

# AWISA THE MAGAZINE

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



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## DEAR READER,

They say that buses come along in threes, but it would appear that anniversaries come along in fives. In this edition, five major suppliers to the Australian woodworking industry celebrate milestones with 20 year, 25 year, 30 year, 60 year and 70 year anniversaries. Read the magazine and you'll find out who, but there is no prize for finding them.

This edition has a big story about tiny houses. We feature two specialists in this field. It surprised me to learn that one has completed 120 tiny houses. I guess they tend to get built in hard to see locations. But the relevant thing for the woodworking industry is that tiny houses involve lots of intricate joinery to the same standard as boat building, except of course that things are generally square in a tiny house.

Interest rates are back in the news. The effect on housing and other economic activity is explained in two articles. Page 12 has an economist's views, and page 52 has a finance company's views.

It is of great importance to the woodworking industry that the training of apprentices is both encouraged and done to the highest standards. The Australian Cabinet and Furniture Association is a Registered Training Organisation that specialises in training for the furnishing and cabinet industries. This edition features a comprehensive article on ACFA's training activities. It is based on interviews with two award winning apprentices and their trainers. If your business wants to help with the workplace training of apprentices, ACFA would welcome your call.

Other articles include one about the rebuilding of Her Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide with its complex joinery requirements, and two articles about bespoke woodworkers, clockmaker Will Matthysen and furniture maker, Peter Cowper.

Geoff Holland  
General manager  
Australian Woodworking Industry  
Suppliers Association Limited

FRONT COVER: Hinge drilling and insertion  
machines provide precise and accurate  
assembly. Photo courtesy of Blum Australia.

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by Pam Kershaw

# Rebuild of Her Majesty's Theatre Adelaide

## presented challenges for local joinery

**CONTRACTED TO** undertake the joinery for the recent \$66 million rebuild of Her Majesty's Theatre in Adelaide, John Reuther of JRCM Commercial Joinery says the project presented a number of challenges including timeframes, the delicate nature of much of the work, the acoustic requirements and the complexity of major timber features of the auditorium.

The Adelaide landmark is the last remaining example of the famous chain of Tivoli theatres and the rebuild (which retained only the grand 1913 façade and one other external wall) delivered a magnificent state-of-the-art theatre. The design by COX Architecture features twin sweeping staircases in the main foyer, custom-built curved timber balcony fronts in the 1500-seat auditorium, and Edwardian elements such as a pressed metal ceiling, elegant architraves and mouldings.

"It is a transformational refurbishment project which blends the original heritage external fabric with a reimagined interior," says COX Architecture Director Adam Hannon. "Our aim was to be inspired by the original Edwardian interiors that were sadly lost during previous renovations in the 1960s and 1970s, and by the performances that have graced the stage over so many years.

"Faceted and timber surfaces, including some complex curves, take centre stage within the architecture as well as providing an essential acoustic layer, while the bold new balconies pay homage to the original curved lines from the 1913 heritage plans," Hannon says.

Reuther says the first challenge was having it all completed within the builder's (Hansen and Yuncken) timeframe. "The work was so delicate and complex that we weren't quite sure how it was all going to roll," he says.

Completing the timber balcony fronts for the dress circle and upper circle took about eight months. The steel manufacturer constructed frames in the theatre to support the fronts, however, Reuther had prototype frames for both balconies delivered to his Adelaide factory so the sections of the balcony fronts could be manufactured, bolted together and hung on the test frames.

"We had to make sure that when we unhooked the balcony fronts and took them to site, they would fit perfectly on the frames that had been installed. We did this because of the program issue. We could see that we couldn't manufacture the balcony fronts onsite because of the eight months it took to build them."

Everything fitted perfectly, and Reuther was relieved to have "ticked that box".

### Mirror images for the balcony fronts

The fronts were made in two sections – left and right – and it was essential that they were mirror images. While computer imaging and CNC routers were vital in achieving this, the choice of American white oak was also important.

"Originally, they wanted Tasmanian oak to keep it all Australian made. But there's too much variation in colour in the Tasmanian oak, with pinks and tans, while the American oak is a little more consistent and a little easier to work with," Reuther says.

The other major challenge was in the huge panels that curve – both concave and convex – on both sides of the auditorium and fit into the façade near the stage.

Roughly six metres high and 15 metres long, the panels were built onsite because of their size and required scaffolding on both sides of the building. Scaffolds could not be taken down until the work was completely finished, and for safety reasons no one could work underneath.

Reuther observes that this "created a lot of tension" at times.

The project took about four months, and while Reuther's company has done similar work, there has been "nothing quite as intricate as this".

"It's all solid timber and we've had to curve it to suit the shapes required. Not only for the look of it, but the acoustic side of things was very important."

### Adjustments made for acoustic ratings

Sound would be directed according to those curves, and Reuther didn't know if the acoustic ratings had been met until the sound engineers did their tests after joinery was completed.

Adjustments were made, including curved timber slats that were installed on each side of the balcony fronts because of a small "bounce" of noise. A section of veneer was also used in the middle of the balcony fronts, with perforations to allow sound to be absorbed.

Timber veneer on both sites of the stage was perforated and then covered with a dark stain that would absorb more sound.

Hannon says the inherent versatility in veneer allowed the ►







► design team to successfully create the challenging, complex curved theatre forms. The veneer panels were crown cut, allowing Reuther to deal with the complex curves in the joinery geometry, giving a consistent finish as the panels curved.

The timber on the twin staircases also entailed a significant amount of very detailed work. Comprising both solid timber and laminated timber, the staircases featured curved handrails, balustrades and sidewalls from the balustrades to the floor. Hand planing and sanding was required to finish each section.

The laminated balustrades also required chamfering to ensure that if a glass was placed on the balustrade rail, it would fall inward to the stairs and not outward to a floor below.

Reuther estimates there were between 12 and 15 cubic metres of American oak in the project.

"While there were a lot of things we had never done before, what we thought through and the way we went about it all worked. One of the pleasing things was that the builder was right on board with us, backed us and listened to what we were saying. So it was a team effort."

The use of American white oak veneers in the fit-out caught the eye of the Timber Veneer Association of Australia's (TVAA) Technical Representative, Peter Llewellyn.

"American white oak is available in solid timber, so the veneered surfaces blended beautifully with solid components such as stair balustrades," Llewellyn says.

The auditorium from the stage showing the balcony fronts.

Photo Chris Oaten.





### Multi-award-winning project

The rebuild has won seven South Australian awards from the Australian Institute of Building, the Master Builders South Australia and the Australian Institute of Architects.

Douglas Gautier AM, Adelaide Festival Director CEO and Artistic Director, says the rebuild has great regard in every respect for the history of the theatre.

"It's one of Australia's oldest theatres, and certainly one with great stories and great artists who performed in it. The redevelopment respects all that, but at the same time it really is a theatre that is now very serviceable for the 21st century.

"It's commercially viable again at 1500 seats, and there's not a bad seat in the house."

Gautier, who chairs the Asia Pacific Art Centres Association, says Her Majesty's is acknowledged as one of the most innovative and interesting theatre developments in the Southern hemisphere.

The TVAA has a range of publications and an informative website <https://timberveneer.asn.au/> to assist specifiers. Email [info@timberveneer.asn.au](mailto:info@timberveneer.asn.au) or call 1300 303 982 for advice on specific projects. ■

The auditorium showing panels that were stained to help with the acoustics.

Photo Chris Oaten.



by Angela Lillicrap, HIA Economist



# Interest rates are rising, and housing demand will slow

**THE RESERVE BANK** of Australia recently raised the cash rate for the first time in over a decade. There was no denying that at some point interest rates had to go up. At 0.1 per cent, the cash rate was a far cry from what was considered an emergency rate of 3.0 per cent during the global financial crisis. But a rise in interest rates will only partially deal with Australia's current inflation problem.

Inflation is picking up in Australia and across the world. In the March 2022 quarter, annual headline inflation in Australia was 5.1 per cent, the strongest annual rate since the introduction of the GST in 2000. This is still lower than in many other countries. These upward price pressures are being caused by supply chain disruptions, strong demand as economies recover from the pandemic and overseas conflicts.

A rise in interest rates will do nothing to fix inflation caused by supply chain disruptions. Supply chain disruptions should eventually ease as production levels increase, backlogs are worked through, and demand returns to normal levels, although the timing of this occurring is unclear.

Energy prices have also risen due to conflicts overseas (Russia is a key supplier of gas and oil). This has a flow on effect to most industries, particularly those that rely heavily on transport and shipping. There is also the risk that the war exacerbates current supply shortages as Russia and Ukraine are key exporters of some goods including metals and wheat.

Property markets are more exposed than other parts of the economy to higher interest rates. Servicing a mortgage

(particularly those on a variable mortgage) becomes more expensive when interest rates rise, reducing housing affordability. Concerns that a rate rise could lead to instability within the financial sector in Australia or cause extraordinary declines in home prices are unwarranted. Australia has an unquestionably strong financial system.

Interest rates must inevitably return to a 'normal' level. In doing so, the RBA needs to be careful not to increase rates too quickly and overshoot the equilibrium level.

A rise in the cash rate reduces households' borrowing power. This typically slows down house price growth and can have a negative effect on consumer confidence. Even talk of rising interest rates can have the same impact as an actual increase in interest rates. Reduced borrowing power and lower consumer confidence makes households more hesitant to pursue large investments such as building a house. This reduced confidence can also negatively impact business investment and can have ramifications for the wider economy.

HIA forecasts of housing construction have the industry declining by 8.5 per cent in 2022/23 and 7.5 per cent in 2023/24 largely due to the impact of rising interest rates. This is still a relatively good year for home building, however, this decline in investment comes at a time when Australia needs investment in housing. There is downside risk to this forecast if the RBA over-tightens interest rates.

Australia has had two years without overseas migration, resulting in the lowest annual rate of population growth since WWII. Despite this lack of population growth, there is a severe shortage of housing available. Nationally, the rental vacancy rate was 1.0 per cent in March 2022. The vacancy rate is below 2.0 per cent in all capital cities. This indicates that there are not enough rental properties available to meet demand. As a result, rental prices in the capitals increased by 8.6 per cent in the 12 months to March 2022. The return of overseas migration will only exacerbate this shortage of rental properties.

The recent increase in the cash rate to 0.35 should not have a significant impact on most household budgets. It is, however, an important signal for homeowners and investors that the period of ultra-low interest rates is nearing an end. Rising interest rates will ultimately bring the current home building boom to an end. ■





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# ACFA's enthusiastic trainers help employers have highly skilled staff

**KYLE MATHEWS** was proud and surprised to be standing on the stage at the latest presentation of the Australian Cabinet and Furniture Industry Association National Industry Awards. The annual awards recognise outstanding achievements in the industry. The association, as a Registered Training Organisation operating under its National RTO Code 90432, provides accredited programs for apprentices to complete their training in the workplace, and the annual awards also recognise their outstanding achievements.

Kyle won the award for Apprentice of the Year - Cabinet Making. He works at Highline Joinery in Port Macquarie (NSW).

It's commonly perceived that young people look for an apprenticeship straight from school, as in Kyle's case. He wanted to do something practical, hands-on work, and he was encouraged by the teachers who saw his potential in woodworking class, to pursue his interest in woodwork which required creative skills. In doing complex installation and cabinetry jobs, Kyle tells AWISA magazine, he pushes the boundaries, always challenging himself, doing work that "requires using your brain".

But apprenticeships are available to anyone at any time along their work journey, as in the case of Matthew Smith, who also attracted acclaim, to win the award for Apprentice of the Year – Furniture, but unfortunately was unable to attend personally at the presentations.

According to the latest statistics from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research, in mid-2021 there were 341,385 apprentices and trainees in-training. That was an increase of more 27.5% over the previous year. In 2019–2020, 25% of people commencing apprenticeships or traineeships were aged between 25 and 44, and 48% were aged under 19.

Both Kyle and Matthew have now completed their apprenticeships and attained their qualifications.

Matthew works at Thylacine Exhibition Design, headquartered in Canberra. His biographical notes say that since he joined the company in 2019, he has worked on a variety of projects. Amongst them were the Voices and Connections galleries at the National Archives of Australia that won awards.

Reflecting on the idea he never would have thought someone would enter him into an award such as ACFA's, let alone that we could win, Matthew tells AWISA magazine he is lucky to have a great support network made up of family, friends, co-workers, and trainers that have supported him.

"Winning the award was a huge moment for me. I love working with Thylacine. The work is always interesting. I am lucky that our work involves multiple disciplines, such as metal fabrication, working with plastics as well as fabric work, which enables me to learn more skills. I would like to become more involved with museum exhibition design as well as assessing and fabricating museum objects and display joinery."

Through his apprenticeship, Matthew finally found something that interests him deeply. "Every day there is something different to focus on. Working with Gavin, my trainer at ACFA, has helped me to gain vital skills in both fabrication and design. The education provided to me has given me invaluable skills in modern and traditional furniture making."

The ACFA program provides tailored one-to-one training. Matthew says he was able to get individual attention and advice which both helped with his development and also related to current and future projects at work.

All the while Matthew's appreciation of timber was enhanced.



Kyle Mathews



Matthew Smith



Gavin McCarthy



"Working and appreciating wood is an ongoing experience. There is always a new exotic piece of timber I have managed to hunt down and use, whether it is for larger furniture, or for making some trinkets on the lathe. It's always fascinating and satisfying to see what different timbers brings to a project."

Gavin McCarthy was Matthew's trainer and assessor. Gavin worked across the industry gaining expertise, especially in kitchen cabinetry before joining ACFA in 2017. "I saw it as a great opportunity to get off the tools full time and give back to the industry that I had worked in for nearly 25 years," he tells AWISA magazine.

Matthew was Gavin's third apprentice to win the award. Modestly, he says the secret to his success is luck. He was lucky to train apprentices who were not only talented but also had the self-motivation to be the best they could be. "They engaged in their training and asked questions when they needed to better themselves. The employers, and the work conducted by the businesses, also pushed the students and expanded their capabilities."

As a mature-age apprentice, Matthew had completed some training in other areas. Gavin says starting out later in life is an advantage as you know what you really want to do. "The first time I met Matthew, he showed great enthusiasm and maturity. He was interested in the industry and was already producing his own furniture items. I currently have other mature aged students who also show the same enthusiasm. They want to learn what they can and are not just there because they are an apprentice but they actually want to better themselves and make a career out of the industry."

It is useful to note that if someone has the skills but not the qualification, ACFA runs an RPL Program (Recognition of Prior Learning) to help someone receive their certificate based on their experience.

Kyle remembers being up on stage to receive his award, "I was only there for a couple of seconds." He felt surprised. He was not used to getting awards, and this was his first. And he felt proud. "It felt good being acknowledged," he says and adds after a moment's thought, that it was a very good night.

He has been with Highline for a year and a half, he says, and intends to stay for a good while. He is not sure what he would be doing now if he had not gone down the path of this apprenticeship. "Definitely, they have taught me heaps with



the job and training. I'm more a practical person, and there were some good practical activities." After his schooling, Kyle completed work placement and got an apprenticeship, but then transferred to the apprenticeship with Highline Joinery.

He enjoyed the apprenticeship and enjoys the work he undertakes today because the company does a lot of joinery work, as well as a variety of timber work, such as using veneers. Every job is different, he says, you are not just assembling boxes together, you are always being challenged. Highline recently ►

- completed one project that he found especially interesting. It was a big high-end job at Sydney International Airport involving curved veneers, countertops, and other woodwork.

Kyle explains that the course tailored after consultation with himself and his employer included a minimum of three hours a week online to learn theory, and then continuous active integrated training on the job. The trainer visited regularly for one-on-one sessions and to answer any questions because sometimes, as Kyle added, you can't get the answers straight away.

Apart from working through the workbook, he had to provide some video evidence to show that he could complete certain tasks, such as assembling cabinets. The program worked well for him, he says. There was always enough work to keep him busy, and learning on the job, hands-on.



According to the information provided for Kyle's nomination, since joining the team at Highline, Kyle has acquired more self-confidence and gained important skills in interacting with clients. He learned to use his skills acquired on the factory floor, understanding the technical requirements of different hardware needed to successfully complete onsite installations. Highline added that he is a valued employee. The judges in their comments were very complimentary and reflected Kyle's passion for his work. "Impressive cabinetmaking skills, very creative. Kyle fulfils the cabinetmaking awards entry category requirements by demonstrating exceptional skills in creative cabinet making, pride in his work and inspiration."

Dylan Harvey was Kyle's trainer. "I only worked with Kyle for his later units as I took a few students off a fellow trainer to help out his workload. But in the short time I worked with Kyle, I found him to be a very well mannered, a down-to-earth guy who was always ready to work and do his best on every visit. Kyle has a very bright future ahead of him in the cabinet-making industry and I wish him all the best."

The biggest challenge for trainers, says Dylan, is the fact the industry is moving so fast and constantly evolving. Trainers have to constantly keep up to date with the latest machinery, hardware, and techniques, to be relevant and teach the students.

