

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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AWISA THE MAGAZINE

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aluminium, plastic, stone and panel
processing industries. Members include
suppliers of machinery, materials, fittings,
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advertising enquiries are welcome.

DEAR READER,

2012 certainly presented its fair share of challenges for our industry and in particular for AWISA Ltd in its supporting role. Indeed, 2012 has been a mixed bag when it comes to the pros and cons of doing business in our industry.

We started the year with optimism, as always, only to be faced with the economic reality that recovery would continue to be a slow process. However, as the year progressed we took heart from an improved performance albeit a modest one.

The return of the AWISA exhibition provided a much-needed stimulus and the quality not quantity of visitors was a reflection of the business today. Sometimes a shake-up is necessary to weed out the players who are in business for a quick buck, they only succeed in damaging the market for everyone. When times are tough these businesses are the first to go and quite frankly, that can only be a good thing. I was impressed during the exhibition to see so many long established clients doing well and even thriving in what has been a difficult period for all.

As outgoing chairman I'm proud that AWISA's contribution to the woodworking industry continues to be an important one. In addition to the successful exhibition and AWISA magazine, the scope of the association is an evolving process. In 2012 AWISA Ltd took an active role in the important work of the FCJ Alliance and our ongoing vision is to continue to assist in bringing the Australian woodworking industry together as one.

And so as 2012 rolls towards an end, it leaves me just to say it has been my pleasure to serve such an enduring industry and I would like to thank everyone for their support over the last four years during my time as chairman of AWISA Ltd.

RICK LEE

Director
Australian Woodworking Industry
Suppliers Association Limited

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AWISA announces plans to hold AWISA 2014 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre



FOLLOWING THE NSW state government's announcement that the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre at Darling Harbour would close for three years from 2014 to 2016 for re-development, AWISA has had to look elsewhere for a venue for AWISA 2014.

AWISA runs few other activities in conjunction with the show. Yet the event is well known for having a strong social side to it. Most of the bigger exhibitors hold evening functions for their major clients. Many visitors spend two days at the show so there are always large numbers of people from the woodworking industry looking for things to do in the evening. Add to this the need for a venue that is close as possible to an airport and hotels.

For this reason AWISA has looked for a venue, like Darling Harbour in Sydney, that has good numbers of hotels close by, facilities in the same locality for social functions, plus restaurants and bars.

"We considered three options in total. While some were excluded because they simply could not accommodate AWISA at the time of the year we want to hold it, the stand out venue from the beginning was the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre," said Brett Ambrose, chairman of the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association Ltd.

"The AWISA board met at the venue and came away impressed by both the exhibition facilities and the venue's management."

"The venue has excellent access by motorway and train from Brisbane airport, and the venue is serviced by a good range of hotels, some close to the venue with many more just across the river in Brisbane's CBD. The venue itself offers facilities for evening functions, and Brisbane city and the river offer many other options. In the South Bank riverside precinct there are about 30 cafes, restaurants and bars within a few minutes walk of the venue," he said.

The Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre has been operating for 16 years. It can easily

accommodate a show of the size of the AWISA exhibition. The centre was even designed by the same architect that designed the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Brett Ambrose concluded by saying: "AWISA has no doubt that the Queensland woodworking industry will get right behind having the exhibition in Brisbane in 2014. But with almost half the show's visitors coming from interstate it is important that we continue to attract visitors from other states. We will be talking to Queensland travel authorities and will be including holiday packages with the show's promotion to encourage southern and western state visitors to visit the show and have the opportunity to then take a break and see some of Queensland's well known holiday attractions at a time of the year when other parts of Australia are in the depth of winter."

AWISA 2014 will take place at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre from 6-9 August 2014. Full details for exhibitors will be available in December 2012. ■





by John Halkett

Australia now part of the Myanmar teak story



Schwedagon Pagaoda, Myanmar – the centre of Buddhism in Asia; part of the mystique, romance and intrigue of the Burma of old British Empire and the focus of nostalgic poems by notables like Rudyard Kipling.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW about Burma – or Myanmar as it is now more correctly called? The centre of Buddhism; historically part of the mystique, romance and intrigue of the old British Empire; and the focus of nostalgic poems by the likes of Rudyard Kipling. His 1892 poem Mandalay has been credited with compelling many to visit the country:

*For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the
Temple-bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier;
come you back to Mandalay!"
Come you back to Mandalay*

Myanmar is also the early home of imperial British policemen, turned author George Orwell. He spent his formative years there, and his three now famous novels; *Burmese Days*, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and some of his other books, are set in Myanmar or based on his experiences there.

We also remember Myanmar as a fierce and bloody battle ground of the Second World War with its still haunting images of emaciated prisoners-of-war working and dying on the Japanese Thai-Burma death railway.

We know that since independence from the British in 1948 Myanmar has been run by a brutal military regime. One of the most closed countries on the planet with an appalling record of human rights abuses, ethnic genocide and descent into human misery and poverty. Its standing in the eyes of Western democracies has been abysmal.

But more recently, and suddenly, a transition towards democracy lead by Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Ky has taken place. Truly a Nelson Mandela-like figure she now strides the world stage after 15 years of house arrest helping to lead the country towards a brighter, freer future and out of decades of debilitating international isolation and sanctions.

This background is by way of getting to the point that Myanmar remains home to still vast tracts of diverse tropical jungle, including about 90 per cent of the world's teak trees.

Still common in Myanmar's jungles are tigers and leopards. Elephants, rhinoceros, wild buffalo, wild boar are also present as well as many species of deer and antelope and an assortment of monkeys, flying foxes, wildcats and the tapir.

recycling for a brighter future



At the same time as being concerned about the need to safeguard Myanmar's very special collection of jungle animals, Australian cabinet and furniture makers should expect to see more teak timber in Australia. Actually, recycled teak recovered from the quickening pace of development after decades of economic stagnation.

Now being liberated from harsh military rule the country is experiencing a surge of economic activity, including tourism development.

Old Burma – long before the British arrived – was built stem to stern from solid teak. Now that some of the older buildings are making way for new, Australian forest conservation and timber interests are recovering and recycling some of this teak retrieved from buildings that may be well over a hundred years old. It will be reused in high quality cabinetry, furniture, boats and architecturally-specified interior and exterior fit-out applications.

The use of this recycled Myanmar teak has real economic and environmental pluses. It reuses a valuable timber resource that might otherwise be destroyed; it recognises and encourages the

protection of high biodiversity jungle across Myanmar and its precious animal inhabitants. It also provides much needed jobs and local income in the labour-intensive task of recovery, cleanup, storage and export.

It also provides an opportunity for Australian families to own something made from one of the world's truly special timbers with a long and mysterious past that will become a family treasure for decades to come. In so doing, it will be a symbol and demonstration of solidarity with the long oppressed and abused people of Myanmar now at the dawn of new hope and prosperity. ■

Above: Recycled teak recovered from the quickening pace of development may be reused in high quality cabinetry, furniture, boats and architecturally-specified interior and exterior fit-out applications.

Centre: Local Myanmar furniture production using both recycled and 'new' teak.

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by John Halkett

CLT the future of high-rise building in Australia

GLOBALLY the wood construction system that is the fastest growing timber product with a current annual increase in demand of 30 per cent is Cross Laminated Timber (CLT). Because of its acceptance by architects and builders it is now being incorporated widely into high-rise development design and residential housing throughout the United Kingdom and Europe.

It is anticipated that this trend will accelerate in the future as confidence in design, engineering and planning approvals regime related to CLT use increase. Similarly now that the first high-rise building is under construction in Australia and more are on the drawing board, CLT use, especially in commercial building and high-rise residential applications, is predicted to take off.

An \$11 million 10-storey residential tower built with prefabricated CLT panels, the tallest of its kind in the world, is being constructed in Lend Lease's Victoria Harbour precinct, Docklands, Melbourne. Known as Forte, the building will be 32 metres tall.

Designed and built by Lend Lease, Forte is aspiring to be the first 5-Star Green Star residential building in the country containing 23 boutique residential apartments and four townhouses.

The CLT system is integral to construction of Forte and its completion this year will usher in a new era of sustainable development in Australia. The project was officially launched by Lend Lease's chief executive officer Mark Menhinnitt.

He said the project would: "Unlock a new era for sustainable development by offering a viable alternative to traditional construction options that are carbon intensive."

"Lend Lease is aiming to develop 30 to 50 per cent of its apartment pipeline using CLT."

Mr Menhinnitt said CLT was the most significant form of innovation in construction technology that Australia had seen in many

years. "CLT will transform the construction industry by introducing a more efficient and environmentally-friendly construction process that has never been undertaken in Australia before."

"With an increasing number of people moving to urban areas, this innovation is timely given the urgency to create liveable, sustainable cities that are climate positive. The adoption of green technologies, materials and construction processes, like CLT, means we are closer to achieving this," said Mr Menhinnitt.

In another Melbourne project, following an extensive analysis of CLT-based construction technology, architectural firm studio505 will be designing Grocon's 10 storey Delta building.

Studio505 director Dylan Bradley has now committed to CLT and engineered timber structures in residential housing by undertaking a dual occupancy dwelling on a very difficult and steep site in the upmarket Melbourne suburb of Canterbury.

He described the project as one of Australia's first developments that is part of a new breed of zero carbon multi-story buildings using wood as a central building component. He advised that the real project saving is time, with a reduction of between four and five months in the framing period.

"The time and finance savings more than offsets the challenges costs with the added bonus of a finished project can be regarded as a sustainable leader in the industry."

He said the building design was closely connected to the new European model for mass timber construction to Passive House standards, which significantly reduces the requirements for heating and cooling to lower energy costs.

The Delta 50-unit residential tower will be at least 10 storeys high atop a heritage bluestone building. ■



Top: Artist's impression of Lend Lease's 10-storey timber building in Melbourne that will be Australia's first and the world's tallest timber apartment tower.

Centre: Murray Grove residential tower in London - built from CLT the 9-storey building stores a substantial amount of carbon and was constructed in nine weeks. Every apartment in the building sold out within 75 minutes of going on sale in January 2009 (Credit: Planet Ark).

Above: CLT is the fastest growing timber product with a current annual increase in demand of 30 per cent.

by Geoff Bills

outlook

The year ahead



Geoff Bills

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

RECENT TRENDS

It's been a miserable year for building.

Chart 1 tells the story. Throughout most of the last financial year, every segment of the industry – new housing, housing renovations and non-residential building – was in decline. Total building activity in the June quarter of 2012, at an annual rate of \$95.5 billion, was 6 per cent less than in the June quarter a year ago and 14 per cent less than in the June quarter two years ago.

Why the decline?

There are several reasons why activity has been falling - many of them are summed up in Chart 2.

As the chart shows, during the global financial crisis Australian households decided to spend less and save much more of their after-tax incomes. The change was quite dramatic, lifting the proportion of income saved from around 4 per cent in 2007/08 to more than 12 per cent in the December quarter of 2008.

The saving ratio has eased a bit since then but was still above 9 per cent in the June quarter of 2012.

There are two main reasons why this change took place.

First, over the past decade, in an environment of low inflation and low interest rates, Australian households had borrowed heavily to buy housing. As a result, they had more debt, in relation to their income, than most other countries.

The interest burden on this and other relatively small amounts of mainly credit-card debt, nearly doubled, from around 7 per cent of disposable income in 2001/02 to 13.5 per cent in the September quarter of 2008.

Second, as the financial crisis spread from the United States to Europe, and deepened into a severe world recession, Australians became frightened. As share markets plunged, they feared for their wealth – much of it in superannuation – and as unemployment rose to new heights around the world, they feared for their jobs.

These fears have since been fanned by recurring sovereign debt crises in Europe and the United States and by the toxic state of politics in Australia.

Some even fear that levels of government debt are

too high in Australia, although nothing could be further from the truth.

Net government debt in Australia is now about 12 per cent of GDP. In Germany it is 58 per cent, in Spain 79 per cent, in France, the United Kingdom and the United States 84 per cent, in Italy 103 per cent, and in Japan 135 per cent. In Australia, GDP – which generates the income to service debt – is rising at around its long-term trend rate. In all of those other countries, GDP is either rising very slowly or declining.

With households saving more, they are necessarily spending a lower proportion of their income on goods and services including housing, and on the goods and services that give rise to new shops, offices and other commercial and industrial buildings.

Other forces have been at work too: the high Australian dollar has made it hard for manufacturing, retailing and tourism; and a sharp fall in population growth has reduced demand for new buildings of all kinds.

