

insight

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017

Construction Industry playing catch-up

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President's report

From the trowel of Stuart Phelps



Welcome to the first issue of Insight for 2017. A good friend shared the following quote with me the other day and I thought it was worth mentioning.

***“Charisma is the ability to influence without logic”
(Quentin Crisp).***

Some would say the sentiment behind a recent politicians raise in popularity and fame. I thought it quite poignant in this present construction market where the number of houses being consented and the forecasts by many national building firms of the new home builds coming through are tantalizing for many tradesmen. With the notable increase in enquiries over the past year in most regions for our member's services, I believe this is one of the most extreme periods of growth and need of trades in my business life time. We can all easily be caught up in the charisma of building companies promises and yet find ourselves burdened with the pressure that this bow wave produces. Often the catch-up effect

flows onto specialist trades who are time deprived, resource deficient and labour depleted finding it difficult to provide the service on which the initial relationship was formed. Logic would suggest building strong and transparent communication channels, sturdy scheduling systems, constantly training new apprentice labour and looking for ways to share workloads within the community of like minded tradesmen would minimise the impact of this demand. These thoughts consume the day to day choices of many small businesses around the country. In my own firm, I have given this tidal wave of demand a measured consideration and decided to grow slowly and future proof by not trying to over promise and ultimately under deliver. I am attempting to be open to all the opportunities that come my way as long as it does not reject the important relationship built prior to the surge. I will let you know how it goes.

With all the business around you in 2017 I encourage you to plan to

attend the annual AWCINZ Conference scheduled for August in Taupo. A beautiful time of year in a stunning location to experience an event designed to encourage contractors, families, tradesmen, businesses, suppliers and manufacturers alike to join together to be educated and enthusiastic about the possibilities ahead. Another fantastic opportunity to take a break from work out of winter, enjoy yourself and be enriched at the same time is the 72nd AWCI ANZ Conference set for October 8 – 11 in Hamilton Island, Queensland. Please touch base with Richard at AWCI for more information.

Busy times ahead so I wish you a safe, measured and prosperous 2017.

Stuart Phelps
President AWCINZ

Construction news



EMPLOYER DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Employers of current BCITO trainees can apply for funding for study programmes to help develop their business.

BCITO supports employers to go on and provide training and employment in the building and construction industry.

We have 15 Employer Development Grants up to a maximum of \$3,000 each (excl GST) available for employers each year.

BCITO wishes to give employers access to study programmes which will help you develop and grow your business.

If you're currently training a BCITO apprentice, you're eligible to apply for this grant so that we can assist you to up-skill yourself and help your business be successful long-term.

Applications can be made at any time but once the 15 have been awarded there's no more available until 2018.

What can the BCITO Employer Development Grant be used for?

Any training or development assistance which best suits your personal or business development needs. Some examples are:

- BCITO supervisory qualifications
 - Consultation with a business advisor
 - Short courses or seminars on small business management, estimating or contract management
 - Higher level business-related qualifications
- Go to www.bcito.org.nz for more information

POTTER INTERIOR SYSTEMS LAUNCH NEW RANGE OF PERFORATED PLASTERBOARD

The new Protone and Rigitone Perforated Plasterboard range feature excellent acoustic capability and innovative VOC reducing Activ'Air technology.

Potter Interior Systems has launched a new perforated plasterboard range called Protone and Rigitone, allowing architects and designers to create beautiful ceilings and walls that achieve high levels of acoustic performance. Protone and Rigitone has been launched in New Zealand through Potter's exclusive relationship with worldwide plasterboard specialist Saint-Gobain. The four new Rigitone and three new Protone plasterboard

options with unique seamless access panels feature excellent acoustic capability and innovative VOC reducing Activ'Air technology to improve indoor air quality.

The plasterboard perforations together with white acoustic fabric lining improve performance and reduce echo and noise reverberation to create more comfortable environments for work and leisure. Good acoustic design includes control of both sound transmission and sound absorption. The Protone range of perforated plasterboard is suitable for both ceilings and walls, whilst the Rigitone range is suitable for ceilings. Each provides ease and versatility for installation, and a surface that is more durable than mineral fibre or similar acoustic absorbers.

A key feature of both the Protone and Rigitone range is Activ'Air, a patented technology that converts formaldehyde into non-harmful inert compounds that are permanently locked in the board and cannot be released back into the air. This can reduce the concentration of formaldehyde in an environment by up to 60% when installed in ceilings.

The Protone Range features three contemporary perforation patterns with white acoustic fabric backing, Protone 12mm Square, Protone

12mm Square Minigrid, and Protone Slotted Minigrid, each with different percentages of open area to meet most acoustic application requirements. Each board in the range is supplied at a size of 2400mm x 1200mm x 12.5mm. The Protone boards can also be used for curved installations down to a radius of 6000mm (dry bending), allowing architects and designers to create stunning architectural features. Unlike standard plasterboard, all four edges of the Protone sheet are recessed to make flush jointing quicker and easier, negating the need for back blocking on butt joints.

The Rigitone range features four contemporary perforation edge-to-edge white acoustic fabric backing patterns, Rigitone Galaxy, Rigitone Astral, Rigitone Matrix 8mm Round (indent), and Rigitone Matrix 12mm Square (indent), each with different

percentages of open area to meet most acoustic application requirements. Due to the variety of perforation sizes and patterns, board dimensions vary slightly but are nominally 1200mm x 2000mm x 12.5mm. The edges of Rigitone boards are square and pre-primed for a unique installation method using ready-mixed Rigitone Filler, creating a continuous, seamless finish.

Unique access panels are available in each of the three Protone board patterns and consist of a plasterboard frame that is easily set into the ceiling and a 510mm square hatch piece with a matching perforation pattern that fits neatly into the frame. These panels provide access to the ceiling cavity while ensuring a seamless look across the surface.

Potter Interior System's perforated

plasterboard range also includes the Gyprock Standard 6mm Round, which is the traditional perforated pattern that has been extensively used throughout New Zealand. Gyprock's Standard 6mm Round provides an economical aesthetic solution for ceilings or walls and is supplied without an acoustic fabric backing. 6mm Round's acoustic performance is adequate for most situations where moderate levels of attenuation are required.

As a decorative acoustic panel system, Protone and Rigitone offers a variety of decorative finishes to combine aesthetics and high performance sound absorption and is suitable for commercial applications including foyers of public buildings, restaurants and hotels, retail and shopping centres, leisure spaces and commercial office buildings.

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Protecting vulnerable workers



Protecting vulnerable workers

– On 1 April, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will enforce stand-down periods for non-compliant employers who breach employment standards. Those employers will not be able to recruit migrants for a period of time after an infringement.

The Minister for Immigration and Workplace Skills and Employment announced this morning measures to restrict access to migrant labour by employers who have incurred employment standards-related penalties. These new measures demonstrate that the exploitation of workers - including migrants who may be less likely to be aware of their rights and entitlements than New Zealand workers - will not be tolerated.

New Zealand employers must

comply with New Zealand's regulated minimum employment standards, and this is reflected in current immigration instructions. The new measures will provide a defined threshold and will mean that, in situations where an employer has incurred a penalty for a breach of employment standards, there will be a set stand-down period preventing them from recruiting migrant labour for either six months, one year, 18 months, or two years, depending on the severity of the breach.

The new measures will be implemented on 1 April 2017. For employers who have incurred penalties or infringement notices before 1 April 2017, while no formal stand-down period will be applied, INZ will have a list of these employers and visa applications will be judged against immigration instructions which require compliance with employment law.