Dylan looks after students on the north coast of NSW, from Tweed Heads down to Port Macquarie. "There is an enrolment process that is completed with ACFA's Student Liaison Officer. Then the trainer makes contact and works with the apprentice and employer to identify the best times to conduct the onsite training. I try my best to make studying more of a "fun" activity that they want to be a part of, rather than a tedious task. I feel by doing this the students are more inclined to do the work."

Would Kyle recommend this type of apprenticeship to his friends? He ponders a moment, then says, "Yeah, for sure. Especially if you do it with the right company that knows what they are doing," and he adds, enjoy it. ■

Kyle Matthews shows his exceptional skills in creative cabinet making





**MR DEAN BRAKELL**, the CEO at ACFA, provided for AWISA magazine background information about his organisation's training program:

"ACFA has been a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for over 20 Years. As an RTO, we are registered by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) to provide Nationally Recognised Qualifications that are regulated by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). Qualifications are delivered through the completion of a competency-based Australian Apprenticeship or Traineeship."

"As the not-for-profit association for the industry, we specialise in training for the furnishing and cabinetmaking industries. Our trainers and assessors are qualified industry tradespeople with years of industry experience who maintain currency to ensure the delivery of best practice training and assessment."

"ACFA accepts enrolments on-demand, at any time of the year. This means

employers don't need to wait for semester beginning and end dates to start an apprentice."

"Our Workplace-Based Training is facilitated by an ACFA Trainer attending the apprentices' workplace for face-to-face learning, supplemented by an interactive online learning platform. This onsite learning allows for training to be customised to suit the machinery and equipment within the employer's factory, increasing the relevancy of the training."

"Workplace-based training also increases the one-on-one interaction between a trainer and apprentice, including ongoing mentoring and assessments."

"As a registered RTO, certain qualifications through ACFA may attract tuition fee subsidies and other government incentives. This is based on eligibility criteria and differs from state to state."



Mr Dean Brakell, CEO of ACFA.

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by Rob Ditessa

# Will Matthysen, woodworker, clockmaker

**WILL MATTHYSEN** is a masterful designer and maker of clocks, both the cabinets, and the inner mechanisms, from wood, brass and steel. Describing himself as a woodworker and clockmaker, he says he uses techniques from both crafts and overlays them with a design which blends them. "If my clocks are perceived by others as art, that's fine."

His bespoke artisan clocks in the form of longcase clocks, mantel clocks, and his remarkable free-form sculptural clocks, stand in homes and collections around the world. Over the past 30 years he has made over 200 clocks of all shapes and sizes. He exhibits frequently and has received numerous awards over this time, the latest was the Felder Award for Craftsmanship during the Studio Furniture Exhibition held at the Bungendore Wood Works Gallery in 2018, for Clock 195 made of Fiddleback Blackwood, Sycamore, Huon Pine, and ancient redgum.

While he works within a long tradition of making clocks from wood going back to the Black Forest in Germany and Connecticut in the USA in the early 19th century, Will works with modern forms and technology. He applies traditional

horological principles in making the parts, for instance, the gears and their geometry, but his method of putting it all together differs from the traditional. The woodwork for the case uses traditional joinery such as mortice and tenons, dovetails, and three-way mitre joints. The case designs are quite minimalist and controlled. "I stick with long established traditions that have withstood the test of time when it suits me, but do not reproduce the forms and aesthetics of the past, preferring a contemporary means of expression," Will tells AWISA.

The smallest intricate piece of a clock made from wood is the grasshopper escapement and the escape wheel, designed by John Harrison over 300 years ago. Originally Harrison used lignum vitae for these parts, and made the gears from oak using a segmented construction where the grain of the timber is parallel to the teeth of the gears. Will uses a similar technique to Harrison's method, but he prefers using Australian semi-desert hardwoods such as Acacia Rhodoxylon, Mulga or Gidgee.

To identify the right timber and how to work with it for a particular application, Will learned to appreciate the subtlest differences in the properties of different timbers.

Early on he learned by a combination of experimentation, reading up on timber properties, and listening to the elders of the trades. Becoming a member of several woodwork and clock making groups, including the Victorian Woodworkers Association, Studio Woodworkers Australia, and the Sydney Clockmakers Association, he has come to know many people in the industry. His library includes a well-thumbed 'Wood in Australia' by Keith Bootle, Bruce Hoadley's 'Understanding Wood', and other books by experts in the wood products department at the CSIRO who understand deeply wood and its chemistry.

Recounting one useful contact, Will remembers getting a call, out of the blue from an 80-year young luthier from the outback of NSW, who had read an article about his work. In the course of their conversation, the luthier explained that violin and cello pegs made from timber sourced from a very low rainfall area will turn and stay perfectly round. Pegs made from timber sourced from a lush area with a higher rainfall, would be oval after six months. This led Will to contemplate the problems associated with moisture and he explains that the luthier was using timber which was so incredibly dry when he sourced it, that once he worked it, it had little moisture left to lose.

Clock 174 and  
Will Matthysen

Clock 174 was made  
from recycled pallet  
from American  
timbers, Red Oak,  
Cherry, Sycamore,  
and Elm, for Create  
a Crate exhibition in  
Melbourne 2014.





"Timber only swells and contracts with variations in moisture content, and that moisture content is in the air. In Melbourne, the equilibrium moisture content in the air would be between 12 and 14 per cent. That means that 12 to 14 per cent of the weight of the timber is water. In Sydney and Brisbane, it might be a little higher, but in Alice Springs, it might be down to 8 per cent because of the dryness."

Eventually, Will developed his own technique for seasoning and stabilising the wood he wanted to use. For instance, for the gears he likes Gidgee, which is very dense, about 1100 kilograms per cubic metre, so that it sinks in water. To get it very stable, he explains, he dries and cuts it into oversized strips that can still fit in the kitchen oven. He weighs the wood on a set of scales with point one of a gram resolution, then sets the oven on a low setting, about 50C with fan, keeping the door slightly open so that the hot air blows out. He weighs it periodically and carries on until it stops losing weight. At this point all the moisture has been removed from the wood.

The difference between the first and final weight is made up by the water that has been removed from the wood, and this constitutes the original moisture content of the wood.

Will continues, if you leave the wood in the workshop for a number of months it will slowly reabsorb moisture, but it will reabsorb moisture below the equilibrium moisture content that it would normally have had if it were losing moisture in the normal drying process. And that is the crucial factor, because the timber movement (shrinkage and expansion) is directly related to the amount of variation in moisture in the air, the corresponding movement in the wood will be minimised. This is known as the hysteresis effect. He then uses a timber finish such as tung oil which will help reduce the reabsorption.

So, he summarises the key is to select the appropriate species for the clock part in terms of hardness and a fine consistent grain, quarter sawn timber is better than back sawn for dimensional stability, avoid timber with internal growth stresses, and then slowly pre-dry the material to below the equilibrium moisture content of the environment in which it will find itself. Ignore this step and you will have problems. He uses metal machining tools to machine the parts, a milling machine, lathe, and CNC.

To make, for instance, the gears, Will prepares wood or brass blanks and turns them on the lathe to size, then mounts them on the CNC milling machine with a digital readout and dividing ►



Clock 195 won the Felder Award for Craftsmanship during the Studio Furniture Exhibition held at the Bungendore Wood Works Gallery in 2018. Clock 195 is made of Fiddleback Blackwood, Sycamore, Huon Pine, and ancient Redgum.

Clock 183 was made from timbers sourced from the Botanic Gardens Sydney for Tree Cycle Exhibition 2016.

Clock183.6

Clock183.5



Clock 174 detail (left) and dial

head. Will's CNC is basically an engineering milling machine that has been retrofitted with stepper motors and a control unit, which allows him to program it. It has four axes, XYZ, and W, which is the rotary axis for milling the gears. The gears are mounted on a horizontal shaft on the dividing head, and then he writes the program. A custom-made fly cutter of the correct tooth profile is mounted on the spindle to cut the teeth. These cutters are either purchased from specialist suppliers, or Will grinds up his own out of tool steel on his tool and cutter grinder.

The beauty of CNC, Will stresses, is repeatable accuracy which is exactly what he needs with cutting the gears and the pinions. Every tooth has got to be equally spaced, equally wide, exactly the right diameter, and he can do a batch of them. While a lot of mystique has developed around working with hand tools, setting up a CNC machine requires just as much finesse and attention to detail, but this is often not appreciated. Yes, certain jobs can be done with hand tools quicker and more efficiently, but there are also some you cannot. You could make a gear using hand tools, but it would take a very long time. You would be spending months filing the teeth because they are unevenly spaced and keep jamming up.

"You have to set up the CNC to work within a few thousandths of an inch tolerance and set the cutter on the centre of the gear otherwise the teeth will be sloping. Spacing between two gears is also critical to get them to mesh smoothly. There is a lot of setting up to do, and it is very much an unrecognized craft. It can take a day or more to set up the machine. I will do a trial cut, slightly oversized, making sure that everything is rigidly locked down so that there is no chatter or vibration and I get a good finish. Using my digital readout, I then make a slightly deeper cut to correct depth and work my way around the blank until the gear is completed."

The other parts of the mechanism he cuts out on the bandsaw and then finishes to size with a hand plane or spokeshave, and towards the completion of the work all the components are assembled, Will adjusts finely the mechanism to make sure all the tolerances are satisfactory, and everything works.

For the cabinets, he uses mainly Australian furniture timbers, Blackwood, Myrtle, Jarrah, Mountain Ash, and as well Huon pine, and Queensland Walnut. Timber is either kiln or air dried for a long time. During re-sawing he is on the lookout for growth and internal stresses. Timber curling away from or towards the blade when cutting on the table saw indicates differential moisture inside the timber with the potential for case doors warping in time. He then racks out the sawn timber, outside in the sun in the summer months, and rotates it every couple of hours for even drying all the way around.

The timber that he likes and selects has a bit of figure to it. He explains that the original texture, colour, grain, the inclusions in the bark, even the bugs and beetles, which have got a trace in there, or the fungi in Black Heart Sassafras, are all part of the history of the tree. The beauty, as with other natural materials like stone, is that it is not reconstituted.

"I've just finished a project with a solid Huon Pine backboard, it was 500 millimetres wide at the bottom and about 1.5 metres long. I started counting the year rings under magnification out of curiosity and estimate that the tree was probably 1,000 years old. To me it is a beautiful thought that the material I use has time written all over it, and I now use it to build a clock which marks the time in people's lives. I used its wavy edge because that's part of its history, and I worked the design for the backboard keeping those features."

In a clock Will uses a range of different timbers giving different colour and contrast to the various parts of the clock and case. He has to play it by eye, a mid-tone for the clock plates and case, with a pale timber such as Sycamore for the dial to provide a strong contrast, and an ebony or 10,000 year old Red Gum which is black for the hands. "So, you have the black hands, light dial, tan for the clock plates which would be a Blackwood or if it's more of a red hue, Myrtle or Jarrah. I might do the case in Jarrah or Myrtle as well. I might add trim or cock beading to the inside of the door, which should be a mid-tone. He tests out a few samples with a finish on it in the sunlight to see if the combination works. Some timbers work together, and others clash horribly."



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Clock gear making on CNC



Clock gear making on CNC



Wooden clock project



His timber comes from all over. "Over the past 30 years I have sourced mainly Australian timbers, which I store in my shed. I have enough to last my lifetime, but it's getting harder to get interesting timber now. Some of my timber is salvaged Red Gum fence posts with weathered surface and a tight fiddleback figure, some from urban forests, and some is recycled building material. As long as it is interesting, I'm interested."

Often clients bring their own timber to be incorporated in a clock. One client wanted to use trees that had been taken down on his rural property, and another wanted a clock made from an old bedstand which had long been in the family. A few have a strong idea of what they want, and some have an idea of which timbers will complement their décor and furniture.

Clocks are objects which people develop a strong emotional attachment to, they sometimes commission him to make a clock to commemorate an event in their lives, the birth of a child or grandchild, a wedding anniversary or change in career. He works into the design some elements or a theme to which they can relate, and that makes the clock meaningful.

"In many ways my workshop has become my refuge where I become absorbed in working with my hands and the worries of the world melt away. I don't work 9 to 5 Monday to Friday but go with the flow. I normally kick start the day with a few coffees and then get working. For a break I take the dogs to the river for a walk and then carry on till the evening. If the weather is too good to be in the workshop, I'll down tools and head to the flying field to meet up with my mates to fly model aircraft, a hobby from childhood that I have taken up again. The evening I spend with my family."

Since COVID lockdowns, he has had the opportunity to realise some special projects for himself and his family, such as a long case grandfather clock. Without the constraints of deadlines for commissions, he has had the time to solve problems associated with this project. After pondering he would jot down his thoughts in his notebook which he would look at first thing when he got to the workshop next morning. "That was really enjoyable, and productive, and I want to do more of that." ■



Clock182.2



# The challenges and satisfaction

## of building tiny houses

**ONE OF** the most complex and satisfying fitouts and tiny house constructions that Joe Arnesen has completed was for the expecting mum and dad of baby Etta. Joe included in the design a pull-out platform beside their bed for the baby to sleep near them in the loft.

He installed a raised loft lounge area, which is quite unusual for a tiny house, with a little room underneath for when she is a little older with windows to easily view the environment with its wildlife, especially the abundant kangaroos.

"When Etta was born, they invited me down there to meet her, and see how happy she was in the tiny house that we built, and it was just an absolutely incredible feeling," he tells AWISA.

He explains in detail the fitout of another custom designed tiny house of which he is especially proud, for a woman on the South Coast of New South Wales.

"Above all, our client wanted rich, beautifully coloured timber, and also wanted to buy locally, to reduce environmental impacts. Tasmanian blackwood ticks both boxes, as well as being a hardwood that is relatively lighter than others. Weight is a huge consideration in a tiny house. We used it for cabinetry, bench tops, and open shelving in both the kitchen and bathroom, as well as the stair treads to the loft bedroom.

"The bench tops and open shelving are the hero in this tiny house. The entire design of this tiny house depended on natural timbers, and without them, this tiny house would not have been built. The feeling of space, the warm earthy tones, and the beauty of the Tasmanian Blackwood makes this tiny house an absolute standout."

Maintaining an honest and clear relationship with each client will minimise problems. A good two-way communication is a must so that adjustments can be made throughout the construction phase, says Joe.

Challenges in planning a customised tiny house include dealing with mobility considerations, handles, trip hazards, protrusions, hard corners, door openings, hard edges, lock types, and plentiful and conveniently placed storage.

A certified builder with 14 years of experience under his belt, Joe says he absolutely loves building work, and has always been intrigued by difficult woodwork, and cabinetry, as well as loving the minimalist lifestyle. He has been designing, fitting out and constructing tiny houses for the last four years, when he teamed-up with Luke McGurgan. Luke had set up LJM Carpentry & Construction, a residential construction business, after 15 years' experience in the industry. Joe bought into co-ownership as the firm pivoted to specialising in tiny houses. They have built more than 120 so far.

"Tiny houses come in all shapes and sizes," Paul Burton, Professor of Urban Management and Planning and Director of the Cities Research Institute at Griffith University in Queensland, tells AWISA. "Typically, and what is very good about them, is that they force their designers to think carefully and imaginatively about the use of limited space. Rather like a boat builder, you need to not waste space, and think about how seats and tables can also be used to store things underneath, how beds and tables can fold away, and how much time can be spent outside the home."







Janine Strachan won the Housing Industry Association GreenSmart Professional of the Year Award in 2021 for her work in sustainable housing design. She is President of the Australian Tiny House Association (ATHA), and founder of Tiny House Solutions. Janine tells AWISA that the main things designers and builders of tiny houses need to be aware of is that overall height needs to be "under 4.3m, width to be no greater than 2.5m and length to be no longer than 12m, if the tiny house is to be transported on the road without an oversize permit. The doors need to open outwards. Gas, plumbing and electrical should be installed and certified as compliant by a qualified trade. This is not required for caravans, but ATHA encourages tiny house builders to build to this so that the tiny house occupier can be safe. Tiny houses cannot capture enough rainwater for daily use and will need some additional water supply or connection to water. Being off grid with solar panels, inverter and battery storage needs to consider the energy demand and the electrical setup whether it be 240 watts or 12 volts. Legal distances of electrical points from water supply and gas hobs from windows need to be allowed for."

Says Janine, "In my designs I look for ways to create multi-functional spaces, good storage areas, and tiny houses that are suitable for people with lower mobility, so they can have a choice of sleeping areas that do not require sleeping lofts."

In working with a new customer, Joe will modify an existing plan or draw up a new one from scratch, and then customise the window types, dimensions, and placement, choose lock specifications, kitchen, and bathroom sizes. Their custom joiner will work through minute details such as types, sizes, placement of handles, height and depth of kitchen benches, colours and materials. "We're able to share our experiences with clients. We can say what works, what does not work. Each client is different. A lot of people choose to go 'no handles'. It streamlines the eye line but some people don't really have the strength for that, and so they really need a handle."

Joe uses timber frames, not steel. The advantages, he says, include the great flexibility of the customised design process, and is also good if you want to modify the plan down the line.

