on his experience with his previous machine. "The year I got the new machine, I told myself it was time to get quality machinery from now on. With the Altendorf purchase, the ability of the machine to link back to the office for cutting optimisation was a must have for

me." Short for Computer Aided Table Saw, the Elmo 4 CATS package allowed linkage to optimisation software and cutting lists for greatly increased productivity and reduced possibility of human errors. "We're able to output a great deal of work accurately with just one man on the factory floor," says Rod, "We go down to the machine, scan the barcode, the cutting list comes up and we start cutting, it's quick and there's not much human thinking involved."

With the combination of over two decades of experience and smart capital investments at its core, Aneka Kitchens will always continue to deliver high quality kitchens and flat packs on demand for the years to come.

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by Rob Ditessa

It's not just a business, it's a passion



"OUR WORKSHOP is no different to that of any other small cabinetmaker in terms of machinery and setup. However, we differ in that it is very much a design-based workshop and that we work with a large range of materials. As a result, we produce some wonderful furniture," Charlie O'Donovan tells AWISA-The Magazine, speaking from the Adelaide workshop.

He and Monique Boseley combined their talents in 2008, and since then they have developed two successful on-line cutting-edge furniture businesses, Retromodern and Senkki, dealing especially in Danish mid-century style sideboards, chests of drawers, and tables. The businesses complement one another in the market place, and moreover offer customers the opportunity to contribute creatively to the design of their selections. Boseley brought the skills of an artistic background to the enterprise having worked in photography and interior design. Boseley explains she looks after advertising, marketing, website design, and "anything that involves the office". O'Donovan manages the workshop, and together they share the design work. He had worked for many years in high-end boat building, specialising in refitting and restoring classic sailing yachts where no two jobs were ever the same, as he recalls, and the standard of finish was always of the highest order. "This is something we aim to bring to Senkki furniture," he adds.

The initial venture, Retromodern furniture, grew out of their liking for

sharp lines, simplicity and general functionality of the Danish mid-century style of furniture as well as their own interest in ecological sustainability. They found and restored some furniture for their own home, discovering in that work, a vocation that let them make both a living and uphold their values. In the Retromodern operation, O'Donovan details, pieces are stripped back, relacquered, and generally restored. Customers pick from a selection of original pieces that would otherwise be discarded, choosing features such as door handles, and type and colour of laminates. "Customers are coming to us with their designs and we build it for them, giving the pieces a unique touch," he explains.

With an effective website, the business thrived and within a year, they were shipping their furniture all over Australia, as well as overseas. Subsequently, the results of a successful exhibition programme and promotional campaign encouraged O'Donovan and Boseley to expand. In 2011 they established Senkki, and extended to new furniture the concept of engaging the customer in creating modifications in the design of any piece in the basic range. The line, for home or business, is inspired again by their love of the Danish mid-century style.

From the choice made by the customer, O'Donovan mocks-up a design in a computer image and returns it for confirmation or alternation, which the customers can achieve if they download the program. Should

customers visit the workshop, they are always pleased to sit down with the client with pen and paper, though, he adds, people nowadays expect to see plans on computer because it speaks of a level of professionalism.

He explains in detail how they use a simple program called SketchUp that serves its purpose very well for both the client and themselves. O'Donovan says, "We still enjoy putting pen to paper as a quick and effective way to hash out design ideas. We also use scaled models to assist with proportion and overall design. From a design perspective I feel it's important not to get bogged down in technology as it can be costly, time consuming and may not achieve the main objective, at least until it has been mastered. I also feel that if technology is not approached correctly, it can in the short term be a drain on the limited resource of a small business. We are keen to embrace technology in a step-by-step manner. Therefore as we grow we will have the resource to implement more computer based technologies into our designs and manufacturing."

As much of the furniture is custom built, O'Donovan explains that the machinery in the workshop is quite basic, including the normal range of power tools, and edgebanders, table saws, and thicknessers. One dimensional table saw is an RGA 150, and a thicknesser is a Griggio FSC400 (over and under with doweling attachment).

The machinery is adequate to satisfy



the present demand. "With our business we're not about going out and buying the expensive equipment. That's not how we work, with a huge debt. We're about meeting our demand, and running a tight ship. So the machinery is old, but it does the job and it does it well. As we grow, we will invest in better equipment, but not at this moment," O'Donovan stresses. Down the track, an investment in CAD and CNC will be a consideration.

In the meantime, they are adding a fourth craftsman to the workshop team, which is bolstered with expert contractors to meet additional demands.

The workshop has a better than a ten percent wastage rate, which O'Donovan says is the 'best practice' rate, and that he achieves it without computer assistance programming. "Wastage can be easily calculated with pen and paper and when we design our items we pay close attention to keep wastage to a minimum on our own designs. Obviously when we custom build for clients, wastage is usually greater in order to meet their requirements. Our wastage with laminate is higher, at about fifteen percent."

Although O'Donovan and Boseley think of their businesses as separate ventures, the work in the shop is run in tandem, and the workshop is not divided into separate areas for Retromodern, and Senkki. The approach to the work is the same, and there are separate work-benches, and dedicated areas and space for

specific tasks, so that a number of jobs can be undertaken simultaneously. Because everything is well organised, O'Donovan is able to restructure the workflow as required. With a small workforce, he says that it is a very hands-on small business, and sometimes there can be a jostle for space and machinery. "No one job is the same as another. We have to take each job as it comes."

A major challenge comes from operating on-line. Because customers cannot view the furniture, their aim was to build a reputation for quality and good service. "A good public relations campaign, word of mouth, clever design and manufacture, and a general trend to purchasing on-line has helped to overcome the difficulty, and because we don't have huge overheads, and we've got a small workshop, we're able to keep overheads down and therefore pass on savings to the customer," he says.

Reflecting on their progress, O'Donovan points out that Retromodern was the start up business, and that the Senkki brand grew from that idea. He adds that as they do not have a production style manufacturing approach and treat each piece as a one off, they have to continually adapt, and explore new ideas. Many businesses would not adopt this model because it is more difficult but O'Donovan says they embrace the challenge. ■

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Integrated design and manufacturing software key to complex joinery business

Design capacity, job quoting, optimising manufacturing, fool-proof installation and business profitability are all critical factors when joinery and cabinet making challenges relate to exceptional design and manufacturing diversity and complexity across residential houses, institutions large and small and commercial fit-outs.

The list of current and recent jobs carried out by HK Joinery Design, at Tuggerah on the NSW Central Coast is simply staggering, from gaols to hospitals, schools and science laboratories through to clubs and sporting complexes, and that doesn't including their considerable effort on residential homes joinery and commercial office fit-outs.

According to HK Joinery Design director Fred White the company has the flexibility to manufacture and install a single unit or fit-out multiple dwelling or commercial sites. Large and complex commercial work is assuming added prominence for HK Joinery Design. Recent work has included fit-outs in the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle and the Salvation Army headquarters in Sydney - from the public toilets to the board room furniture.

Fred White says an essential key to their success and expanding reputation as one of the state's leading joinery companies is the use of CabMaster and EzyNest software in combination with CNC-based manufacturing technology.

"Within our geographic spread that includes the Sydney metropolitan area, Central Coast, Hunter Valley and Port Macquarie, the company has earned its leading reputation through honest, expert advice, modern design ability, high quality manufacturing and best pricing possible."

"This has been greatly assisted by our improved use of manufacturing nesting technology and the software installed and supported by QST Systems," he says.

"This combination has helped us continue to be the supplier of choice to building and construction companies large and small, as well as individual home-owners."

HK Joinery Design's CabMaster design software, working in tandem with EzyNest's manufacturing optimising program, enables the company to go from the initial design and quote in the showroom to the precise, optimised nested cutting pattern for the company's Anderson CNC router.

"The software integrates perfectly with our Anderson CNC. QST Systems and the Wood Tech Group [supplier of the Anderson router] have worked together to give us a seamless operation," says Fred.

He adds that what he particularly likes about the CabMaster and EzyNest software is the continuous improvement with updates automatically uploaded and good back up support

as required. "Although we have found it easy to use and haven't needed a lot of technical support."

"QST commissioned the software and did the necessary training. From that day to this we have never had a failure - it's a very robust system that is now the heart of our diverse and complex design and manufacturing business."

The CabMaster program allows users to drag and drop details into a comprehensive pre-built library with a wide range of cabinets with numerous options allowing units to be modified easily. The program also permits job pricing by material, hardware and labour use variations.

Setting up a customer database and creating individual custom templates with specific company information is easy. Over twelve thousand materials are available, with additions easily made. CabMaster contains several libraries of different types of cabinets and units plus an individual parts library that allows cabinets and units to be designed from scratch. In addition an accessories and models library enables concepts, designs and quotes to be more realistic and viewed in elevated views as well as four different 3D profiles.

The EzyNest Wood software program operated by HK Joinery Design permits cabinet designs generated by the CabMaster software to be converted into an optimised nested manufacturing cutting pattern and sent to the router work centre in seconds.

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Fred White and production draftsman Paul Scott ... Design and manufacturing functions have been greatly assisted by the use of CNC nesting technology and software installed and supported by QST Systems.

HK Joinery Design director Fred White with showroom consultant Karen Jurd ... CabMaster software enables precise quoting on complex and diverse residential and commercial jobs.

The true value of the designer

DESIGN

THE QUESTION, “what is value?” has plagued scholars for years. In today’s world product designers are commissioned and employed for different, sometimes contradictory reasons, and the nature and extent of their responsibilities varies widely.

The idea, that designers are (or should be,) capable of meeting people’s needs that are fit for purpose, is not new. This claim has been significant for the professionalism and development of design and remains very critical today. Does value have something to do with the extent to which objects fulfill pre-existing (but not necessarily articulated) representative and functional requirements? Are designers there to close the gap between objections and needs in such a way that perceived value and price surpass production costs? Well I think that designers, consumers, suppliers and manufacturers are all actively involved in the social and cultural construction of whatever product you choose in this instance, kitchens and bathrooms.