Questions and Answers

WHY AREN'T NON-COMPLIANT EMPLOYERS ALREADY RESTRICTED FROM EMPLOYING MIGRANTS?

All employers have to comply with regulated minimum employment standards and this is reflected in current immigration instructions. But there isn't a clear threshold set for when non-compliance with employment standards becomes unacceptable for immigration purposes (as opposed to non-compliance of a very minor or accidental nature).

These new measures provide a threshold and will mean that, in situations where an employer has incurred a penalty for a breach of employment standards, there will be a set stand-down period preventing them from recruiting migrant labour for either six months, one year, 18 months, or two years, depending on the severity of the breach.

Protecting vulnerable workers *continued...*

WHAT KIND OF PENALTY IS INCLUDED?

Employment standards-related penalties extend from formal infringement notices issued by the Labour Inspectorate (following a Labour Inspectorate investigation) through to penalties issued by the Employment Relations Authority or the Employment Court, or banning order issued by the Employment Court.

Employers issued with penalties as a result of private actions taken by employees either through the Employment Relations Authority or the Employment Court are also included.

WHAT IF A BREACH IS MINOR

The threshold for non-compliance does not include employers at the very minor end of breaches, such as those who have entered into an enforceable undertaking with the Labour Inspectorate, have mostly adequate wage and time records and demonstrate a desire to comply. The intention is not to restrict access to migrant labour for minor and inadvertent breaches, and so the threshold is set at formal infringement notices and above.

HOW WILL THIS BE GIVEN EFFECT TO?

The Minister will make an addition to the existing immigration instructions.

A list of non-compliant employers will

be produced and maintained by the Labour Inspectorate and shared with Immigration New Zealand to ensure that employers on the list are not able to recruit migrant labour.

Employers who meet the threshold for non-compliance will be informed of their stand-down period preventing them from recruiting migrant labour, and when their non-compliant status will expire.

WHAT RIGHT OF REPLY WILL AN EMPLOYER HAVE WHO'S HAD A STAND-DOWN PERIOD IMPOSED?

There are various means currently available for employers to challenge all final enforcement action decisions. These range from:

- the right to request a hearing at the District Court for infringement notice
- challenging an Employment Relations Authority determination seeking a hearing at the District or Employment Court
- appealing a District or Employment Court decision.

If, as a result of an employer's challenge, the decision regarding their penalty is overturned, then the employer would again become eligible to recruit migrant labour.

HOW WILL THE LENGTH OF THE STAND-DOWNS BE DETERMINED?

The stand-down period will be proportionate to the seriousness of the breach, and therefore the penalty amount. There will be a fixed gradation aligned with the level of the penalty. For example, when a penalty is issued to a company:

- a 6 month stand-down will apply for a penalty up to and including \$1000
- a 12 month stand-down will apply for penalties over \$1000 but less than \$20,000
- an 18 month stand-down will apply for penalties of \$20,000 and over but less than \$50,000
- a 24 month stand-down will apply for penalties of \$50,000 and above.

HOW MANY EMPLOYERS WILL THIS AFFECT?

A precise figure is not available but the figures for those employers who incurred penalties over the past year give a rough indication of the potential number of employers who might meet the non-compliant threshold.

- 47 infringement notices (with 20 issued to employers of migrants) were issued by the Labour Inspectorate in the six months since infringement notices took effect in July last year.
- 72 penalties (with 25 of those issued to employers of migrants) were issued in 2015/16 financial year by the Employment Relations Authority for



cases filed by the Labour Inspectorate.

- 16 penalties were issued to employers of migrants by the Employment Relations Authority for cases taken independently of the Labour Inspectorate 2015/16 financial year.

WHAT TYPE OF EMPLOYERS WILL THIS AFFECT?

The new measures will apply to all employers intending to recruit migrant labour, including those employers who are: supporting work visa applications and approvals in principle; seeking accredited employer status or supporting residence class visa applications based on employment; and employers who are part of the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme.

HOW WILL THE PROPOSAL AFFECT BUSINESSES WHO RELY ON MIGRANT WORKERS?

The changes will not increase the powers of either labour inspectors or immigration officers. There will be no impact on compliant employers. There will, however, be an impact for some non-compliant employers who may consider the ability to recruit migrant workers as an entitlement rather than a privilege.

Improving the process for restricting access to migrant workers for non-compliant employers should also help to improve access for those employers

who are compliant, creating incentives for employers to ensure they are complying with all their employment obligations.

WHAT HAPPENS IF EMPLOYERS ARE FOUND TO BE NON-COMPLIANT AND ALREADY HAVE MIGRANT WORKERS IN THEIR EMPLOYMENT?

These employees will be able to work out the duration of their work visa, but will not be granted further work visas to work for the non-compliant employer.

WILL THERE BE FLEXIBILITY TO ALLOW FOR SITUATIONS WHERE LABOUR MARKET NEEDS CHANGE – SUCH AS A HIGH DEMAND FOR CERTAIN SKILLS AS A RESULT OF EARTHQUAKES, FOR EXAMPLE?

Yes. As is currently the case, there is flexibility for situations such as changing labour market needs following an earthquake or other significant event. In such situations, where an employer is deemed to be non-compliant but specific circumstances may warrant an exception, the Minister of Immigration (or a delegated decision maker) would be able to grant a visa as an exception to immigration instructions. This would mitigate the risk of restrictions being applied in circumstances that were patently unreasonable, manifestly disproportionate or not in the national interest.

WILL THERE BE ADDITIONAL COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING THIS?

Any costs associated with implementing this proposed change will be met from within current baselines.

WILL THIS ONLY AFFECT EMPLOYERS WHO ARE PENALISED THROUGH THE LABOUR INSPECTORATE?

No. Employers who are taken to the Employment Relations Authority or to the Employment Court independently of the Labour Inspectorate will also be subject to stand down periods.

WILL THIS NEW MEASURE ONLY PROTECT MIGRANT WORKERS – NOT LOCAL WORKERS?

Local workers are protected by the existing employment standards regulatory and penalty regime. The right to recruit migrant workers is an additional privilege for employers and so we are putting constraints on that to ensure that non-compliant employers can't have ready access to the international labour market as well. When the breach is particularly serious a banning order can be put on employers and this can prevent them from employing anyone (local or otherwise) for a period of up to 10 years.

New Zealand Construction sector still playing catch-up despite new highs

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

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

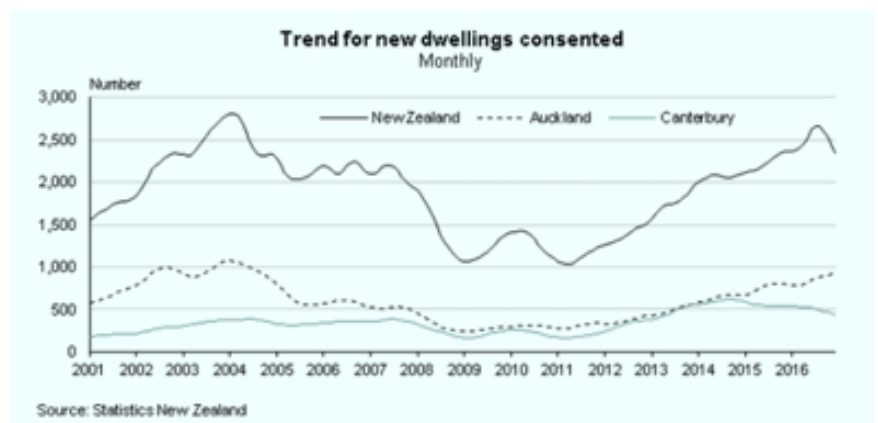
Almost all regions showed good growth particularly Manawatu/Whanganui (49%), Northland (43%), Hawke's Bay (32%), Nelson (34%) and Otago (29%). Auckland fell just short of the 10,000 mark with 9,930 consents which was a 7% increase on 2015. The only regions to have negative growth were Southland (-1%) and West Coast (-17%).