The work shop is a typical operation with all the standard tools that you would find for a residential home build, especially as they have all their tools from the pre-tiny houses days.

Talking of tools, Joe mentions his tape measure. "I have a lucky tape measure that I've used to measure up and design over 100 custom tiny houses with our clients, that has helped create so many amazing windows, design features and ultimately happy tiny house living."

He summarises that the internal carcasses are made from high moisture resistant Australian made White VJ panel Board. All joinery is cut by a CNC machine ensuring high accuracy and very clean cuts, ready for installing, avoiding any difficulties down the track. They use Austrian made Blum hinges. All joinery is designed and crafted by their highly experienced joiner who has over 20 years' experience. All joinery hardware is sourced from local suppliers. They use soft dual wall draw runners. On the exteriors, Colorbond is used and combined with custom Red Cedar features.

The team at Häuslein reflects that sometimes the limitations of building in a small space are difficult for people to wrap their heads around. Joshua Moses, the Sales and Marketing Manager, is fielding questions and answers between the team and AWISA over a number of conversations, and Scott Rohdich has already provided some information in one of the firm's update construction videos. Joshua says it can be hard to explain to a client why some ideas may struggle to work in practice, but it is rewarding when everyone and everything works cohesively and meets the needs of customers and meets the space and legal restraints.

Häuslein Tiny House Co was established in 2018 by four friends, Sam Verlaan, Scott Rohdich, David Boyd, and Sarah Rohdich. ►



► They use solid timbers and natural materials wherever possible, partly for their beauty, as well as health benefits and longevity, utilising Baltic pine tongue and groove wall panelling or shiplap, and Cypress pine bench tops. Joshua says solid wood requires the joy of maintenance to keep it beautiful; you can always sand-back and re-oil and make it look like new. For cabinetry they use Rhino ply that comprises nine layers, covered in melamine. Scott, their designer, prefers natural materials, and “not products that look like something they’re not”.

He adds, “We make most things ourselves, from all the kitchen cabinetry and bench tops to Cypress bathroom feature sinks, to

ladders, to fabricating our own trailers and toilet roll holders and sliding door runners. We now build our kitchen components and other products in bulk. Though each is hand-made, they can be brought together and installed quite quickly. Not many final adjustments are needed as we have tried to standardise many components.”

For the wall frames they use F2 termite treated hard pine, says Scott, and for the outside, apart from a Colorbond section, they use Western Red Cedar from Canada. It has a nice grain, is lightweight, does not crack in the weather, stays in one piece, and has the smell of wood shavings. The weatherboards are tapered and overlapped. Even the screws are selected with a careful eye, he adds. Wurth screws are galvanised, rated for outside use, have a sharp thread and are reliable. “They are like a piece of art almost.”

In the large and efficiently laid out workshop, there is a new panel saw but they do not use a CNC. Scott, who is also the head builder, says his favourite machine is a spiral head thicknesser, and as for the most useful hand tool in the workshop, it is a toss-up between a razor-sharp chisel and a hand-plane.

Echoing a sentiment in the growing tiny house construction industry, Joshua says, “We love the creativity, and satisfaction, that making things from scratch allows. We’ve designed and built one tiny house specifically for a lady in a wheelchair. We were grateful for the opportunity but it definitely posed some challenges, building a wheelchair-accessible house but keeping to something ergonomically designed and, of course, tiny.” ►







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### ► Some insights from Professor Paul Burton

Paul Burton is Professor of Urban Management and Planning and Director of the Cities Research Institute at Griffith University in Queensland.

Generously, he took time out from his busy research and academic schedule to offer his insights on the tiny house movement.

"My colleague, Dr Heather Shearer, and I have been interested in tiny houses for some time from different perspectives. As planners, we're interested in how local planning authorities regulate tiny houses, especially in existing urban areas where there is a commitment to achieve greater residential density with the least environmental impact. From a sociological point of view, we are interested in what motivates people to live more sustainably, sometimes with a degree of mobility and the opportunity to create new communities of like-minded people. But, we're also interested in working further with our colleagues at Griffith on the design principles, construction techniques and economics of tiny house living."

"Tiny houses can be very suitable for all kinds of people and we should remember that in most parts of the world everyone lives in what is in fact a tiny house by Australian standards, just as your grandparents probably did as well. It is only in recent years that we've gone big in the belief that it's better in all cases. For me, a well-designed smaller home is better than a sprawling McMansion that is poorly designed and costs a fortune to furnish, heat, or cool. In times of acute housing cost inflation, a couple living in a five-bedroom, four-bathroom house with a double lock up garage and one or more media rooms, is more problematic than a family of four living in a well-designed smaller home."

"There is no 'proper' definition of tiny houses. It varies from place to place and has changed over time. One of the most common assumptions is that it describes small dwellings that are transportable. These are often called Tiny Houses on Wheels or THOWs. But, for sure, there is no clear distinction

between a THOW and a caravan or even an RV, although the former are usually towed by another vehicle whereas the latter have their own engine. In practice, we have to live with this variation but be as clear as we can be about what we mean in particular cases or settings."

"The National Construction Code is implemented through State and Territory regulations and does not typically mandate minimum room sizes, but requirements for minimum ceiling heights in bedrooms can be difficult to achieve in tiny houses with bedrooms in lofts or mezzanine floors. There are also requirements for energy efficiency and the steepness of stairs that can also cause problems for tiny house designers. Banks will also not typically give a mortgage on any dwelling of less than 40m<sup>2</sup> or any mobile dwelling."

"There is variation in how local planning authorities, which are governed by State and Territory legislation, define tiny houses and then regulate them. Dr Shearer and I will be exploring this variation and whether it should or could be modified, in our next research project."

"In Australia, local governments will typically set the rules for whether you can build or keep a tiny house on a particular site, using policies set out in their planning schemes. The National Construction Code sets standards for constructed dwellings, no matter what their size and whether or not they are moveable. But a vehicle that you happen to live in is not covered by Building Code standards, but by regulations about the roadworthiness and size of vehicles."

"As you know there are some fantastic advances in manufactured timber that can be used in tiny house construction. Whether it involves lighter weight for mobile homes, fire resistance in bush fire-prone areas, good thermal and acoustic properties and the ability to prefabricate components offsite, new forms of timber are increasingly important. And we shouldn't forget that there has always been a group of tiny house builders who are committed to re-using timber and other components." ■

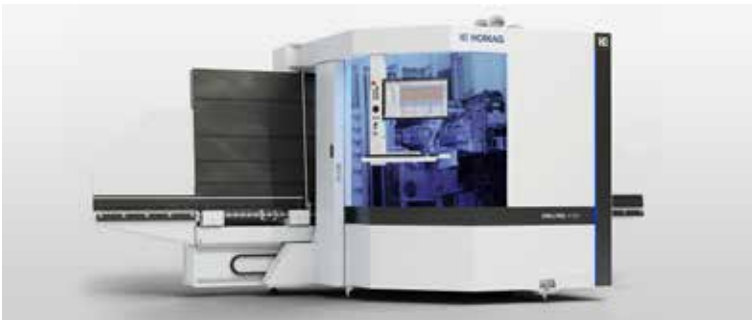
# DRILLTEQ V-310 - The new space-saving miracle from HOMAG

With the new DRILLTEQ V-310 vertical CNC processing centre, HOMAG is setting new standards. Comprehensive solutions for milling, drilling and grooving - combined with additional unique features on a footprint of just 11 m<sup>2</sup> - have never been seen before in this form of woodworking machines. Resources and space are often limited, especially in the craft woodworking sector. In order to be able to offer high-quality and individualised CNC processing in these limited spaces, HOMAG has met the market requirements and developed a true space-saving miracle in the form of the DRILLTEQ V-310.

Up to 45 drilling spindles, 2 swiveling grooving saws, a dowel insertion unit and a C-axis with unit interface round out a wealth of extensive application possibilities with the DRILLTEQ V-310. The units can be easily combined with an 8-position tool changer and adapted to the application situation. Because of this, extensive tasks for sawing, milling, and drilling for classic furniture construction are possible, as well as capabilities for an extensive range of furniture connectors. Even door processing is possible. Comparable to the process with other machines in the DRILLTEQ series from HOMAG, on the DRILLTEQ V-310 the workpieces are optimally held with two collets, without vacuum, while they are drawn into the machine during production. The workpieces are clamped vacuum-free and ergonomically via an easily accessible foot switch.

## Optimised handling - ergonomic processes

The large panoramic window offers an optimal view into the interior of the machine. The tilting control panel, in combination with the height-adjustable monitor, enable ergonomic and efficient work. This means that changing operators is always easy on this machine, as adjustments can be made easily depending on operator height or preference. Short distances and quick access to all functions characterise the DRILLTEQ V-310 and are the basis for an optimally thought-out production process.



## Visual LED support with IntelliGuide

A feature that will absolutely increase efficiency and ensure process reliability is the tool-changing concept on the DRILLTEQ V-310. On the software system side, tools can be transferred from the tool management system "toolManager" to the picker simply with a tap of a finger. The IntelliGuide system then indicates on the physical tool changer which action is to be carried out.

To support the machine operator, the loading area of the DRILLTEQ V-310 is also equipped with an LED assistance system. Incorrect loading will be a thing of the past. The IntelliGuide system is linked to the control system and shows the workpiece sizes and the correct positioning for loading into the machine by illuminating the LED bars in the X and Y directions. This saves time, reduces operating errors to a minimum and is also an ergonomic advantage, as the workpieces only have to be lifted and inserted once.

## New safety concept with safeScan technology

The safety of the operators, in harmony with the machine in the context of production, is clearly a priority. Here, HOMAG relies on a new system without safety mats - with safeScan.

If the lasers detect movement or entry into the operating area, the machine stops. The program is not interrupted, but merely paused. If the person leaves this area again, the DRILLTEQ V-310 continues processing. Thanks to the automatically integrated auto-quit function, no confirmation or restarting of the machine is necessary. Leaving the area is sufficient to continue production.

## "The Raumwunder" (space-saving miracle)

HOMAG has redefined CNC processing with the DRILLTEQ V-310. The wealth of technical possibilities, along with time-saving and ergonomic benefits for customers, are the proof. On top of all that, the DRILLTEQ V-310's features are all paired with a focus on sustainability and conserving resources. When seen in combination with the small footprint of 11 m<sup>2</sup>, the uniqueness of this machine becomes clear. There has never been so much CNC processing in such a small space.

The DRILLTEQ V-310 vertical CNC processing centre is truly a miracle of space.

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# **HOMAG iX**

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by Michael Smith

# Furniture maker's creations

## reflect wood's qualities and versatility



Peter Cowper focuses on creating furniture and art pieces that reflect the qualities and versatility of wood.

**NEW ZEALAND'S** Nelson-based furniture maker Peter Cowper has been working with wood for much of his life – in parallel with a hectic corporate career. He talked to AWISA about focusing less on the business world and more on what gives him personal satisfaction ... woodworking and furniture design.

"My corporate life primarily involved telecommunications engineering. I would eventually take up senior leadership positions across the tertiary education, building science and telecommunications sectors – along with a variety of governance roles."

"All those roles were great and led to me starting a couple of leadership and business consultancy practices. Then I reached a point where I'd had enough of all that business stuff."

"Over the years I had made quite a few pieces of furniture, and odds and ends – and done a substantial amount of building work on our family's homes. Up until 2013, I was pretty much self-taught ... and then I did an Introduction to Fine Woodworking course at the Centre for Fine Woodworking\* [CFW] near Nelson. I realised just how little I really knew – especially with respect to the proper use of tools and effective making techniques."

Peter gave up full-time work the following year and immersed himself in the 32-week, full-time Furniture Makers' Programme at the CFW. "I then decided to put most of my efforts into my workshop, whilst taking on the occasional, right-fit governance role."

"The programme was such an intense and diverse developmental journey. I had access to a wonderful array of tutors ... all with different ways of doing things and views on being a furniture maker."

"Collaborating with students from different backgrounds – and with diverse skills – also proved exceptionally valuable. The breadth of thinking and styles produced a pool of knowledge that allowed me to choose the bits that resonated with me and my approach to woodworking."

Peter says that while there are many designers and makers out there, he tends to look for themes, styles and approaches to inform his thinking ... as opposed to being strongly influenced by individuals. "I especially like the form that a lot of Japanese designs follow."

"However, I do admire the work of Canadian designer/maker and teacher Michael Fortune. In particular, I like the way he breaks down construction into a series of processes, supported by specifically designed and built jigs, which are both efficient and repeatable. His finished pieces are generally things of complexity and beauty."

"For similar reasons I respect the work of David Trubridge, and how he has transformed beautiful designs into accessible products."

When it comes to choosing appropriate wood species, Peter says Tasmanian blackwood is a long-time favourite ... "primarily for the variety of grain and figures it offers. It covers the spectrum from dark to light, and whilst it can present some working challenges, the oiled result is always stunning. Blackwood fits so well with New Zealand homes and the colour palette preferred by Kiwis – warm wood tones with touches of black and grey."

"I'm also keen on black walnut, again for its colour; European beech for its golden hues and ease of working; and American Oak, which gives a nice oiled finish."

Peter is perhaps best known for his functional and decorative Curl lighting range, which features a floor lamp and three pendant lights (Wave 1, Wave 2 and Drift). "My wife Janet, who is an interior designer, became frustrated with the lack of 'different' floor lamps available. Most were either very traditional – similar to those styles we grew up with – or very 'modern' industrial-looking tube and metal designs. We played around with various wooden floor lamp ideas, from which I created a range of scale models. From these we picked a favourite as the basis for a full-size mock-up. And that eventually led to the first 'real' version. The process of creation and construction evolved from there."

"The main 'vane' components for these lights are a vacuum pressed form and it also became apparent that a single pressed laminate stood alone nicely, so we tried different ways of suspending these. A lot of our thinking was tested with a quality lighting design and retail supplier. Through this iterative

Right: Shaping the clashing (a timber strip glued to the edge of a veneered board) for a pendant light.

Far right: Hall table in walnut and tiger maple.

Curl Floor Lamp (in Tasmanian blackwood): functional and decorative, and available in a variety of species.

approach, and some early and excited customers, the pendant range developed."

Peter adds that he regularly collaborates with his wife on a variety of projects. "Occasionally she will have a client situation where a specific piece would fit well, but isn't available 'off the shelf' to purchase. Quite often I will also assist her in designing a solution that would be created by a specialist supplier."

"Working with a client starts with a conversation. We tend to play around with what they want and what might work. Sometimes I'll use SketchUp (3D design software) or hand drawings to help a client visualise the final result. It's critical to ensure there are no misunderstandings ... and to clarify any possible ambiguity in the design."

"If necessary, I'll make a mock-up of the design – particularly if there's a complexity to the joints or final look/finish of the timber. And I will often supply a number of finished timber samples to help with the final selection. On occasion a client might have seen another piece of mine and will want to use that as a starting point to create something that is unique to them."

"The whole process can take a few weeks to a few months, depending on the nature of the project. The satisfaction for me is the client's excitement when they finally receive the finished work. It's confirmation that their expectations have been met. And it's nice knowing something I've created will be enjoyed in people's homes for many years to come."

In all this, Peter is keen to emphasise the importance of work-life balance – "so I'm careful with the size and number of commissions I take on at any one time. We are also very targeted with our lighting range sales to ensure they don't overwhelm us."

To see more of Peter's work, go to [www.bespokebydesign.nz](http://www.bespokebydesign.nz) ■

\*The Centre for Fine Woodworking was founded in 2007 by furniture maker and teacher John Shaw (profiled in a previous edition of AWISA - The Magazine). Regarded as New Zealand's premier fine woodworking and design school, it offers an array of courses - from an 8-week introduction for beginners to a full-time Furniture Makers' Programme.





# Blum's global customer benefits philosophy contributes to 50 years of success in Australia

Blum's philosophy of global customer benefits, which ensures any product innovation must benefit every part of its market, is a key reason for the company's market leadership in Australia, according to Managing Director Brett Ambrose.

Blum has been supplying hardware to the cabinet industry in Australia for around 50 years, initially via a single importer and distributors, and is about to mark 25 years since the local subsidiary of this Austrian company was established.

"All of our product and services innovations are created with this philosophy at the centre of our planning," Ambrose says. "It ensures there are benefits for all the segments of the market we service. So, with a new product, for example, we strive to incorporate a benefit for the manufacturer, for the salesperson or kitchen retailer that is selling the kitchen, for the installer and finally for the homeowner who will use the kitchen day in day out.

"Our focus is not on assessing feasibility, but on creating benefits for our customers. We aim to be true partners to the industry; it is not about our ideas, it's about enabling theirs. We monitor trends worldwide and enjoy dialogue with our customers to create and provide product and services solutions that best meet their needs."

Blum was founded in Austria nearly 60 years ago and supplies the world's largest and most demanding kitchen and furniture manufacturers. The company also concentrates on a core range of products, following its philosophy of focusing on what it does well.

The first Blum office in Australia, Moorebank, Sydney.