World economic outlook

Hopes that the world will soon solve its financial and economic problems are not encouraged by the leading indicators in Chart 3.

These suggest that growth in the economies of our major trading partners will slow to below-trend rates in the six months ahead. As the chart shows, the indicators for the Euro area and for Asia's major economies have been growing at below-trend rates since early this year and continue to decline.

Last month's forecasts by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) confirm that world growth in 2012 is likely to have slowed markedly: from 3.8 per cent in 2011 to 3.3 per cent this year, with slowdowns in both the advanced and developing economies. The IMF sees only a gradual strengthening of activity, mainly because policies in the major advanced economies have not rebuilt confidence in medium-term prospects. On the assumption that policies in Europe and the United States improve, it forecasts that world growth will pick up to 3.6 per cent in 2013. But it notes that downside risks have increased and are considerable.

OUTLOOK IN AUSTRALIA

Treasury's latest forecasts see the Australian economy growing by 3 per cent, both this year and next.

Treasury forecasts no growth in private investment in dwellings (real spending on new housing and housing renovations) this year, but growth of 4 per cent in 2013/14.

It says that weakness in the retail sector and the expectation of below-trend employment growth, and therefore subdued demand for new office space, is expected to be reflected in weak growth in private non-residential building activity, with growth of just 1 per cent in 2012/13 and 1½ per cent in 2013/14.

These are sensible forecasts. We nevertheless think that private investment in housing will fall by about 4 per cent this financial year before lifting by 4 per cent in 2013/14. And we think that although private non-residential building is likely to increase slightly, as Treasury suggests, declines in public sector building will see total activity fall by around 5 per cent in 2012/13 before steadying in 2013/14.

So although housing is likely to improve a bit in the year ahead, commercial and industrial building is not.

Some happier thoughts

In outlining its reasons for deciding not to cut interest rates at its November meeting, the Reserve Bank was much more upbeat.

It argued that recent information on the world economy was slightly more positive, that Australian growth was still being driven by strong investment in resources, that inflation remained under control, and that past cuts in interest rates would continue to assist the housing market and business investment.

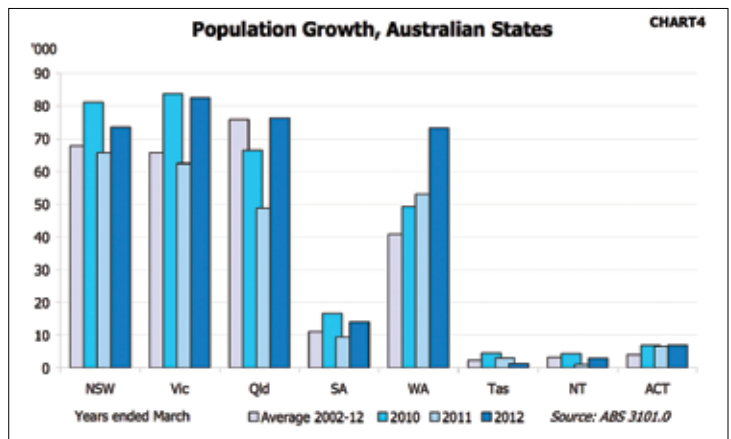
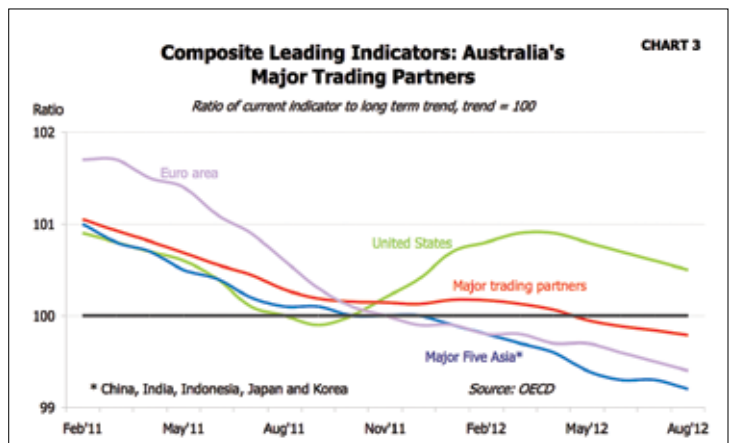
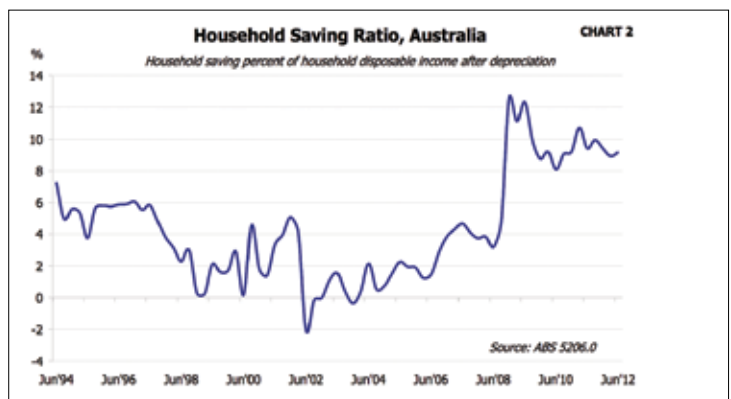
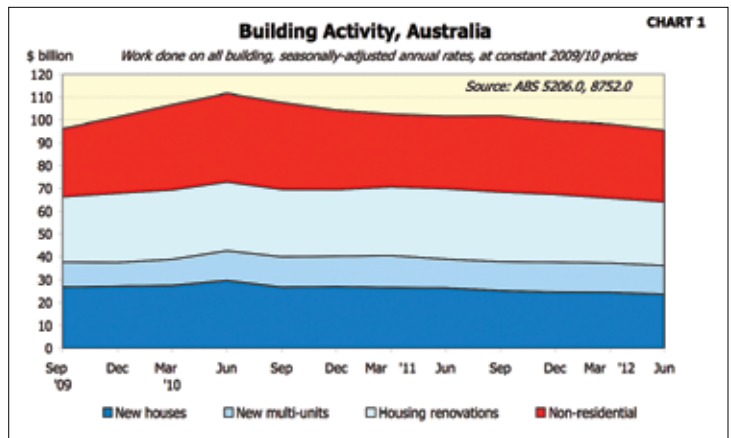
Should these views prove too optimistic, the Reserve no doubt stands ready to cut rates further. In our view one more rate cut will be needed.

Perhaps the best news for future building activity is that a main driver of demand, population growth, is surging again.

In the year to March 2012, Australia's population increased by 331,200, compared with a rise of 250,600 in the previous year to March, and with an average of 271,200 a year over the past decade.

Growth has accelerated strongly in Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

Victoria nevertheless remains the state with the biggest growth, adding 82,500 people in the year to March compared with 76,400 in Queensland, 73,500 in New South Wales, and a historically massive 73,300 in Western Australia. ■



Design for the future



IT IS QUITE COMMON to hear cabinet makers complain about the lack of understanding of construction techniques exhibited by architects and furniture designers. Common sense dictates that a limited understanding of construction methods will inhibit effective design and make construction more difficult. Unfortunately most degree level furniture design courses taught in Australia are taught through schools of art and design and tend to focus on the design elements, with little thought given to how a great design might be manufactured.

The University of Tasmania's (UTAS) School of Architecture & Design based at Inveresk in Launceston has a somewhat different, more 'hands on' approach and offers an associate degree and undergraduate degree in furniture design. The associate degree is a two-year full time course that was previously taught at the Australian School of Fine Furniture, now part of the UTAS School of Architecture & Design gives graduates a solid foundation in the design and fabrication of furniture and object.

The Australian School of Fine Furniture (ASFF) was established in 2001 specifically to train future generations of fine furniture craftspeople. It was established as an independent, specialist teaching facility to provide students with traditional and contemporary furniture making and design skills.

The ASFF offered a 2-year VET diploma and during its early years developed an international reputation through an innovative guest lecturer programme that utilised the services of leading craftspeople from Australia and overseas. It developed a unique teaching model based on a master craftsperson/student relationship and a relatively small cohort of students, including a number of international students who were attracted by the teaching model. Unfortunately, the ASFF struggled financially and following negotiations between the stakeholders and various levels of government it became part of UTAS in 2005.

The School of Architecture & Design acknowledged and respected the vision of the founders of the Australian School of Fine Furniture and added to it the components that go to make up a well-rounded university education. As a result, the School of Architecture & Design now offers a two year associate degree and a three year degree in furniture design. The programmes offered are unique in Australia because of their links to both architecture and interiors, with a healthy balance of design and construction knowledge and skills.

Associate degree in furniture design

The associate degree in furniture design is a two year full time course providing graduates with a solid foundation in the design and fabrication of furniture and object. Hand skills and tool maintenance are an important component of the course and are taught across a number of units, together with drawing conventions and presentation skills. Students are provided with advanced joinery and machining instruction and encouraged to develop their design thinking through the testing of various methodologies and research strategies.

The associate degree course also actively promotes and fully supports experimentation with materials. Some of the materials put under investigation by students in the course of their project work include thermoformed Corian objects, slip-cast porcelain lights, laminated timber chairs, concrete shelving, carbon fibre tables and textile lights, to name just a few. The course also has a strong focus on design development and prototyping of design concepts all the way through to the production stage. Students are also encouraged to consider appropriate markets for their products and develop marketing and logistics strategies.

In this course, you make it happen. A blend of traditional and contemporary skills and processes are taught providing students with the best of both worlds while hand tool skills and craftsmanship are taught in parallel with computing and CNC machine operation and manufacturing. The opportunity for integration with other design disciplines is paramount in the School; this is aimed at replicating real-life practice, but it also provides design students with a variety of design 'languages', a broadened design sensibility and an heightened empathy for other design disciplines.

The School is committed to a future in which social responsibility, health and wellbeing and environmental sustainability are key elements in furniture design. Sustainability is embedded as a core component throughout the curriculum. Consideration of the end user is one of the most critical aspects of the course's design ethos. This is because in thinking about the end user the designer is thinking about the future and how the design will impact our future lives.

What are the employment opportunities for graduates?

Graduates from this course will have many opportunities to demonstrate their unique creative skills and design



thinking. Students are encouraged to look within the furniture industry and beyond, as there are some amazing opportunities. Graduates may choose to work as independent designers or in collaboration with furniture manufacturing companies.

Some of the more recent graduates have established themselves in private practices across a variety of areas, as furniture designers / makers, as workshop managers, as partners in multidisciplinary design teams, in interior design consultancies and working within architectural practices. While others have obtained product design commissions, or gained employment as designers for related disciplines such as theatre design.



The degree course in furniture design

The furniture design course structure aims to take advantage of the immediate creative and interdisciplinary riches that exist in within the School of Architecture & Design and follows on directly from the associate course. The extra year looks at professional practice, law, copyright, intellectual property and insurance, along with exhibition design, portfolio presentation, branding and the development of an individual body of work. Furniture students are exposed to design on a variety of scales and environments and learn the progressive development of skills, knowledge, observation and understanding over three years:

- The first year focuses on experimentation, discovery, creativity and methodology, as well as developing strategies for tackling design projects.
- Second year introduces production efficiency and critical design development skill sets. Professional approaches and industry standard skills are developed.
- The final year explores challenging self initiated briefs and allows students to pursue and develop specialised focused bodies of work. Professional practice, portfolios, branding, philosophy and identity are critically addressed.

How can UTAS's courses benefit the cabinet making industry?

In some respects the courses could be considered as a 'finishing school' for tradesmen or people with considerable industry experience. Their primary emphasis is to take people who have been trained to work as part of a team doing specific jobs and processes that make up the 'bread and butter' of the industry and to give them the tools to



- investigate the 'why' that underpins both design and construction.

To this end, skills in observation and reflection are fundamental, and students are encouraged to question 'standard practice and procedure' in an attempt to arrive at a better methodology or direction. Design thinking is an attribute the school nurtures and promotes intensively. Design concept or ideation drawing is a precursor to CAD drafting, working drawings and presentation drawings or 3D modelling. It is important that all models of practice are investigated and developed so students gain a full appreciation of when to apply a particular methodology or structure. It increases the student's ability to be adaptable and flexible in the workplace and enhances their capacity as creative thinkers.