Designers have a very privileged role in shaping objects of need right across our universe, but the dynamics and responsibilities today are increasingly challenging as we all know. The notion that designers increase competitiveness by giving kitchens and bathrooms extra doses of style, functionality, ergonomics, brand awareness and product identity is true, and today more so than ever before.

Back in 1996, an American academic, Strassman came up with this method to try and determine value not only in designers, but also in other areas of management. First he subtracted the cost of purchased goods, energy and services, as well as interest costs and taxes. Then he subtracts shareholder value, operational costs and management costs. What’s left over is management value. Strassmann calls the ratio of management value to management costs a “return on management”.

So, should we look at the value of the designer as a “return on management” or from a kitchen and bathroom perspective, is there more? What value do we place on ourselves, what price do we tag ourselves, and more importantly what value will our clients place on us tomorrow? We must all remember - nothing in this world happens

without a designer, whether it’s a car, a boat, or a Mars Bar. In my experience most people view design as a superficial thing. It’s about making something look nice, be that a business card, a brochure or a website. People just don’t get what design is really about and therefore don’t understand the real value in you.

Our closest profession, and some would say not our most popular on an everyday basis, is probably architecture – an architect is often described as someone who has a mastery of technology and art combined.

That which a person cannot understand he cannot appreciate. An architect is an artist and a technician in one — a rare, combination of high skills, ability and vision so beyond the average individual that it is viewed with awe by those who understand it... and not understood by most. The visions of architects, and therefore their own inherent value, the almost godlike ability to create beauty and functionality out of nothing, the very task of actually forming the future, are incomprehensible to laymen and thus become something that, for most people, “doesn’t exist.” However, are we not the same, does our value, as kitchen and bathroom designers, not produce those similar results?

In both areas of the two professions, that being architecture and kitchen and bathroom design – one thing remains constant, both alike have the power, if we trust them, to transform our customers’ lives, and on the one hand the buildings an architect designs, controls the way the consumer thinks and behaves, the kitchens and bathrooms we design, fulfill the inner needs of those same consumers. Every one has an opinion on both, and each bestow value, you have to live with the pleasure or pain for a long time. We all recognize that architecture is public sculpture, with a great deal of social responsibility attached and the expertise of an architect and vision creates the framework around family structure. Likewise the art of kitchen and bathroom design clearly has a need to create an environment that not only has aesthetic appeal but has a real long term benefits for the consumer.

I strongly believe that design is the catalyst for creation, and both professions are responsible for ensuring that each other recognize those



unique skills that exist within all of us. It is my belief that there is role to be played by both industries in ensuring the consumer is aware of the constant advancements in technology. The owner chooses the architect and the budget. Kitchen and bathroom design is no different; we need each other more so today than at any other time. We need to rely on each others skills, and to do this we need to focus on aligning ourselves with those specialists who not only have the technical ability but the design skill and understanding of aesthetic necessities.

For many, kitchen and bathroom designers fall into one of two categories – lifestyle or career. A career is the sum total of paid and unpaid work, learning and life roles you undertake throughout your life. The term ‘career’ was traditionally associated with paid employment and referred to a single occupation. In today’s world of the kitchen and bathroom designer the term ‘career’ should be seen as a continuous process of learning and development. And I think that’s the key to those that are successful. They constantly recognize that to learn is to grow, to develop as a designer is paramount, to produce pieces of art, useful creative and adaptable pieces of art, secures their career, and therefore their lifestyle.

These designers are the ones who comprehend their own value, and to be honest so do their clients and so do their employers and suppliers.

A designer’s true value to his or her client is simply whatever the client thinks they are worth. There is no objective worth, only each person’s subjective opinion. Worth is like beauty, it’s in the eye of the beholder.

All of you have heard of the “80/20” theory. Generally 80% of the design community earns 50% of the income whilst 20% earn the other 50%. This, in itself, shows that over three quarters of the designers today choose kitchen and bathroom design as a lifestyle. There are those whose time is spent between “design” and “work”. They operate on the theory that “if you can’t create, then work!” Does this work? Do our potential customers pick up on this? They do, and those who succeed in their chosen field appear to project confidence and professionalism at every turn.

Good design is much more than just making something look nice. It’s about taking a considered approach to a design problem in order to find the best solution. A good designer will spend time learning about a project, finding out about the clients needs and wants and trying to marry these up with their end goals. With a clear understanding of the issues at hands, and firm objectives in mind, the designer can start crafting the most appropriate solution.

However all too often people rush into design, with the sole objective of creating something

Good design goes to heaven, bad design goes everywhere.



Designers are meant to be loved, not to be understood.

► that looks nice. This is a fatally flawed approach as looks are extremely subjective. What one designer or client may love, the rest of you may hate. Design decisions need to be made for strategic reasons, but without a clear strategy they are usually decided by personal preference. This leads to a design that may look nice, but fundamentally ignores the strategic needs of the client.

As an industry we need to start educating the public about the value of design and therefore the value of the designer. We need to change people's perception that as a chosen "career" or "lifestyle" there are many things that we must remain vigilant about to ensure that the delivery of value is ever increasing:

We need and must achieve the following:-

- More understanding of the need to get the whole living environment correct.
- Real training and an intimate knowledge of ergonomics
- Some interior architectural skills – a kitchen is no longer something in isolation
- Deeper education in kitchen design theory

- Deeper education in the history of furniture, architecture, home design and the wider aspects of physical culture from fabrics to the use of craft techniques and materials
- Greater understanding of the experience of cooking. But it's not just about the physical act of cooking, it's also about the serving of food, the preparation, the presentation, the sense of the gift.
- A basic grasp of psychology – there is a need to get a better understanding of clients needs and ourselves as individuals. This makes us less defensive, more confident, we are better able to cope with new ideas and subsequently are able to communicate much better

There is no other profession that shapes the very existence of our environment and daily lives towards a more aesthetical, more functional and more livable form than a kitchen or bathroom designer. Education plays a big part in understanding forms and aesthetics. In our school system, the fundamentals of art, form, design, proportions, rhythm, flows, colors, and such are not taught and they should be. Instead, we learn about Vincent van Gogh's missing ear and memorize dates from the lives of artists.

Kitchen and bathroom designers are forming the future of our culture — any design for the inside of the home has to be imagined before it can be planned, constructed, and so on — and today's kitchen and bathroom designers create the world inside the family home as we know it... and always will. The value of your creations, are only as good as your ability to have your client to fully understand your own value.

- Is there value in a kitchen or bathroom designer?
- Is there a future for a kitchen and bathroom designer?
- Is there a real need for a kitchen and bathroom designer?

Of course there is, but the challenge is for your clients to feel that there can be real value adding by dealing with such professionals as we have here today.

Does the design community in this country have value – real and quantifiable value? I have previously stated that here in Australia, this design community is now willing to embrace new concepts much quicker than many other countries and must continue to do so in order to survive and prosper. But it's happening at an ever increasing rate. We have overtaken our cousins across "the ditch", who historically had been more eager to embrace new design theories and material usage. As stated earlier, design is the catalyst for creation; your worth can be related to your ability to deliver. Your clients must understand your expertise – without this they will deny the value, feasibility and truth of your conception.

Your value is your ability to design – you all have it – you must use it wisely, skillfully and then bank it. ■

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Why send apprentices to a TAFE NSW institute?

TAFE TEACHERS are highly experienced trade professionals. They are drawn from the industry, they know the industry, and they maintain a high level of currency and innovation within the industry. In addition, they are fully qualified teachers (not solely assessors) who know how to get the best results out of apprentices, and will always work with them to ensure every opportunity is given to learn and become high class tradespeople.

TAFE students find that their attendance at TAFE is very beneficial to their development as a whole tradesperson. Apprentices form networks and relationships with like-minded individuals and develop skills in teamwork, accountability and commitment.

The teachers work with the employer and understand that every business is different. They ensure that tasks specific to each workplace are reflected in the training environment. They can fill the training "gaps" at modern facilities with the latest equipment and technology and offer hands-on, face to face learning that is second to none. The aim of TAFEs is to provide quality learning experiences and outcomes that enhance and develop the skills apprentices need to work effectively and productively in the workplace.

TAFE NSW support services enhance the learning experience and contribute to successful outcomes for all TAFE students. Training rooms and workshop facilities are first class, and reflect the diverse environments that apprentices will be working in. Students learn using industry standard tools, equipment, and machinery, including CNC machinery and associated software programs. Support services include counselling, libraries and learner support for language literacy and numeracy issues.

TAFE incorporates community projects to train and assess students in 'real life' work situations. Students take responsibility for the whole project from material ordering to installation, and they also learn the importance of skills such as planning, organisation, teamwork, leadership, and quality assurance. Non-profit community groups benefit from this arrangement also, and students develop a sense of 'giving back' to their community.

Certificate III in shopfitting (CPC31811)

This course is designed for apprentices who will be working on the fabrication and installation of a diverse range of commercial and residential joinery products including cabinets; windows and doors; workstations; kitchens; counters; demountable and fixed partitions; shop and office joinery fit-outs; shopfronts; glazing and fix-out.

Shopfitting is a very comprehensive course that covers a wide range of employment situations and workplace environments. This qualification leads directly to eligibility for a joinery contractor's licence, and to part eligibility for the kitchen, bathroom and laundry renovation licence (6 additional units need to be completed as specified by NSW Fair Trading).

Certificate III in cabinetmaking (kitchens and bathrooms) (LMF32109)

This course is designed for apprentices who will be mainly working on the manufacture and installation of commercial and residential joinery products including: kitchens; bathroom and laundry cabinets; built-in and freestanding furniture; benchtops and counters. Cabinetmaking (kitchens and bathrooms) is a specialised course designed for situations directly related to kitchen and bathroom manufacture and installation. This qualification leads directly to eligibility for a joinery contractor's licence, and the part or full eligibility for the kitchen, bathroom and laundry renovation licence (dependent on course structure and elective options).