## Latest innovations

Two of Blum's latest innovations are the pull-out shelf lock and SPACE STEP solution.

The pull-out shelf lock provides a practical lock-open position for MOVENTO and TANDEM pull-out shelves in kitchens, bathrooms, living rooms or other areas of the house. A discreet, space-saving mechanism securely holds the open shelf in place, while a synchronisation shaft enables it to be easily released with one hand.

SPACE STEP creates extra storage space behind kickboards, providing easy access to the top shelves of wall cabinets and giving extra reach. It enables designers to specify higher cabinets while creating additional storage space in the kickboards of base units. Blum's motion technology ensures easy opening and soft closing.



SPACE STEP.

Blum has introduced the new MINIPRESS top, the new drilling and insertion machine that brings ease to manufacturing. Combined with EASYSTICK, the new features allow for accurate working methods and are designed to provide customers with a state-of-the-art machine that meets the growing demand for more convenience.

Blum's comprehensive range of services, for example, Cabinet Configurator along with MINIPRESS top, EASYSTICK and the EASY ASSEMBLY app, ensures that manufacturers are given the best possible support along the entire process chain

#### Services benefit all touchpoints

"Services is a key component of our Global Customer Benefits philosophy," Ambrose says. "We support all our products to aid the designer, the manufacturer, the assembler and installer with up-to-date information that's available around the clock."

These services include the free Cabinet Configurator, which provides total support from planning to manufacturing. Entire cabinets can be planned and saved in a web browser, including collision-checked fittings; projects can be transferred to CAD software for further planning and design; and lists for parts and cutting, production drawings, CAD/CAM and BDX files can be quickly produced.

Blum has also created the EASY ASSEMBLY app that can be downloaded on to a smartphone or tablet. If installers can't take a PC or laptop onsite, they can use the app to get answers to any questions regarding the assembly and adjustment of Blum fittings. The app includes assembly videos for all Blum products.

Part of Blum's philosophy is clever utilisation of space in the home – and the company has followed similar thought patterns with its own warehousing.

Blum Australia's distribution centre in Sydney is one of 15 cities around the world to have a vertical, automated warehouse that provides a large space on a small site. The Sydney building is 30m high by 100m long, with six internal cranes providing an automatic retrieval system (ARS) almost six storeys high.

"From receipt of the container to the placement of product into the tower, and then the retrieval when an order has been placed, everything is done automatically," Ambrose says.

"The great thing is that it's scalable too, and we added an extra ►



MINIPRESS top.



Pull-out shelf lock.



Sydney Distribution  
Centre and showroom.



Sydney Distribution Centre tower.

► two-thirds in 2016. That was done while the current building was in operation."

Ambrose says he's often asked why Blum went to the expense of building that style of warehouse.

"I say it's a clear commitment that shows how important the Australian market is for Blum, and that we're a key market for the Blum group worldwide."

When Blum Australia was founded in 1997, Ambrose was leading a team of 10 employees. The team now numbers 85, and the original showroom in Sydney has been replicated in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. Product was initially imported from Austria for distributors; now all product for Australia comes from the automated warehouse.

The company continuously invests in the local industry through sponsorships, support, trade shows, education and membership of industry associations.

"We see ourselves as a valued partner at our customers' sides, growing long-term relationships based on mutual trust," Ambrose says. "Creating furniture fittings for a better quality of living is very important to us – we believe furniture should look good, be practical and last a long time. We pride ourselves on developing solutions that support our customers and their customers' ideas."

Blum is a family-owned business that has five "fingerprints" built around a focus on team members being approachable, committed, dialogue-driven, attentive and explorative.

"It's a business that supports and embraces its employees to ask questions, seek solutions, be open to new opportunities, tasks and challenges," Ambrose says.



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Inside Blum's Distribution Centre in Sydney.





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# Let's face it, it's a digital world



**I WAS SURPRISED** at the number of responses to my column in the summer edition of AWISA Magazine, 'The Long, Long Lunch'. Most opinions came as shared experiences, reminiscence amongst those of my own generation. There was a mixture of responses, nostalgic tales about the good old times, and those that said good riddance to an era they'd rather forget. I won't mention any names or some of the stories recalled, but it did make me reflect on just how much work was achieved by some who indulged over lunch with clients. The article also sparked a debate about the need for face-to-face contact at all in a world that is increasingly digital. Is there coming a time when the traditional representative is no longer needed? It was a question put to me directly as a result of the column.

To some extent at least, it's a generational discussion. There are an increasing number of industry professionals that have grown up in the digital age. You've only got to look at the success of social media and how entrenched it has become in modern living, to see that digital is already a way of life. For those of a younger generation, digital is the only way to communicate. I must admit to finding it hard to accept a future where meeting online is more preferable than sharing a handshake and a

discussion around the table. But, is it an inevitable future?

One sales manager who asked to remain anonymous, believes that the shift is already underway. His company is committed to taking representatives off the road and putting them inside, where they can achieve more, he believes. "There is a new generation whose version of reality will eventually take over the real world," he says of the millennials who now accept virtual communication as normal behaviour. He concedes that there will be some who won't embrace the change but insists that the overall benefit will be worth the compromise. "For us, moving away from having people on the road is a case of keeping up with the times, making the most of new media platforms. The use of EDM (Electronic Direct Mail) enables us to reach multiple customers all at the same time, and inform customers about product updates, changes and new releases."

Ross Campbell, Managing Director of Homag Australia, freely concedes that having a team of reps out on the road is an inefficient form of lead generation. It's a dilemma he's contemplated for years. However, he doesn't see a time when face-to-face representation is obsolete. Rather, he believes that a combination of models will become the norm. "It depends what you are selling," says Ross. "We represent a premium

Rick Lee has over 40 years  
experience in the woodworking  
industry.

He now works as a writer  
and consultant and  
can be contacted  
on 0412 237 456



brand with a high profile. Customers can readily research our products before they make contact. At Homag, we make it easy for them to do that by providing an array of online resources. As a result, unlike years ago, customers are way up on the learning curve when they start the buying process in person."

There's no doubt that the sales tools available to representatives far exceed those of the past, and each come with their own area of expertise. As a consequence, sales roles are being re-defined. In larger organisations, rather than having a single representative assigned to each customer, whole teams are now responsible for sales budgets and work together to achieve success. Specialists like data analysts, CRM managers, technical experts and relationship managers collaborate and support each other on each and every sale. Smaller organisations are employing adaptable people who can multi-function across that same sales process.

Blum Australia, Managing Director, Brett Ambrose, doesn't see a future where everything is focused on an online presence. "Our business is set up primarily to supply and support a network of distributors and re-sellers. We view each of them as partners, so relationships are vital. At the same time, we have embraced digital marketing as an important tool for our business model. The future for us, as I think it is for our partners, is a combination of face-to-face contact and online management. It's our job to inform and support our customers, to understand their needs and concerns. We also work closely with the Australian woodworking industry directly in the field. Cabinetmakers, joiners and designers all form part of our network; we have a history of close personal support."

There is little doubt that the COVID pandemic caused everyone in management to step back and re-evaluate their business models. Working from home quickly became a necessity and questions were soon asked about its long-term viability. Ross Campbell says that it worked remarkably well at the time, when there was little or no alternative. "We had great success during lockdown," says Ross. "Because of our very strong digital support, virtual meetings and online initiatives, our clients were able to find all the answers they needed to make an informed decision. Since restrictions have been lifted, however, it's clear that customers want to return to the personal relationships they had before lockdown." Ross feels that a combination of approaches is what's needed in order to give customers the security they need when making major purchases. "For many, buying machinery will be the biggest investment of their life, other than buying a house. Putting a familiar face behind the contract gives them the assurance that we'll be there whenever they need us."

Whatever the future holds, it's inevitable that digital marketing is here to stay. Life without the personal touch, however, seems virtually unthinkable for some. ■

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VIEW RANGE

# The perfect solution

There comes a time when having a CNC machine is simply not enough. Competitors have them too, so manufacturers have to look for other competitive advantages. One company in Queanbeyan has found a solution to space and production issues with industry-leading technology supplied by Biesse Group.

Capital Veneering is a company heavily invested in innovation. In fact, their motto actually is, 'Innovation in Joinery.' Managing Director Ben Madden, and Director and Operations Manager James Saffery believe that when vision and skill come together, the result is nothing short of inspirational. And so, Ben and James actively seek better, more effective ways to manufacture their mostly high-end, quality products through innovative processes; software solutions; machinery; and logistics.

Capital Veneering has grown over 22 years from a two-man joinery shop manufacturing bespoke solid timber and veneer furniture, to one of the largest joineries in the Australian Capital Territory. Ben and James both have trade backgrounds, Ben winning a 12 month scholarship to the UK. There he worked for Viscount Linley, a furniture maker; former chairman of the auction house Christie's UK, and nephew of Queen Elizabeth II. Linley furniture is sold in retail stores in Belgraveia, Harrods, and overseas.

Returning to Australia, Ben returned to the joinery he did his apprenticeship with as production manager before starting Capital Veneering. Ben says, "Veneering was not widely taught in Australia and was considered a niche market. I thought I should tap into that market and use the skills I learned in the UK to make a range of bespoke furniture such as dining and boardroom tables, and credenzas. We also did veneer work for other manufacturers, especially those with patterns and inlays they couldn't do themselves."

## A partnership with Biesse

Their growth over the last 20 years or so has been made largely on the back of quality work, and for 17 of those years, the use of Biesse Group CNC technology. Ben said "We've never been afraid to invest in innovation. Yes, we've looked at other brands, but we are yet to find another machine with the same value as Biesse. The key things we look for is build quality and after sales service. When things don't go to plan, and they do no matter what brand you have, it's good to know Biesse Group are always there to get us back up and running again. We upgrade

our major production equipment every five years and so two years ago, we started thinking about our next step."

And so, last year, when faced with an overcrowded workshop, the need for even more CNC machinery and the likelihood of being forced to seek out a larger factory; Ben, and James invested yet again in innovation. The solution was installing a Winstore automated warehouse from Biesse Group, along with two new Rover B CNC machines. They did this within their existing factory to store even more product, increase production output yet again, and achieve an even safer manufacturing environment. So, in a limited space, how did they achieve this?

## Winstore is the solution

Capital Veneering had invested in a Biesse Group K2 Winstore some five-odd years ago now. The Winstore is an automated storage and retrieval system that is integrated into digital production through software. The Winstore replaced much of their standard sheet racks and led to improvements in productivity, quality, and safety. Five years later and faced with having to relocate due to the amount of work they could take on; Ben, James, and Capital Veneering's Systems Manager Andy Mann looked up and saw a perfect solution: air space.

Most factories have high ceilings and manufacturers are starting to appreciate the unused space right above their heads. Mezzanine floors are a cost-effective way of increasing production space within the same factory footprint. Ben, James, and Andy decided to consolidate their machine shop and board store into a fully integrated cell within the limited space and once again, went to Biesse Group to make it all happen.

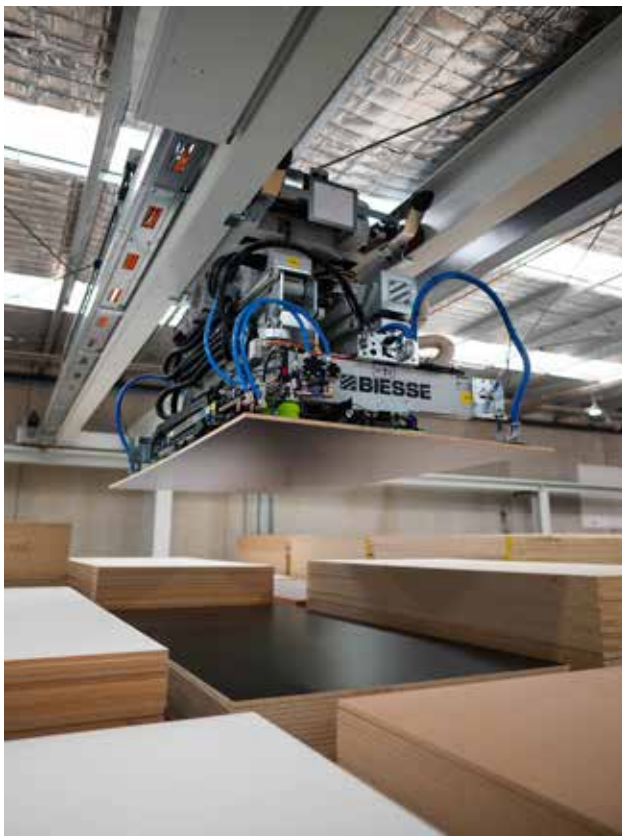
The solution; Capital Veneering's Andy Mann would work together with Biesse Group to build a mezzanine floor in collaboration with local engineers in Canberra. Biesse Group

Left to right: Andy Mann, Pre-Production Manager, Ben Madden, Managing Director and Clint Lewis, Biesse Product Manager.





Andy Mann, Pre-Production Manager.



► would locate a new, larger capacity K1 Winstore on the mezzanine and two new Rover B CNC machines on the ground floor underneath and drop the panels through an opening in the floor of the mezzanine, right onto the CNC machine labelling tables.

Biesse Group's Clint Lewis says, "We've installed a lot of Winstore's, but this is our first one on a mezzanine here in Australia. These installations are very popular in Europe where space is at a premium. Since we installed the Winstore at Capital Veneering, 50% of our Winstore enquiries would be for installations on a mezzanine, and we can only see this increasing. The industry here can certainly see huge advantages with this concept of materials handling and delivery to their CNC machines."

#### Compelling numbers

A Winstore automated warehouse can deliver some impressive numbers. Production line increases of 25%, product delivery to machine times reduced by 35%, 30% labour reduction and a 50% space saving over conventional panel racks located on the ground. When installed on a mezzanine, those Winstore space savings get close to 100%. Without the need for aisles for forklifts, floorspace savings climb even higher, workshop safety increases, and the real potential of Biesse Rover CNC machines can be realised.

Capital Veneering's Winstore is 29 metres by 11 metres and can accommodate 35 stacks almost a metre high. The Winstore can stack sheets up to two metres high but in a mezzanine setup when the ceiling height is lower the system is adapted to suit, thus reducing the stack height. This could seem to be an issue at first but the lower stacks can improve the efficiency of the Winstore. This is achieved by not having to move as many panels to get the board you need. 'Just in time' machining can finally be realised as manufacturers further embrace automation and digital technologies.

It's manufacturing what's needed, when needed, and it's achieved with a clever and efficient use of space that's already owned. Winstore uses an open software platform and will work with any of the industry software programs as all of the software suppliers integrate with Biesse Winstore. Winstore is also a digital database with full visibility of existing stock, including any offcuts that can be stored in the warehouse, or catalogued by the software and stored externally. Winstore can also 'defrag' stock for greater efficiency, and to use oldest stock first.



### A focus on people, and quality

Capital Veneering is now one of the larger joinery shops in the Canberra region, producing commercial joinery, kitchens and residential joinery, and custom-made furniture. Their work mostly comes through architects and builders, with their core business being large commercial fitouts, multi-unit residential projects including kitchens, vanities, robes, and storage units; and office fitouts including reception counters, wall panelling, breakout areas and boardroom joinery.

Some of their notable projects are ACT Law Courts, AFP Headquarters, Attorney General's Department, Adina Hotel, Canberra Centre, Canberra School of Music, John Curtin School of Medical Research, Department of Defence, Republic apartments, and Parliament House.

Capital Veneering currently employs a staff of 65 full time people including 30 on the workshop floor. Ben and James are focused on their people and run a social club that includes out-of-work activities and events. Capital Veneering also employs 12 apprentices and are committed to the future skills training in the industry. In fact, Ben taught apprentices at a TAFE College in the early days of the business.

What sets Capital Veneering apart is its attention to detail, old-fashioned hard work, and state-of-the-art Biesse Group equipment. The company maintains its roots from the detailed, high-end custom furniture and joinery that is still at the core of their business. Ben describes Capital Veneering as, "A company that embraces leading technology and innovation whether it's in our systems, equipment or our thinking." Over the last ten years Capital Veneering has won numerous awards and builders in Canberra will often be heard to say, "That's a Capital Veneering job."

Winstore is not just another piece of technology, its part of an integrated system that improves the output of Biesse CNC machines, whether these are beam saws or machining centres. Winstore provides Capital Veneering with significant benefits. A return on investment of only one year, massive savings in space, production time and staff, a reduction in material damage from manual handling or forklifts, coupled with improved performance from their three and five-axis CNC machines. Winstore really is the perfect solution.

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# More storage with Hideaway's 350mm wide laundry solution

As homes get smaller it is important to think through how a customer is going to live in the home and space that is being designed for them. The appliances that are selected for the homeowner need to be practical and space conscious.

Laundries are a critical and busy hub of the home, and when it comes to apartment living there is limited space available. It is also common to have laundries that are part of a kitchen or open area, so having hidden storage becomes more important. Including a laundry hamper is often not a realistic option as it requires too much space in an already limited environment. However, this decision leaves the homeowner without a location to store dirty washing and often they will need to buy a hamper option that sits on the bedroom floor occupying further essential space.