UTAS School of Architecture & Design is happy to work with industry to present short courses or workshops



addressing skills gaps in the education and training sectors. It is particularly evident that these exist in the areas of design thinking and observation and courses could be implemented if the demand is identified. Businesses or individuals with comments or suggestions as to the 'skills gaps' that exist in furniture design and manufacture in Australia are encouraged to forward these to programme director, Simon Ancher. Simon is a furniture designer, maker and teacher and would be happy to hear from you. All enquiries about the furniture design programmes can be directed to: Simon.Ancher@utas.edu.au. ■

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The pursuit of productivity and quality



For most business owners, seeing increased output for the same input is one of the key measures of ongoing success. There has been a huge push in recent years to change the way companies manufacture. Advanced CNC machinery promised to revolutionise the manufacturing process and deliver better profits as a result. However, the one size fits all philosophy does not always work well when it comes to business and not everyone reaped the benefit of such investment. Many small to medium manufacturers have built their success on tried and true practices, only to be overwhelmed by the total change in manufacturing philosophy.

There are significant investments both in terms of cost and time involved in the transition to new manufacturing processes and many have underestimated the commitment needed to make it successful. On the other hand, alternative solutions to maximise the productivity of traditional manufacturing methods do exist. Altendorf's Optimisation 2 and Classic Cabinets are examples of such combinations that can deliver high quality manufacturing on the trusted and proven panel saw platform.

Optimisation 2, a newly introduced package bundled with Altendorf's Elmo range of panel saws, answers the needs of many in search of simple yet powerful panel sizing software to augment the saw. For Port Stephens based GJ Morgan Kitchens, the panel saw is the foundation on which their high precision work and stylish designs are built, and the

Optimisation 2 couldn't have come sooner.

"Because our kitchens are unique each time, the saw is something we really invest in and try to maximise in order to be competitive. Our new saw being fully automated really speeds up the workflow and when combined with Optimisation 2, it's even faster," explains Michelle, owner of GJ Morgan Kitchens.

The business has been able to cut down the significant amount of time previously required for calculations, edging and other manual processes. "The software minimises the likelihood of human errors and there's not much learning or extra effort involved," says Michelle. "To us, it simply means we can deliver more at the premium level of quality our customers have come to expect from us."

Building upon the technologies most modern joiners have come to trust, Classic Cabinet software takes saw-based manufacturing even further. "Over the years I've developed quite an effective system comprising a CAD, spread sheet and optimisation program," says Ivo of I & S Joinery, an industry veteran whose business is renowned for attention to detail. "Then I saw Classic Cabinets, it took streamlining to the next level. It was intuitive and as we build up our libraries, the time savings keep on increasing."

While I & S Joinery's forte is in the field of detailed and intricate joinery work, Ivo sees potential in his business to leap forward and take on high volume repetitive projects. After just a few months, the collective impact

of Ivo's Elmo 4 and design software has already meant Ivo has no problem keeping his seven cabinetmakers busy with a steady flow of components.

"It used to take a full day to work out pre-production preparations such as drawing, panel calculation and so on. Now we're talking about getting that done in about an hour." Explains Ivo, "Thanks to the productivity increase with our new saw and software package, we're looking to take on mass production contracts while retaining the standard of quality we are now providing."

Software and machine integration has become the corner stone of productivity and efficiency in the modern woodworking industry. Combining software with the panel saw, the backbone of every joinery shop, represents one of the most effective ways to step up turn over with less risk and compromise, be it quality of work or future expandability.

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Steve Kallenbach (left) and Greg Tinson know that in their cut-to-order and just-in-time business, machine uptime and lead times are critical.

Streamlining processes helps Queensland business enter new markets

In today's kitchen manufacturing industry a competitive advantage is everything to ensure that a company continues to compete and grow in a difficult market. Quality products and service is key. It also takes innovative minds to stay ahead of the pack and Greg Tinson and Steve Kallenbach from Brisbane-based Handy Group know that time is increasingly of the essence. This means being able to provide the industry with very competitive lead times.

Recognised as a leading supplier of cut-to-size components, carcasses, cabinets and laminate benchtops in the kitchen manufacturing industry, the Handy Group's products are sold to commercial and residential customers, with an increasing amount of work going to DIY (Do It Yourself) customers throughout the Brisbane area. Customers can count on Steve and Greg to go the extra mile to make sure cabinetmakers and shopfitters are supplied just-in-time employing the most up to date, world-class machinery at their Kingston manufacturing facility.

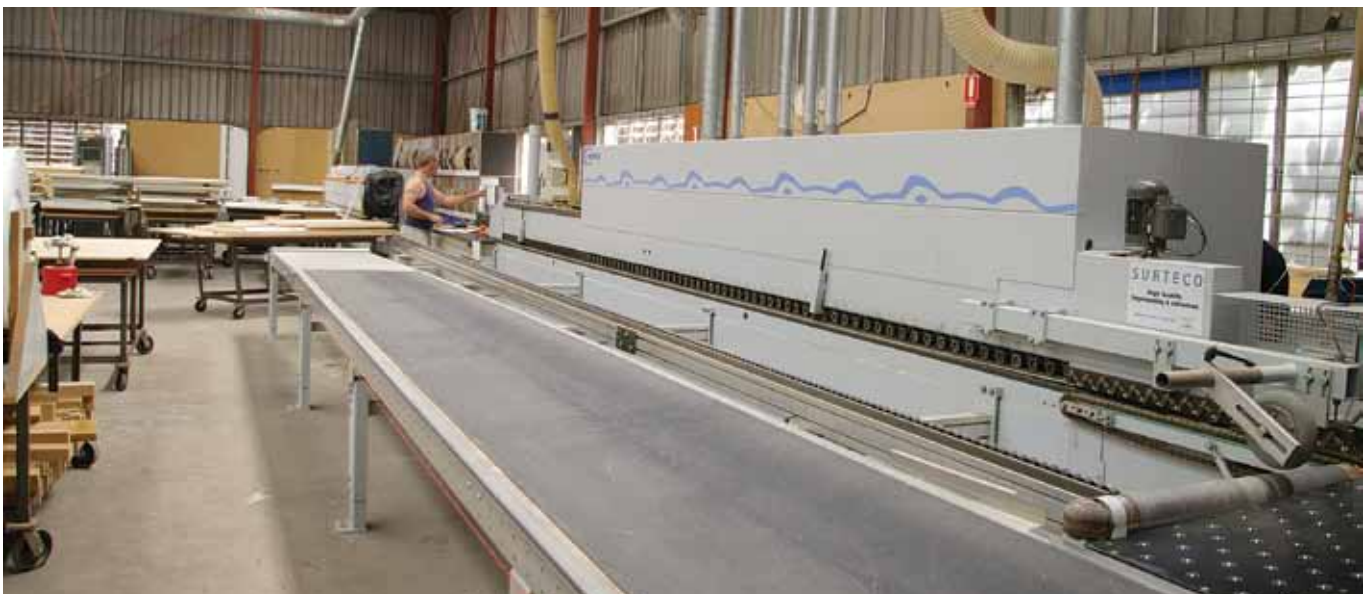
"Greg attends trade fairs like AWISA and does a lot of research before we invest in new equipment," Steve, the company's financial controller, says. "We want to make sure that our machines and products are abreast with latest trends and technology because the company was in need of a makeover when we took over from the previous owners about 5.5 years ago."

Cut-to-size kitchens

The Handy Group consists of two businesses, Handyform and Handy Cut. While the former is into postforming and kitchen benchtops, Handy Cut supplies cut-to-size kitchen components to the trade. When Greg and Steve bought the company, Handy Cut was running five fairly old machines, two beam saws, two edgebanders and one point-to-point. In order to streamline the way of handling small batch cut-to-size orders from their growing list of cabinetmakers, the two businessmen decided to invest in quality machinery, consisting of a Homag KAL210 edgebander and a Weeke BHP200 nesting cell, thus ensuring excellent end products.

While the machines represent a huge investment for the 30-men strong company, Greg doesn't look back and believes that the quality equipment from Homag will certainly help to drive his business forward. "Homag comes with a higher price tag, but the reliability and longevity we get from their machines is fantastic," he says. "We are prepared to pay for Homag machines because they are reliable, quality machines."

And quality and reliability is what Handy Cut needs, as the company is constantly evolving and now looks to enter new markets. "The scale of our clients is changing as we go forward," Greg explains. "Previously we were focussed on various SME customers. With our new resources behind us, we are now in a position to service large commercial and project-orientated businesses."





Targeting flatpacks

While the business has always focused on cut-to-size services for cabinetmakers, Greg and Steve are looking to get into the flatpack market. "Our focus is and will be on cabinetmakers and shopfitters. Our new machines will also give us the opportunity to expand and reach the end-user DIY market."

Flatpacks offer budget customers the opportunity to do something they would otherwise not be able to afford. As flatpacks moved into the kitchen category, consumers found their options increasing. Flatpack kitchens are modular and, depending on the quality of the offer, a customer can erect a kitchen that an expert would not be able to distinguish from the real thing, assuming it's done well of course. But the beauty of flatpack kitchens is in their price – they're much cheaper than ready-made kitchens.

To capture a slice of this emerging market, companies like Handy Cut need to be prepared, as one thing is certain – half-hearted approaches don't work. Kitchen flatpacks require dedication from everyone in the supply chain. And Steve and Greg are certainly dedicated to their business, striving for continual improvement, which is what the new Homag edgebander and Weeke nesting cell have contributed to achieve.

"In our cut-to-order and just-in-time business, machine uptime and lead times are critical, because you don't want to let your customer down," Greg says. "With our new machines efficiency has improved by around 30%, which means our lead times dropped from 6 to 4 days. The return on investment will certainly be there."

Greg adds that they also get instant returns by re-locating or reducing staff. Since installing the Homag KAL 210 edgebander, the company not only reduced the required operators by 50% in that area, the machine also meets all quality requirements. "We have increased capacity, improved quality, and decreased machine downtime," Greg says. "Moreover, with release agents sprayed directly onto the panels at both the start and finish of the machine, the end product no longer requires cleaning."

Eliminating bottlenecks

While edgebanders can be the bottleneck of the manufacturing process, it would be an understatement to say the KAL 210 has eliminated Handy Cut's bottleneck, Homag's Mark Vowles emphasises. "When you sit on a pallet and watch 100 metres of edge tape disappear in under 15 minutes with no cleaning, that's impressive to watch. The results of this new machine show in every panel."

The machine's automatic profile change facility in the profile trimming unit ensures the panels' top quality appearance right into the corners. Additionally, a high-performance jointing unit takes care of a clean cut on the top and bottom surface of the panel. The machine offers many automation features to ensure fast processing times, such as fast glue changeover from EVA to PU by simply exchanging the complete application unit without the need for tools. Moreover, the heated glue application roller is capable of gluing workpiece edges between 8 and 60 mm in thickness. A modern magazine height adjustment facility guarantees central banding of edging materials with different heights onto the workpiece.

With the edgebander installed in 2011, Handy Cut was making the first step in making huge changes to its factory processes. "We re-arranged our factory from our previous manufacturing process to enable us to implement all changes and we have just completed everything now," Steve says. "The new nesting cell meant quite a significant change in the flow of the factory because we had to uninstall one beam saw before putting the Weeke in, which is a massive change in our production line."

With the installation of their Weeke BHP 200 nesting cell, Handy Cut is set up for what Homag calls "dual track manufacturing." Handy Cut is now using the automated nesting solution together with the other Holzma CNC beam saw and CNC drilling machine, which offers two different channels to achieve cut-to-size and drilling with a click of a mouse because all

Embracing world-class technology, Brisbane-based Handy Group has the competitive advantage they need to succeed in existing and new markets.

- ▶ machines use the same interface in the office. They have also access to the same board library and can even manage and reuse off-cuts the same way.

“Replacing one of the beam saws with the Weeke has given us a more efficient manufacturing line with flexibility and capability,” Greg explains. “Before we had the nesting cell, we used to perform all cutting operations on the beam saw, which means straight cuts. With a nesting cell, you can use materials much better and produce parts you couldn’t even hope to make on a beam saw.”

Increased material yield

Greg and Steve managed to increase their material yield by 5-10% through optimised nesting. Nesting technology is based on advanced cutting algorithms specifically designed to optimise the cutting layouts in routing. It consistently delivers high utilisation layouts, significantly reducing the waste and maximising productivity. The required workpieces are routed out of fully-sized materials on the Weeke gantry processing centre in one workstep also including all necessary holes and grooves. In order to optimise the raw material cut, the programmed workpieces are automatically nested via optimisation software.