Building and Construction Industry

Training Organisation (BCITO) Chief Executive Warwick Quinn says he expects this upward trend to continue in 2017. Quinn says this rate of construction is at New Zealand's long-running normal rate of 6.5 builds per 1,000 people and a response to the record low rate of construction during the global financial crisis (GFC). In 2011 the build rate fell as low as 3.1 builds per 1,000. Quinn says the number of homes that weren't built during the GFC is double the number that

weren't built during all other recessions combined and New Zealand is still playing catch-up.

While the turnaround is welcomed, Quinn says 30,000 consents per annum is the new normal based on our population, but that level does not replace the shortfall developed during the GFC. He says New Zealand built about 45,000 fewer homes over the past 10 years compared to the previous ten, yet the population grew by about 480,000.



“It is no surprise to anyone that Auckland is the worst affected with about 4-5 years of backlog based on historical build rates. Other regions have significant backlogs as well including Bay of Plenty (3.7 years), Northland (2.7 years) and Tasman/Marlborough (2.5 years),” says Quinn.

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

“While 10,000 apprentices is a new milestone for us it is also our new normal and must be increased if we

are to successfully fill the skills gap in construction,” Quinn says.

“We tend to get a surge in apprentice numbers each year from about March and it will be interesting to see if that continues in 2017,” says Quinn. “Most of our growth comes from those firms that traditionally have apprentices, but in order to get the increase in apprentice numbers that we need, we also need to increase the number of employers who train. In order to do that we need to ensure training programmes align more closely with their business and meet employees expectations.”

BCITO has been working closely with the Tertiary Education Commission and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in order to progress this. At the end of 2016 BCITO got the go ahead to pilot an alternative skills model that is aimed at increasing the number of firms that train and attract more people into the trades. Quinn says there has never been a better time to get into construction with a strong forward work projection and great job security.



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Female workers an untapped resource

BCITO identifies education as key to overcoming challenges on both sides of the fence



While the proportion of women working in the construction sector has increased over the past ten years, data shows they are still heavily under-represented on building sites across New Zealand.

A PWC report, *Valuing the role of construction in the New Zealand economy*, stated that female employment in the core construction sector has grown at a faster rate than for males in the past decade, which has caused the ratio of male to female workers to fall from 6.3:1 in 2005 to 5.9:1 in 2015.

That growth has seen 5,887 female workers join the construction sector in the ten years to March 2015 – equivalent to a 45% increase.

Perhaps surprisingly, figures from the past two years show that mean hourly earnings in core construction for females are higher than for males and, in 2015, women earned an average of \$27.96 per hour compared to the industry median of \$22.75.

However, when translated to mean weekly earnings, males earned more than their female equivalents – indicating that men in construction work more hours than women, which could be attributed to more women working in part-time or support roles.

This is supported by data published by BCITO in its Workforce Development Plans, showing the number of female support staff working in trades far outweighs the number of trade-qualified females.

BCITO chief executive Warwick Quinn acknowledged that positive progress has been made, but said that women are still under-represented in construction.

“For trades under BCITO’s coverage, the number of female apprentices increased by 22% from the beginning of 2014 to the end of 2015, but the total percentage of female apprentices is a very small portion, at around 2%.”

“Attracting women into the trades is a real opportunity; at the moment, it is an untapped market. We do, however, have a couple of challenges in this space: firstly, to convince them that a career in construction is a genuine option,” said Mr Quinn.

“The second challenge is having an industry that is happy to employ women.

We have many firms that would love to, but we also still have a fair few that are less enthusiastic and for all the wrong reasons.

“We need to educate and change these attitudes. You just have to look at other employers, such as the NZ Police, which have made a concerted effort to attract more women and been very successful.”

FUTURE PLANNING

BCITO’s Workforce Development Plans are aimed at a number of trades, including carpentry, all of which were developed alongside extensive industry consultation.

Mr Quinn said that, based on the feedback they received, the next stage is to develop tactics for each sector that are relevant to the work currently being

undertaken, with key projects resulting from the workforce development plan including:

- Establishing a BCITO virtual schools academy for prospective apprentices.
- Creating and implementing a marketing plan for each sector to change perceptions.
- Investigating channels into industry and responding to barriers.
- Rolling out mentoring programmes for apprentices and employers.
- Celebrating and promoting industry success.
- Creating digital tools for employers, including a best practice toolkit and information hub.
- Raising the perceived value of qualified tradespeople.

“We also have a couple of specific strategies focused on the long-term work predictions and skill demands in the ‘Golden Triangle’ (Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga), as well as more flexible learning packages to better align with how businesses are structured,” he said.



Mark the Date!



AWCI 2017 Conference - Taupo

Thursday August 17th – Saturday August 19th

Venue: Great Lakes Event Centre

Accommodation and Gala Dinner: Manuels Millenium Hotel.

New format across the three days with great speakers and activities



Awards of Excellence:

Our Annual Awards of Excellence judging and national winner will take place at the Conference.

- This year we are having a larger programme with more entries
- Start thinking about the projects that would be suitable for entry now!

GIB Workskills Competition:

Our annual apprentice work-skills competition will also be held at the conference

- We want lots of apprentices attending and entering this competition - as they could go on to represent New Zealand at the Australasian competition in Australia
- We want employers to put forward apprentices for this competition to recognise their skills and your business for training them
- Start thinking about entering your apprentices now!



AWCI Annual Golf Day



The AWCI held our annual Christchurch Golf Day on March 3rd at McLeans Island Golf course.

A packed field enjoyed a beautiful hot Christchurch supported by numerous hole sponsors and **The Rock** radio station. The **AWCI** gratefully acknowledges it's supporters on the day especially **GIB** for all the drinks and the **BCITO** for the BBQ lunch.





Winner of Fit Bit Fitness watch for Straightest Drive, sponsored by USG Boral: **Iain Irong**



Winner of Hilti drill for Longest Drive on Hole 1, sponsored by Hilti: **Tim Evett**



Winner of Panasonic TV for Nearest the Pin sponsored by Potters Interiors: **Martin Tier**

Winner of Makita Radio for Longest Drive, sponsored by Wallboard and Insulation supplies: **Cam Fyfe**

Winner of electronic sander for Most Golf, sponsored by NZ Ceiling & Drywall Services: **Forman Commercial Interiors B**

Winner of GIB prize packs for Runners-UP in Trophy competition, sponsored by GIB: **KMC Plastering**

Winner of prize table selection for Nearest the Pin on Hole 11, sponsored by Drywall Direct: **Chris Fifield**