The new Concelo® 1 x 35 litre laundry hamper has been designed to resolve both issues. Being compact in size, it fits behind a 350mm door and provides the homeowner with a large single 35 litre hamper that slides away out of sight. By including a Concelo laundry hamper within the laundry design, the homeowner is provided with everything they need for a practical and workable compact laundry.

The Concelo system features premium, concealed, soft closing synchronised runners. The 35 litre hamper is easy to remove and carry as it is made from a lightweight polypropylene, it features air vents and a solid base to prevent drips. The hamper then sits in the unique clip'n'clean tray which can be easily removed for cleaning, and it will never rust.

Designed and made in New Zealand, Concelo has been well engineered and designed to fully meet the requirements of the homeowner. Hideaway Bins are distributed nationwide throughout Australia by Hideaway's distribution partners Nover, Hafele and Galvin Hardware.

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# AvanTech YOU from Hettich now with signature lighting

## High in quality and individually tailored for shop and kitchen

The growing megatrend of individualisation is reinforcing customer demand for customised design flexibility, be it in trendy shop design or in kitchen and home furnishings. The versatile and adaptable AvanTech YOU drawer platform from Hettich meets this contemporary taste and style. The inventor of the drawer platform has now added an attractive design option to its latest system: every drawer can be given its very own LED signature lighting with the "AvanTech YOU Illumination" feature.

The AvanTech YOU drawer system takes every effort out of individualising design to meet any customer preference in colour, format and material. All components within the platform can be combined with each other, permitting a wide product line up with lean, flexible production at low costs in manufacturing and stock keeping.

By way of option, AvanTech YOU now even gives furniture its own signature lighting: in clip on profiles, homogeneous LED

light at 4,000°K illuminates open drawers on the inside or makes a stunning feature on the outside. Glass inlays with polished or ground edges can also be shown off in the best light: the LED signature creates amazing visual effects every time the drawer is opened. In each case, a practical rechargeable battery pack provides the necessary energy. This eliminates the need for costly and complicated electrical connections - the quality design feature with signature lighting is easy to install and can be realised without any additional effort on the technical side. This exceptional design achievement by Hettich has already won several international accolades, including the "Interzum Award 2021", the "Red Dot Design Award 2022", and the "IF Design Award 2022".

## Even more design flexibility

In a width of just 13 mm, the slimline AvanTech YOU drawer side profile with invisibly integrated front panel adjustment function permits elegant, flawless design in any finish. Even within the standard lineup, the platform provides a huge range of combination options: time and again, clip on DesignProfiles



or DesignCapes can be used to create visual highlights with a different look. And drawer side profile inlays provide the key to meeting personal design preferences - even in any material the customer chooses.

The "AvanTech YOU Illumination" feature is a new, attractive addition to Hettich's cost effective drawer platform. For kitchen and furniture manufacturers, this opens up further opportunities to set themselves well apart from the competition and give their discerning customers attractively designed drawers with an exclusive feel and noticeable quality right up into the high-end segment.

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# SCM Group celebrates 70 years



## An interview with the CEO Marco Mancini on "Top 500"

The Group's 70th Anniversary, the outstanding figures recorded in 2021 and the "main pillars" of investments for 2022, among which innovation will continue to be the priority. These are the topics of the wide-ranging interview with the CEO Marco Mancini, published in the "Top 500" supplement of Il Resto del Carlino.

### **This year is the seventieth anniversary of its foundation: what does this achievement mean at this unusual and complex time?**

The seventy-year anniversary is, on the one hand, an important achievement while, on the other, it should be a stimulus to continue along a successful path based on ongoing innovation and sustainability, or rather, with a long-term vision that guarantees long life and a better future for our company. We shall apply the same logic as in the past as we set out along this path, focusing on both organic growth that aims at innovation, digital transformation and internationalisation, and on partnership research in Italy and abroad in all of the key sectors, to complete our solutions and technologies for machining wood, composite materials, glass or stone.

### **2021 was a positive year, as is clear from the figures on turnover and orders.**

2021 was an excellent year for financial results both in terms of turnover and order growth, into double figures compared to 2020, and at a level of profitability and cash flow. Equally

positive are the non-financial results. Here are just a few: over 50 thousand hours of training distributed in situ and on-line by our Campus, approx. 35 million invested in R&D (each year we invest 7% of our turnover), 125 recorded patents (the highest in recent years) and another one hundred or so R&D projects launched. We have opened new SCM subsidiaries in India and Turkey and a new Hiteco Subsidiary (Electro-spindle Division) in the USA. We signed strategic trade deals, like the one with the Swedish company, Randek in the field of systems for timber construction.

### **Will 2022 be a year for investments: in what areas?**

As well as product innovation carried out non-stop with the programmes in recent years, that saw us continue to launch new products onto the market, important initiatives are planned with investments in digitalisation both of internal production and to support our customers' processes. In addition, further upgrading of the production capacity of industrial sites with particular focus on matters of sustainability. Of particular importance is the modernising and renovation of the area of the Foundry in Rimini, with the creation of a fully automated spare parts warehouse that brings considerable advantages in terms of logistics, efficiency and energy saving.

### **Why was there a corporate reorganisation?**

The reorganisation is in line with the group's ambitions for growth. The founding families remain at the helm with a renewed governance set-up, of three equal quotas, that guarantees continuity, entrepreneurial dexterity and a common strategic vision. Scm Group is a family business that knew how to adopt multi-national managerial standards and make use of external professionalism to successfully face the ever more complex market challenges.

### **Problem of costly energy and the price of raw materials: what impact does this have on Scm Group?**

Like everyone, we too find ourselves facing the well-known criticality linked to the rising cost of energy and materials and the difficulties of procuring components. Despite the fact that Scm Group is structured and benefits from the possibility of internally producing part of its components for machines, we fear that demand could, over time, drop if the lack of raw materials were to continue, resulting in lengthier delivery times and were accompanied by significant inflationary effects.

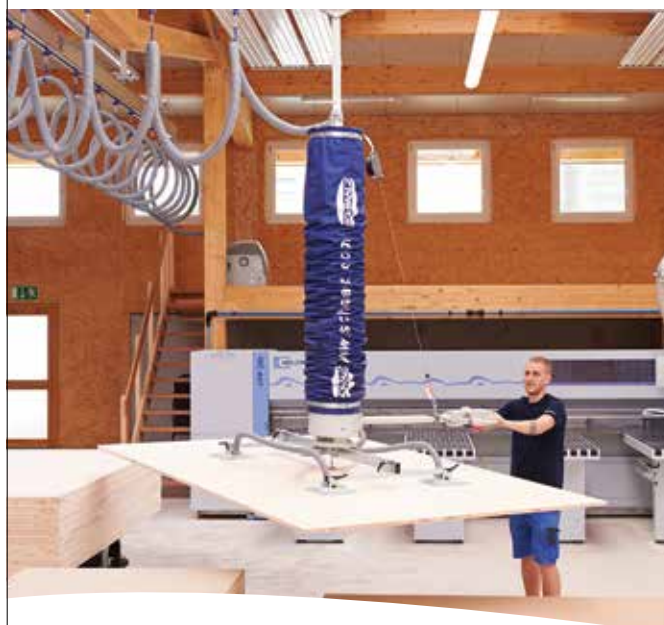


### How important is innovation for a business like yours?

Customers and markets have “prompted” us to think, plan and develop technological solutions with an innovative content “of discontinuity”. Possibly one of the best examples of all that saw us earn new market shares in the additive manufacturing industry is represented by the new solution LFAM (Large Format Additive Manufacturing) by our entirely owned CMS Spa: a machine capable of producing large-scale components with carbon content, with a process similar to that of 3D printers. In 2021, moulds were produced with this machine used in the construction of “restomod” (modified restoration of auto) parts, based on the Maserati 3200 GT produced by the company Bercella Srl in Emilia Romagna.

Other examples of innovative products manufactured in the group include the CMS technologies for machining stone used by the Tuscan artisan Claudio Claudi to reconstruct the rose windows in the Basilica Santa Maria Novella in Florence, and some high-automation SCM plants, including the 100-metre line inaugurated recently by Gautier, a leading French company, in the production of custom-designed furniture, and the project for the Chinese giant, Star River Bay: a 200 thousand square metre factory with over 50 of our technologies for contract furnishings.

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# Why do interest rates rise and why now?

When Philip Lowe (Governor of the RBA) announced on 3 May 2022 that the official cash rate will rise by 0.25% - the first time since 2010, it was no surprise to those that could see and feel the impact of price rises across the economy.

Inflation is the biggest threat to interest rate rises especially when it rises too fast or too high. The RBA has a target band of between 2% to 3% and the recent inflation figure of 5.1% confirms the cash rate had to rise. The critical path here is for the RBA to position the cash rate so that economic growth and housing affordability is sustainable versus a boom crash approach.

The Australian economy has seen a significant impact from abnormal global price rises on Inflation caused by COVID. If we understand that the 2-year COVID effect on significantly reduced component production (where the shortage of computer chips alone decimated production of cars and certain machinery) substantially increased export costs (where the cost of transport for a shipping container has risen between 300% & 500% over the past 3 years) this, coupled with the present Ukraine war, has led to an undersupply of key materials in many areas.

Such shortages, where demand exceeds supply, inevitably lead to greater competition for product/components and as a result, higher prices paid. This is simply the Law of Supply and Demand coming into effect and the byproduct of those increased prices is inflation.

In our case, this has been intensified by the desire for Australian households to divert spending choices to home improvements, property renovations and purchasing property. Combine this with the return of expats, working from home and various Federal Government stimulus packages, have all seen a surge in the supply of money and increased household savings,

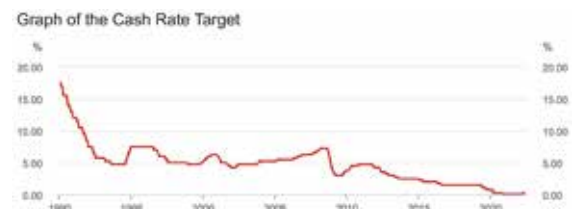
resulting in higher prices in the goods and services for the housing/construction industry. With property prices at an all-time high, we are now in an inflationary cycle.

The single largest "lever" used by the RBA to calm inflationary pressures is to raise interest rates.

The RBA influences the Australian economy through monetary policy (via the official cash rate) and the RBA considers the following factors when determining changes to official cash rates:

- Inflation
- Government and household debt
- Wages growth
- Unemployment
- Exchange rate

The chart below provides a snapshot of the RBA's position on the cash rate over the last 30 years. The last rate rise we had was November 2010 when it moved to 4.75% and since then there has been a long decline to 0.10% (April 2022) and from here we will start to see the uplift.



Source: <https://www.rba.gov.au/statistics/cash-rate/>

The Australian economy has been one of the world's better performing economies in recent years, however, there are several external influences outside the RBA and Federal Government's control that has led to inflation rising to 5.1% to March 2022 which is a 21-year high. The underlying inflation rate is 3.7% (excludes large price rises and falls) takes into account the abnormal fluctuations in prices.

It's as plain as the nose on your face that the cost of living has risen in an abnormal way caused by supply chain shortages, the Russian/Ukraine war impacting fuel prices, a lack of farm pickers to get produce on the shelves, floods impacting food supply, low unemployment levels (3.9%), property price rises, steel, concrete, timber and higher freight costs (to name a few) all contributing to our current higher than normal inflation rate.

The good news is that in terms of inflation, Australia has done a lot better than other major economies to March 2022 like USA at 8.4%, UK at 7.0% & Europe at 7.8% (approx.)

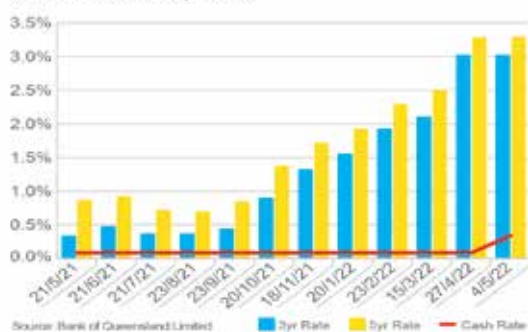
There is no question that the cash rate will rise based on this data and will continue to rise but to what level? Longer term rates are a good indicator of where rates are heading, and it is



worth looking on the current trend in fixed interest rates. These movements are usually a prelude to RBA cash rate decisions.

The bar chart below shows the extent of market forces having on the 3 and 5 year fixed bank bill swap rates influenced by the various components. The 3 and 5 year swap rates do not rely solely on the RBA cash rate movements as the market has already priced this in and so is a good indicator for the movement in rates. These rates are effectively the cost of funds for a bank and to this they will add a margin depending on the loan purpose and asset type.

**3 Year/5 Year Swap Rates**

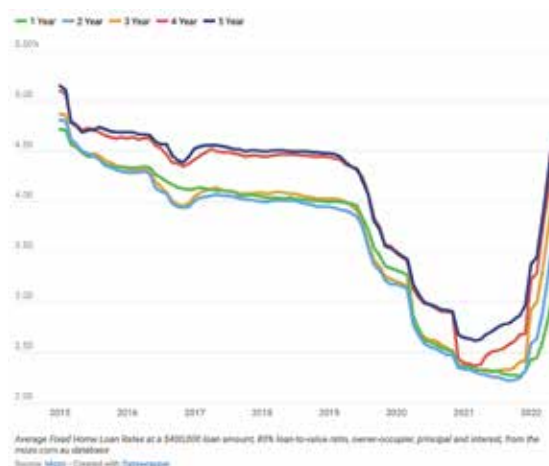


The example above shows the rising trend for the advertised Bank Bill Swap Rates for 3 and 5 years from the Bank of Queensland – here, the financial markets have already reacted to inflationary pressures, and we can see the increase in the cost of funds even though the RBA official cash rate has remained constant during this period (lagging for some months). What we can take from this is that business who borrowed for plant, equipment and or vehicle purchases in 2020 and early in 2021, took advantage of Australia's lowest fixed rates of approx. 3.0% to 4.0% for 3 and 5 year money.

Move forward 6 months to May 2022, and fixed rates on equipment loans have increased to between 5.5% to 6.5%. It will be of interest to see how long it will take for this to flatten with the latest impact on recent China lockdowns with the supply and movement of freight in and out of Shanghai and Beijing.

The increase in fixed rates is not all bad news for business owners as the fixed rates for home loans have also seen their share of increases since March 2021. The chart below shows the average fixed rate home loan for 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 year terms that evidence a correlation to fixed rates for equipment finance. The only difference being the margin the bank applies due to the "risk" associated to the type of asset being financed.

Today the 5-year fixed home loans are in the 4.5% range with the major banks. This does give some reassurance that the equipment and vehicle loans are in unison with the movement of home loan fixed rates.



Source: <https://mozo.com.au/home-loan-statistics>

Looking from an expert point of view, Westpac's Chief Economist Bill Evans predicts the following RBA cash rate rises:

- June: 0.25%
- July: 0.25%
- August: 0.25%
- October: 0.25%
- November: 0.25%

He is forecasting the cash rate will be 1.5% by the end of the year.

Depending if you are a glass half full or half empty person, if we look back to 2019 before COVID, the Australian economy was going well with the cash rate around 1.5%-1.25%, 5-year fixed home rate was on average 4.3%.

The only reason why the cash rate was reduced by 0.5% in March 2020 and 0.15% in November 2020 was for emergency COVID reasons only.

So, understanding that the RBA will raise interest rates to "cool down" the inflation rate to stay within the 2 – 3% band, are we in for more increases in 2023 or will inflationary pressure calm down as a result of 2 key areas: -

- 1) As we hopefully come to the end of the COVID effect, will world supply of components, goods and shipping increase to the point where supply equals or exceeds demand? If it does, then supply will need to compete for demand and adjust (lower) prices accordingly.
- 2) The end of the hostilities in the Ukraine.

If we knew the answer to the above, we could then consider if we will temporarily stay at 2019 levels or not. Given the current volatility of interest rates, there's never been a more appropriate time to ensure you're getting a competitive rate when it comes to your equipment finance.

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# Lek Supply, a trusted distributor of Hettich, quadruples its NSW warehouse capacity

A 100% Australian family-owned and operated business was established in 2007 with humble beginnings as purely a decorative handle distributor. 15 years on, Lek Supply has evolved and grown to be a leading supplier to the cabinetry and joinery industry, expanding its range to drawer systems, hinges, appliances, general hardware, storage solutions and more.

Lek Supply takes pride in sourcing quality hardware products and is committed to delivering an excellent customer experience both off and online.

The company is proud to be an authorised distributor of German-made brand, Hettich, the premier cabinetry hardware manufacturer with superior quality products like hinges, drawers and sliding systems. The success of the partnership contributed to the news of Lek Supply's NSW relocation and expansion to a larger premise to further enhance their local product offerings and service levels.

The new NSW location at 96 Newtown Road, Wetherill Park will quadruple the capacity of the previous warehouse which will increase inventory levels to meet the growing demands

and supply pressure from customers. In addition, the new distribution centre features a new showroom that showcases a diverse range of products and brands.