The CutRite nesting software controls both Handy Cut’s sawing and nesting production through the one solution. Handy Cut can now take parts sizes from its order processing system and send the sizes across to the software and then either send the job to the saw or the nesting machine, depending on workload. Moreover, the WoodWop nesting programs include all machining steps optimised according to travel ranges and tool changes. Combining cutting and final processing makes it possible to reduce material costs and to shorten total processing time.

“We upgraded our current software with custom software from Homag,” Greg says. “The upgrade enables us to move into a more streamlined flatpack option without interruption

to our current process. It enables us to enter orders manually, but we also have a library of existing programs that allow for the majority of what our customers need. The best thing is that we don’t have to enter programs line by line anymore. It’s probably more a catalogue library the customer can choose from but completely variable, there are no restrictions to what the customer requirements are, no limitations.”

Custom software

“We really needed the custom software, it was an integral part of the transformation,” Steve adds. “The Homag software specialist came up with a system that really makes us different from the norm. Greg had even flown to Perth to get first-hand advice and see what a custom software solution had done to a Perth supplier. He came back knowing he was going down the right track.”

Asked about their future plans, the answer is clear: “There are a lot of indicators the market is improving. We will focus on our customers, keep moving forward and invest in equipment, diversify and access the do-it-yourself market.”

“Homag’s service response times are exceptional considering the amount of equipment they have in Queensland alone,” Greg concludes. “Homag Australia decentralised their service a few years ago and each state has its own service coordination, this is fantastic. We deal with local people in local time and we know each other well. This gives me the confidence for when the market does pick up to look at an automated storage solution to complement our existing range of high-tech machines.”

HOMAG AUSTRALIA
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Handy Cut increased its material yield by 5-10% by reducing material waste through optimising nesting.

Replacing one of the beam saws with the Weeke nesting cell in early 2012 has given Handy Cut a more efficient manufacturing line with flexibility and increased capabilities.





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.

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Interzum 2013 offers an impressive supporting programme



Three trade fairs, three topics, one destination: next year, from 13-16 May, Cologne will once again be the central meeting place for the world's furniture industry. It will be the focus of the three trade fairs IMM Cologne, LivingKitchen and Interzum. As the world's leading trade fair for furniture production and interior fittings, the latter will once again offer international visitors a unique, wide-ranging market overview of material and design trends with halls at full capacity. A varied supporting programme together with three piazzas with various themes ensure that Interzum will continue to be the source of inspiration for product developers, designers and architects.

The Interzum trade fair will also again set the standards in 2013 as the world's largest trade fair for materials to manufacture furniture and interior fittings. The focus will be on new products and ideas in particular because manufacturers have to a large extent aligned their development programmes with the two-year cycle of Interzum. For the first time, the trade fair will take place after Ligna in Hanover, which is traditionally held over Ascension Day. This is so that visitors and in particular those from abroad can easily combine both events meaning that this time Interzum is starting on a Monday and finishing on a Thursday.

The supporting programme is especially varied for this forthcoming event: for the seventh time the competition for the "Interzum award: Intelligent material & design" will show which position the supply industry occupies in the development of contemporary designs. Awards will be given to innovative products, which combine above-average functionality with a high level of quality. In order to support the development of the next generation, the young designer award will be presented by the Association of German Industrial Designers. In addition to the coveted awards, the interior designer day organised by the

Architects' Chamber of North Rhine-Westphalia will take place once again. The Veneer and Nature Initiative will be organising the firmly established European Veneer Forum together with the Association of the German Timber Trade and Koelnmesse. An innovation workshop for wood-based products is planned together with the Association of the German Wood-based Panel Industries.

The three central piazzas within the halls will ensure that more detailed information is available: the piazza in Hall 6, in product segment Materials & Nature, will focus on the latest trends and product developments from the sectors of decorative surfaces, wood-based products and veneers or solid wood. In Hall 4.2 Interzum will once again underline its creative potential and showcase new applications by architects, designers and developers at the special exhibition entitled "Innovation of interior". The forum for innovative ideas from the upholstery, beds and textiles industry will take place in Hall 10 (Textile & Machinery).

There are already signs of a high level of registrations for Interzum 2013 at such an early stage. By September 2012 registrations had already been received from 690 companies. This corresponds to an increase of about eight per cent compared with the same period in 2010. Approximately 60 per cent of companies are foreign with the largest number of exhibitors coming from Italy, closely followed by Turkey and Spain. In addition, there will be group participants from Italy, Turkey and the USA. This is why Halls 6 (Materials & Nature), 7 and 8 (Function & Components) as well as 9 (Textile & Machinery) are already fully booked. Koelnmesse is expecting over 1,450 exhibitors at Interzum in 2013.

INTERZUM
13-16 May 2013
www.interzum.com

Hettich + Blueprint Interiors = perfect recipe for cooking show's new kitchen



Take the team from award-winning cabinetry designer and manufacturer Blueprint Interiors, add celebrity chef Iain "Huey" Hewitson, mix in some high quality Hettich products, sprinkle with a lot of hard work and what do you get? A brand new kitchen set for the popular daytime cooking show, Huey's Kitchen!

Blueprint Interiors has just finished installing the new kitchen for the set of Huey's Kitchen, which airs weekdays at 3.30pm on Channel Ten.

"The craftsmanship of the kitchen is first rate. Obviously the layout for our kitchen needs to be a little different from the norm, but I like the fact that everything is within reach – yet there's tonnes of bench space," says Huey. "My favourite features are the amount of storage space and the compartments in the drawers for cooking utensils and all the other equipment we need."

Blueprint Interiors used Hettich's InnoTech drawer system in the new kitchen, to get maximum use out of all available space and help make things more organised in this fast-paced kitchen.

InnoTech double wall steel drawers run effortlessly and silently on soft close Quadro runners – both designed and manufactured in Germany and include lifetime warranties.

InnoTech comes with the widest range of accessories – from the OrgaStore which helps organise Huey's groceries, to the sleek InnoPlus for cutlery, to the unique OrgaWing where two side panels gently spring out when the drawer is opened – no matter how a kitchen is used, whether it be in a commercial or residential sense, Hettich's InnoTech drawer system has a solution.

Neerabup-based Blueprint Interiors were thrilled to have won the job, and are excited to see their creation on national television.

"I really enjoy Huey's show and have always been a fan," says co-owner of Blueprint Interiors, Tracy Foley. "Of course we were really happy to have won the job and are excited that the kitchen will be seen all over Australia every afternoon – last year an average of 1.2 million people watched the show every week," says Tracy. Wayne and Tracy Foley have more than 20 years experience in the industry and their designs are second to none.

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Halifax Vogel Group (HVG) completes the Wilsonart colour story for the decorative building industry

Committed to leading the industry in the provision of quality building products, HVG has released a new range of Wilsonart Decorative low pressure melamine (LPM) panels, available in a wide variety of colours and surface textures to extend and complete the Wilsonart colour story for the decorative building industry.

As the exclusive distributor for Wilsonart laminates across Australia, HVG is a dedicated partner, ensuring a large investment is made into the growth of Australia's highest quality laminates. HVG is making sure that builders, designers, kitchen manufacturers, shopfitters and end consumers have a consistent and reliable collection of decorative building products.

David Maltby, business manager of HVG Decorative Building Products, is proud to release this new range of low pressure melamine panels to the industry.

"This range is another step in the development of a series of decorative products branded as Wilsonart as we continue to redevelop the Wilsonart brand in the Australian market.

"HVG is pleased to bring the initial range of 46 solid colours, abstracts and wood



grains in a number of surface textures to the market. Our strong relationship with Carter Holt Harvey Woodproducts Australia, the Australian manufacturer producing this range, guarantees that quality is maintained and strictly upheld by our two trusted, Australian-owned companies. "

Andrew McFadden, national service and integration manager for Carter Holt Harvey Woodproducts Australia espouses the superior new range of LPM panels.

"Carter Holt Harvey has been manufacturing

high quality LPM decorative building products for many years. The opportunity to form an alliance with market leaders HVG, was an enviable prospect we couldn't pass up."

The new Wilsonart Decorative LPM panel range, manufactured in Australia and supplied on 16mm MDF MR E0 substrate is available through all HVG distribution centres.

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by Martin Lewis

CEO Furnishing Industry Association of Australia

“Made in Australia” – a community economic perspective

WITH 2012 ALMOST AT AN END, Australian industry has come to a cross roads.

Business conditions continue to be a major challenge for the Australian manufacturing, forest and construction industries. Depressed market conditions from the GFC of five years ago have had the effect of reducing economic activity in each of the industries that surround the FCJ Alliance (Furniture, Cabinetmaking & Joinery). The Aussie dollar is still way overpriced, well in excess of parity to the US dollar, and this has made competition for Australian FCJ manufacturers and their supply chain most difficult as we compete with imported FCJ products.

of what is right ranks a long way behind “self”.

The latter part of 2013 will bring to us a federal election, but from where I sit, it is difficult to see a clear winner of my vote. I know “dumping” is unfair and I know illegal logging is unfair, immoral, illegal and environmentally despicable. I would like to see really strong positions articulated by both the Labor and the Coalition parties in the lead up to next year’s election.

It’s because what is right and what is fair is more important than just about most things.

People count. Jobs count. Jobs reduce taxation outlays and increase taxation income. Jobs



We know that some of this imported FCJ product has been “dumped” into Australia, that is, it is being sold into Australia at prices lower than what it is actually being made, and sold for, in the overseas country where the product is actually manufactured. That’s not fair, but it is hard to convince some of the key “free-market thinkers” [sic] in politics, the press and the bureaucracy when the concept of fairness is alien to them. They argue against market intervention in almost every case, but self is always their best friend.

We also know that some of this imported FCJ product has come from illegally logged sources. That’s not only not fair, it is also not right. Again, it is hard to convince those same “free market thinkers” [sic again] when the concept for them

bring income. Jobs bring dignity. Income gets circulated in communities. Jobs revitalise communities. Like I said - jobs count and people count. Communities count.

The latest battlefield being waged between the Federal Labor government and the Coalition opposition is based on their “economic management” credentials. At this point in time, this is code for the capacity to deliver budget surpluses (which in time, and in conjunction with different monetary policy settings) may also deliver a more fairly-priced Australian dollar exchange rate.

So where’s this all fit with the concept of Made in Australia?



MARTIN LEWIS,
CEO of Furnishing Industry
Association of Australia Ltd



...for every \$1000 worth of Australian-made cabinetry sold here, the ATO collects \$118.50

For many years now, Furnishing Industry Association of Australia (FIAA) has commissioned statistics so that we can get a decent picture on economic activity in our industry. Let me share some data with you.

In 2010/2011, the furnishing and cabinetmaking industry was worth about \$23 billion to Australia's economy and it paid out wages approximating \$5.46 billion to Australian workers – the majority being blue collar workers and their equally blue collar small family-based business owners. The Australian Taxation Office also has some benchmarking data which approximates the costs of these small enterprises – cabinetmakers in this case, showing that:

- labour costs approximate 24% of turnover
- cost of sales approximate 48% of turnover
- non-capital purchases approximate 65% of sales
- rent approximates 3.5% of turnover

Statistics provided to us from elsewhere suggest an annual profit on turnover in the order of 3.5%.

... imported cabinetry bought over the internet can generate no tax to the ATO whatsoever

On the other hand, ATO data for furniture retailers gives us the following data:

- labour costs approximate 11% of turnover
- cost of sales approximate 59% of turnover
- non-capital purchases approximate 79% of sales
- rent approximates 9% of turnover.

We don't have financial statistics on furniture retailers but a check of some ASX reports

for the larger furniture retailers reveals profit approximating 7% is not unrealistic.

There is no data from the ATO in relation to overseas-based import businesses who sell through the internet – and why would there be for they generally do not pay tax in Australia.

Please bear with me on this exercise.

So what would be the taxation money that was returned to the government when we purchase some cabinetry? Let's imagine we have \$999 Australian to spend on some cabinetry and we have three options on where to spend our money:

1. Option 1 - buy direct from the cabinet-maker (it's Australian-made product)
2. Option 2 - buy from the retailer but to choose imported product.
3. Option 3 - buy directly over the internet. It's imported directly to you.