To find out more information about TAFE courses visit www.tafensw.edu.au or give TAFE staff a call and they will be more than happy to discuss study and training options to suit the business and the apprentice. ■

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Lidcombe student Nick Sheils operates a flat panel processing saw.



Riverina Institute teacher Steve Forbes-Taber reviews some project plans with shopfitting students Tom Bottcher, Paul Worsley and Nathanael Dudley.



Lidcombe College student Ben Jabornik operates one of the CNC flatbed routers.

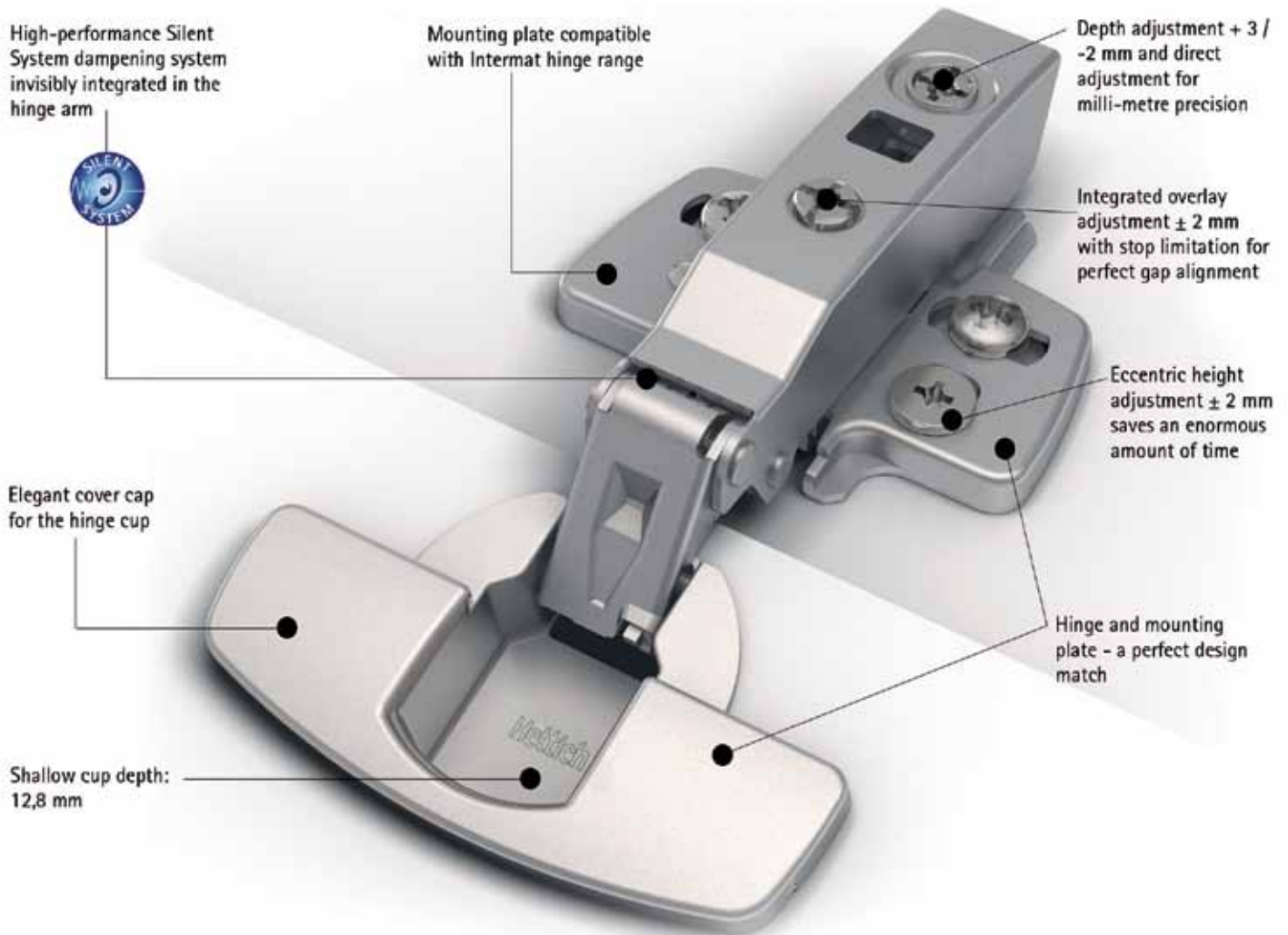
Lidcombe College teacher Paul Kubisch checks student Daniel Grant's programming prior to operating CNC router.



Wagga Wagga shopfitting student Tom Bottcher installs a kicker.



Wagga Wagga shopfitting student Ben Wealands assembles an aluminium shopfront frame.



Sensys for integrated soft close

Sensys is Hettich's award-winning hinge with integrated soft close and perfect silent close action. As soon as the open angle of a door reaches 35° the unique pull-in function of Sensys hinges closes the door gently.

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- German engineered for superb function
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Well-designed, quality hardware fittings backed by a genuine manufacturer's warranty are crucial to achieving premium cabinetry results built to last. These are the qualities that make Hettich products, including its Sensys range of hinges, a preferred choice for the industry.

"Sensys has become a well-established integrated soft-close hinge in Australia and is continues to grow based on good customer and end-user uptake, and dedicated customer support," says Hettich marketing manager, Mr Dave Angus.

"Sensys is taking a leading position in the market, both in Australia and internationally, and continues to lead the way with its lifetime warranty and full replacement guarantee," says Dave.

The Sensys integrated soft-close hinge system offers innovative design both in an aesthetic and functional sense. The dampening function creates peaceful spaces in busy homes, by dampening banging doors no matter how hard they are closed.

Hettich's award-winning range of soft-close hinges are the perfect addition to any storage project, with Sensys hinges available for all main door mounting options, and capable of soft closing a door from an angle of 35 degrees.

Featuring award winning European design, Sensys hinge systems are manufactured with the highest quality materials to the exacting standards for which German manufacturers are renowned.

"Hettich is a family-owned German company with a 100-year proud tradition of being at the forefront of new concepts and design trends," says Dave Angus. "As a leading supplier of stylish, efficient and innovative hardware and fittings, Hettich products make living spaces work beautifully."



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The ASOFIA National Conference will be held at the Intercontinental Fiji Golf Resort and Spa.

Australian Shop and Office Fitting Industry Association to host National Conference in Fiji

The Australian Shop and Office Fitting Industry Association (ASOFIA) will host its 17th National Conference in Fiji on 27-30 April 2012. Themed, "Leadership, Change and You", the conference will provide valuable insights into steering businesses through the current economic climate.

Occurring once every 18 months, the conference is a significant event in the shop and office fitting industry calendar. Catering specifically to members and industry professionals, it provides tangible opportunities to develop relationships with key industry suppliers, network with like-minded business leaders, get updated on the latest developments and take time out to consider the broader industry issues affecting shop fitting related businesses.

Having been involved with the development and delivery of ASOFIA's past ten conferences, CEO Gerard Ryan knows first-hand the impact attending the conference has on attendees. "The conference provides unparalleled networking opportunities, which are particularly useful to sponsors, not just to promote their products and services, but also to engage with potential customers," said Mr Ryan.

The conference is supported by leading Australian businesses; the Laminex Group, Polyflor, Biesse Australia, Mirage Doors, Positive Energy Electrical and Samsung Staron have all come onboard as sponsors.

"Taking time away from the responsibilities of everyday working life, provides a unique



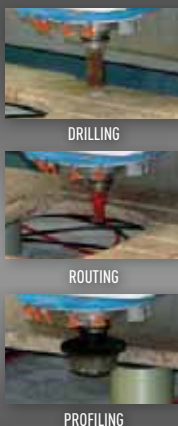
opportunity for business owners to step outside their day-to-day perspectives and consider their options for the future," said Mr Ryan.

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Ongoing commitment to training

Altendorf is committed to ongoing training for its technicians to provide the high quality service that comes with the name.

With Altendorf Germany technician Bjorn Konemann leading the training, these technicians work through a range of new diagnostic technologies and familiarise themselves with the latest innovations to stay ahead of the ever evolving generations of Altendorf machines. The outcome focused training emphasises cost effective servicing practises, maintenance tailored to meet each customer's individual requirements and providing maximum utilisation at minimal cost.

In the coming months, Altendorf Asia Pacific technicians will also be travelling to Altendorf Germany headquarters for training among their German counterparts.

"High quality equipment demands high quality support," says Vit Kafka, general manager of Altendorf Asia Pacific. "We have and will always continue to invest in our technicians to offer unparalleled quality in our after sales support."

Apart from training days, Altendorf's technicians are always on the road and provide support for most areas of Australia, and will ensure that machinery runs at its best condition.

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Training day 5 - Altendorf Service Team:
Duy Doan, Leo Tsiprin-Reznik, Glenn Nierves, Bjorn Konemann, Jeffrey Napper, Trevor Clifford and Brad Garvey).



New location

As part of the latest developments at Altendorf Asia Pacific, its Sydney headquarters has relocated to brand new premises. Located just minutes away from the M5 corridor, the head office is now situated at Building D, 12 Rose Street, Campbelltown NSW 2560.

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Why no real standard means no fair play

CAST YOUR minds back to 1995/96 – its only 15 to 16 years ago – and try and remember what business in the kitchen sector was like.