Hettich is today one of the world's largest and most successful manufacturers of furniture fittings, constantly striving to be innovative through intelligent technology, functionality, and design.

See the exciting Hettich range which is available for purchase through Lek Supply's trade counter or online through its recently revamped website at [www.leksupply.com.au](http://www.leksupply.com.au). Access to the full catalogue is also available upon request. Register for a trade account to access pricing and account information.

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# 60 years of edge banding excellence

Furniture manufacturers today may be well familiar with HOMAG's flagship edge banding machines – the EDGETEQ series – but it is the history of HOMAG's innovation that has helped accelerate the Group's reputation as a pioneer and technology leader in this segment.

This year, as HOMAG celebrates 60 years of edge banding excellence, let's take a trip down memory lane to see how their edge banding technology has evolved and improved in breadth, complexity and performance.

60 years ago, HOMAG launched the first throughfeed edge banding machine using the hot-cold application process. The machine was an immediate hit, and what followed over the years was a constant series of innovations and further developments that have allowed HOMAG to regularly prove itself as a pioneer and technology leader in edge banding.

## Hitting milestones from the beginning

In 1962, just two years after the company was founded, HOMAG registered a patent for the first automatic edge banding machine – the KH 2/18 – a series machine with a veneer strip magazine, gluing unit, pressure zone, and flush trimming unit. This technology was to become the starting point for almost all further developments by HOMAG in this segment. In the same

year, at the Hanover trade fair, HOMAG launched a new type of edge banding machine that utilised the hot-cold application process. In comparison to the competition, this revolutionary machine allowed edges to be glued much faster and more economically.

From then on, HOMAG concentrated entirely on the production and further development of this gluing technology, and the process was further driven in particular by an innovative glue technology: hot-melt glue.

In 1965, HOMAG launched a double-sided edge banding machine with a new base frame and width-adjustment device. Two years later, they developed the first single-sided edge banding machine: the KH 12.

With the KF, another milestone in furniture production was reached, as it was the first combined sizing and edge banding machine. The KF 60 was particularly successful as it could also incorporate snipping and sanding units in addition to edge banding and flush trimming. Today, up to 15 units are installed on these types of machines, allowing workpieces to be processed in a way that makes them ready for installation.

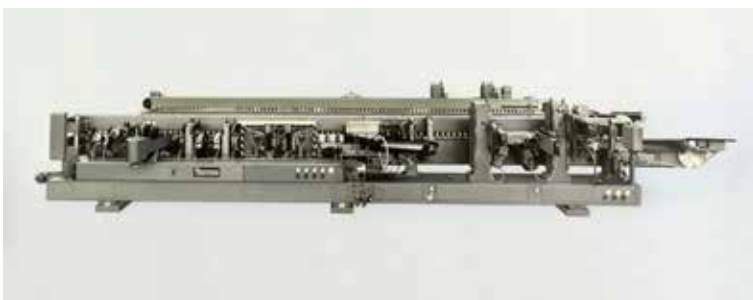
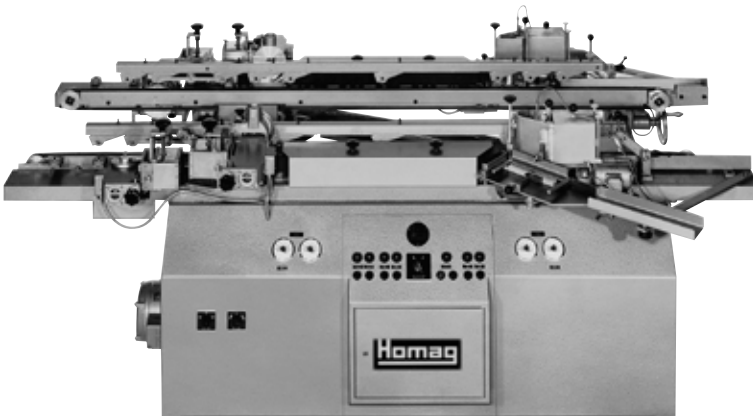
To offer smaller furniture companies with a suitable edge banding machine, HOMAG launched the KH 10-13 series in 1973. These machines were offered with two different gluing stations to allow coil material, solid edges and pre-coated edges to be processed.

## The cold-glue activation process

At the 1975 LIGNA trade fair, HOMAG presented the cold-glue activation process to the industry for the first time – a technology for edge gluing using PVAC glue.

The following year, a majority stake was acquired in Heinrich Brandt Maschinenbau GmbH (later BRANDT Kantentechnik GmbH). This move significantly strengthened HOMAG's position in the woodworking sector.

In 1982, a new generation of edge banding machines, the KL 70, was shown at a trade fair for wood craft in Munich. Fundamental innovations in construction, versatility and work safety were implemented in these machines – particularly the mechanical air-supported chip removal, which was integrated into the stand and reduced required suction power by 70%. The machine was further developed to become, for example, the KL 70 Optimat in 1995.





surface to be glued and then pressing it directly onto the workpiece, laserTec process guaranteed a consistently high processing quality with almost no joints. It could also process all standard edge types, including PVC, ABS, PP, PMMA, veneer and melamine. Introduced in 2017, the laserTec Next Generation was available in two performance classes and offered the industry zero-joint edge quality in both batch size 1 and series production.

In 2013, airTec was launched for the processing of invisible joints using hot air – using special edges with both decorative and functional layers. Melted at a constant temperature and volume flow, the functional layer can be securely connected to narrow surfaces. Since 2016, the airTec unit has been available with a rotation air heater, making it quieter and more powerful. In 2017, the process was established in door production, allowing the manufacture of optical zero joints with ABS/PP edge material.

#### The EDGETEQ era

After the consolidation of HOMAG Group and its companies in 2017 into a single HOMAG brand, the Group launched a whole series of new machine generations that covered the entire process chain and combined new functional designs. From then on, HOMAG's edge banding machines bore the name EDGETEQ and the technology has continued to develop to meet changing market needs.

The entry-level EDGETEQ S-200 machine (model 1130 FC) was launched in 2018, followed by the new EDGETEQ S-500 and EDGETEQ S-800 series. In 2021, the company kept up with the market shift toward autonomous and automated production systems by introducing an advanced concept – two cell solutions with edge banding machines - an EDGETEQ S-380 with LOOPTEQ O-300 return conveyor, ideal for the production of construction elements, and an EDGETEQ S-500 with LOOPTEQ O-600 return conveyor and a new workpiece infeed system for workpieces requiring a particular sizing accuracy. ►



In 1999, HOMAG launched its powerline series, a range of double-sided machines designed for series production. They offered a 50% increase in performance at just 30% additional cost was achieved with higher feed speeds, shorter gaps and changeover times, and longer availability.

Small series production and individual production became more and more important in the following years. In 2001, HOMAG presented a new, highly automated generation of the powerLine series for batch size 1 production.

In 2004, HOMAG responded to the growing use of lightweight panels, and began offering machines and systems not only for the production, but also for the further processing and edging of these panels.

HOMAG was again able to celebrate a world premiere at LIGNA 2009, through the launch of the Ambition series of edge banding machines in the form of six series from BRANDT and HOMAG. Remarkably, the basic version of the series covered over 90% of all applications required in woodworking factories, and in 2014, the next generation of the Ambition series followed, featuring new unit technology and models in various performance classes.

#### A new age in edge processing

The introduction of the laserTec process in 2009 heralded a new age in edge application. Using a laser beam to melt the





- To be at the forefront of further digitalising manufacturing in woodworking, HOMAG has placed significant emphasis on ensuring that software and machinery are seamlessly integrated for better data generation, management and utilisation, as well as diagnostic capabilities.

The current milestone in the software sector for EDGETEQ was marked in 2022 by woodCommander 5 with Edge Data Plugin on the EDGETEQ S-500 edge banding machines. This enables quick selection of processing programmes and edge materials, as well as reliable recording of production parameters and the workpiece-oriented creation of machine programmes. In addition, it forms the direct connection between the machine and the “materialAssist” app, which manages the edging material.

### Partnering growth in the industry

In edge processing, the range of services offered by HOMAG today extends from individual machines in the entry-level, medium or high-end segment, through the engineering and installation of complex production lines and systems, to complete industry solutions, including consulting and software. With this closely coordinated machine and service range, the HOMAG Group continues to offer its customers a comprehensive product range with high customer benefits. Setting foot into the next decade of edge banding excellence and innovation, HOMAG will continue to be a trusted partner to manufacturers of all sizes.

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# The Magic Pro drawer buzz

The growing family-owned business Lek Supply is dedicated to providing Australia with the best products and service when it comes to cabinetry hardware. Taking exclusive distributor rights for DTC's Magic-Pro slimline drawer system has led to Magic-Pro quickly becoming the go-to residential and commercial drawer solution amongst its customers for its exceptional versatility, adaptability and uncompromising quality and affordability.

With aesthetics and flexibility to suit all styles, the Magic-Pro is highly customisable and "an on-trend, stylistic choice" according to Nicholas Borg of Ink Joinery Pty Ltd. "It is a sleek and good-looking drawer. We often use it for our high-end homes and our clients are all very happy with the modern drawer system".

The range comes in three colours: black, white and grey. It is a highly durable drawer system that comes with 3 dimensional adjustments: left, right, up, down and tilt adjustment. There is also the choice of 40kg and 60kg load capacity for strength and durability.

Kitchen & Stone's Ramon Lam praises "The Magic-Pro has been incredibly reliable for its quality and magnitude of design options which has been extremely fitting for my range of clients. A drawer system we've been using for years from wardrobes to high end kitchens".

It's been quite exciting for the team at Lek Supply who have had such a positive uptake since introducing the Magic Pro in Australia in 2018. Youssef Asmar from Mastercraft Kitchens Joinery adds "the Magic-Pro has become our go-to drawers for all our projects. From style to functionality, Magic-Pro ticks all the boxes for us and our clients' needs. Simple to install and adjust, Magic-Pro is the ideal system for us."

If readers have been experiencing issues with their usual drawer system, Dave Tomkins from Site Worx Solutions can give some further confidence about making the switch to Magic Pro claiming "I have been completely transparent with my clients and choice to change to Magic-Pro and they have all been happy with the price point and quality of the drawers. They come with a lifetime guarantee and any minor issues have been quickly and painlessly resolved by the team at Lek. So, nothing but a positive result from the changeover and will continue to use Magic-Pro where applicable."

Magic-Pro is a perfect mix of function, elegance and performance. Register for a trade account on [www.leksupply.com.au](http://www.leksupply.com.au) or contact Lek Supply's product specialists for pricing.

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# Is chaotic work culture hurting productivity?

## How a manufacturing ERP can straighten out internal systems

Chaotic cultures are all too common in the Australian manufacturing industry. Also called “firefighting culture”, a chaotic work approach looks like:

- Managers rushing from meeting to meeting
- Finger-pointing when a production process breaks down
- Knee-jerk reactions when problems arise
- Recurring production bottlenecks
- Quick-and-dirty fixes

Especially in complex manufacturing and R&D operations, there simply aren’t enough resources to address every little problem that arises.

So management ends up overworking the best people while trying to patch the problems in front of them. Meanwhile, the business manages to stay afloat. However, making any headway seems impossible due to the steady stream of emails, phone calls and shutdowns.

But by implementing an ERP that spans the supply chain, your organisation can use data to rethink problem-solving and make better business decisions. Ultimately, a manufacturing ERP will help design long-term growth strategies, save time, improve productivity and encourage collaboration.

### ERP makes it simple

Complexity is one of the biggest challenges to overcoming chaotic culture. Even for small and medium manufacturers, it can seem like there are too many standalone systems and too many established processes for an integrated approach. Here’s where an ERP becomes invaluable.

ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) is a simplified system that combines data from across the supply chain:

- Suppliers and purchase orders
- Inventory
- Customer information
- Lead management
- Capacity planning
- Production
- Finishing and dispatch

- Logistics
- Finance
- Time and attendance

All this information comes together in a single user-friendly platform. As a result, everyone in your organisation has the tools, features and data they need to prioritise and track tasks, so unexpected issues are put in context with the bigger picture.

Manufacturers who implement an ERP can take their business to the next level, straightening out chaotic culture as they go.

## How Jobman helps Australian manufacturers to overcome chaos

### Strategic problem solving

There will always be more problems than there are hours in the day. Production problems shouldn’t be ignored; they should be prioritised and addressed systematically.

A manufacturing ERP provides an overview of the entire business, so management can decide how to allocate resources in a way that aligns with long-term priorities. This approach ensures your workforce stays focused on growing the business. It also reallocates the time and energy spent on problem-solving back to production and value-adding activities.

### System and processes driving priorities

Lean management methodology identifies non-value-adding activity (i.e. waste). Quality Assurance processes home in on specific defects. Six Sigma provides a framework to stamp out variability.

But management can’t adopt these methods without the right tools. And neither can the workforce alter their behaviour. For example, when machine operators and salespeople don’t communicate, or when the logistics coordinator can’t see what materials are taking up too much valuable storage space, everyone feels alone with no support.

Bringing the business together into a simplified ERP system means every level of the organisation can communicate, see the positive impact, and understand the bigger picture.

### Systems ensuring profits

ERP software helps to reduce waste and target a better-quality product. For example, reallocating resources to clear a

Chaotic culture leads to...	Jobman Culture leads to...
Reactive problem solving	Strategic problem solving
Complaints driving priorities	System and processes driving priorities
Promises eroding profits	Systems ensuring profits
Priorities overriding processes	Process controlling priorities
Band-Aid solutions	Developed solutions to strengthen outcomes
The best person being overworked	Balanced workload for everyone
Repeating problems	Adapting the system for desired outcomes
Patches become the system	Implementing proven systems and processes



recurring bottleneck can increase output. In turn, this shortens production lead time. As a result, customers are more satisfied, payments come in faster, and the business can re-invest in expanding output.

All that data is easily accessible in Jobman:

- Real-time job tracking
- Production reports
- Sales and financial reports
- Automated financial processes
- CRM tracking customer feedback

Implementing an ERP system creates a constant feedback loop for management to track their progress in real-time, rather than waiting for quarterly or annual results.

#### Process controlling priorities

Who sets priorities on the shop floor? If that question is hard to answer – or if the answer depends on the problems that crop up each day – then your business needs the data-driven intelligence of an ERP.

Without a clear picture of performance across the value chain, priority-setting becomes chaotic. Teams (or individual operators) decide which problems to address and which tasks to prioritise instead of collaborating in line with management's priorities.

#### Developed solutions to strengthen outcomes

Band-Aid fixes only hide production problems; they don't create long-term solutions. They also make things more chaotic

downstream, where the result is visible, but the root cause is plastered over.

Better outcomes require a thought-out, systematised approach. Due to the complexity of manufacturing operations, this usually means an iterative method for identifying, tweaking, tracking and continually improving results. An ERP like Jobman provides easy access to the data needed to make those decisions.

#### Balanced workload for everyone

In the community, firefighters are heroes who respond to emergencies and save lives. But in a manufacturing organisation, letting the reactive heroes lead the charge means discouraging innovators from contributing long-term ideas.

Eliminating chaos allows innovative ideas to come forward. It also means the people who continually step up to solve problems can instead focus their energy on long-term business growth. Jobman balances workloads at every stage of the production process: by scheduling work based on capacity, providing easy-to-follow checklists, automating time-consuming tasks and eliminating double data entry.

#### Adapting the system for desired outcomes

Without an ERP, production issues can look random and varied. But when you have all the data you need at your fingertips, it's easy to see patterns:

- Recurring bottlenecks
- Production delays
- Machine breakdowns
- Underperforming staff



- Overtime wages
- Human error in data entry
- Lost or mishandled paperwork
- Inefficient stock control

Once you can see the problems, you can use management methodologies to address them. But without real-time production data, you can only see the issues after they occur, which means you're always on the back foot and never moving forward.

#### Implementing proven systems and processes

Quick-and-dirty patches become the accepted standard too often in Australian manufacturing. Unfortunately, these patch fixes ultimately lead to lower reduced productivity and quality, whether it's a production workaround, manual data entry, retrospective timesheets, or overpaying for last-minute material orders.

With Jobman, Australia's leading manufacturing ERP, you can eliminate patchy problem solving for good. Jobman simplifies strategic problem-solving. Data from all corners of your business come together in a simplified browser-based system, giving you the tools to identify, address and systematically eliminate poor practices.

The first step is contacting the Jobman team for a tailored consultation. We'll invest time to understand your specific issues before taking you through the tools and features that can untangle a chaotic work culture and help your business grow.

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# Peka Riverso

- a unique drawer system that opens from both sides



Nover has announced an addition to the Peka storage range – the Riverso drawer system. It is made in Switzerland and allows access from both sides of a unit.

Perfect for island units and room dividers where access to drawers is visible from both sides. With full access to the entire contents of a drawer from two sides of the unit, items can be passed between two rooms via the same draw. Applications for the Riverso drawer system include kitchen islands, shop counters, healthcare settings, room dividers, points of sale, beauty salons, laboratories, and more.