Option 1 – Direct from the cabinetmaker

From our data we know that \$999 to the cabinetmaker means \$60.00 is remitted in GST (\$91 less input tax credits of \$31), 11% of the \$240 he spent on wages and super is remitted in wages income tax – say \$26.40, and \$10.50 is remitted in company tax. For this exercise we will ignore the myriad of state taxes and the other federal taxes such as FBT, Carbon Tax, etc. Total direct return to the ATO from this cabinetmaker is \$95.40. Assuming 50% of input purchases were for Australian-made board or timber, a further \$21.60 is referred earlier in the supply chain to the ATO. That's a total of \$118.50. No voodoo economics here either!

Option 2 – Imported product from the retailer

Again from our data we know that \$999 to the retailer will result in a nett GST of \$46.60 (\$91 less input tax credits of 79% of 59% of receipt), 11% of the \$110 he spent on wages generates \$12.10 to the ATO, and \$21 (30% company tax on the \$70 profit) is remitted to the ATO. That's a total of \$79.70 to the ATO. There is no downstream taxation contribution as the product is imported. Again no voodoo economics!

Option 3 – Buying imported product from an overseas internet website

There is no ATO data that we can identify – and that's because there is no tax activity. \$999 is paid over the internet. There is no tax! No voodoo economics only voodoo policy and voodoo administration.

.... Australian-made cabinetry pays 48.6% more tax to the Australian Government than imported product

Summing up, we have three different scenarios based on buying ostensibly similar products (assuming the imported stuff has not been "dumped" here and has not been manufactured from illegally logged timber). They are, however, big assumptions, and in my experience – probably unreasonable assumptions. The results in our particular exercise are:

- Australian made product returns \$118.50/\$999 to the ATO – 11.86%
- Imported product sold through Australian retailer returns \$79.70/\$999 to the ATO – 7.98%
- Imported product sold directly from overseas website returns zero to the ATO – 0%

In summary, Australian-made furniture is worth 48.6% more in income tax revenues to the Australian Government than imported furniture sold through legitimate "bricks & mortar" retailers.

I guess the first question is – does this seem fair to you ?

My second question – Can you see an opportunity to increase incoming taxation receipts through some type of program preferring higher tax footprint purchases ?

Stay tuned for my next article where we will explore further the concept of the taxation footprint and especially Government procurement policies. ■

by Kristin Brookfield
HIA senior executive director
Building, development and environment



Trusting the product

IN 2012 Australian manufacturers have faced a raft of changes in their business environment as new taxes take effect, changes to workplace laws continue to be implemented, health and safety laws change, and other environmental targets and programs continue to roll out.

With more and more building products being manufactured offshore, and with increased access to these products through the internet, the need to focus on compliance with building standards and ensuring a level playing field for Australian manufacturers has never been greater, HIA managing director Shane Goodwin explains.

Competition is good, but the competition needs to be fair. With this in mind, HIA has moved to open up the debate about how the current regime for building product compliance operates in Australia, and identify ways to ensure manufacturers have a level playing field. And just as importantly, that builders and consumers can trust the products they buy to do what they are intended to do.

There is no doubt that the problem of non-genuine and non-tested building materials and components making their way into Australian residential buildings is growing. The issue has been on the agenda of our manufacturing members for some time, and is of equal interest to builders who have to rely on these products.

There is an accepted role for imported building products and components in Australia, some of which can be cheaper, and many of which meet local standards. But it is also clear that many building products don't come up to scratch.

Clearly the cost of failure and subsequent replacement of substandard materials – and the damage they can cause – invariably outstrips any initial savings on the original purchase. And in the case of structural materials, and fixtures such as electrical and sanitary components, the potential cost to health and safety is far greater.

The residential building industry should be able to have confidence that regardless of where something is made, it meets Australian standards. Unfortunately, it appears that the evolution of compliance and enforcement in Australia has not kept pace with the changes to how or where products are manufactured or sourced.

Such is the interest in this issue that it was the central theme of HIA's third annual Building Better Cities Summit held earlier this year.

This year's summit, entitled 'Building Products: A compliance free zone?' brought together a well-credentialed array of Australian and international experts from manufacturing, government and product certification.

Scoping the extent of the use of non-compliant materials in Australian residential building was one of the first challenges put to the summit. Evidence tabled by a number of presenters shows that there are products being used in Australia that are not fit for their intended purpose.

The other fundamental problem identified by the summit was that inconsistent compliance regimes have led to an uneven playing field between the manufacturers that comply with standards, and those that do not. Manufacturers who do the right thing are being disadvantaged against those that neither invest in producing products that meet Australian standards nor programs to demonstrate compliance.

Speakers from Denmark and Canada offered up alternative approaches to product certification.

The Australian marketplace and our building regulatory system is, of course, slightly different to other countries, so copying overseas solutions will not be possible. However, taking the elements and benefits of these overseas practices and debating how they could be used in the Australian context was something attendees saw merit in.

In response to the concern about product certification and the overwhelming support from members to see HIA respond, a number of initiatives were put forward at the summit.

The cornerstone will be the development of options for an industry - led product registration scheme. Builders, manufacturers, certifiers and consumers should be able to satisfy themselves that a product is compliant and fit for the purpose and know the conditions under which it should be used. A register could be supported by a manufacturer-applied compliance mark to show it conforms to a credible product standard.

To be a success, such a scheme will need the



buy-in of government as well as industry, so it will require an extensive consultation process. But the extent of the problem means that we can't afford to ignore it.

We are in the business of supplying innovative and world-class housing for all Australians. It is essential to the sustainability of our industry into the future that our customers have confidence in the product they are buying.

But leadership from industry shouldn't be seen by governments or enforcement agencies, such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), as an excuse to abrogate their responsibilities to the community. No-one would suggest this is going to be a simple fix, but public safety and basic fairness to manufacturers who are

struggling with a high dollar dictate that they have an obligation to contribute.

Conversely, the challenge for industry and regulators is to ensure that the outcome is not just more bureaucracy and red tape. Solutions will need to have a positive cost-benefit and not result in a burden on those manufacturers already complying, who may be seen as the easy targets.

The rise of the internet and accompanying web-based commerce tools have transformed the nature of trade from an enterprise to individual level – but perhaps product compliance hasn't caught up yet.

There are a lot of locally manufactured and imported materials that help the Australian industry build quality homes, provide goods



HIA managing director Shane Goodwin.

and services to community, and drive the economy. Not everything cheap is all bad, but that doesn't mean it's all good either.

The question is, how can we be sure if they are not all subject to the same transparent compliance regime? ■

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by Jim Bowden

quality

EWPAAs labs keep close check on product quality

RIGOROUS TESTING of wood-based panel products at the EWPAAs NATA-accredited laboratory on the Gold Coast reaffirms the international respect the brand has earned for certification and product analysis. The Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia operates two industry laboratories in Australia accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA).

Facilities in Brisbane and the Gold Coast test for a full range of structural and physical properties and for formaldehyde emissions and bond quality.

Since the amalgamation of EWPAAs and the Australian Wood Panels Association, industry has gained from access to the Gold Coast test centre laboratory, which carries out

most of the wood panel tests specified in Australia / New Zealand, European and Japanese standards.

The EWPAAs technical committee produced (through active representation on Standards Australia committee TM005) all of the reconstituted wood panel standards and test methods covered under AS/NZS 1859 and 4266 series for particleboard, dry processed fibreboard, decorative overlay wood panels and wet processed fibreboard.

The committee also produced the Australian Standard 1860 Parts 1 and 2, Particleboard Flooring and Installation of Particleboard Flooring, and provides input to regional and ISO Standards development.

“Compliance testing of particleboard and MDF to Australian standards at the Gold Coast lab goes hand in hand with the EWPAAs program providing major benefits for the engineered wood products industry in Australia and New Zealand,” EWPAAs general manager Simon Dorries said.

EWPAAs is proud of the fact that manufacturers of wood-based panels have qualified for emissions intensive trade exposed (EITE) status under the federal government’s Clean Energy Legislative Package.

“This has been a long and expensive process but it effectively adds \$10 million to the bottom line for EWPAAs members,” Mr Dorries said. “We now receive 65% free carbon permits after demonstrating our emissions intensities were above a certain threshold which was quite a technical challenge.”

Samples from member plywood, LVL and wood panel manufacturers are tested daily at both laboratories with other properties tested on a monthly basis. The schemes are accredited by the Joint Accreditation System of Australian and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ).

EWPAAs speaks for a notable proportion of the timber industry, representing plywood, LVL, particleboard, MDF and wood panel manufacturers and services in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

Valued at well over \$1.5 billion, the industry in Australia and New Zealand supports more than 5000 jobs. ■



Laboratory manager Vince Wilkinson prepares flooring board samples for testing at the EWPAAs Gold Coast laboratory at Burleigh.

WoodWop on the high seas

The Metrica Interior Group develops and constructs exclusive fittings for luxury yachts, aircraft, villas and other high-end properties throughout Europe. Its factories specialize in sophisticated CNC routing work, and have perfected the process of importing design data as the basis for program generation. The workpiece geometries encountered in boats and aircraft are often highly complex and diverse, as well as posing a particular challenge in terms of their quality and precision.

It was to meet these stringent demands that Metrica Interior decided to invest in a 5-axis router from Homag in 2010. Its machine frame is constructed from the vibration-absorbing mineral material Sorb Tech, and the moving gantry machine also features a second processing spindle alongside its 5-axis spindle to allow for high-speed tool changeover.

“An additional and possibly even more decisive factor in the decision to purchase a Homag machine was the WoodWop programming system”, recalls Guido Rödiger, head of the CNC data processing and programming division at Metrica Interior. “The way the WoodWop software releases have consistently advanced from version 2.5 through 4.0, 4.5 and 5.0 to the current

version 6.0 clearly demonstrates that Homag has remained committed to the evolution of its own internally developed programming system while at the same time ensuring continuous investment in new functions and features”, concludes Rödiger, who has worked with WoodWop since as long ago as 1994.

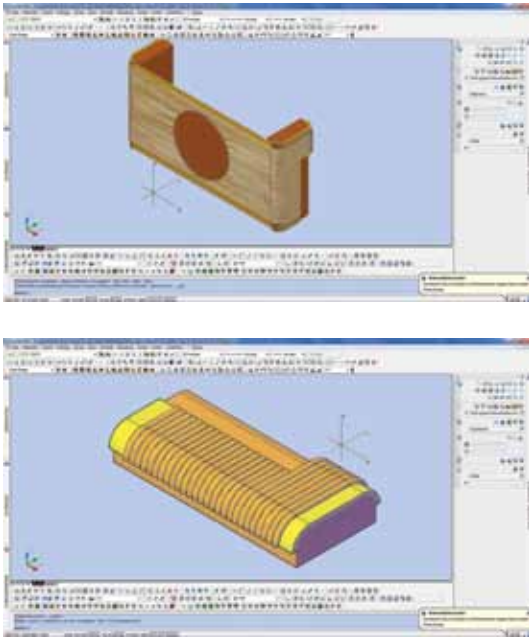
The work flow adopted for fitting out a yacht is a remarkable one. Starting from a plan of the hull, designers work to create a complete interior fitting concept. This is a world in which anything goes, and design creativity only rarely comes up against any unresolvable barriers. The designers are called upon to work with ever new materials – furniture covered in goatskin, ceilings lined with silver leaf and intarsia work using fish skin are just some of the unusual expectations voiced by their fastidious clientele. The company even produces individual furniture hardware and handles to customer order. Based on these individual specifications, a scale model known as a mock-up is created. The mock-up is shown to the ship owner to obtain approval for the designs and the materials used, and at the same time is used by the production department at Metrica Interior to assess the feasibility of the project.



Following acceptance by the designer and the client, planning takes place on the basis of CAD drawings of the ship's hull. In the company's dedicated design department, AutoCAD is used to draft all the rooms including floors, wall claddings and ceiling elements, and also to design the furniture. Following the design phase, all production-relevant data is imported for production engineering. Here, the CAD data is processed and finally the CNC data is generated.

To make sure that the data generation process is performed as effectively as possible, the company Metrica Interior uses WoodWop dxf import. In the design department, 2D views of the components are drawn using CAD, and this data is also transferred to production engineering, where the drawings are checked and supplemented if necessary. More complex components are subsequently designed as 3D models





► in AutoCAD. Although at this stage of data preparation, the component data comprises exclusively geometric measurements and no processing information whatsoever, the steps required for subsequent production already have to be taken into account. These include for instance the creation of interfaces for processing, drawing specific approach movements or supplementation with detail designs.