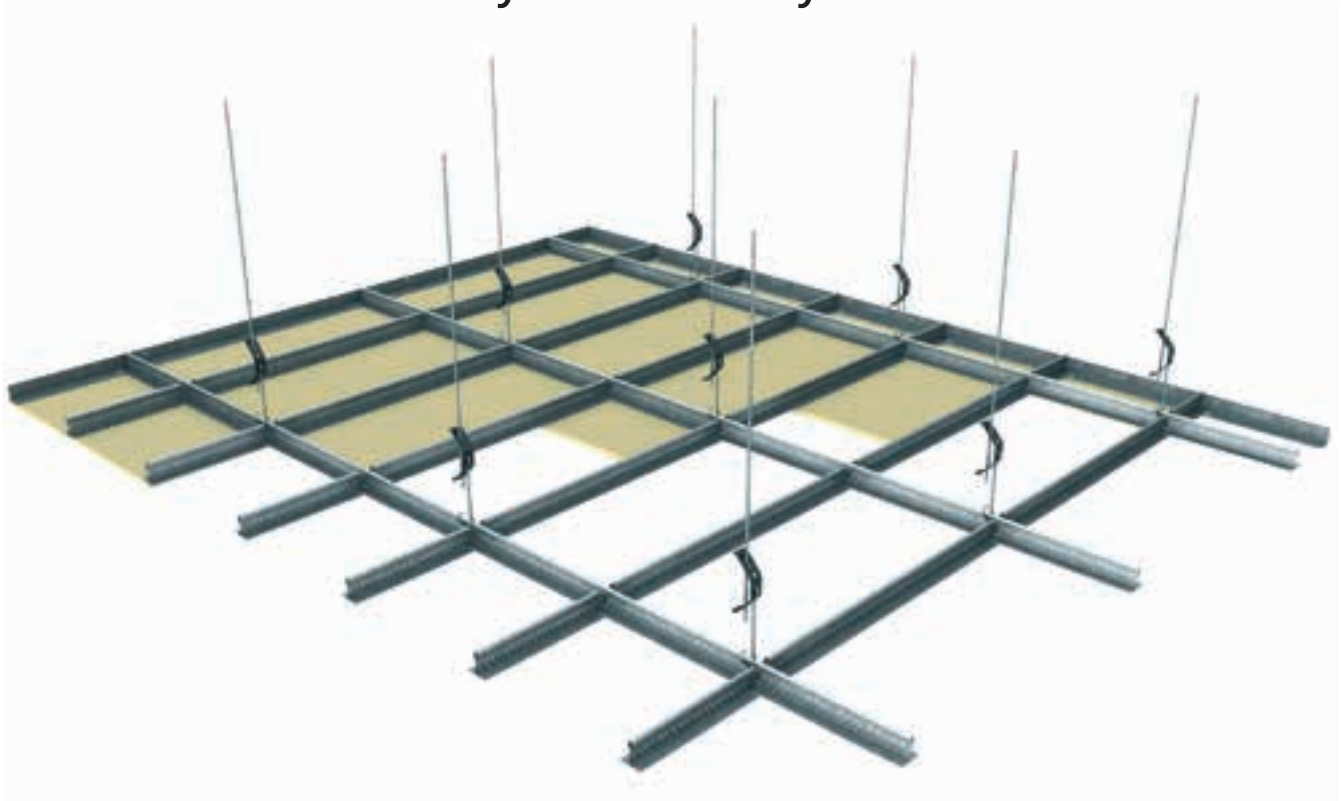


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Certified Builders introduces mandatory building guarantees

Certified Builders Association of New Zealand has gone one step further than recent law changes that enhanced consumer protections for building work, by introducing mandatory building guarantees. This move comes in advance of a decision by the Government about whether regulations on mandatory building guarantees are needed.

Certified Builders Chief Executive, Grant Florence, says, “Certified Builders isn’t waiting for the outcome of the Government’s review of this issue as part of the wider liability framework, because we believe mandatory building guarantees are in the best interests of both consumers and our members. The reality is the expectations of homeowners have changed significantly over the past few years and there is a need to drive greater accountability within the building industry.

“As a trade association, Certified Builders is focused on promoting best practice and setting a high standard of professionalism within the industry. We’ve moved to introduce mandatory guarantees because it’s the right thing to do, and because it will provide maximum peace of mind for homeowners and our

member builders,” said Mr Florence.

The Building Act reforms that came into effect in January 2015 included a requirement for there to be a written contract for residential building work over \$30,000, as well as requirements around disclosure of guarantee products and warranties for defective work, but stopped short of introducing mandatory building guarantees.

“Under the current system, consumers may not fully understand the guarantee product they are purchasing or may even engage a builder without a guarantee, resulting in loss of cover.

“Given New Zealanders’ homes are often our single biggest investment, it is important that we provide security for homeowners so that if work is not completed to the highest standard, they can be confident that it will be remedied,” said Mr Florence.

Exclusive to Certified Builders, the InBuild 10 year Residential Guarantee Insurance scheme is the widest home guarantee insurance cover currently available in New Zealand. It is underwritten by Lloyd’s of London and carries an “A+” rating from Standard and Poor’s. The scheme will apply

to every new home build or home building alteration over \$30,000 that is undertaken by a Certified Builder, and provides greater protection than other guarantee schemes. For example, cover extends to not only fixing any defects but also the damage caused by the defect.

The new scheme replaces Certified Builders’ former industry-leading voluntary guarantee scheme. Like the previous scheme, the InBuild 10 year Residential Guarantee Insurance scheme is run by an independent insurer, which ensures there is no potential conflict of interest in the management of guarantee claims as could be the case with an in-house scheme.

“While Certified Builders has already moved to introduce mandatory guarantees, we welcome the Government’s continued consideration of regulation of building guarantees.

“Mandatory guarantees should be standard practice for major building and renovation work as this would provide greater security for homeowners. When consumers have confidence in builders it’s good for the industry as whole,” said Mr Florence.

Construction update

	Latest	Dec 2017	Dec 2018
Gross domestic product ⁽¹⁾	3.0%	2.7%	3.1%
Residential consents ⁽¹⁾	10.5%	7.0%	19.2%
Non-residential consents ⁽¹⁾	1.7%	8.1%	4.6%
House prices ⁽²⁾	13.5%	5.8%	-4.6%
Unemployment rate ⁽³⁾	5.2%	4.7%	4.6%
Net migration ⁽⁴⁾	70,588	69,703	60,067

(1) Year-end % change (2) Annual % change
 (3) Quarterly level, seasonally adjusted (4) Annual total
 Data source: Statistics NZ, Infometrics forecasts

THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

Economic growth accelerated to 3.0% pa in the September 2016 quarter and is likely to push up to around 3.5% pa by March 2017.

Stronger growth in household spending was a key component of the economy's performance, with the 5.5% increase in private consumption between September 2015 and September 2016 the fastest growth in 11 years. This willingness to spend comes on the back of increasing tightness across the labour market, with capacity pressures spreading beyond the construction and tourism sectors. In this environment, attracting and retaining staff will become more difficult for businesses, and we expect wage inflation to pick

up during 2017 and 2018. There are also early signs of some re-emergence of broader inflationary pressures, both domestically and internationally. No further reductions in the official cash rate are expected, but we anticipate it will be mid-2018 before the Reserve Bank starts to tighten monetary settings.

THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

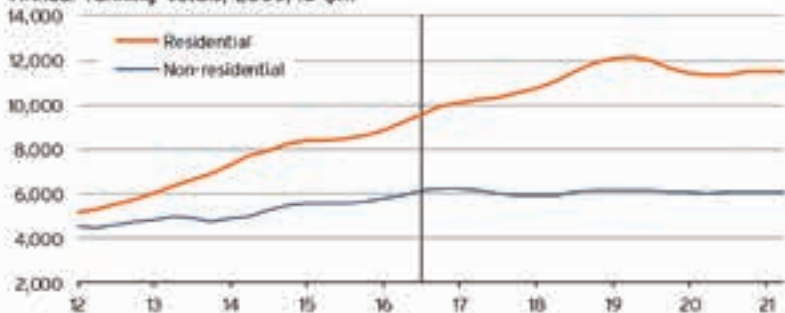
Both residential and non-residential consents recorded a soft finish to 2016. Residential consent numbers in December were down 13% from December 2016, the biggest annual decline in over five years. A 22% decline in consents for Auckland was particularly disappointing, while Waikato and Canterbury also recorded significant falls.

The drop-off in Auckland is reflective of the slowdown in the region's housing market in the wake of the latest loan-to-value restrictions announced by the Reserve Bank in July last year, with sales activity and house price inflation both softening in subsequent months. However, the latest house price data shows a renewed rally in house price growth, particularly outside Auckland, suggesting the effects of the LVR changes will once again be short lived.

Another factor undermining residential construction activity in Auckland is capacity pressures and rapid building cost inflation. These pressures are also spreading beyond the residential sector, increasing the lag between non-residential developments being consented and completed, and discouraging developers from pushing ahead with new projects. Nationwide year-end growth in non-residential consents for 2016 was just 1.7%.

We expect persistently strong net migration and the ongoing undersupply of housing in Auckland to drive further growth of 27% in residential work put in place by June 2019. However, these increases will be harder to achieve than

Building work put in place
Annual running totals, 2009/10 \$m



in previous years, and we see a risk that capacity constraints in the industry will limit the extent of future growth.

Special topic: Migration's rule changes and its role in the construction industry

Prior to 2013, the record net migration inflow of construction-related workers during any 12-month period was 969 people in 1995/96 (our data goes back to 1992). But with a massive lift in labour requirements due to rebuilding work after the Canterbury earthquake, annual net migration of construction-related workers surged from -1,068 in January 2012 to +2,390 by November 2014.

With building activity continuing to expand over the last couple of years, particularly in Auckland, the net inflow of construction-related workers lifted to a new record high of 2,672 by the end of 2016.

The announcement by the government in October last year that it was tightening residency requirements raised questions about the outlook for migration flows, especially in view of the strong labour market and skills shortages being experienced in growth areas such as construction. Our initial

instinct was that the rule changes would lead to a decline in net migration this year, although there might be a compositional shift with fewer people arriving on residency visas and more coming here on temporary work visas. Having delved into the numbers more closely, we have actually revised our net migration forecasts substantially upwards compared with our 2016 predictions.

Arrivals on residency visas made up only 13% of inward migration in 2016. Resident approvals since the rule changes have dropped dramatically, particularly for the parent and family-related categories. So far, the increase in points requirements appears to have had a limited effect on the number of skilled migrants being approved, which had already declined slightly from its peak prior to the rule change. This last subcategory is probably the most important of the residency visas in terms of the labour supply.

In 2016, the number of people arriving on work visas was up 10% from a year earlier and has more than doubled since 2011. Although it is too early to see whether there has been a lift in work visa applications in response to

the tighter residency requirements, if the number of people arriving on work visas increases at the same pace as it has over the past year, we can anticipate an additional 8,000 people arriving on work visas within the next two years. This increase would more than offset the targeted decline in residency visa approvals.

The push towards work visas ensures that migrants will still come here when work is available, but also reduces the risk of having too much spare capacity in the labour market during a slowdown in the economy. Immigration NZ has flexibility to force temporary workers to leave again if they are not meeting their visa requirements (eg no longer working at the stated place of employment). Obviously there is no such flexibility to send away people who have previously been granted residency.

For the construction industry, the news that the tap of potential foreign-sourced workers is not being turned off will be welcome. The industry experienced intense capacity pressures during 2016, with both skilled and unskilled workers reportedly extremely tough to find. Tightness in the labour market is spreading beyond the construction

Construction update

and tourism- related service sectors, the difficulty of attracting and retaining staff looks set to persist for at least the next 2-3 years.

With the volume of total construction work forecast to increase another 9.3%

over the two years to March 2019, demand for workers within the industry will remain strong. Foreign workers arriving on temporary work visas provide an important temporary solution while the industry moves to boost the

supply of skilled workers domestically. However, overreliance on foreign workers also risks masking longer-term workforce development issues in the sector, such as an aging workforce and the need to upskill young workers.

Arrivals soar in response to demand for labour
Construction-related workers, annual international migration flows



construction update



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Staying on top of the job: managing fatigue

If you've got lots of jobs on the go, it can be tempting to push through and extend your working day. But ignoring the signs of fatigue in yourself and your workers can be a real hazard.

What is fatigue?

Fatigue is more than feeling drowsy. At work, fatigue is a state of exhaustion which can be both mental and physical. Fatigue reduces a person's ability to do their job safely, and decreases performance and productivity.

Fatigue is often caused by a number of combined factors, including:

- the demands of work
- work scheduling and planning
- environmental conditions
- dehydration: symptoms of which include cracked lips, flushed face, dizziness, cramps or headaches
- drugs/alcohol/medication
- the type of work activity: such as a noisy environment or using vibrating tools
- poor diet, a lack of exercise, disrupted sleep

- poor emotional wellbeing or stress

Identifying fatigue as a risk

To figure out if fatigue could be a hazard at your work, it's vital to recognise mood, alertness, sleepiness, task performance and focus.

To assess the fatigue risk, ask yourself and record.

Who is likely to be at risk of fatigue and where?

- How often is fatigue likely to occur?
- What degree of harm could it cause?
- Are any existing control measures effective?
- What action should be taken to control and monitor the risk of fatigue in yourself and others?
- How urgently is the control needed?

Signs someone may be fatigued

Mood	irritable, uncommunicative, frustrated, disengaged, late for work or doesn't show up
Alertness	slurs speech, rubs eyes, yawning, appears tired
Performance	cuts corners, takes risks, clumsy, forgetful, makes mistakes, poor decision making and judgement
Focus	loses the big picture, misses warning signs, has a fixed gaze, blurry vision, lack of focus

Preventing fatigue

Work scheduling and planning:

- Take regular breaks and consider extra breaks if the work is demanding.
- If you need to work longer hours, consider staggered start and finish times, and longer breaks and periods off work.
- Think about how you schedule your work - a person's ability to be alert is not constant throughout the day. For most people, low points occur between 3.00am and 5.00am, and between 3.00pm and 5.00pm. During these times, try to avoid doing tricky or dangerous jobs.
- Monitor and place limits around overtime. Avoid incentives to work too many hours. If night work is required, limit the number of night shifts in a row

that your employees can work. Also place limits around shift swapping and on-call duties - regular sleeping patterns help prevent fatigue.

- Try to create a positive environment with good relationships.

Mental and physical demands of work:

- Use the right tools and resources for the job.
- Use low-vibration hand-held tools and where practical install low-vibration seats in machinery.
- Rotate tasks between workers.
- Stay hydrated and avoid drinks with caffeine.

- Make sure workloads and deadlines are realistic.

Environmental conditions:

- Avoid working during extreme heat or cold.
- Provide shelter and facilities for breaks.

How much sleep do I need?

You should aim for between 7.5 to 8.5 hours a night. But to work out your optimal sleep time, try the following on your next holiday:

- Put your alarm clock away and wake up naturally for at least two days to overcome cumulative sleep loss.
- Then for the next three or four days,



write down how many hours you sleep.