I'll give you a prompt – here's my recollection:

- Almost all kitchen renovations were done by going through your local cabinetmaker – and we had all sorts of rules to comply with such as maximum deposits, licencing, 7 year statutory warranties, and a compulsory home warranty insurance that was characterised by an extremely poor value proposition.
- Those kitchen renovations were almost universally supply and install – there were very few supply-only contracts. Most kitchens were fully bespoke.
- DIY shows were really only just starting, and cabinetmaking was seen as tradesmen's work.
- Very little imported cabinetry was offered for sale and hardware stores had not really reached into this market space.
- In NSW, household kitchens names included Customtone Kitchens, Barnsley Joinery, Nouvelle Kitchens and Nobby Kitchens to name a few.
- The exchange rate comparison was \$1AUS to \$0.70US.
- 1996 saw the publishing of a new standard for kitchens – AS4386.1 (assemblies) and AS4386.2 (Installations)

Now let's move forward a few years to today:

- Kitchens sold and installed by compulsorily-licenced cabinetmakers are required to be insured, subject to a cost threshold, and

the cabinetmaker has to give an extended warranty to the homeowner and subsequent purchasers of the home where that kitchen was installed – in the case of Victoria for example – its an effective 10 year guarantee.

- Kitchens bought through an auction house, over the internet, or through a hardware store come without an installation contract, and no 10 years warranty is required. Further, because DIY is usually involved, the warranty in some cases can be an effective period of zero years.
- DIY shows are plentiful, with TV audiences being sold the fantasy that flat pack assembly and kitchen installation is a piece of cake.
- Kitchens imported over the internet are also given a free ride by an incompetent government approach and are exempted from GST where the modules are priced less than \$1000. There are instances where people have imported entire kitchens, including marble bench-tops, using the modular method to escape GST.
- Cabinet doors and panels can be made to look impressively shiny and new, thanks to the wonders of vacuum forming and polyurethane. These surface coatings have the power to camouflage both high quality and also poor quality substrate – both HMR and non-HMR, and also E0, E1 and even E99 board.
- Sales of kitchen cabinetry through overseas internet sites, hardware stores and auction houses has just begun to boom.
- The variety of products available has increased enormously, including advances (in some cases anyway) of re-constituted stone benches, vinyls, glass, acrylics and also cabinet hardware.

- A significant area of consumer disputation involves cabinetry, including cabinets for kitchens and similar projects.
- The \$AUS exchange rate dynamic has altered such that \$AUS1.00 now buys \$US1.08 – that's an increase of almost 55%!
- Meanwhile, bureaucrats in Federal and State Government have not reacted to the enormous inequity that now exists in the kitchen market place.

today is a different world...

The point I am labouring to get to is – today is a different world than when it was 15 years ago.

We desperately need to review the AS Standard for Kitchen Assemblies AS4386.1 – if we are fair dinkum and we accept that the market needs a better standard.

In late February 2012 Standards Australia convened the first meeting to get the process of reviewing AS4386.1 underway. This project has been led by Victorian Cabinet Makers Association, closely supported by Furnishing Industry Association of Australia, Engineered Wood Products Association of Australia and Western Australia Cabinet Makers Association.

From my personal point of view, a revised AS Standard will only be the first part of considerable action that needs to be done to correct the current market failure in kitchens and the government failure in market stewardship.

My personal view is that once we have an up-to-date standard, we then need to either enforce that standard, through its inclusion as mandatory in the National Construction Code (formerly the Building Code of Australia), or be



MARTIN LEWIS,
CEO of Furnishing Industry Association of
Australia Ltd



creating sufficient market influence to ensure its widespread adoption.

Late last year, FIAA became involved in the case where a large national builder had sub-standard joinery and kitchens installed in a large NSW Housing Department project in regional NSW. The product was really cheap stuff imported from China. Some of the product failed miserably in the first few weeks following completion. At least one worker had to receive serious medical attention following illness apparently arising out of working some of the board product. Only after considerable argy-bargy, did both the NSW Government and the builder do the right thing – ripping

out the entire complement of 130+ kitchens and letting out a new contract to an Australian supplier supplying quality panel product in its cabinetry.

But why does it have to get to this stage?

There are plenty of other issues which I believe a revised standard will provide some assistance in resolving.

Foremost in my mind are some of these questions:

- Will there be product failure in many of those shiny cabinets and shiny cabinet doors bought from internet sites, auction houses and hardware and retail stores in the next few years and will that mean a

calamity of consumer claims in the next few years?

- Will bureaucrats continue to stick their heads in the sand and do nothing to address the inequity to cabinet makers arising out of what they must provide in the way of licencing, guarantees, joke insurance and cash flow restrictions, all this leading to a higher cost base for cabinetmakers when compared to their competitors in the kitchen space?

Above all else – what should a revised kitchen standard include?

Love to hear your thoughts – email me at mlewis@fiaa.com.au ■

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Blum's unique opening system for waste pull-outs available now

Servo-Drive Uno makes waste disposal and separation straightforward in kitchens. The electric opening support system is easy to mount and available as an individual set.

"How often have you been in the middle of cooking when you have needed to open the pull-out to your bin with your hands full? Servo-Drive Uno is a handy solution that can be opened with just a light touch with your hip, knee or foot. Dirty, wet or full hands are no longer a problem", says Alicia Draper, Blum marketing communications manager.

Servo-Drive Uno is very easy to mount and is available as a pre-assembled set for standing waste separation systems. Blum also has a solution for hanging waste separation systems to ensure that waste pull-outs can be opened with ease. They close again softly and effortlessly with tried and tested Blumotion soft-close.

"The waste pull-out is the most frequently used pull-out in the kitchen. We recommend Servo-Drive Uno is used as a standard feature in the cleaning zone to make work in the kitchen easier and more comfortable", comments Draper.

Furniture with and without handles can be opened with ease with Blum's Servo-Drive Uno electric opening system – not only in the kitchen, but throughout the home. The Blum Servo-Drive Uno set consists of a pre-assembled Servo-Drive unit, comprising of a drive unit, attachment



brackets, drip guard, bumpers and plug power supply including cabling. Instructions have also been enclosed to further facilitate assembly.

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Top: Servo-Drive Uno is a handy solution that can be opened with just a light touch with your hip, knee or foot.

Left: Dirty, wet or full hands are no longer a problem with Servo-Drive Uno.

The next generation



Imagine the ideal nesting machine – versatile, simple and great value.

Then imagine all the ways that value can be added to products – machine benchtops, stairs, solid timber, plastics, signwriting and even machining for pre-hung doors.

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Compact: "What you see is what you get." No additional mats, fences or light cells. The patented Morbidelli safety system gives this machine a uniquely small footprint. This makes the Morbidelli Pratic S the most compact and user friendly machine in its class, perfect for workshops with limited space as it requires less than 17 square metres.

Safe: Thanks to the protection system mounted directly to the beam. The system allows direct access to 3 sides of the worktable. Advanced R&D techniques have allowed for a design incorporating all the operating equipment

within the base. The control cabinets, vacuum pumps, cabling are all hidden and protected – making for a very user friendly environment.

Easy to use: The Morbidelli Pratic S series feature the new award winning 'Tecpad' remote control with 7" display. New operating and nesting software are all inclusive – for seamless downloads.

Affordable: A great value price, with many finance options available. This machine will cost significantly less than the minimum wage, however will give much greater value. It's a lot cheaper than many think for a genuine European built machining centre.



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Leitz opens full sharpening service centre in New Zealand

Leitz Tooling NZ Limited has opened a new sharpening service centre located at Penrose in Auckland. This is a further step in the Leitz strategic concept of expanding the international service network. Currently Leitz has over 200 sharpening centres located in five continents. Australia has four centres located in Brisbane, Sydney, Perth and Melbourne. This is the first Leitz sharpening centre for New Zealand and includes a full service diamond sharpening with the latest diamond sharpening machine from the company Vollmer.

The chairman of Leitz, Dr Dieter Brucklacher, stated "one of our main aims is to provide Leitz customers worldwide with service support within calling distance of our sales offices". He said that "in terms of service cover, Leitz has already achieved much and this new sharpening centre will give us even closer customer contact in this market"

The new centre has the facilities to sharpen all types of diamond tools, saw blades, profiling of knives, balancing of tools and more, all with state of the art German machines especially designed for woodwork cutting tools which can maintain the tools to original specifications over the life of the tool. This combined with the ability to service the large range of nesting tools now in the market.

The Leitz service package includes a pickup and delivery service within the Auckland area.

Following the retirement of Karl Stachel, Leitz has appointed Robert Carey as the new New Zealand manager. Rob has worked for Leitz for the past eighteen years and is one of the senior sales and technical staff in the Leitz group throughout the Asia Pacific region.

Today Leitz products are used in more than 150 countries around the world, with 10 production plants, 37 international sales companies and 200 sharpening centres.



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International award for Leitz

At the TopMóbile competition in Brazil, Leitz won the first prize of the leading magazine of the woodworking sector in Brazil. In a market survey, the magazine questioned 400 Brazilian furniture and wood derived material manufacturers and asked which suppliers they preferred. Leitz was the best performer in the category of tools – with a margin of votes of more than 16 percent in comparison to the second place. Leitz won the prize for the fifth time in succession.

For Vitor Ledur, managing director of Leitz Brazil, the prize of the TopMóbile competition is something special. Whereas most prizes are awarded by an expert jury, the results of the TopMóbile competition only are determined by the customer. "The prize is a great compliment from our customers," thinks Ledur. "It shows

that Leitz is doing a good job in Brazil."

Brazil is one of the most important markets of the woodworking sector and is characterised by stable and lasting growth. Dr. Dieter Brucklacher, chairman of the Leitz Management Board, assumes that this process will continue. In the past, high investment sums were spent on the secondary wood-working level i.e. on sectors that follow the cutting of the raw material. "From this, great chances result for suppliers, including tool manufacturers such as Leitz," estimates Dr. Brucklacher. "These chances we will use."

Since 1979, Leitz has a sales and production subsidiary in Brazil. Here, the company produces tools for wood and plastic processing, especially tailored for the local market. In 2011,



Maristela Longhi (right) of the Brazilian Furniture Trades Association Abimóvel hands the prize over to Vitor Ledur, managing director of Leitz Brazil.