Taking this data as a basis, the next step is the allocation of technology data such as tool number, feed rate and processing depth. Each of the elements to be processed is assigned a layer name. This assignment allows the relevant processing operation to be automatically created when the dxf

drawing is imported into WoodWop. The program generated in this way can then still be supplemented or modified in WoodWop if required. The three-dimensional depiction of all processing operations in WoodWop 6.0 helps the programmer to check the program for errors.

Guido Rödiger has further optimized the assignment of processing operations to geometry elements by writing his own AutoCAD plugin which allows most WoodWop processing operations to be programmed by means of AutoCAD input screens. His special formula: All the relevant parameters are entered into the screens and used to generate an individual layer name. As described, this then forms the basis for generation of the relevant WoodWop macro. The benefit of this system is that staff processing the CNC data quickly find their way around the input screens and do not need to concern themselves with the syntax of layer designations. To program a vertical drilling process, for instance, the macro "Vertical drilling" is selected, followed by the parameters such as drilling depths and drilling mode, and finally a circle is drawn. Using this method, 3D data can even be transferred to WoodWop

in the form of a 3D polyline and used to generate 5-axis routing macros.

In addition to these input screens, Metrica Interior also depicts its complete tool outfit in AutoCAD. The task of the tool database is to support the CNC programming process with programming in AutoCAD. "We apply the relevant tools to the individual cuts in order to obtain Z distances, depth and angle dimensions, which at the same time allows us to detect possible collisions with the workpiece. The tool numbers and senses of rotation (green for clockwise – orange for counter clockwise) are immediately recognizable for the programming process", explains Rödiger. The tool profiles can also be used for 3D depiction in WoodWop and in the processing simulation program WoodMotion.

WoodMotion is used to simulate all complex components before transferring them to the machine itself. This simulation is based on a virtual machine control system which reproduces the behaviour of the machine on a 1:1 basis on the office PC. This means that the PC is used to run a real CNC control system which simulates not only the processing operations themselves

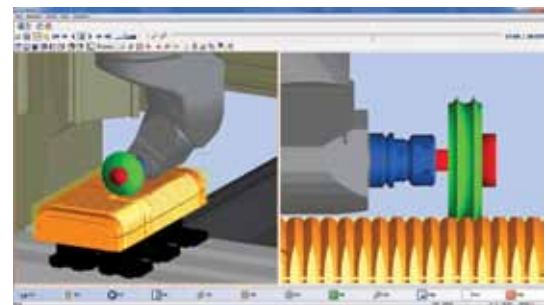
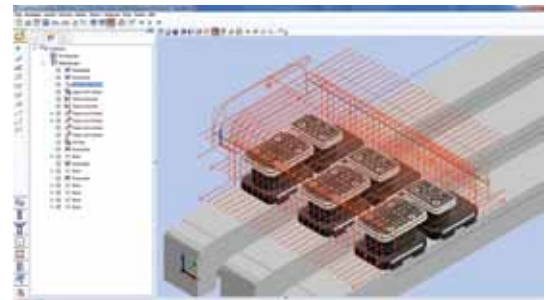


but also tool changes, entry and exit movements as well as acceleration and braking processes. Consequently it is also possible for WoodMotion to obtain an extremely accurate forecast of the workpiece processing time. Even error messages which typically appear only when the machine is actually operational are recognized and displayed here in advance. WoodMotion also features an integrated collision monitoring function which detects all collisions between tools, suction cups and consoles during the simulation run.

Following the production of all components, assembly of the individual elements takes place.

Cabinets, walls, ceiling and floor cladding are all pre-assembled as far as possible in the factory and then taken to the dockside for integration into the ship's hull.

The enormous degree of product variance – each and every component is a one-off – makes for the most stringent demands in terms of effective production engineering. Only with all these requirements in place can design, quality and precision be effectively combined.



Pictures courtesy of HOMAG Holzbearbeitungssysteme GmbH

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by Richard Brooks
CEO, Cabinet Makers and Designers Association

An update on the CMDA initiative



THE EXECUTIVE committee and staff of CMDA/CMA thank all of the industry representatives who have shown interest in CMA's initiative to form a truly national association to represent the interests of those businesses involved in the manufacture of fitted cabinetry and furniture.

The response received at the excellent exhibition put on by the team at AWISA has provided more impetus to the association as it progresses with the admission of members in a number of states. All at the association would like to take this opportunity to indicate their commitment to the board and management of the AWISA exhibition in future years and to congratulate both the organisers and all exhibitors on an excellent 2012 exhibition.

The current level of activity in the industry continues to cause concern with many examples of businesses finding it necessary to close, rationalise activities or reduce staff while at the same time there are businesses who are struggling owing to too many orders to meet the production deadlines that have been imposed by their clients.

CMDA's objective is to work with its members to assist in improving the recognition and profitability of their businesses – businesses which on many occasions provide the finishing touches to otherwise bland building projects thus enabling the builder/developer to gain a far greater return – CMDA is keen to see its members share in this return.

CMDA Activities

The formation of CMDA is intended to assist members to improve the marketing of their businesses by the use of the association's facilities such

as the website and the opportunities to list and promote their business. At the same time the Association intends to conduct a regular series of association meetings and trade nights in each state during 2013 and following years. These trade nights will provide the opportunity for further professional development and most importantly the opportunity to network with your industry colleagues. A detailed list of trade nights will be available on the association's website at www.cmda.org.au during November/December.

Webinars

CMDA is also conducting a regular series of webinars which can be accessed from the member's area of the website. Currently there are seminars on:

- The ABC's of OHS.
- Working on building sites
- Coping with changing market conditions and
- "Contractors vs Employees" and "Flexible employment arrangements" will be held/added during November/December.

These webinars are complimentary to members and can be accessed multiple times via the website if required.

CMA/CMDA Victoria trade night at Blum

A trade night was held in October at Blum in conjunction with the annual general meeting of CMA. An opportunity was also taken to present an update to CMA members on recent developments at the association and to demonstrate some of the resources available on the Association's website. Ron Redman of Blum made an

excellent presentation on the topic of 'What inspires the decision to purchase a new kitchen?' Including the discussion of topics such as:

- What inspires the decision to purchase a new kitchen or bathroom
- Emerging trends in kitchens and bathrooms
- Function as a feature in kitchens and bathrooms
- Innovation in functional fittings for kitchens and bathrooms
- Research into kitchen use
- Understanding the needs of the customer when designing today's kitchens and bathrooms
- Opportunities for the kitchen and bathroom Industry

The night was well attended with members and guests providing most positive feedback and appreciation of the information provided on both the association and an excellent presentation by Ron Redman.

Australian Cabinetmaker of the Year Awards

Entries are currently being received from members for the inaugural Australian Cabinetmaker of the Year Awards to be presented in April 2013. Victorian entries close on 23 November 2012 with entries from new members of CMDA closing on 23 February 2013. Full information is available on the association's website and a webinar on 'How to Enter' will be conducted for new members of CMDA late January 2013.

CMDA Conference 2013

CMDA will be holding its inaugural conference at the Novotel Melbourne St Kilda on the weekend of 5-7 April



RICHARD BROOKS

CEO
Cabinet Makers and Designers
Association

in conjunction with the presentation of the Cabinet Maker of the Year Awards on the evening of Saturday 6th April. Speakers are currently being finalised with the objective of presenting topics that are relevant to the fitted furniture sector and the changes that are occurring in our marketplace. This event will be one not to be missed by businesses involved in the kitchen, bathroom and cabinet industry.

Review of AS 4386.1 & 2

Standards Australia has advised that the review of the kitchen standard will commence

in December 2012 and that the technical committee has been approved. CMDA will keep members informed as to progress with the review and welcomes input from industry during the process. The objective of the association in submitting an application to have the standard reviewed is to ensure that the standard reflects current design, materials and construction techniques consistent with best practice manufacture.

The committee and staff of CMDA wish you all 'seasons greetings', a pleasant break and trust that you will return to a busy and financially rewarding year in 2013. ■

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Innovative hidden recycling solution with Hideaway Bins Commercial



When commercial projects have rubbish and recycling problems that require solution, designers should consider creating recycling stations that incorporate Hideaway Bins to assist with waste separation.

Recycling is becoming ever more important within the workplace. The installation of four 50 litre Hideaway bins side by side is an innovative solution for separating waste and recycling, and better yet the bins slide away out of sight keeping the room clear of clutter.

Hideaway Bins are designed with quality materials to ensure the units withstand the challenges posed in a commercial environment. The framework is made from high grade steel for strength, powder-coated for durability. High quality runners are designed to hold upwards of 40kgs and they over-extend so the bucket can be easily removed.

The buckets are made from a food grade polypropylene and come complete with a liner holder designed to hold the bin liner in place. All buckets are designed with the Australian life-style in mind and fit the standard bin liners available from local supermarket chains.

If space is limited within the design don't despair, large twin bin solutions are also available with double bin solutions to choose from including twin 15, 20 & 40 litre buckets. Hideaway Bins are designed to be mounted at bench height and pull out towards the user making the units both ergonomic and functional.

With many distinctive features to select from, there is sure to be a Hideaway Bin to suit any commercial need.

Hideaway Bins are easily available across Australia through the following distributors: Hettich, Nover, Galvin Hardware, Furnware and Dorset Distributors.

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Holzma's new version of Cut Rite – what it can do, what's new

Quality is a question of the cut – for boards and for software. Holzma has again tailored its optimization software Cut Rite to the requirements of the time, introducing further improvements including state-of-the-art graphical displays, enhanced analysis features, multi-core processor capability and the quality of the calculated results.

New: overview of key results in graphs and charts

Users can only have everything under control, if they can see it all at a glance – and this is exactly what the optimization software Cut Rite achieves with its graphs and charts. Up to three charts, which can be freely configured by users, can be assigned to each summary. The most important results are displayed in a general summary. All in all, information can now be understood far more quickly and easily. Furthermore, a new navigation bar provides greater convenience. Users can now jump from one menu item to another, without first having to return to the main menu screen. They can access all functions from any part of the program.

User-friendly data evaluation with new editing and filter options

The new version allows data to be edited directly from the review runs screen. Users can switch back and forth between areas and make their changes without having to change screen. Should these changes have further consequences, the dependent data can easily be re-optimized or recalculated. Gremlins are virtually handcuffed: incorrect inputs are quickly corrected. Furthermore, runs can now be filtered according to name, job number and many other options and can be also be grouped by week.

Multi-core processor capability: faster optimization

The new Cut Rite software supports multi-core processors. This greatly increases efficiency because computing time is reduced considerably. Linked to the new progress bar, the software also provides an option to “keep the last result”. This allows the computing process to be stopped and the last result obtained to be retrieved easily.

Easier management thanks to user profiles

Working in a network will now be even easier for Holzma customers: the new Cut Rite allows each user to create their own profile – with password, paths and a lot more. It is now far easier to assign specific functions to individual users, which simplifies network administration.

Managing areas and volumes

Customers with horizontal storage systems will benefit from the enhanced board library. Whereas codes were previously limited to 20 characters, they can now contain up to 50 characters. The board library now also includes a new field for material density, that allows the software to calculate the weight of boards, components, offcuts and waste.

Calculated values in the summaries

Cut Rite now offers some spreadsheet options similar to those of the Microsoft Office classic Excel. For example, users can easily determine the number of rip and cross cuts in a cutting pattern. Data and mathematical formulae can be copied as needed and the results automatically indicated.

Besides the above, Version 9 of Cut Rite has many more new functions to offer. One of them is immediately apparent:



the updated toolbars and icons in true colour look more attractive. Also good for the optical impression: the parts and product library can now be extensively illustrated. Simply extract images or photos in any file format and integrate them – quotations that contain illustrations are a lot more appealing.

A new feature in the stock control option is that the software now checks the stock twice: firstly before the optimization process and then again later before transfer. If the stock level has changed between the first and second check, the software will display a warning and allows the optimization process to be repeated if necessary.

Excel spreadsheets can now be imported directly – in xls and xlsx format files. Furthermore, the selection dialogs have all been standardised. A new menu option has been added that allows users to reprint single labels for individual parts or all the labels for parts in a single cutting pattern.

HOMAG AUSTRALIA
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www.homag.com.au

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 system 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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Delivering excellence

Intermic Group is an Australian leader providing manufacturing and fitout solutions in NSW. The company provides superior quality fitout services for retail, commercial and residential projects. Intermic's highly experienced team is passionate about delivering projects on time and within budget.

The directors of Intermic, Michael Fitzpatrick and Michael Rowe, both have over 15 years in the industry and have a reputation for friendly, honest and consistently reliable service.