With the Peka Riverso system, the drawer fronts overlay the unit walls on both sides: while one side is opened, the other remains closed. The design possibilities really are endless. Riverso is incredibly user-friendly too: the system is based on a full-extension draw runner with a load capacity of 40 kg and excellent running action, features soft-closing devices and can be fitted with a push-to-open system on one side for handleless fronts. Riverso is suitable for custom-made furniture with the dimensions and materials able to be customised. The front panel of the drawer system is 3D-adjustable on both sides. The runner technology by Grass is installed on a reinforced intermediate shelf.

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# Seventy years of innovation by SCM Stefani

In this article Fabio Cernoia, General Manager of the Thiene-based edgebanding business unit of Scm Group, talks about the business.

"SCM and its Stefani Business Unit specialising in edgebanding is definitely the biggest organisation in Triveneto for the production of woodworking machinery, with a dedicated factory for edgebanding staffed with real product specialists," he said. "The facility is larger than 30 thousand m<sup>2</sup>, shipping more than 1,800 edgebanding machines every year, the widest portfolio currently available in the market, ranging from basic models to big plants that combine flexibility and productivity and that will be incorporated into the manufacturing lines of the world's top furniture manufacturers. The company is highly specialised and boasts an efficient industrial organisation, exporting more than 90 percent of production all over the world".

"Stefani, acquired in the early nineties by SCM, was established in Vicenza in 1950, and has worked in the wood machinery business ever since. Being part of SCM for almost thirty years, we have had the opportunity to grow and make big investments that have turned us into a global reference for edgebanding operations, from entry-level machines up to big custom automated solutions, always offering tangible technological and competitive benefits to our customers."

"Edgebanding is a complex technology, constantly evolving, strictly connected to materials and design; in recent years, it has contributed significantly to the visual impact of finished products, as a result of different techniques to hide the glue line and ensure affordable costs for the finished product and the production plant".

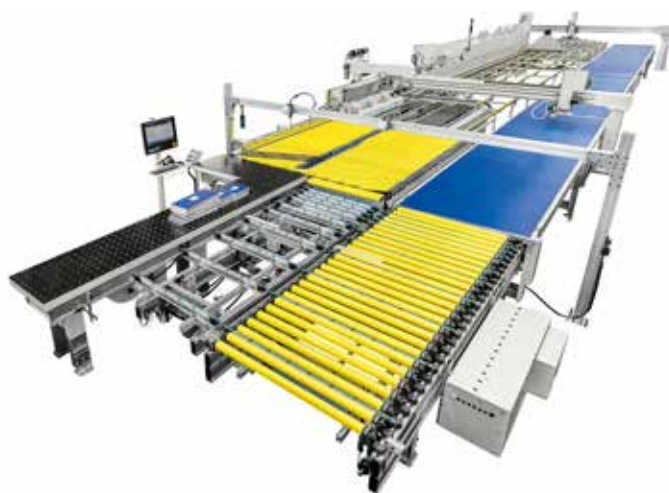
"We should not forget," Cernoia continued, "that we are at the crossroads of design, quality, designer and production requirements, glue and edge specifications: so, for some time now, we have been setting up working groups with all stakeholders, encouraging the creation of new concepts to foster innovative developments in edgebanding, a "networking project" involving furniture manufacturers, material suppliers and designers. We believe a lot has been done, but there is still so much to do: we are committed to helping our customers customize the final result and respond to a market that looks for increasing flexibility and easy-to-use edgebanders, equipped with electronic systems that allow automatic setup and offer controls similar to a smartphone. The ultimate goal is making sure that any investment is effective even with less skilled staff, considering the lack of specific skills."

"Another big topic is the sustainability of processes, panels, glues and edges: our technology features an excellent control



of energy consumption, and this approach has really been rewarding”.

“Our flexible Stefani model solutions are arousing interest all over the world. For many companies, the primary need is to have easy-to-use edgebanders incorporated into their production lines, U-shaped or closed-loop models suitable for “batch one” cycles, while preserving high productivity and versatility. In many countries, this is the most requested technology: our solutions offer a very competitive quality-price ratio, have a relatively small footprint, and each machine installed in a production line can also be operated independently if necessary. More and more often, we offer solutions with technical features that support the efficient production of small batches.”



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# Docking Drawer range expands

## with new flush pop-up outlets



Available now at Wilson & Bradley are the new Docking Drawer flush pop-up power outlets.

Joining the existing range of Docking Drawer products, the flush pop-up outlets are Australian Certified and are simple and easy to install into any kitchen worktop.

Sitting just 2mm above the worktop surface, the flush pop-up outlets integrate seamlessly to ensure no worktop functionality is lost when not in use and can be expanded with a simple tap to conveniently power kettles, small appliances, chargeable devices and more.

Joining the Docking Drawer range in early June 2022 are the Docking Drawer steel canisters. Made from high quality materials and designed

for simple specification into any type of drawer, these canisters are guaranteed to enhance every project by creating a highly functional space. Available in a variety of sizes and styles in chrome and stainless steel finish to fit blow dryers, shavers and other styling accessories, the Docking Drawer steel canisters feature a corrosion resistant finish and make for the perfect hot tool holder. Combine with in-drawer power to eliminate clutter from vanity surfaces.

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# When only dark will do, see it through

The TeraBlack absolute matt finish is unlike any other. TeraBlack products have been engineered with a light absorbing microstructure which provides a smooth, uniform, velvet-touch surface. The unique non-reflective matte finish complements all decors for truly versatile black hardware, equally as effective against anthracite and true black surrounds.

TeraBlack is more than just a colour – the Titus enhanced resistance application black is a uniquely durable finish with lasting good looks. As the name suggests, the TeraBlack coating provides exceptional corrosion resistance and consistency throughout the lifecycle of the product.

Take the design and performance of furniture to the next level with Titus TeraBlack product range. The TeraBlack finish is available and has been applied to a suite of hardware products to ensure uniformity, functionality and aesthetic appeal throughout

the cabinetry. Current TeraBlack products include the innovative T-type hinges, Titus' best-selling push latches and QuickFit connectors, and the latest 5mm shelf supports with spike. Take the trendy dark look to the next level with the complete range of Titus Tekform anthracite and matt black products. Highlights include the Optimatt premium black board, the high capacity Kosara bin range, Quadra anthracite pull-out units, and Tekform slimline anthracite drawers. For accent finishes, look to the Aura range for European-inspired titanium grey, pearl anthracite and matt black handles and knobs.

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# Experience the magic of metal

## with SURTECO Australia's Deko Metal surfaces and edges

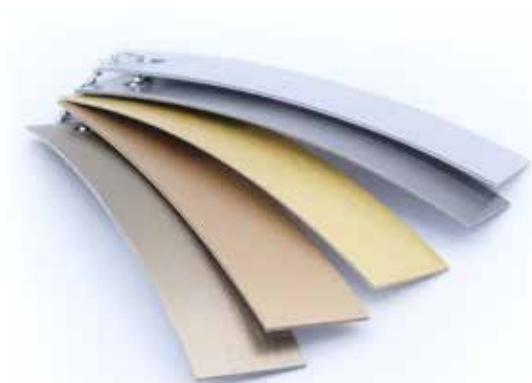
SURTECO Australia's custom fusion of innovation, creativity, generations of experience, and deep understanding of modern surface technology results in a comprehensive offering that displays the brand's ongoing pursuit of perfection – and makes SURTECO Australia the ultimate destination for industry professionals looking for consistency in their projects across both edge and surface. As experts in creative design and technologically advanced surfaces and finishes, SURTECO Australia develop new ideas and products that move people and make trends come alive. This constant pursuit of design excellence helps SURTECO Australia remain on the forefront of new design trends which can be seen in an exciting new offering; SURTECO Australia's new Deko Metal range of surfaces and beautifully matched edges.

Made with real metals, these gorgeous new colours and tactile finishes make a dramatic statement and will leave a lasting impression. However, SURTECO Australia's Deko Metal surface range now has matching edgebands available for the brushed range of surfaces. Perfectly match these edges with a Deko Metal brushed surface application or feature a dramatic contrasting edge design when paired with a more subtle decor. The design options for the range are extensive and inspiring.

Deko Metal edges are available in 23mm wide by 1mm thick and there are 5 luxurious colours available to order now; brushed bronze, brushed copper, brushed gold, brushed titanium, and brushed silver.

Inspired by precious metals, these real metal laminates and





edges have been carefully curated to complement or contrast SURTECO Australia's extensive range of beautiful decors. With applications of these finishes seen in popular hotels around Australia as well as high end kitchens, for those looking to make an impact, Deko Metal surfaces and edges are the perfect solution for the next project. For more information, please call or email the customer service team at SURTECO Australia for a presentation of the new Deko Metal surfaces and matching edges. Email [info@au.surteco.com](mailto:info@au.surteco.com) or phone to speak to experience the magic of metal with SURTECO Australia's Deko Metal surfaces and edges.

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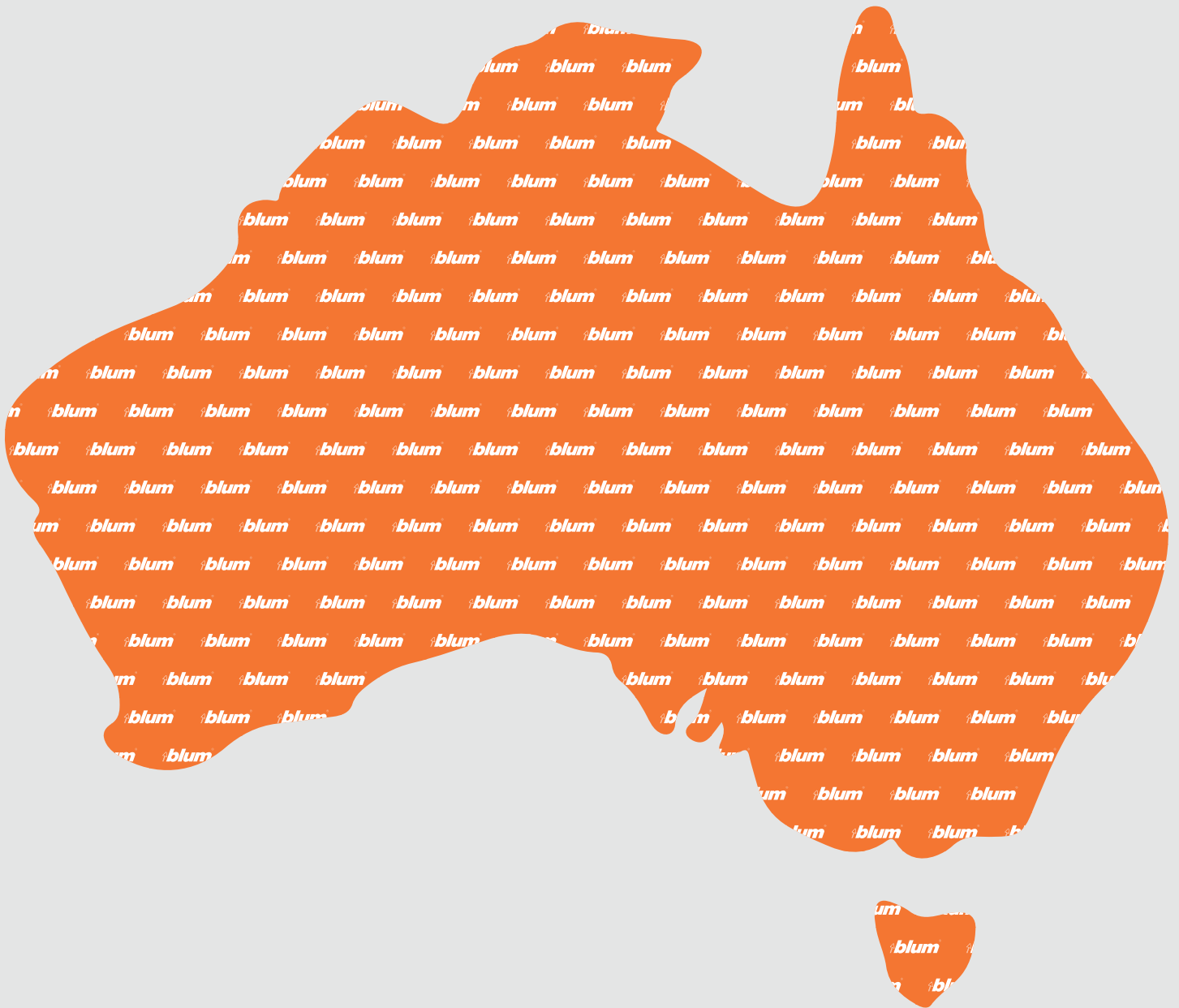
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# New WA showroom for Luna Machinery

Meet the men behind Luna Machinery WA - Chris and Jeremy both come from trade qualified engineering backgrounds. Jeremy is a trade qualified CNC machinist and spent his early career as a CNC machinist, moving into running a large engineering shop.

Chris began his career in the oil and gas industry as a trade qualified mechanical fitter with qualifications and experience in instrumentation and process control. His expertise troubleshooting engineering problems led to leading small teams in workshops and onsite.

Both Chris and Jeremy continue their interest in engineering and problem solving by building and racing cars in their downtime.

Together they started with working from a van and a small industrial unit repairing all kinds of machinery from many different industries in 2017. They saw the issues customers were having and knew sourcing high quality machinery for the WA market was key. This led them to partner with Luna Machinery Australia in 2019.

The focus for Luna Machinery WA operations has been creating a team that is driven to excel, listening closely to customer feedback and providing high quality service for WA's aluminium and uPVC industries.

Supply issues and increased lead delivery times have long been a challenge for many Perth and WA businesses. Luna Machinery WA has proudly moved into even larger premises at the Perth



suburb of Malaga. There is a well-appointed showroom and increased warehousing capacity with a strong focus on service and repair of all kinds of machinery. Chris and Jeremy would love to have clients drop in and check out the new showroom as well as discuss any future plans or process challenges they may be currently having.

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# Brindabella Kitchens increases output

## while reducing staff, overtime, and floor space

Brindabella Kitchens started business in 1994 and was initially a small-scale business. Ben purchased the company in 2005 and continued its growth by increasing his customer base.

Over the years the business grew into a medium-sized manufacturing business specialising in producing high-end custom-made kitchens for the private sector and the full house fit-out for project home builders including – kitchens, laundry, butlers' pantries, pantries, vanities, and outdoor kitchens to meet increasing demand.

Main clients are the home renovation market, home builders, architects, and interior designers.

Brindabella Kitchens was faced with a changing market along with large growth in the project home market, builders' demand, and faster time frames.

With the local housing market seeing a boom in development

in recent years, builders were on the look out for reliable manufacturers that they could use across their housing development portfolio. Brindabella Kitchens was keen on meeting this demand as well as existing ongoing work.

Although increasing demand was being met initially through short term solutions, this led to other challenges and higher costs, which left Brindabella Kitchens entering a vicious cycle. With further investment in factory space, employing more staff in manufacturing, increase in overtime costs and purchasing additional machinery, as a result, Brindabella's profit margins were decreasing dramatically, and this problem had to be resolved.

Ben started investigating the best solution for his business and after considering a few options Brindabella Kitchens highlighted the following reasons for choosing Wood Tech.

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- Ability to bring new innovative machine and production concepts

In 2017 Brindabella Kitchens reached out to Wood Tech to help with its production issues.

### Objective

The main objectives for the new project were:

- increase production and efficiency
- less factory floor space
- fewer machine operators
- no overtime.

### Solution

Since the factory had reasonably high ceilings the suggestion of using the Barbaric multi-level board system was a great choice. This allowed them to use the high ceilings (space above the machines) to manage the board stock as well as automatically load the nesting machine. The efficiency was significant as freeing up floor space saved the movement of board stock and

access for forklifts. With this solution, Brindabella saved over 500 square metres of floor space.

The next machine that Wood Tech recommended, linked to the board storage system, was the new Anderson GS linear motion nesting line. Wood Tech stated that this single machine would output the same amount of square metres as the two existing nesting machines. Although initially sceptical, in the end, Brindabella Kitchens admitted the results were amazing.

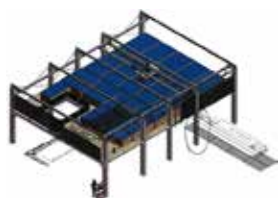
Going from two nesting machines, two edge banders and four staff machine operators all doing overtime every day the company reduced their staff by 75% in this area and had just the one machine operator with no more overtime required. Crucially the output they had during the week, on a Saturday and with excessive overtime was now the same as 8 hour shifts during the week.

Brindabella Kitchens told Wood Tech that the biggest takeaway from the use of these machines was the reduction in staff, reduction in overtime costs, and reclaiming of factory floor space which ultimately led to a dramatic increase in profit margins.

Wood Tech, they said were “woodworking machinery” specialists who resolved all the problems discussed in the brief which led to more production output with significantly fewer costs giving them the confidence to approach any future projects knowing they can complete them using the best equipment and support.