Leitz had a turnover growth in Brazil of more than 22 percent in comparison to the year before.

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by Barbara Shultz

The flood recovery – one year on

FURNITURE CONCEPTS' managing director Franz Braun has proved to the world that doing things a little differently in Queensland, Australia, pays off. After the commercial joinery was totally immersed in the Queensland floods earlier this year, the company recovered back to production thanks to the great Aussie spirit which saw more than a hundred volunteers help to get the business back on track. Equipment supplier Homag Australia was among the major supporters, donating engineers and loan machines to make sure the company got back into production as soon as possible.

As the Queensland flood's trail of destruction worked its way south towards Ipswich and Brisbane in January 2011, the industrial hub of Rocklea saw the waters peak at 4.5 metres, submerging many suburbs and leaving many companies hard hit.

Businesses said they stood to lose an average of \$908,000 or 13% of their annual turnover immediately after the floods and Cyclone Yasi, along with significant job losses. One in five Queensland businesses had to close due to partial or full inundation by floodwaters, loss of power, or access cuts to their premises.

Franz Braun's commercial joinery Furniture Concepts was out of action for more than 5 weeks, without power or phones, but the flood-hit company managed to keep all its 50 staff and the 10,000m² production facility is now back to about 80% of its pre-flood capacity. But it wouldn't be where it is now without the tremendous support from friends, neighbours, business colleagues,

government agencies, teams from his bank, NAB, and equipment suppliers such as Homag Australia, Mr Braun emphasises.

"It is difficult to comprehend the damage," he says. "Not only was all our machinery, stock and material destroyed after the water level peaked at about 2.5 meters in our factory, but fixtures and fitting have also been damaged and even ceilings had to be stripped bare. The re-build is still going on."

If nothing else, the January floods showed that no matter how bad things get, there's nearly always a helping hand close by, and it was astounding the different places where help appeared, Mr Braun says. The major concern was to get the machines back into production, but the flood damage was immense, and it takes a lot of patience, hours and expertise to strip not only the mechanical parts, but also electronics and motors apart, clean out the mud and eventually reassemble all equipment to a working state.

"It took around 400 man hours per machine to fix, the labour content was enormous," Mr Braun says. "Without Homag's and many of our other suppliers' ongoing support we couldn't have done it as no insurance covered the costs. Homag Australia's managing director Ross Campbell, local sales team leader Mark Vowles and their entire team have been extremely helpful. Without them we wouldn't be here today."

"Furniture Concepts is certainly one of our major local customers here in Australia," comments Mr Vowles. "They run 13 of our machines, from Holzma saws, Weeke CNC



machining centres, Homag edgbanding machines to a Bargstedt panel storage system TLF410, which had only just been installed before the floods."

The company decided to invest in the Bargstedt storage system in November 2009 after touring various factories during a Homag Open-House event in Germany. Furniture Concepts' cornerstone is the production of quality, locally crafted office furniture and seating, and the system's ability to control all stock, orders and off-cuts has improved the company's cash flow, which is of paramount importance for any business.

"With the Bargstedt we managed to increase our production by 60-70%," Furniture Concepts' general manager Michael Madden says. "Cash flow had also improved because the system's coordination of job planning and purchasing means you order only what you really need. And then the whole storage system went under water, all the boards were floating across the fence, it was a complete disaster."

The automated system doesn't only control all stock, but also feeds one of the most important machines in every furniture factory: the beam saw. The HDL 380 angular system cuts entire books of panels, fully automatically. "We had to get that machine running," comments Mr Braun, "otherwise





Homag Australia sales team leader Mark Vowles (left) and the entire Homag team helped Furniture Concept's Franz Braun to smile again after the devastating floods.

we would have had to give up. If we don't cut, we cannot do anything in our factory."

But the Homag team and many volunteers managed to save all machines but one older model, and with the help of all suppliers and even competitors – who not only offered Mr Braun to manufacture parts in their factories, but also shipped up essential machines such as a saw and an edgebander – Furniture Concepts managed to keep its doors open and survive together with all staff.

"Ross and Thomas from Homag supported us a lot, there was also heaps of support from Germany," Mr Braun says. "In fact, the head office recommended to give up one of our Holzma machines, they couldn't see a chance to accomplish the enormous task of refurbishing it. One major issue was the acid in the water, which corroded all the circuit boards."

But the Queensland company was not prepared to give anything up. "Giving up was never an option," Mr Braun emphasises. "We wanted to prove the Germans wrong and repair our machine; and two weeks later it was running again! That was the best thing that happened to us. That was the turning point, everybody in here wanted it to work again, nobody gave up."

Furniture Concepts' recovery has been won through hard work, determination, dedication and supplier innovation. "Thank you," Mr Braun concludes. "Together with all our supporters we will work through all the immense challenges ahead. We will take at least a year to get to full production, but at least we could keep all our employees and we've actually employed two more apprentices. Yes, business is tough but we're getting great support, everybody helps." ■

Design and build it all in Microvellum



Complete Software Solutions has announced that it now has computer aided design and manufacturing solutions available for almost any woodworking manufacturer.

For the first time ever, manufacturers can now have an automated, tailored solution that will design almost anything for both domestic and/or commercial applications.

From these designs, the system can generate quotes, cut lists, optimised patterns and machine specific G-code for almost any CNC available on the Australian and New Zealand market. All of this is achievable within the Microvellum system, no third party machine or optimisation software is required.

The advantages of only having to learn and maintain one system for whatever needs doing are enormous. It is estimated the system usually pays for itself in productivity gains within six months of purchase.

Kitchen manufacturers can now produce extremely high quality renderings, along with accurate and detailed quotes. The kitchen library has a solution for any cabinet that could possibly be thought of. The system also comes with instant 2D dimensioned drawings for architects or for use by the assemblers and installers.

Wardrobe companies now have the ability to design any style of wardrobe, aluminium frame, timber sliding or hinged in front of the client and wow them with professional quotations. The job can then be emailed to the office for same day manufacturing.

Office furniture companies can purchase the office furniture library, which will give most office furniture companies an out of the box design and manufacturing solution that embraces the latest manufacturing technologies or can produce traditional cam and dowel styles of manufacturing.

Commercial fit out companies can design complex and unusual reception counters, unique storage systems and produce high quality plan and elevation drawings for clients and architects.

Staircase manufacturers can now take advantage of a fully CNC ready library that will build almost any standard stair configuration, out of the box. Microvellum has already been adopted by some of the largest stair manufacturers in Australia.

Window and door companies can quickly and easily generate quotes for both standard and custom designs. The quotes can be accompanied with dimensioned drawings or detailed rendered images. Microvellum can then generate manual cut lists, or link to a CNC chisel mortiser, point to point or the tiger stop automatic pusher.

Shop fitters can benefit from a library of fully customisable dump bins, magazine racks, banquet seating that will build any conceivable shape in seconds and slat wall gondolas. Custom building tools allow users to only be limited by their imagination.

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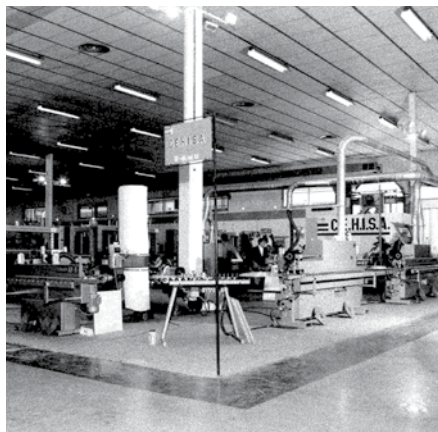
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Bryko – European quality by Cehisa

Founded in 1956, Cehisa is a family company based near Caldes de Montbui some thirty kilometres north of the Spanish city of Barcelona. This once agricultural district boasts a vast history with the continuing presence of monuments constructed by the ancient Romans. Today there is a bustling modern economy with an array of industrial and residential built up areas. In turn the machinery manufacturing company Cehisa, pronounced in Australia as 'sah-he-sah', was originally established to produce an array of basic woodworking machinery. However over the years the company has prospered to become an internationally renowned business completely devoted to the production of edgebanding machinery. From 1975 the Cehisa brand commenced distributing around the world on five continents and in 2006 Cehisa celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Now managed by the second generation of family members, Cehisa edgebanders are considered a leading product for quality and design innovation within every market where they are represented.

Traditionally Cehisa's core business was the manufacture of large industrial edgebanders suited to high level production workshops. For example the Cehisa 800 series is able to apply twenty two millimetre thick edge strip with ease. After developing and resolving these industrial types of machinery, Cehisa realised a market opportunity to produce a medium to small edgebander that carried all the features of their big brothers. In 2009 Cehisa released the first range of



Bryko edgebanders pronounced 'bree - co', these compact machines revolutionised edgebanding with their array of standard features, quality of build and cost effective pricing. Since the initial launch of Bryko several models have been released, the latest offering being the Bryko PC Plus. The PC Plus is the most comprehensive machine in the series with its combination of simplistic design and solid reliability matched with a full suite of machining applications.

Equipped as standard is a diamond tool pre-milling unit. Edging of freshly cut composite boards needs to occur immediately to achieve a perfectly flat edge as swelling can occur due to atmospheric moisture. Pre-milling means the edge is trimmed as the edge material is applied thus a perfect finish is guaranteed. Pre-milling also assists in elimination of glue lines and the operator does not need to distinguish between top and bottom faces of the panels. The PC Plus is supplied with a Teflon coated hot-melt glue tank fitted with an electronic thermostat. The Teflon coating makes cleaning the unit very straightforward and the thermostat assists in accurately managing glue temperature throughout the working day. Automatic feeding for strips up to 2mm thickness is standard so a single operator can load and unload the machine on ninety five percent of projects. A nice touch is the high frequency twin saw end trim unit. Unlike guillotine trimmers, saw trim units will not stretch the edge material which results in creeping of the applied tape. After trimming each edge is then finished off with corner rounding, again another standard feature which enhances the final result. As would be expected the PC Plus has top and bottom trimming unit, horizontal / vertical tracers and numerical indicators for adjustments, there is a LCD control display for easy viewing. Surface buffers are also standard which give that "ready to hang" result. Brought together all these features pack a real punch for the smaller operator giving them leverage against the larger manufacturer.