Over a year ago, Intermic set out to purchase a second CNC router and quickly realised the superior build and features of the Woodtron CNC over other brands evaluated. The Woodtron Advanced Auto 3600 x 1800 fully automatic series was chosen because of its robust, heavy duty build and quality. The Woodtron's 'one sweep loading action' ensures the board is automatically loaded and squared inside the machine against stops in one movement.

Intermic's modern, fully equipped factory is in St Peters, Sydney, where the team of qualified fitters and joiners are trained to the highest standards in workmanship and workplace safety. With numerous professionals working across a number of industries, the team at Intermic is positioned to provide superior services.

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by John Halkett

European wood products manufacturing study tour to take in Ligna



Top: Ligna Hannover Exhibition Centre is without doubt the number one venue for the world's wood and forestry industries.

Above: Ligna will include the latest in new and emerging solid wood, panel products, bio-materials, wood finishing systems, wood modification, building materials and construction systems technologies.

A WOOD PRODUCTS manufacturing and technology study tour of Germany, Austria with options to visit other European destinations is planned for next year to take in the Ligna Hannover Fair 2013 from 6-10 May 2013.

The 15-day tour will be supported by the Engineered Wood Products Association of Australasia (EWPAA), in collaboration with other industry bodies and companies. The tour, from 28 April to 10 May 2013, will visit manufacturing sites; innovative value-adding product development; technical colleges and universities (engineered wood programs); housing projects, and forest operations. A number of sight-seeing destination stopovers will also be included in the tour.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend the full Ligna program in Hannover and to join selected visits to surrounding wood manufacturing factories and a university outside Ligna for one or two days, allowing three full days at Ligna.

Led by widely experienced Australia-based timber industry and travel specialists, the tour and related sight-seeing program has been prepared in collaboration with the Homag Group and its subsidiaries and partners, and in consultation with other leading wood processing technology companies and manufacturing, machinery and technology specialists.

The Homag Group, located at Schopfloch in the northern part of Germany's Black Forest, is a global player represented in more than 100 countries. It is a leader in the field of machinery and manufacturing for panel processing, structural timber frame housing construction, producing solutions from stand-alone machines to complete production lines.

As is their usual practice, Homag will be running their regular European tour that managing director Ross Campbell describes as a industry study sabbatical. In addition to attending the Ligna fair, the Homag tour will take in the Interzum show and include a number of site visits.

"Our sponsored tour will be purpose-designed for Australian panel processors and will run in

parallel to the EWPAA tour, with some common activities and visits."

Enquiries regarding the Homag-sponsored tour should be directed to Ross at: ross.campbell@homag.com.au or 02 8865 2700.

The Ligna Hannover Exhibition Centre is without doubt the number one venue for the world's wood and forestry industries. Exhibitors from all over the world showcase their latest products and technologies in the areas of solid wood processing, wood panel and veneer processing, structural plywood application, forestry, sawmill technology, solid wood processing, wood component fabrication and furniture manufacturing.

The special Ligna engineered wood exhibition this year will present the latest machinery and plant, plus innovative accessories for the manufacture of wood panel products and veneers, structural plywood and CLT technology.

This section will also feature production of chipboard, fibreboard, OSB, chips and strands from wood waste, processing, press equipment, transport systems, measuring and control technology, production of veneers, veneered plywood and laminated veneer board and wide range of plywood structural and panel options.

The very latest in new and emerging technologies – in solid wood, panel products, bio-materials, wood finishing systems, wood modification technologies, building materials and construction systems that potentially can be picked up by local companies – will be a fair focus.

The EWPAA study tour will be a careful mix of industry visits and sightseeing. It will be of interest to wood product manufacturers, timber product merchants and importers, cabinet making and joinery professions and designers.

A full study tour itinerary is now available along with tour costs, including flight and coach travel, accommodation, meals, visits to tourist locations and entry to the Ligna exhibition. Enquiries should be directed to: EuroWOOD2013@bigpond.com or to Jim Bowden, 07 3266 1429, or John Halkett, 02 9356 3826. ■

Gearing up for success

Established in 1971, Green Kitchens Pty Ltd, located in Sefton NSW, is a family owned and operated business. This reputable kitchen and cabinetmaking joinery offers personal and reliable service.

"Our customers deal directly with us, which guarantees they will get the care and commitment to their project every time," said directors Karim and George Kassis.

"We were previously manufacturing with two panel saws working six days a week just to meet demand. We had panel saw operators taking a full day to cut and drill a standard kitchen – it simply wasn't the most efficient way. We purchased a Woodtron 2700 x 1200 CNC fully automatic nesting cell that now cuts and drills that same kitchen in 45 minutes. The accuracy is exceptional and it has streamlined our assembly time as everything fits perfectly."

"The Woodtron has allowed us to produce a higher quality consistent product and has given us the freedom to take on



more work. Woodtron support has been exceptional and we are thoroughly delighted with our purchase."

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Blum's new website is coming soon

Fittings manufacturer Blum will launch a new website with a modern design, many additional functions and a new 'Ideas' section later this year.

Blum's new presence on the web meets users' latest demands in terms of technology and design. The website is clearly structured to facilitate simple navigation. The site, blum.com is linked to Youtube and is compatible with mobile devices such as iPhones and iPads. Numerous images and videos make it easier to understand content.

Alicia Draper, Blum marketing communications manager said, "The evolution of technology and understanding the role the internet plays in supporting research for consumers and product information for our customers was one of the key elements for the new Blum website. Blum.com is compatible with mobile devices such as the iPad and iPhone".

Blum's website is divided into different sections: Products, Services, Ideas and About Blum. The four sections of the website provide information which is user-friendly and geared to the different needs of visitors. The first two sections provide up-to-date information on products and services for industry professionals. The information is clearly structured, easy to locate and has an appealing design. The Ideas section is completely new and supplies information on Dynamic Space, Blum's ideas for practical kitchens. Users will discover useful tips on buying kitchens and many innovative ideas for their homes. Inspiration Boulevard presents real life applications and shows how Blum products can be used throughout the home.

BLUM AUSTRALIA
Phone 1800 179 186
www.blum.com

Blum's new website has a new design, a clear structure and additional functions.



Wilson & Bradley - relationships with supported employment

Over the past ten years Wilson and Bradley has formed strong relationships with several providers of supported employment that assist in the packaging and assembling of several items. Wilson & Bradley currently work with three separate entities, Hi City that they have been working with since 2003, Ability Works Australia, that they have worked with since 2006 and a recent addition this year, VATMI.

Providers of supported employment give those people with disability an opportunity to have a fulfilling work life and achieve a level of independence that was previously not attainable.

Hi City was established in 1975 and provides supported employment for people with

disability. Hi City currently employs 100 people who cover their three divisions, specialist packaging, grounds maintenance and plant nursery. It is the specialist packaging division that employs over 65 people who have worked closely with Wilson & Bradley over the past 9 years. Wilson & Bradley, together with Hi City look forward to continuing this mutually beneficial relationship.

Ability Works Australia was established in 1963 and is proud to provide employment and training for over 120 people with disability who have the opportunity to work across several different areas including packaging and assembly, brush manufacturing, general engineering and warehousing.

VATMI Packing provides real employment opportunities for over 300 people with disability. A wholly owned subsidiary of VATMI Industries, it has grown into a commercial enterprise encompassing recycling, packing, and an art studio. VATMI has over 50 years of experience in the field and began working in conjunction with Wilson & Bradley earlier this year.

Wilson & Bradley values the support and positive relationships that have come out of these partnerships to date and look forward to a positive future working together.

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EQ Software – an essential tool for business

Ask any kitchen manufacturer or retailer why they invested in EQ Software and a recurring theme is that using this leading business management software solution enables them to provide accurate quotations and save a significant amount of time and money.

At Mr Cabinets in Thomastown Melbourne, visitors can view the very best ranges on offer from leading industry suppliers and have their 3D designs shown to them in the purpose built presentation room. Over the past 30 years Mr Cabinets has seen the number of brands available to the market increase exponentially. This can potentially cause problems for retailers trying to keep information up to date.

Since purchasing the EQ Software system they have not looked back. "The ongoing support has been second to none. EQ is the first program I have purchased that has come with the level of support I expect and has even exceeded my expectations," says general manager Derek De Betta.



"EQ is nothing short of amazing, from the ability to customise 99% of the program to suit your needs to the easy to use interface so that even the most inexperienced user can work with it."

"EQ has allowed us to take on more work and our admin processes are no longer the 'bottle neck' most businesses suffer from these days, so we can now concentrate on other areas of the business." Derek goes on to say "We probably still only scratch the surface of EQ but couldn't run the business without it. The quoting elements cut out user error and from a project management view we have complete visibility on our business operation from a single screen. I would recommend any small to large business wanting to refine their systems, make life easier or to grow their business, to invest in EQ Software."

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Derek De Betta
Mr Cabinets

"I would recommend any small to large business wanting to refine their systems, make life easier or to grow their business, to invest in EQ."

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payment and finance options available

Insurance – cost versus cover

Eight years is a long time to specialise in a particular industry sector for insurance. However specialising in the industry has opened our eyes to great deficiency in clients' insurance coverage for property, liability and business interruption, also making us expert in getting it right. Our customised facility for the cabinet making, joinery and shop fitting industries means we can provide the appropriate coverage at competitive pricing.

Plenty of clients over the years form relationships with their insurance representative and although relationships are important in business, the insurance representative you deal with may not necessarily have access to the same cover and or pricing as a customised industry facility provided by Cabinet Makers Insurance Brokers. As such, you are more than likely paying too much for too little.

Most clients have chosen to reduce cost by underinsuring their businesses, understandable considering the government taxes loaded onto insurance premiums primarily Fire Service Levy in Victoria and New South Wales pushing the total cost upwards of 110% of the base premium (the component actually paid on the declared values and sums insured).

One issue with underinsurance lies in the average or coinsurance clause of the insurance policy wording, something that most clients are not aware even exists.

Where a business's insurance policy is subject to average, underinsurance can result in very high liabilities on the owner. For example, if a flood or fire causes \$3 million of partial damage, the building is insured for \$5 million, but its true value is determined to be \$10 million, the payout will be:

$$\text{Payout} = \text{Claim} \times \frac{\text{Sum insured}}{\text{Current value}} = \$3\text{M} \times \frac{\$5\text{M}}{\$10\text{M}} = \$1.5\text{M}$$

This would leave the business owner with an underinsurance shortfall of \$1.5 million. In the case where a building is listed and has a mandatory rebuild order, it could be ruinous.

Under certain conditions, if the sum insured is 85% or more of the current value, no deduction is made for partial loss.

So what does this mean for you? It is important to review your insurance every year, taking time to have buildings, machinery, tools and other items compared to current new for old replacement costs, then insuring your risk for full replacement value. We understand that this could see your insurance premiums soar, however, as mentioned above, unless you shop the market and look at specialised insurance facilities and risk terminating long standing relationships, you are not going to get the best price for the appropriate cover.

Special care also needs to be given to business interruption coverage. The life blood of a successful business is a healthy

cash flow. Products are produced and sold, services provided; wages and other expenses paid; profits made.

Impede or stop the process, even temporarily and, like a plant denied water, the business suffers. If the interruption is severe enough, the business may never recover if there is not sufficient capital to call on during the lack of cash flow.

Business interruption insurance is not a guarantee of prevention or cure of all the calamities that can beset a business, but it is the means of ensuring that the policyholder will have the security of available money to pay ongoing business expenses, retain trained, experienced key employees, recover any additional expenditure on loss mitigation and to receive payment of the net profit which the business would have earned had the interruption not happened.

Therefore, if insurance is not arranged on the basis of insuring ongoing expenses which cannot be avoided and which have to be paid whether the business operates at 10 % or 100% capacity, then the business may fail.

Research conducted on businesses that suffer a major fire (not necessarily a total loss) shows that 43% of businesses never re-open despite having some form of insurance in place, 28% of businesses fail within 3 years and only 29% survive.

Its best to have an expert assist you with business interruption insurance that will give your business the best chance of survival should an insurable major loss occur.

Further consideration should be given to other areas of cover that may be required for your business for example: - contract works insurance, home warranty insurance, Work Cover, life and income protection, transit insurance for stock and customers goods, machinery breakdown and management liability insurance.

Don't know what the above covers you for? Then just maybe you are not insured correctly. All of the above are important insurance coverages available and required in most cases for your industry. The time to get your insurance policy right is right now.