Based on discussions and strategic objectives together the companies agreed on the following solution:

- 1 Barbaric multi-level storage system CSF12 17m x 12m - storage to 1100 sheets.
- 1 Anderson Model GS 612 linear motion automatic labelling line.
- 1 IMA Model 400L edge bander.
- 1 Wood Tech Model NB5XE bevel edge bander.
- 2 Wood Tech Model MJK1138 3.8m electronic panel saw.



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# A unique vision for the future

It was December 2020 when Sandy Passmore made the decision to take over Planit Cutting Edge Solutions after the passing of her husband, Anthony. It was a brave decision, given the company's previous success, and living up to those high expectations could have been overwhelming for some. Sandy, however, never had any doubts about what needed to be done and just how to go about it.

"Anthony had built the company from the ground up over past 36 years, so it was an easy decision for me to make as I wanted to honour his legacy and very importantly, look after the Planit family – our fantastic team of people who have helped built our business over the years."

May 2022 and the evidence is clear for all to see; Sandy has not only embraced the challenge but is leaving her own mark on the company, taking it forward with her unique vision for its future.

Raelene,  
Planit's Office  
Manager.

"One of my main goals when taking ownership was that I

wanted Planit to be an employer of choice, a place where people really wanted to work." In an uncertain world where talent is in short supply, Sandy's approach is both insightful and pragmatic. Without a skilled workforce, there can be no future for any hi-tech industry; keeping trusted and experienced employees is key to ongoing success.

Hot on the heels of Anthony's passing, came the pandemic, leaving Sandy's workforce in an understandable state of doubt about the direction the company might follow. Sandy was determined to steady the ship.

"Change was tough in the early days as it was mid COVID," says Sandy. "So, everyone was working remotely, and I also needed to take the company through a reset process to ensure our focus was on our customers at a time when they needed us the most. I believe that a happy and passionate team is the key to delivering an amazing customer experience – which is what I want for everyone that deals with Planit every single day."

One could describe Sandy's style as a holistic approach to business. She knows instinctively what a happy and well-rewarded team means to the ongoing care of her customers. It's an approach that's all too lacking in a world where sales budgets are placed before the welfare of employees and customers alike. To that end, Sandy introduced her new 6-point Team Planit Program early last year, with the goal of making Planit a standout employer in the industry, here is what it covers and Sandy's explanation for each initiative:

## 1. Wellness days

"The past couple of years had been tough and the pace of business is faster than ever. This is why my team can take two 'wellness' days a year for any reason and spend this time relaxing or with their families."

## 2. Focus on real communication

"Being a software company, we can sometimes get too 'tech orientated' and I wanted to see us get back to real face to face meetings and interaction. We now meet with our team regularly in person and encourage lots of 'teams' style meeting rather than relying on emails and chats."

## 3. Coffee Club

"We have an amazing internal communication channel called 'Coffee Club', this is where we celebrate the people of Planit ►





# FLUSH POP UP OUTLET

The Docking Drawer Flush Pop Up outlet is the perfect hidden power source. The retractable unit can be installed seamlessly into benchtops, worktops and cabinets, keeping the space tidy while not in use.

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Peter one of Planit's Product Solution Experts.

► with things like their birthdays, family events and special occasions. My team run this themselves and I love that we share this across our team nationwide."

#### 4. Employee assist program

"Mental health is very important to me; I want my team to feel like they have access to help in this area whenever they need it so I have set a confidential service available to our whole team where they can access a counsellor whenever they feel they need it and we pay for this service."

#### 5. Fresh new uniform and branding

"We have recently released our new Planit branding which included a fresh new uniform for our whole team. In the mornings I want my team focussed on the day ahead, not what they are going to wear or what they need to iron."

#### 6. Company-wide incentive

"Kicking off in 2022 was our company-wide incentive where every member of my team gets to share in our success. I know that many companies will incentivise their sales teams (which we do as well) but this is a bonus for our entire team to share in, this includes everyone from our team in customer service, to our service team and all those in between."

Sandy says that as restrictions have ended recently, she has been able to travel around the country to spend time with her team and its customers and to gauge how her initiatives have been received. "What I have loved seeing is the positivity in both our team and the market on my travels. My team and I have worked very hard over the past two years to create a new Planit experience, and whilst we still have work to do, I am excited by what we have achieved so far."

Sandy believes there are still challenges ahead, goals to be achieved, but in these times of change she is certain of one thing; the future is bright if her team and her customers can face it together. "Bring it on," says Sandy.



Sandy Passmore onsite with Chris from Precision Cabinetmaking and Jack, Planit's Business Development Manager.

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# Free space the clever connection of less and more

## Small and strong, for more freedom in furniture construction

Häfele is expanding its successful Free Space flap fittings family with two new flap fittings for heavy weight flap doors up to 15kg. With the new Free Space 6.15 and Free Space Push to Open 5.15 for large and very heavy flap doors, the family is now complete. The compact flap fittings with minimal space requirements in the cabinet now cover all common flap stay applications.

Free Space provides something unique: It creates more storage space in furniture with less volume and more power at the flap. The convenient operation is the result of a very low opening resistance and extremely smooth-running properties. The soft closing mechanism ensures soft and quiet closing of the flap thanks to an integrated mechanism tailored to the entire range of application. Its special feature is an absolutely slim design. The hinge-less flap stay eliminates the need for large cover caps and creates more space for modern furniture design even

with shallow cabinets thanks to its minimal installation depth of 173mm height and 63mm depth.

Free Space 6.15 and Push to open 5.15 have a slightly larger installation size than Free Space 1.11/1.8 being 183mm high and 72mm depth to allow for the larger weight capacity and doors up to 600mm high.

Free Space 6.15 and 5.15 still have the same drilling pattern as the lighter weight Free Space fittings for the side wall of the cabinet (standard series drilled holes 32/37mm) and the door flap. The well-trie positioning pin system and the fact that only one pre-mounted fixing screw is required, ensures a high degree of standardisation in the pre-production of cabinet panels and the absolute easiness with simple and very quick installation. The perfect alignment of the front is quick and easy with a generously designed 3D adjustment mechanism. The opening angle can be limited to 90° by means of a tool free, integrated adjustment option.

## 2022 iSalone Report

For the first time in four years a full iSalone event, including Eurocucina and Salone Bagno, will take place in Milan in June 2022. The exhibition organisers have confirmed that all halls are full and it is expected that all the major local and international exhibitors will be in attendance.



TKBB's Melanie Gardener will be attending and will be collecting information from the show. Keep yourselves and your staff up to date with the latest in trends and designs with a show report from the first significant in-person exhibition since 2020.

Each report will include a summary of key highlights from the show, as well as a personalised introduction that addresses particular areas of interest to your organisation. The reports will be supplied as a PDF which can be distributed to your staff. Reports will include images and information, including hyperlinks for more information.

You can also choose to "add on" a face-to-face or Zoom presentation with Melanie with the opportunity for a Q&A session.

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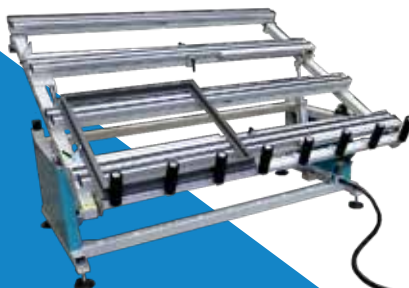
The Free family calculator is an easy-to-use configuration tool on the Häfele website helping users to calculate door weights and takes the guess work out of selecting the correct model required for each application. The Configurator tool can be found on the "Services" tab at [www.hafele.com.au](http://www.hafele.com.au).

The Free Space fittings are currently available in the standard colours of white/nickel, anthracite/nickel and now a puristic Black Edition design line that fits perfectly into darker cabinet interiors to extend the range of colour options.

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**Luna Machinery**

# The “digital job folder” brings transparency to the workshop

The order books at many carpentry and joinery businesses are full, which makes it more challenging to keep an overview and keep data and information about jobs up to date for all employees. Whether the employees are in the work preparation department, in production or tasked with assembly at the customer's premises, the “digital job folder” now gives everyone access to all information about each job in real time.

But that's not all: The web app also makes the current status of individual components transparent for everyone involved. Users therefore always have an overview of the status of jobs. The web app can be used by anyone who has a laptop or tablet to hand.

## The challenges:

### A lot of information and data, a lack of transparency

Many carpenters and joiners today face similar challenges: The volume of data involved in the work is increasing - but it often comes from various sources. How can companies deal with this efficiently and consistently? How can all employees stay up-to-date in terms of the job status? What is the best way to keep an overview of the jobs in the machine and assembly areas?

Woodworking shops often have to deal with a lot of paper: Information about jobs, parts lists, assembly information, drawings and construction plans - a lot of data is printed out (in some cases several times) and distributed to employees. Time and again, information about a job is also distributed to different storage locations or using different programs. This can now be consigned to the past because from now on, productionManager allows users to bundle all the information about a single job centrally. Carpenters/joiners can use the “digital job folder” to gather all production-relevant data in one place, replacing numerous paper documents in production.

### An end to endless paperwork: All the information is always up to date

In the work preparation department, the user imports all data from any software systems, such as Excel, industry software or a CAD/CAM system, into the productionManager web app. Alternatively, the user can create the data directly in the software. From this point on, any employee with a laptop or tablet at hand can access the data: items, assemblies and components, including the relevant drawings and information. Changes can be entered quickly and are therefore available to

all users immediately. Drawings, images or further supplements can also be easily added to any job.

### Full transparency on the progress of the job

The “digital job folder” bundles all the important information about a job in one place. And because it's a web application, employees of wood-processing companies can access it from anywhere where they have access to the Internet: in the office, in the workshop or on the construction site. All employees in production or assembly have full transparency over all jobs. For example, they can view job progress in real time and the status of items and components for easy tracking.

Anyone who also uses the productionAssist Feedback app can easily define individual stations in the workshop at which feedback on the current status of the individual component/item should be given. Feedback can be submitted to the app by scanning (using a hand-held scanner or tablet) or by clicking in the app. The benefit: All employees know at any point in time where particular components have already been processed or whether the furniture has been assembled in the assembly area.

### Flexible use in any workshop

The “digital job folder” can be integrated into any existing workshop environment with very little effort. No adjustments are necessary in the software landscape or in the machine pool. The machine pool is usually made up of machines from different manufacturers — this is also no obstacle to using the software.

### Cost-effective: No investment, update or maintenance costs

There is no risk with regard to costs when using productionManager. The use of the web app can be billed monthly or annually and can also be canceled within these cycles. The benefits of the web-based software: it is always up-to-date, no server landscape is required and no effort is required for updates.

### The backbone in communication between HOMAG apps

Anyone using other HOMAG apps or digital assistants has many additional benefits thanks to coordinated interfaces between productionManager and the HOMAG apps. Within the app environment, productionManager acts as a central application in the background and ensures that the correct information appears in the correct place in the work preparation department and the workshop.

- Anyone who uses intelliDivide optimization software for cutting or nesting can transfer the parts for cutting directly to intelliDivide.
- If the company manages its panel and edge materials in the materialManager web app, productionManager also uses this data.
- If the cutting assistant (Cutting Production Set), the nesting assistant (Nesting Production Set) or the sorting assistant (Sorting Production Set) is already used at workstations in the carpentry/joinery workshop, the user can transfer data to these workstations (i.e., to the productionAssist app used there.) These production workstations automatically report the processing progress directly to productionManager.

At the same time, HOMAG has also developed suitable interfaces with various external software partners. In conjunction with imos iX, Borm ERP systems, SWOOD or SmartWOP, the HOMAG software also shows how simple and easy seamless



data exchange between different systems can be. While data is exchanged between the different manufacturers' software solutions fully automatically in the background, users will see a uniform and lean solution from a single source.

In the work preparation department, in production or assembly at the customer's premises, the "digital job folder" gives access to all information about each job in real time.

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# MINIPRESS top by Blum

## - the new generation of drilling and insertion machines

The MINIPRESS top is the new drilling and insertion machine that makes manufacturing easier than ever before. The new state-of-the-art machine provides accurate working methods to deliver more convenience for manufacturers and cabinet makers. Combined with EASYSTICK, MINIPRESS top offers a more affordable and accessible offering to customers looking to enhance production efficiency and quality.

### Automated for accurate results

As fittings become increasingly complex, the importance of precise and accurate assembly is increasing substantially.

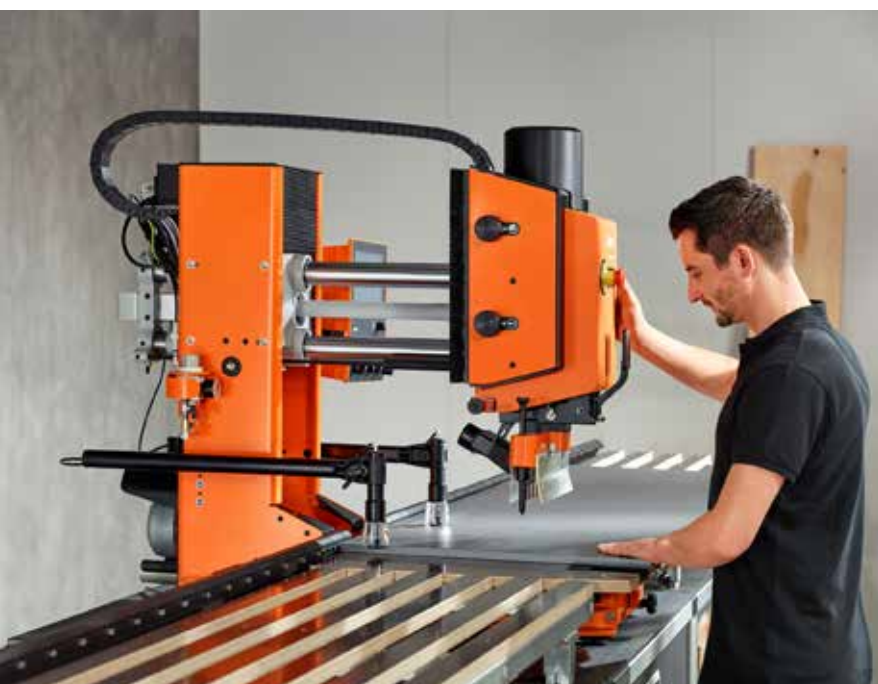
MINIPRESS top with EASYSTICK allows manufacturers and cabinet makers to set dimensions and drill for their individual requirements for a completely automated and error-free assembly.

The accuracy of the machine can be set to within 0.1 of a millimetre, ensuring the most accurate drilling possible. With the automatic control of the y-axis with EASYSTICK and a large depth of up to 350 mm, it's also possible for cabinet makers and manufacturers to carry out central line drilling for cabinets that are 700 mm deep.

### Convenient functionality

With the flexibility of the MINIPRESS top and its comprehensive modular drill heads and ruler system, all users are able to maximise their workflows and processes. With only small space requirements, low procurement costs and no need to train staff on operating the device, MINIPRESS top with EASYSTICK is a great cost-effective alternative to CNC machines.

When purchasing a MINIPRESS top with EASYSTICK, customers will have the option to order new drilling heads or elect to use their existing drilling heads from their PRO-CENTER and MINIPRESS PRO machines.



Blum also offers a new 11 spindle drilling head as an optional extra and a worktable extension to further enhance efficiency for users.

#### Excel with E-SERVICES

Blum's comprehensive range of services ensures that all manufacturers and cabinet makers are given the best possible support throughout the entire process. For a completely automated experience, users can plan their drilling requirements using Cabinet Configurator and transfer the data to EASYSTICK via a USB memory stick. Alternatively, EASYSTICK allows users to enter settings directly on the MINIPRESS top, and it will calculate the drilling positions automatically.

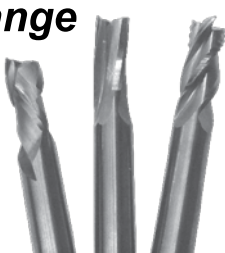
The MINIPRESS top can be configured through Blum's Product Configurator in E-SERVICES.

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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 next AWISA exhibition is planned to take place in Sydney in July 2024 at ICC Sydney, Darling Harbour. For more information visit [www.awisa.com/exhibition](http://www.awisa.com/exhibition) or phone Geoff Holland on 0412 361 580.

## AWISA The Magazine



AWISA's magazine is published quarterly and is distributed free to a database of over 13,000 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.

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[www.awisa.com](http://www.awisa.com)

### 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](mailto:info@awisa.com). (AWISA Ltd may at some time in the future charge a subscription for personally addressed magazines)



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BY HIDEAWAY



## NEW SIZES FOR 350MM CABINETS

New Waste Bin sizes:

- 1 x 35 litre bucket**
- 2 x 13 litre buckets**
- 2 x 16 litre buckets**

New Laundry Hamper size:

- 1 x 35 litre hamper**

What's great is the 2 x 13 litre model has been designed so two units can be installed in a standard carcass height providing a four-bin recycling solution. The 2 x 16 litre model allows designers the option of either a 2/3 to 1/3 or 60/40 split in drawers to match design preference.

Bucket models are available in arctic white or cinder, laundry hamper model is available in arctic white.

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