- Divide the total number of hours you have slept by the number of days – this is how much sleep you need to maintain optimal alertness, performance and wellbeing.

Get the whole team on board

Develop a fatigue policy which includes details on the maximum shift length, average weekly hours, and travel time. Make sure everyone is aware of the policy, how to recognise fatigue and how to report risks and incidents.

For more information, check out the fatigue guide on the Site Safe website

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Face to Face: Cecilia Padilla



No stranger to our readership—and those that have followed the *On Center Solutions* column for the past several years, *On Center Software's Cecilia Padilla has retired. A true industry pioneer and ambassador for new technologies, she leaves the company in good hands with her successor Angelo Castelli. Here, she speaks to the magazine just following retirement.*

W&C: *The news seems pretty sudden. Why are you leaving?*

CP: It was only recently announced, but my plans to retire have been in the works for quite some time. Last year, my husband Art retired from his career as an oil and gas engineer, and it's always been our plan to retire together. Succession planning can be complicated, so early this year I began coordinating my retirement with Angelo Castelli, our chief operating officer and Chris Buzz, our vice president of finance and services.

W&C: *Are you retiring properly or just moving on?*

CP: Yes! I'm definitely retiring. I've had two amazing careers. First 26 years in the wall and ceiling industry and then nine years at On Center. Art and I are looking forward to traveling and generally enjoying life.

W&C: *Let's go back and start with some*

basics: Where are you from? How did you get involved in the trades?

CP: Wow! That's a very long time ago! I actually followed in my father's footsteps. When I was 3-years-old, my parents immigrated to the United States from Argentina. My father began his life in America working as a residential drywall hanger in Southern California. He eventually moved to the commercial trades, and for a time, was a foreman at The Raymond Group. It was because of his reputation as a hard and loyal worker that I was hired as a junior estimator at Raymond almost 20 years later. Our roots in the wall and ceiling industry run very deep. The industry has been supporting our family for over 50 years.

W&C: *Eventually, what led you to On Center Software?*

CP: In 1994, my husband took a transfer to Houston, which involved my leaving Raymond to find a new home. Fortunately, I found a great one at Marek Brothers Systems. On my first day at Marek I was introduced to Quick Bid and it changed my life. During the 14 years I worked for Marek, I met and collaborated with Leonard Buzz, the founder and CEO of On Center. He tried to hire me several times, but it wasn't until 2008 that he made me an offer I couldn't refuse. He was planning to retire and asked me to come onboard as his successor. It was an amazing

opportunity and one that I couldn't turn down.

W&C: *Have you always been interested in software/technology?*

CP: I've always been interested in finding an easier way. I've joked that I'm a fundamentally lazy person and hate doing boring work. So yes, software and technology were the best way to achieve that goal. I've found so many ways over the years of improving the quality and quantity of my work by using software and technology. Fortunately for me, my employers encouraged that vision and allowed me to implement many technologies over the years.

A Look to the Past

W&C: *What was OCS like when you started with the company?*

CP: We were very typical of a founder lead software business. OCS had grown very quickly and had a very loyal following. We have always been customer focused, but that growth was starting to stretch us pretty thin. We needed a growth plan that would allow us to scale and the internal discipline to achieve that successfully.

W&C: *Given you came from a background in contracting and were familiar with the wall and ceiling industry, can you tell us what type of tailoring/customization you advised on OCS' software?*

CP: That's a huge list! As a customer,

I would submit feature requests to Leonard all the time. Whenever I was using On-Screen Takeoff, Quick Bid or Digital Production Control and I reached a block or a stumbling point, I would just zip off a feature request right then and there. Most of those ideas made it into the product and others didn't. But, I have always known that OCS has the customer's best interests at heart and we genuinely listen and try to help.

W&C: *What are some periods where you felt the technology made giant steps?*

CP: Well obviously the invention of Quick Bid in 1988 changed everything for the industry. Prior to that, every wall and ceiling contractor used their own manual or spreadsheet methods for estimating and project management. The fact that the entire wall and ceiling industry came together around Quick Bid as the industry standard was significant.

Our invention of On-Screen Takeoff in 1994 was another huge leap. We were way ahead of the construction industry as a whole. It wasn't until architects and general contractors began to release electronic files that OST was able to change the way the entire industry worked.

W&C: *How much farther do you think software companies can take the technology for the end user?*

CP: The innovation will never end. In 1985 my husband and I bought a 10 MB hard drive for our IBM PC. We were certain that 10 MB would be all the hard drive space we would ever need. Now our phones have 64 GB of storage. When you look at the technology you're using today, you believe that is all you'll ever need. But it's our job to see beyond that and prepare for the future. It's also our job to make that future technology better, faster and something a contractor really needs to run their business. We don't build Angry Birds or Candy Crush, we build serious business applications that are easy to use and will make a

difference in a contractor's life.

W&C: *What are you most proud of during your period with OCS?*

CP: There are two decisions actually. When the recession started in 2008 no one really knew how long it would last. We did know that as long as our customers didn't have backlog or decent margins it was going to affect our business too. But innovation couldn't wait for the recession to be over, so we made the decision that regardless of sales, we would continue to innovate and doubled the size of our software engineering department during those years.

And second, it was a personal goal of mine that we would get through the recession without ever laying off any of our staff. They are a great, well trained group and understand our culture of always taking care of the customer. I didn't want to lose their knowledge and passion and have to start over later.

Saying Goodbye

W&C: In what condition are you leaving the company?

CP: I'm happy to say that OCS has never been in better shape. We have a best of class management team, led by Angelo Castelli, and a professional, highly competent and very dedicated staff. We have now grown to about 100 employees and are hitting on all cylinders. As you know, Leonard Buzz retired in 2013 and On Center is now a subsidiary of Roper Technologies. We have a permanent home with a great parent company.

W&C: *How was Angelo Castelli selected?*

CP: Angelo is by far the most qualified choice as the next leader for On Center. He has been with On Center for almost 14 years, and worked in the wall and ceiling industry for a decade before that. He is smart, hardworking and has always been passionate about what we do. We believe that one of the reasons On Center has grown into such a successful business

is that our leadership; Leonard, me and now Angelo come from within the industry. We have walked in the shoes of the estimator, project manager, chief estimator, branch manager and owner. We know firsthand their problems and pains and have a passion for making their lives better. On Center's future couldn't be in better hands.

W&C: *What beach are you retiring to? It'd be a shame not to have something indulgent post-career.*

CP: It's probably cliché, but we truly are moving to the beach! Art and I have been planning our retirement for a very long time. We have recently moved from Houston to Destin, Fla. where we will be spending most of the off season, and also have a summer home in Canmore, Alberta (outside of Banff). They are two very different and beautiful places and we are extremely excited about starting this next phase of our lives together.

W&C: *Finally, what final words/advice would you like to leave to the wall and ceiling community?*

CP: First, I want to say thank you to all of the friends, mentors, colleagues and customers that I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with over the last 35 years. There is no way I could have foreseen what an amazing career I would enjoy in the wall and ceiling industry. I wish you all much health, happiness and success in all that you do.

As for advice: I've learned that contractors hate change. And when it comes to embracing technology the construction industry lags behind almost everyone else. My advice would be to lead and embrace technology rather than run from it. It's like water levels and lasers. They both work, but one makes your life so much easier than the other. Make sure you have not only the best tools, but the best training. Strive to become an expert at the software you own. It will make your life and your business better, and you'll never regret it.