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Carving a niche in benchtop manufacturing

With today's expanding technology, old school production principles for big batches have become a thing of the past. Companies need to be versatile and flexible to meet the ever growing demands of their customers. Speed, versatility, quality and material waste are critical areas to maximising manufacturing processes. Queensland-based Aussie Benches knows this and has invested in high-tech machinery, including a new Homag Ambition 2272 edgebander to process high-quality tops and doors.

Australian Benchtop Specialists – or better known as Aussie Benches – is a partnership formed by Wayne O'Brien and Craig Smith in 2009. Wayne came with a lifetime of experience in manufacturing in NZ as a son of the family business The O'Brien Group and worked from a very young age in the business. Craig has also been involved in manufacturing of benchtops since he left school.

Speed, versatility, quality and material waste are critical areas to consider in maximising manufacturing processes

When Wayne moved his young family to Australia back at the start of 2009 looking for manufacturing opportunities in Queensland, the two men crossed paths and decided to go into business together. What Aussie Benches has achieved in three short years is testament to a strong partnership with great communication and a passion for manufacturing. "Our business here in Queensland has grown steadily," Wayne says. "We now have 15 staff and rely on our Homag machines as an integral part of the process to manufacture our products."

Changing market

According to Wayne, the stone benchtop dominated Australian market is changing.

"We see laminate coming back," he says. "Stone is very heavy, expensive and very unfriendly from a manufacturing point of view. We see laminate

regaining some market share. The laminate market is getting trendy, much more innovative, with so many new colours and textures and designs."

Wayne adds that "there is also the added advantage for our customers that laminate is more profitable to them than stone due to the process."

Aussie Benches owns seven Homag machines, a Brandt edgebander, two Brandt postformers, a Weeke BHP 200 nesting cell, a Weeke rail and pod machine, a Holzma beam saw and the recently installed Homag Ambition 2272 edgebander with a Ligmatech ZHR05 return system. The system permits one-man operation of single-sided edgebanding and was particularly developed for the requirements for medium-sized enterprises such as Aussie Benches.

Niche: High-gloss laminate doors and benchtops.

While Wayne and Craig realised that a significant capital investment would be required to compete in the market, they also saw the trend changing towards gloss finishes in tops and doors.

"With high-gloss laminates growing in the market we saw an opportunity to complement these evolving trends with high quality doors for our customers," Wayne says. "But we needed a high-end edgebander to get the efficiencies up. As our existing machine at the time was not up to producing the quality required, we needed to look for a solution to do both doors and tops and we also wanted to remove as much of the labour content as we could to make a more competitive product."

"The reason we invested significantly in a high-end edgebander from Homag was so that we now have the machine to offer our customers a quality door especially as the trend of high-gloss is gaining momentum in the marketplace," Wayne says. "There are only a few companies in Australia offering acrylic high-gloss door edgebanding, and we want to be known as one of them."

The Homag edgebander not only handles high-gloss material with ease, it is also highly productive with less after work and manual labour required – which is a decisive factor when

trying to build quality into products and just-in-time delivery is of crucial importance.

One thing that stands out on the Homag edgebander is that the machine is built very heavily. Everything is oversize and built to give customers what they expect, which is products that are very very good, Wayne says. With a feed rate of 25m/min for high productivity, the machine is unbelievably fast considering the very small panel gap. The Edition 2272 could easily process 100m of edge tape every 15 minutes when pushed. It also features a profile trimming unit with two automatic 8-slot tool changers and is highly flexible through its capacity to process all types of edging material. Also included are servo-driven multi-profile scrapers. "That really do add to the end result," Wayne remarks.

"With the edgebander we can now also support our customers with high quality edgebanding to get a quality product at cost-comparative price," Wayne says.

Minimise manual labour

Moreover, Wayne is very pleased with the good cycle times because the industry doesn't always plan as well as everybody would like. "We needed a machine to give us extremely fast turnaround of orders," he says and adds "The other reason we went with the Homag edgebander is that everything is done through the screen. The operator doesn't have to make mechanical adjustments, the computer organises everything, with the result that the operators can concentrate on other things."

The touch screen allows the operator to select all the important functions for fast, reliable production. Program selection, selection of edges and changing the workpiece height are just some of the possibilities afforded by the Homag operating concept. Moreover, the PowerControl PC22 control system offers simple operation through a user-friendly menu prompting using the Windows-XP standard and easily understandable plain text messages.

Leaders in the field

Wayne and Craig like technology and because they want Aussie Benches to be leaders in the field with doors and tops, another decisive factor to buy the Homag edgebander was the



ability to retrofit LaserTec. A laser edgebander can eliminate the glue pot and mechanical glue application, providing a seamless "zero join" edgeband. Instead of hot glue applicators, a diode laser system directs light beams via oscillating mirrors to melt a reactive layer under the edge tape's surface. "The result is simply amazing," Wayne says.

Wayne and Craig both admit they don't see the need for laser edgebanding at this point in time. "We see the stepping stone for us to laser being PUR application."

Asked why they still went with Homag technology, Wayne's answer is clear: "Because it is German, the machines are engineered to last and they do last." Craig agrees with Wayne and adds "I didn't believe it myself until we started looking at edgebanders. I thought the only time you saw edges like we can achieve is every two years at AWISA. We have a great working relationship with Homag. And our new edgebander is testament to this."

Craig Smith (left) and Wayne O'Brien in front of their Homag edgebander, that will support Brisbane-based Aussie Benches to compete in the market.

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Register now for Dynamic Space

Blum Dynamic Space workshops will resume in the new year with fresh content. Those considering a showroom overhaul or looking to revive their knowledge to assist in selling and designing practical kitchens, should register their interest with their local Blum representative.

Blum would like to share their research and inspire the industry with Dynamic Space – ideas for practical kitchens by Blum. The company's innovative products and practical solutions for cabinet makers make everyday kitchen use easier and facilitate kitchen planning.

The focus of Dynamic Space is also on kitchen showrooms and making demonstrations convincing. Potential kitchen buyers can experience the functionality and added value of quality fittings. Discussing the added value and benefits of a practical kitchen allow potential kitchen buyers to confidently invest in a new kitchen.

Good workflows, enough storage space and top quality motion are the three essential features of a practical kitchen. If attention is paid to all three, a kitchen can be designed to suit the customer's needs now and well into the future. Those interested in learning more about Dynamic Space – Idea's for functional kitchens, should contact their local Blum representative.

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by Eric Lytton
Executive officer
Cabinet Makers Association of WA



Distant murmurs... news from Western Australia

THE PAST couple of years have, on the whole, seen very trying economic conditions for cabinet makers in Western Australia. Despite the perception that the west is awash with cash and the Australian Bureau of Statistics data suggesting that WA leads the nation on many economic factors, the reality for many small to medium businesses has been very different.

Commercial developments have slowed markedly, as has consumer confidence and despite declining interest rates both the new home and renovations markets have experienced slowing demand. Added to this is the growing impact of imported products and the pushing of flat pack kitchens by the large hardware chains and the result has been a significant number of cabinet making businesses closing up, with many more experiencing financial difficulties.

Industry Representation on the Food Fibre and Timber Industries Industry Training Council

CMA WA committee member Alex Rupe, is the cabinet making industries nomination to the executive committee of the Food, Fibre and Timber Industries Training Council of WA (FFT ITC). The primary purpose of the FFT



ITC is to provide advice to Government on behalf of industry, and ensure all nationally recognised training programmes and packages reflect the current and future needs within the industries. Training or education issues you want raised with the FFT ITC can be directed through CMA WA.

2013 Golf Day

Planning is underway for CMA WA's 2013 golf day that will take place at Wembley Golf Course on Friday, April 12. This is always a great value event and much enjoyed by participants. CMA WA looks forward to seeing many of you there.

Home Building Contracts Act (HBC Act)

Many cabinet makers are unaware of the existence of the HBC Act and how it impacts on the way they do business. In short, the provisions of the Act come into play when cabinet makers take on private work within the threshold values, currently between \$7,500 and \$500,000.

Earlier this year a CMA WA member was threatened with prosecution by the WA Building Commission for requiring progress payments. According to the Building Commission progress payments, other than the statutory 6.5% deposit, can only be obtained for work or materials that have been delivered to site. The Building Commission's interpretation of the HBC Act means two things, firstly by taking progress payments (or deposits in excess of the prescribed amount) most cabinet making businesses in WA are

operating illegally and secondly in order to operate within the Building Commission's guidelines cabinet making businesses will have to act as a 'bank' for their customers and run the risk of not being paid when the work is delivered and installed.

CMA WA commissioned commercial lawyers Wilson & Atkinson for its interpretation of the Act and received advice that nothing in the HBC Act precludes cabinet makers from obtaining progress payments. Accordingly CMA WA has raised its concerns with Minister Simon O'Brien's office and has written to the Building Commission with its recommendation that cabinet makers be permitted to obtain progress payments.

Businesses that follow the prescriptions of the HBC Act generally aren't ones setting out to 'rip off' consumers and are simply asking for payment, through the construction process, to cover their outgoings. CMA WA is aware that many cabinet making businesses in WA don't know about the HBC Act, or simply chose to ignore it and that many of these businesses obtain deposits in excess of the 6.5% maximum. This issue is far more critical than whether or not obtaining genuine progress payments is or isn't in breach of the HBC Act, but unfortunately this doesn't seem to attract the oversight of the Building Commission quite so much. CMA WA will advise the Building Commission's response when it is received. ■

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Eric Lytton
Executive officer
Cabinet Makers Association of WA

Melbourne's Inner West shows off latest design trends

Organic, earthy and natural tones with a splash of contemporary – these are the prevailing design trends in Melbourne's inner west, according to a new local home and kitchen renovation company Room 4.

"There are a lot of beautiful old homes in the area, particularly in Yarraville and Williamstown – there is very much a village feel around here," says Room 4 owner, Peter Gurovski.

Room 4 is a unique home renovation team that specifically targets the Yarraville, Seddon, Williamstown, Newport and Spotswood neighbourhoods. With local knowledge and an understanding of the unique houses in the area, Room 4 is able to offer the best advice on kitchen, bathroom, laundry or wardrobe space.

"I've noticed over the years locals are taking more pride in their homes, and there has been an increase in demand for renovation work, with a strong leaning towards more organic and earthy styles, such as woodgrain finishes and recycled timber."

Peter opened Room 4's stunning new showroom earlier this year and says the market is looking strong.

"Business has been fantastic. The end of the year will be really busy – we've already noticed more people coming in and wanting work done on their kitchens and bathrooms for the Christmas period," says Peter. In addition to Peter the team at Room 4 includes a professional colour consultant/stylist and an assistant. Peter plans to add another staff member towards the end of the year.

As a member of the Hettich Endorsed Showroom programme, Room 4 stocks Hettich products such as soft-close doors and drawers, accessories, handles and other cabinetry products. Hettich's Endorsed Showroom programme is a selection of hand-picked showrooms across Australia that stock Hettich merchandise.

"Peter has more than 12 years experience in building and renovation and because of this, is able to offer clients the full package – the team at Room 4 can help customers every step of the way from the initial planning



stages through to installation. Room 4 is a perfect fit with Hettich's brand values," says Hettich Australia's Endorsed Showroom manager, Corene Roberts. Room 4 is located at 334 Williamstown Road, Yarraville.

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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

AWISA The Exhibition



The exhibition has been held regularly since 1988, and attracts furniture manufacturers, cabinet makers, kitchen manufacturers, joiners, shop and office fitters, and other wood, timber and panel processing industries. Architects and interior designers also attend.

The association recently held its twelfth exhibition at the Sydney Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, from 11-14 July 2012. The next AWISA exhibition will take place in Brisbane from 6-9 August 2014 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

AWISA The Magazine



AWISA's magazine is published quarterly and is distributed free to a database of over 16,000 end users in the industry. AWISA's editorial policy is to produce quality editorial about business and technical issues that affect the woodworking industry, and to provide members with a means of disseminating information about their products. The association welcomes input from both members and end users about subjects that should be written about in the magazine.

AWISA The Board

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DISTRIBUTION

AWISA – The Magazine is distributed free to a list made up of companies that attended the last three AWISA exhibitions, plus the client databases of some major AWISA members. To be added to the distribution list send an email to info@awisa.com or send a fax to 02 9918 7764. (AWISA Ltd may at some time in the future charge a subscription for personally addressed magazines)



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