Gregory Machinery Pty Ltd is the Australian distributor of the Cehisa brand and will be exhibiting the Bryko range at the upcoming



AWISA event this July in Sydney. Visitors will have the opportunity to see these machines in action and to discuss with Gregory Machinery's sales consultants the ways in which the Bryko range can develop their manufacturing processes.

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Top: Double end saw trimming station

Left: Cehisa factory circa 1973

Below: The Bryko PC Plus



Ahead of the curve

EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY has led three Queensland companies through good and hard times to remarkable success.

Queensland Factory Direct Office Furniture has spent the last 25 years building its reputation – and its success – on a passion for manufacturing. Founded in 1986, the company specialised in selling second-hand furniture, including fridges or washing machines. As the 1980s drew to a close, company director Rod Verney and his father and partner Garry knew that if their Gabba-based business was to survive, it was going to have to undergo a paradigm shift in the way it did business.

No longer, they felt, could Queensland Factory Direct be content to compete in the second-hand business where it had grown up. So the partners continually folded their money back into the company and invested in second-hand machinery to produce their own office furniture. By 1998, Queensland Factory Direct was also a proud owner of a new panel saw and a Homag edgebander.

Today, the company owns a good-sized factory in Sumner Park, Brisbane, running two panel saws, a Weeke CNC processing centre and a brand new Homag edgebander, installed in June 2011.

While his old edgebander was still doing a good job, it couldn't keep up with the workload anymore, and Rod Verney felt it was time to replace the obsolete machine with a new state-of-the-art Brandt Ambition 1650FC edgebander.

Investment in technology pays off

The edgebanding process is a critical and important process in every cabinet making business, and investing in

only the best technology pays off. With capital remaining as a primary basis of competition, companies that get the greatest return on their capital investments will win. Rod knows that.

"Brandt edgebanders are not the cheapest machines you can buy, but in the end they are very reliable, they don't break down," he says. "The amount of downtime we've had in the last ten years is virtually zero. There is nothing worse than buying a machine and knowing you have another five years paying it off and it's not doing what you want it to do. You don't want your machines to be an anchor around your neck!"

Brandt produces over 2000 edgebanding machines per year, and a high degree of standardisation in combination with an advanced manufacturing process and more than 50 years of engineering experience ensure state of the art quality customers like Rod are looking for in order to survive in a fiercely competitive market. Every market in the world is unique though, hence Brandt edgebanders sold in Australia are purpose-built to the specifications required by the local market, which is characterised by batch-size-one runs and constant change of machine set-ups.

The machine is equipped with a precision gluing unit, a tiltable end trim saw and a multifunctional top/bottom trimming unit, as well as a contour trimming unit. Brandt ensures a perfect finish by the use of a radius scraper and a buffing unit. A perfect finish is what every competitive shop needs; the less work that has to be performed after the edgebanding process, the higher the productivity.

"Our customers increasingly expect bespoke products finished to a very high standard, all at value for money prices," Rod explains. "The new Brandt edgebander helps us achieve this. The consistency of the finish is outstanding. Every time you feed a panel into the machine you can rest assured you get a good edge and the parts are ready for assembly. It is a big time saving factor for us!"

Pre-milling option saves time and money

In the past, Rod Verney and his team had to clean the glue off after the process and file the edges, as the old machine didn't have the advanced features mentioned above. One of the most important new features, however, is the pre-milling unit incorporated into the Brandt Ambition edgebanders.

Most joineries or cabinet makers deal with materials that are inconsistent, the board thickness varies all along the cut edge of a panel, and the edge strip thickness and shape varies all through the roll. The ambient temperature, the glue temperature and humidity also have an effect on the

Queensland Factory Direct Office Furniture's Director Rodeny Verney knows that investing in only the best technology pays off. "Brandt edgebanders are not the cheapest machines you can buy, but in the end they are very reliable, they don't break down," he says.



State-of-the-art edgebanders enable cabinet makers and joineries to remain competitive

performance of applying and post-processing the edge strip. Pre-milling remedies this problem by recutting the edge immediately prior to the edgeband being applied. In this way, users have a fresh clean edge for maximum glue bond with an edge that has no chance to reflect the ambient humidity.

"When the boards come off the saw, they are not always perfectly cut, for example if the saw blade gets a bit blunt, you get a chipped-out effect," Rod explains. "Today we don't have to worry about the edge quality too much anymore, because the pre-miller takes around 2mm off the board before applying the edge strip. When Mark from Homag Australia introduced this new feature to me, I thought we didn't really need it, but after we've had it I know that's the only way to go!"

Straight to the customer

Peter Cali from Ross Joinery Kitchens in Townsville, Queensland, has a similar story to tell. He admits that he has always been "anti pre-milling" in the past, but since he installed his 6th Brandt edgebander about four weeks ago, he thinks differently. "I am very glad Homag convinced me of the pre-milling option," he says. "We get a much better finish and don't have to touch any of the edging anymore after the boards come out of the edgebander."

Ross Joinery Kitchens has the history, the experience, the products and the management team to meet any of the challenges they encounter on the road to success. When Mr Cali's father founded the company in 1948, he was manufacturing timber windows and doors. From the 1970s, however, he made the transition to kitchen manufacturing, as aluminium slowly took over in windows and doors. Today, Ross Joinery Kitchens supplies local builders around Townsville with professional kitchens, which makes up 90% of the business.

Smart planning and major capital investments have transformed Ross Joinery Kitchens into this true powerhouse in the kitchen manufacturing industry in northern Queensland. Mr Cali knows his industry is a very competitive one, and the only way to remain competitive is through continuous investment in state-of-the-art machinery and automation.

"With our 30 staff, we run six ten-hour shifts per week and plan, build and install four kitchens a day," he says. "As a result we need to be as productive as possible and need reliable machinery. The edgebander we recently installed is our 6th one, because I replace them every five years. It is a very important piece of machinery in our production process."

Mr Cali says he doesn't consider buying any other brand edgebander than Brandt supplied by Homag Australia. "I feel it is the best edgebander, it does the best job, the best finish, and Homag has got a good backup service."

Moreover, the new Brandt Ambition 1650FC is much more productive than the previous generation. For companies like Ross Joinery Kitchens reliability and just-in-time delivery is of overarching importance. They have to proactively seek solutions to the challenges they are facing and make things happen for their customers.

Perfect finish

"The new machine is a lot faster," Mr Cali says. "We are producing 1.5 times quicker these days, easy. There are no more stockpiles waiting to get through the edgebander anymore, and we get the same work done in six instead of eight hours. Moreover, thanks to new technology and the pre-miller, the finish off the machine is 100% better. The glue line is excellent and the edge rounding works better, too."



Today, Mr Cali's shopfloor staff can concentrate on other tasks than filing or cleaning the edges, and the machine is so fast that he is considering investing into an automatic return system, such as the Homag ZHR 02 Boomerang system. The system permits one-man operation at one-sided edge banding machines and was particularly developed for the requirements of small and medium-sized enterprises such as Excel Lockers based in Richlands, Queensland.

Reliable CNC machinery to deliver the promise

Excel also recently installed a new Brandt edgebander and decided the Boomerang return system would even give them a better ROI and boost their production capacity. "With this new Boomerang system, one person can now operate all of our edgebanding," national sales and project manager



Tony Downes from Excel Lockers recently replaced his old edgebander with a Brandt Ambition 1650FC edgebander and doesn't look back. "With our new edgebander we can virtually go straight from the machine to fit the door, there is no further edge cleaning required."

► Tony Downes says. "We operate nation-wide and also export our lockers to Dubai and Afghanistan, we supply to the Australian defence force and Federal Police, but also deliver our lockers to mines, hotels or hospitals, such as the new Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. As a result, we need reliable CNC equipment to deliver what we promise."

The Boomerang return system takes over the workpieces leaving the edgebander via a roller track. When the rear edge of the workpiece has left the machine, it is lifted by several supports and is transversely transferred to the second roller track segment.

The Boomerang return system takes over the workpieces leaving the edgebander via a roller track. As soon as the rear edge of the workpiece has left the machine, the same is lifted by several supports and is transversely transferred to the second roller track segment and put down there.

This second roller track segment is arranged in the opposite direction to the first roller track segment and it is 65 mm lower in height than the first roller track segment. After this cross conveying segment, the parts are returned by a conveyor belt and arrive at the operator's place onto a non-driven roller track section.



"Since we started the company we've only had Homag machinery, and we rely on them," Mr Downes says. "We buy Homag and Brandt brands because of their reliability and quality. We recently replaced our old edgebander – which wasn't really old, only three years – with a new one to achieve faster production times and improve the level of finish."

Outstanding quality

Excel Lockers' Brandt Ambition edgebander also features the pre-milling unit and much like his peers, Mr Downes is amazed by the production benefits and quality the machine is able to deliver. And as the name already suggests, quality is one of the company's mainstays.

"Excel's designs are favoured for their versatility, durability and outstanding quality," Mr Downes says. "Most of our doors are edged with 2mm PVC and it is vital that our edgebander can edge these doors perfectly. The Brandt does an amazing job using the new servo controller corner rounding unit."