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Responsibility for hard hats, parties and redundancy

Common questions on employers' minds, as told to employment advisors at the Employers and Manufacturers Association Northern Inc (EMA)

Q *Can I make my staff pay for the increased costs of health and safety, like charge them for hard hats and vests that they constantly damage or lose due to carelessness?*

- Kev

Dear Kev

No you can't, I'm afraid.

The stark truth of the matter is that you could be fined up to \$25,000 for charging an employee for protective equipment in relation to doing their job or if you require them to as a pre-condition of employment or through a term in the employment agreement.

But employees should be expected to look after and use the appropriate personal protective equipment provided.

On a similar vein, it's unlawful for you to have insurance (to pay) to protect you or your liability if there's an accident at your workplace or in connection with your workers and the accident is due to breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act.

"...you could be fined up to \$25,000 for charging an employee for protective equipment in relation to doing their job..."

Q *I'm making someone redundant. But I do need most of that Role to be continued. Can I replace the person immediately? - Vince*

Dear Vince

I'll start by correcting your language and thinking: you can't make someone redundant; only a position.

However, you might want to reconsider disestablishing that position if most of the role is still needed. It might be easier to performance manage the employee.

if you are not satisfied with the employee's level of performance as opposed to making the position redundant, and this could include more training to get them up to speed.

If you are disestablishing the position

you would have to recreate a new role with additional components to the current role. If that role is similar to the previous role the employee whose position was disestablished should be given the role because they have the skills and experiences for it. There is a risk in recreating a new role that is substantially similar to the role that was disestablished, as it can appear as though the employer did not have a genuine business reason to make someone's position redundant.

The difference in a new role might be as much as a different level of responsibility, reporting to a different manager, adding and/or removing any task, requiring a different qualification or skill set to a new focus in the new role.

When recruiting for a new role also take note of the Human Rights Act and Fair Trading Act, the Privacy Act and if relevant, the Immigration Act.

Q *The Christmas Party went horribly wrong last year, so how can we ensure we get our functions, even our drinkies, right this year?*

- Amy

Responsibility for hard hats, parties and redundancy

Dear Amy

So, without intending to put a dampener on a function before it starts, it is worth reminding employees about your expectations around behaviour, about social drinking and the importance of ensuring everyone gets home safely after having an enjoyable time.

“It is well established in employment law that some conduct that occurs outside the workplace may lead to disciplinary action. The appropriate response to an issue of misconduct will obviously depend on the particular circumstances.”

This is important even if the event is held off-site at another venue.

We recommend you inform employees of drink-driving laws and put steps in place to ensure the health and safety of employees during and after functions. This could include you doing the following:

- Providing information about safe drinking,
- Identifying excessive drinking and

stopping the supply of alcohol if necessary,

- Providing food and non-alcoholic drink alternatives,
- Encouraging people to arrange transport home or provide transport/taxi cabs, and/or
- Taking particular care of young people.

You should also be aware that it is unlawful to supply alcohol to persons under 18 years old without express consent from their parents, and any alcohol must be supplied in a responsible manner.

We recommend you also review existing policies around the use of company vehicles. You can state what the legal limits are and/or reiterate the company's rules around alcohol consumption and company vehicles.

Also remember that you must pay people their usual pay if the party is held at a time when they would otherwise be working. If the party is after hours, eg, at night, and the business only operates in the day time, you do not have to pay them to attend the event. But the safety and responsibility rules still apply!

It is well established in employment law that some conduct that occurs outside the workplace may lead to disciplinary action. The appropriate response to an issue of misconduct will obviously depend on the particular circumstances.

Consider how you would respond to the following complaints about behaviour at a staff function held at an off-site venue:

- An employee verbally abuses staff at the function venue;
- An employee assaults a colleague after a heated discussion between them;
- An employee who has been drinking tells a joke which visibly shocks a few staff but is laughed off by others.

Your response could range from a quiet word with the employee about their particular behaviour, to formal disciplinary action including dismissal in the most serious case.

However, in order to justify taking formal action there would need to be a link to the workplace, eg, an impact on your business and your obligations to other employees.

It is important to consider why any alleged behaviour is an issue, taking into account the relevant circumstances. As usual the onus is on you as the employer to justify any action you take.

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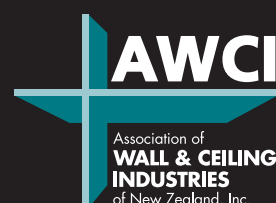
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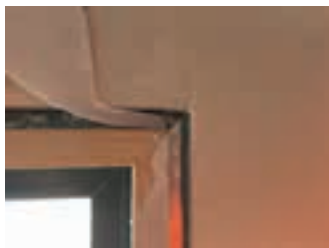


Tip for Tradies

Cleaning out shadowline by cutting out a section of sponge sanding block, works perfect



For tidying up some bits in shadowline, get a cheap plastic knife and cut to size



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4 Steps to happiness in Business

By Gerald Delany – Advantage Business Ltd

1. Look at the big picture! Prepare for your next life!

Failing to start with the end in mind is the most common error in business – how and when will you get out?

A clear vision of the exit pathway helps shape the business model, gets the processes documented, guides your staff selection, and ensures the company identity is separate from your identity – it's much harder to sell a business that is your name – Fred's Plumbing is YOU! And you certainly don't want to have to change the name before the sale and lose the goodwill you've built up over years.



Starting with the end in mind makes sure you delegate, groom your second line of management, and build an “automated business” that can run without you. You have identified the next products and services to develop, and you will have an outline plan for how that will happen.

In short – starting with the end in mind gives you the best possible capital return, and along the way improves profitability and ease of management, making YOU much happier!

2. Good managers set good boundaries!

A great number of New Zealand SME

owners and managers have come off the tools and into business ownership without stopping to change hats from employee to employer!

Learning to set clear boundaries with staff is essential – be consistent, clear, and fair.

Don't play “favourites and scapegoats” no matter how tempting it is. Don't gripe about any staff member to other employees. Be clear in your expectations of high performance and use a simple but robust performance appraisal system regularly - and follow up!

Lead by example – if your staff see you making free and easy with the company's stock and assets, they will too!

Good boundaries make for happy, productive workplaces! Don't trespass over those boundaries and don't let your staff trespass either, and your happiness will increase!



3. Employ in Haste, Repent at Leisure

There seems to be a death-wish amongst SME owners – they will persist in hiring the wrong people!

Why is this? Mainly because recruiting staff is hard work, and not what most business owners are good at – but recruitment companies are often seen

by owners as too expensive or not reliable enough. Be systematic, and don't be afraid to ask for help from your business advisor. Take the time to do it right, and never, ever, employ second best. You'll be a lot happier in the long run!

4. Manage your cash and your cash will look after you

Review your pricing regularly, analyse your costs line by line, reduce wasted time, resources and rework, add automation where appropriate, implement simple Lean practices and the cash will mount up. Don't waste it! Aiming at a cash reserve of 10% of turnover gives a safety net in the event of disasters or downturns. Review Profit and Loss statements monthly, and take immediate action if negative trends are visible. Get your accounts people to put the information into charts and graphs to show the trends. You'll sleep easier at night!