Because the company demands a high quality finish, they always used to hand finish the edges. "But with the Brandt Ambition we don't have to touch them anymore," Mr Downes says. "With that machine we can virtually go straight from the edgebander to fit the door, there is no further cleaning required. The controller is very easy to operate and because of the pre-miller, we can run our CNC cutting machines a bit faster, which improves our efficiency and guarantees a very good return on investment!"

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Paradise goes automatic to improve production

When demand was beginning to outweigh production, Wessam and Bassam Issa of Paradise Kitchens considered whether nesting was the solution they were after.

Paradise Kitchens was founded by Alex Issa almost 24 years ago. Manufacturers of kitchens, bathrooms, vanities and laundries, they supply direct to the public, builders and tradesmen as well as home owners and self-renovators. The company is now run by Alex's sons, Wessam and Bassam Issa, who took over from Alex a few years ago.

In October 2011, Wessam and Bassam found that demand was beginning to outweigh their production capabilities with their current factory equipment. Their previous factory set up was comprised of a beamsaw and a point to point machine, which meant production involved staff manually loading machines and supervising them as they ran. The brothers began to investigate their options and considered that nesting may be the correct solution for their factory to keep up with the market.

The evaluation process led them to research the factors that were most important to them and their production needs. These factors included an appropriate running speed, the size of the main spindle head, size of the working table, automatic zoning of the vacuum table, a large drill head and of course the price to quality ratio. They found that in all these areas, Biesse came out on top. In fact, Biesse was able to supply the largest spindle head on the market and a wide choice of table sizes.

In early December 2011, the Issa brothers made the decision to invest in a BiesseArtech numerically controlled machining centre. The package they purchased includes the BiesseArtech Skill 1536 which has a 5' x 12 table size, sweeping arm, automatic loading, outfeed conveyor

and includes BiesseWorks, BiesseNest and spreadsheet software.

"We were impressed that the machine was fully automatic, all software was supplied by Biesse and was user friendly. Most importantly, it could be run by one operator who now does both programming and machining. This reduced our staff from 5 men to just 3 on the production floor, reducing long term costs."

Now the operator can leave the machine to run on its own without supervision and in the meantime he can attend to other tasks, such as running the edgebander or writing programs for the next job. The BiesseArtech Skill will nest and drill all in the one operation reducing the need for double handling.

When purchasing a new machine, another important factor is any delay the change will have on production, both during and after installation as well as after-sales service. "The installation of the machine was a smooth transition even though we chose to do it in December; the Christmas period is one of the busiest times of the year for us. The operator received full training by the technician so there was very little disruption to production."

"Service was also a big deal to us; we needed to know that we could rely on the service department. From the installation of the machine in December, we have been very happy with the support and fast turnaround we've received from Biesse."

The purchase of an automatic numerically controlled machining centre has resulted in a 60% increase in production within just a few months for Paradise Kitchens. They are now running 70-90 sheets per day and meeting demand even in their busiest times. Wessam and Bassam's are positive that choosing to invest in a nesting solution was the right decision for their production floor.



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Organise wardrobes with Hideaway Bins storage systems



Wardrobes are notorious for quickly becoming cluttered and disorganised. To organise this space, Hideaway Bins offer many simple and stylish storage solutions. Precious wardrobe space can easily be regained by installing a Hideaway Bin. Clothing, soft toys, makeup and other items can be neatly tucked away but are still easily accessible when required.

Hideaway Bins are an intelligent, space-saving solution, designed with detail and made of high quality materials, making them ideal for any area of the home. Wardrobes come in many different sizes and shapes so Hideaway have a range of configurations available to suit the space such as single and double bucket models.

For larger wardrobes such as walk-in wardrobes where space is ample, why not install a 50 litre Hideaway Bin as a hidden laundry basket. An organisational system for sorting shoes, laundry and other bits and bobs can also be achieved by installing a double 15 litre bucket system such as the KC30D. Alternatively, two units can be stacked one above the other to create the ultimate four-bin storage system.

For those with a smaller wardrobe, a single 15 litre bin from the Hideaway Compact range is ideal. The compact design makes them perfect for smaller spaces while creating a modern touch and simplifying the home. Available in handle pull or drawer pull; great for limited space areas; an easy solution for

storing children's toys such as blocks; and the high quality tracks have a dynamic weight loading of 40kg.

Whether it's for a child's room or the master bedroom, there is a Hideaway Bin available to suit nearly any wardrobe. Hideaway Bins are distributed Australia wide by: Nover, Hettich, Galvin Hardware and Furnware.

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Selling kitchens online

The number of kitchen, bathroom and bedroom products sold online over the past few years has been simply staggering. In countries like the USA and the UK where this method of marketing and selling was adopted early on, online sales valued in the billions continue to grow year on year.

A number of reports readily available on the internet put Australia's relatively late arrival to the internet party down to the availability of internet services and broadband speeds. With these issues addressed and rapid growth already being widely reported, it is forecast that Australia will see the same online shopping explosion as experienced by its overseas cousins over the last 5 years.

In Australia over 60% of consumers already research products and services online before making a purchase.

The right tools for the job

Selling kitchens online is not only easier than one might think, it is probably the most profitable area of the market, and being relatively untapped in Australia, selling kitchens online presents a unique ground floor opportunity for anyone with the right products and e-commerce website, selling to the trade or retail.

These websites need a level of sophistication that is not required when selling other products: the ability to handle configurable items (in this case cabinets and doors), manage the customer payments and process the orders



when they are received. After all, when the shop's open 24 hours a day, the retailer needs all of the processes to run smoothly and efficiently.

EQ Software is the only web development company specialising in e-commerce sites for kitchen, bathroom and bedroom companies. Its portfolio of live sites is extensive. EQ has its own business management software taking care of managing the products, the content of the site, and the processing of orders and deliveries.

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Keeping plywood up to standard

RECENTLY REPRESENTATIVES from a number of organisations met in Brisbane to deliberate on plywood standards. Included in these discussions were the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia, Timber Development Association (NSW), Standards Australia, New Zealand Wood Processors Association, Scion New Zealand, Building Products Innovation Council, and BRANZ New Zealand.

The revision of the standards, funded by Forest and Wood Products Australia, assures they are consistent with the latest version of AS1720.1 – Timber Structures Code.

"The updates will ensure plywood can continue to be used in all building applications governed by the Building Code of Australia," Simon Dorries said. "The funding by FWPA is greatly appreciated by industry." Mr Dorries said extensive revisions of LVL standards would take place in 2012.

Stakeholders at a meeting of the TM006 committee in Melbourne recently addressed changes required to the AS/NZS 1604 series. The 5-part standard covers solid sawn and round wood (part 1), as well as engineered products like various wood-based panels (part 2), plywood (part 3), LVL (part 4), and glulam (part 5). [Only part 1 (sawn and rounds) is an Australian product; the other four parts are joint Australia/New Zealand standards].

The AS/NZS 1604 series was extensively revised and published in 2010, but since that time there have been significant changes to biocides, formulations (e.g. carrier system) and product manufacturing (e.g. veneer thickness, application of biocide to veneer surfaces), in addition to the gluelines and/or the veneers themselves. There were also a number of operational-type changes such as the route to introducing preservatives to the standard, clarification of branding requirements, and the designation of some new preservative numbers.

"Taken together, these changes were sufficient in numbers and significance to warrant another revision of the five parts of the standard," committee chairman Dr Harry Greaves said.

Key industry bodies at the Melbourne meeting included the Australian Forest Products Association, APVMA, Australian Timber Importers Federation, DEEDI, Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia, Forests NSW, Glued Laminated Timber Association of Australia, Monash University, NZ Pine Manufacturers Association, Responsible Care New Zealand, NZ Timber Industry Federation, Timber Preservers Association of Australia, Timber Queensland / FWPA, and the Wood Processors Association NZ. ■

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Not everything is what it seems

Strength failures on imported plywood under scrutiny

CLAIMS THAT the stress grade of structural plywood from Chile has been misrepresented on the open market in New Zealand and Australia are under investigation by watchdogs in both countries. Independent laboratory tests on imported structural flooring and roofing plywood branded with an F14 stress grade show many of the tested samples were significantly below their stated F14 ratings with many indicating an actual stress grade of closer to F8 (for modulus of elasticity and modulus of rupture).

This has raised concerns from the market that some imported structural plywood could potentially fail New Zealand Building Code structural standards – something that both the New Zealand Commerce Commission (NZCC) and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) are currently investigating. New Zealand and Australian structural plywood standards (specifically NZS 2269 - Plywood Structural) requires structural plywood to meet strict performance and quality standards to ensure panels perform consistently to a set of known attributes such as panel strength, appearance and glue line durability.

This is of critical importance given the high load applications such as bracing flooring and roofing where structural plywood is typically used. Building authorities in New Zealand and Australia have warned builders and specifiers about using plywood in structural situations that is not branded in accordance with Australasian standards. To prevent inferior products entering the market, importers and local suppliers are urged to have structural plywood independently tested by an organisation registered with the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) to ensure compliance with the standard NZS 2269.

A copy of such certificates should be forwarded to the certifying building surveyor to ensure compliance with building codes in New Zealand. The Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia is the only organisation providing NATA testing – carried out daily. It supplies NATA reporting on every production shift of its members in New Zealand, Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

The association's quality control program was registered by NATA as a quality managed system under ISO 9002 in 1994. The highest level of independence and credibility, however, was achieved in 1996 when the EWPAA quality control program and product certification scheme were directly accredited by the Joint Accreditation System - Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ) as a product certification program. The EWPAA JAS-ANZ scheme is an industry-wide, product certification based on the requirements of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) Type 5 system. This system requires

that a production facility maintains a documented process control system, conducts in-mill end product testing and has rigorous internal audit procedures.

EWPAA general manager Simon Dorries said it was the responsibility of governments to have effective regulations to prohibit the use of dangerous or illegal materials and he is concerned about the ineffectiveness of current policing. EWPAA members provide directly and indirectly more than 6000 jobs across the region and add more than \$2 billion to the Australasian economies. ■



New Zealand and Australian structural plywood standards require structural plywood to meet strict performance and quality standards.