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Gerald Delany, Business Advisor at Advantage Business on 027 298 0629 or gdelany@advantagebusiness.co.nz

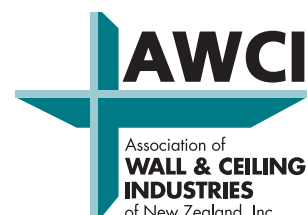


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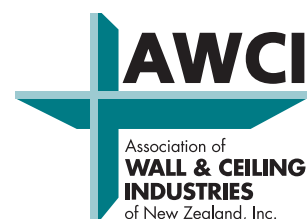


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HBS Interior Linings	AUCKLAND	(09) 216 8693	Wallboard Systems	TAURANGA	(07) 544 3721
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Hylton Plasterers Ltd	TAURANGA	(07) 576 4754			



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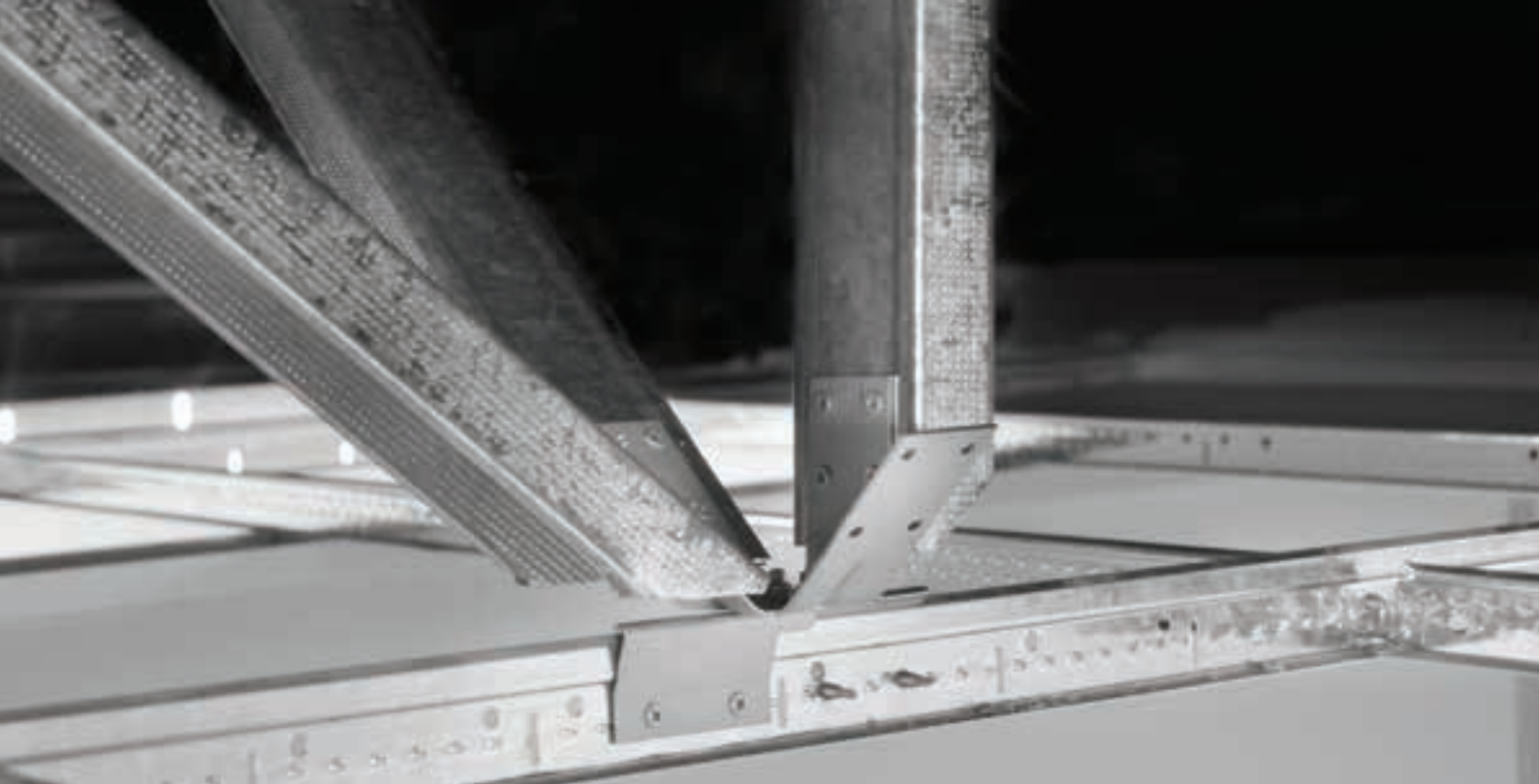
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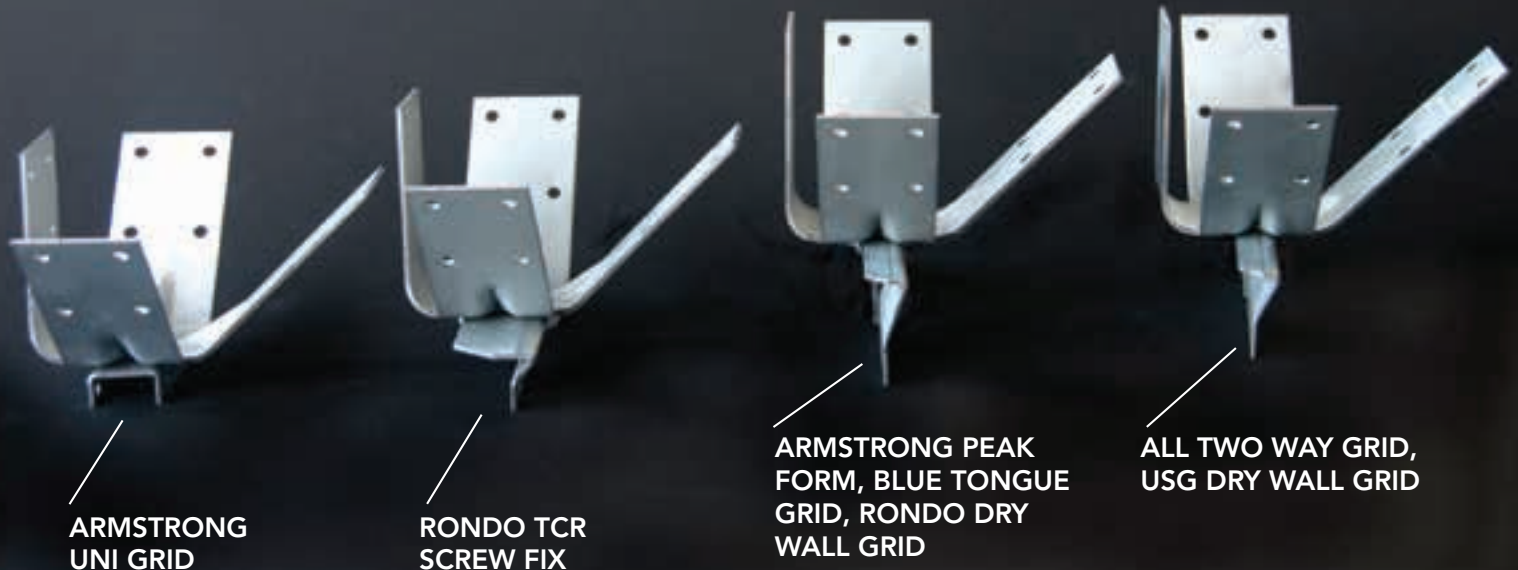
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CeilingsJohn Keen.....021 963 033.....john.keen@usgboral.com
Fibrous Plaster.....Terry McKain.....09 634 8800.....tmckain@xtra.co.nz
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