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Guide to Kitchen Planning & Design

NEW release and a MUST have reference, covering all aspects of planning and designing a new or renovated kitchen. Includes expert tips and showcases a top line-up of colour kitchen images and award winning designs. Essential tool for entry level designers, showroom sales staff, kitchen manufacturing businesses and experienced, qualified designers.

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Top-selling, popular reference with industry, The Guide to Kitchen & Bathroom Construction Edition 2 looks at areas of quality, workmanship, standards and tolerances in the construction and installation of kitchens and bathrooms. Practical, comprehensive guide useful in the workshop, office and/or onsite.

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Eric Jones Stairs expand and update

Eric Jones Stairbuilding Group is a Melbourne based staircase manufacturer specialising in timber and steel stairs, balustrading and handrails. They mainly supply private homes and commercial projects throughout Australia and the world. They have built a reputation on superior standards employed in the manufacture and installation of staircases since 1947.

In 1998 they purchased their first Multicam CNC routing machine with a view to streamlining production. Daniel Auld, manager of Eric Jones Stairs explains: "At the time we decided that, in order to keep ahead of our opposition and secure our company's future, we would have to modernise our plant and streamline our production methods. Obviously part of this process meant purchasing a CNC routing machine that we would use for the manufacture of stair stringers, posts and balustrades."

Daniel goes on to add, "Because we pride ourselves on the quality of our workmanship and the service we provide to our clients, it was important to us that the CNC machinery we purchased was from a company with a similar outlook. Multicam impressed us not only with the quality of their machinery, but also with their dedication to their service. We

also like the fact that Multicam machines are made in Australia and serviced directly by Multicam technicians."

Over the years Eric Jones Stairs has grown and survived the difficult economic times, when many others have not. Daniel believes that this is because only the finest materials and the latest technology are used in the construction of their stylish timber and wrought iron staircases. "Whether domestic or commercial, we supply a quality stair and guarantee complete customer satisfaction. Each stair is crafted to individual requirements," says Daniel.

After many years of service, Eric Jones Stairs decided it was time to replace their old reliable Multicam machine with a new model. "Having had the Australian manufactured Multicam machine for well over 10 years has proven their reliability, and the team at Multicam has provided us with exceptional service over this whole time. In a way it made our decision to update quite easy," adds Daniel.

While similar in size to the machine it replaces, having a bed size of 5500mm x 1350mm, this is where the similarity ends. Daniel explains the differences. "The new Multicam machine builds on its solid construction, with increases

in speed and changes in design meaning that the machine is even more user friendly. The traveling rotary toolchanger is a real bonus when doing multiple tool jobs, especially on long work, and features like WiFi connectivity and remote access give us an added freedom with the machine and another level of support. I can easily see many years of service coming from this new machine."

Daniel concludes by saying, "Both Multicam Routing Systems and Eric Jones Stairbuilding have built our reputations on being Australian manufacturers and also the superior standards we employ in the construction and installation of our products. In our case that's why organisations like Metricon, Multiplex and thousands of other clients have chosen us to construct and install all their staircases. "We have been in business since 1947, with over 90% of our work being from regular customers. This in itself really says something about who we are as a company and how we approach our work." Eric Jones Stairbuilding can be contacted at www.ericjonesstairs.com.au

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Why buy a hot melt edgebander?

Many kitchen manufacturers will know the limitations of using a hot air pre-glued edgebander. Longer tape supply lead times and increased purchase costs create headaches for most joiners.

That's why the new design ME20 has seen such a rapid growth in popularity. The ME20 is a hot melt glue pot machine, giving smaller manufacturers the advantages and versatility normally only seen in high volume production shops.

Many joiners and kitchen manufacturers would have experienced unmanageable lead times on 'non standard' colours from edgetape suppliers, so the ME20's ability to use standard tapes off the shelf eliminates this problem.

The biggest advantage of the ME20 is the strength of the glue bond. Hot melt systems, with their application of the glue to the panel, give a much stronger, longer lasting bond.

Another area hot melt machines perform well in is variable temperatures. Many joiners would be familiar with trying to use hot box systems in the middle of winter. The combination of cold tapes, a hot air system trying to adequately melt the glue and cold ambient temperatures gives extremely variable edge quality.

The ME20 system uses a recirculating glue pot system with heating elements – ensuring glue is always at the optimum temperature for application.

An additional advantage of the hot melt glue pot system is the increased feed rate. This compact machine runs twice as fast as other machines of a similar size. Edgebanding time can be cut in half with the ME20.

One of the other upgrades within the machine is its 5mm solid timber capacity. Adjustable pressure rollers and infeed fence allow clashing to be applied to panels via a few simple adjustments.

Manufactured by the SCM group, the ME20 has been designed using SCM's years of edgebanding experience.

Simplicity is the key here – with a new controller designed to make operation even easier. A large control panel with clear switching makes the machine very intuitive to use.

Access to the operating groups is one of the best in the industry, with a large, swing away style feed track. This opens up the complete working system for adjustments and cleaning.



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A bigger pie with the right woodworking software

Crave Creations is an Australian kitchen making powerhouse with over 20 years of experience in the field and a reputation for high quality, precision work. Producing up-market detailed joinery as well as high volume builder's projects, Craig Hounsell, owner of the cabinet making business, attributes his growing success to their recent software investment.

To keep up with the ever evolving nature of the woodworking industry, the hunt was on in 2010 for Craig to explore new territories and revamp the production capacity of his new 360m² factory. As solid construction and precision has been the hallmark of Crave Creations, Craig was determined to find a solution which would facilitate higher output while maintaining these high standards for his customers. "All our kitchens are mortise and tenon construction even though it takes a little longer, everything will always be solid carcass joinery and brand name hardware," as Craig puts it.

After scrupulous research and countless demonstrations, the solution for Craig became clear, Altendorf's Spazio 3D software. Due to the simplistic yet powerful nature of the software, Spazio quickly proved itself to be the flexible package which encompassed all areas of production from design to manufacturing. "It's a really intuitive piece of software, aside from a few things such as additions and updates Altendorf's Softlink team continuously help me with, I'm able to easily navigate the software on my own and have even trained other staff on the software." Commented Craig, "Bear in mind I didn't have any CAD experience or training prior, all our kitchens were hand drawn with a scale ruler."

For Crave Creations, an even greater benefit with the Spazio software was the quadrupled productivity his business now enjoys, "We're talking about two kitchens drawn, cut and assembled in a day! That's working comfortably without extra hours. It used to take two days for just one kitchen. I would never have in my wildest dreams attempted take on the amount of work we're doing now without Spazio 3D," Craig explains. He wasn't the only party enthused by their new software solution, "While our productivity has increased fourfold, our turnover has tripled. By passing down the benefits of the software, my customers are also enjoying better prices on the same quality of work people have come to expect from us."

Armed with their new software package, Crave Creations now accepts not only more work but has also acquired a new degree of flexibility in accommodating a wider spectrum of markets. "The software is the key that allowed me to approach builders, where high volume production and a competitive pricing edge is essential." Craig concludes, "Spazio is powerful enough that I can also deliver extremely detailed kitchens for my up market customers as well. You get the best of both worlds."

The team at Crave Creations, (from left) Luke, Red, Nick, Tim and Craig.



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seminars to help build your business

KBDi to run seminar programme at AWISA 2012

This year, for this first time, the KBDi and registered training organisation, Designer Training, will team up to provide one hour seminars designed to help AWISA visitors to build their businesses. The seminars will focus on business, design and environmental topics.

Geoff Holland, AWISA's general manager, is delighted to be welcoming this contribution from the KBDi and Designer Training.

'With AWISA expanding its trade show and offering more to the industry, we are pleased to enter into this relationship to provide these useful and informative seminars,' Geoff Holland said.

'We are also very excited about our involvement with AWISA,' KBDi executive director, Alex Milne said.

'We are looking forward to joining with Designer Training to provide business savvy presentations to kitchen and furniture manufacturers, shop fitters and renovation specialists.

'And for trades people licensed in NSW, there's an added advantage that most of our seminars will attract professional development points.'

Show visitors should not miss this opportunity to build their businesses. Space is limited. For more information phone the KBDi on 07 3505 9249, or sign up at www.kbdi.org.au

Further demonstrating their commitment to AWISA, the KBDi will hold its 4th annual conference, DESIGN2012 in Sydney to coincide with the trade show. This national event attended by KBDi members including designers, manufacturers and suppliers covers everything from business and marketing to design insights and style trends.

The KBDi is a national organisation with local chapters located around Australia, providing members with kitchen and bathroom industry technical and business information, conference and award programs, networking opportunities and designer certification (CKD Au and CBD Au). KBDi membership is open to the wider industry from students just starting out to highly experienced industry professionals.

KBDi
Phone 07 3505 9249
www.kbdi.org.au



Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association Limited

AWISA The Association

AWISA was formed in 1986 by the principal suppliers to the Australian woodworking industry. The main aims of the association are to present industry exhibitions, publish industry magazines, co-operate with other organisations, and to uphold the highest ethical standards and encourage members to do the same.

Membership applications are welcome from Australian based companies, and from overseas companies with Australian agents or distributors that are also members of AWISA. Membership of AWISA includes suppliers of woodworking machinery, cabinet and furniture hardware, panel products and surface materials, portable tools, computer software, materials handling equipment, dust extraction equipment, components, and general plant and safety equipment.

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AWISA The Exhibition

With over three months still to go to the exhibition, AWISA 2012 is already almost 90% booked. This means there are still great opportunities for suppliers to the industry who wish to present their products to the Australian and New Zealand market.

AWISA welcomes membership and exhibiting enquiries. Enquiries should be directed to Geoff Holland on 0412 361 580 or info@awisa.com



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