

CONCRETE IQ

Concrete IQ is the official newsletter of Master Concreters Australia

ISSUE 1, 2017



2017 MCA EXCELLENCE IN INDUSTRY AWARDS



MCA is pleased to announce the 2017 Excellence in Industry Awards will be held at the Pullman Brisbane Hotel King George Square on Saturday 3 June 2017.

Projects completed by MCA Contractor members will be showcased as they vie for the various category awards and the Supreme Awards. The Awards will once again showcase the high standards and professional work of our contractor members. We look forward to joining with our members and guests at this major industry event and to acknowledge the contribution we all make to the construction industry.



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MCA HOTLINE

Our highly experienced members can provide advice on various issues affecting concrete contractors through our MCA Hotline.

Members may contact our Hotline representatives or if it is more convenient, call the office on 1300 884 544 and they will start the ball rolling.

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VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I'm very pleased to deliver the first report for 2017 to our valued members as your Vice President. The focus of MCA into 2017 is to support our concrete contractors and provide additional services while advancing key initiatives to improve the safety, viability and professionalism of our industry.

MCA, as a united team, have achieved a number of important results in 2016 for our members, associates, sponsors and future members. On behalf of the board of directors of MCA we thank you for your support in 2016 and we look forward to a bigger and better 2017 in our growing industry.

As mentioned our industry is growing and industry reporting is reflecting strong construction activity.

The next five years in the NSW market will feature the biggest construction boom in Sydney's history, according to forecasts released by the NSW State Government. It is predicted that there will be record growth in new houses, warehouses, and high-rise commercial and residential apartments throughout the City of Sydney Region out to 2021. Initial figures suggest 85 per cent more development than has been seen in the previous five years. The forecasts prediction from the Department of Planning and the Environment is that the population of Sydney would grow by 2.1 million people in the next two decades, so its busy times for the concrete sector for many years to come.

The Queensland construction market has been buoyant for around two years, the past year saw the construction market in Queensland pick up, so much so it is predicted that it was one of the busiest years since 2007 with predictions that 2017 is only going to be better. Having spoken with several large developers and builders in QLD over the past months, the general consensus is that the concrete sector will see an increase compared to the past two years, but companies will need to diversify their project pipeline in order to capture future growth.

I mentioned earlier some key outcomes were achieved for the Association in 2016 and will continue into 2017. These include:

- A strong voice at the ministerial level in the QLD and NSW Governments on our

requirement to establish a concreting apprenticeship that will replace the existing traineeship. This is in line with our strategy "apprenticeships to secure a future for the next generation".

- The QLD Annual golf day continues to be a great success in bringing the industry together. In late 2016 we held the inaugural NSW golf day. It was fantastic event with well over 120 members and sponsors joining us to support the MCA and promote our brand into the NSW market.
- A strategic alliance with Australia's premium online training provider is just being finalised and will be launched to our members shortly.
- Affiliations with other associations were formed in 2016 to assist our exposure to the professional community (Concrete institute of Australia).
- We have started the ground work to revamp the MCA website to further assist and support members
- Increased sponsorship support for the association (to develop further services for our members).
- Monthly industry updates to keep our members on the front foot with changes to our industry. Members would have seen an increase in 2016 and we welcome feedback on items our members would like to see in 2017.

As Vice President I can assure members that MCA will continue to press forward with a dedicated CEO and board who will work with external consultants and advisors to address the problems we face on site and to improve our industry.

I would like to conclude by thanking our current sponsors. We are a not-for profit organisation and a lot of work behind the scenes occurs with their support. This support helps to build a strong association and enables MCA to bring benefits to all our members now and into the future.

As many would be aware we are already on the countdown to the 2017 Excellence in Industry Awards being held on 3rd June 2017. Tickets can be purchased through the Association. Book a table now!

I look forward to seeing you all there. Let's unite and make 2017 A GREAT YEAR.



CEO'S REPORT

Welcome to the first edition of the Association's newsletter. It has been another fast start to the year and members are reporting strong activity in the sector, which is still highly competitive when tendering for work.

In this report I would like to focus on our soon to be rolled out partnership with our preferred National Registered Training Organisation. We are confident that they will provide quality training, which will be reviewed and endorsed by your industry peak body.

The training is a mixture of practical onsite work and online study that enables your staff to undertake their training during down time and when they are not on site.

Many tradesmen (and employers) in our industry have been burnt by the likes of Face to Face Training who issued certificates without doing any assessment, which left workers with a certificate that provides no credible record of an individual's skills. There are still a number of training providers out there providing training and assessment that is less than rigorous and is more akin to a tick and flick system. It would be remiss of me to say all providers are in this boat, however, we are confident that our preferred training partner will provide the best possible formal training and skills assessment for our members.

Members should be aware that training grants and subsidies are available and vary by State. Some governments provide funding for formal training (Apprenticeships and Traineeships) and skills assessments for experience workers (referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning or Skills Assessment and Gap Training). Some States only provide funding for formal training in addition to the

Federal Grants. As with any activity that draws funding from the public purse there are conditions that need to be met.

Currently all employers who meet the necessary conditions can receive up to \$4000 from the Federal Government in the form of a sign up payment (paid in part after 6 months) and a completion payment. The period in which a new trainee or apprentice must be signed into a training agreement, after commencing employment, is now 28 days in NSW and 14 days in QLD. However, there are further options available for existing workers to ensure neither you nor your staff miss out in being upskilled and achieve the required qualification.

In essence the registering of a training contract triggers the Federal Government grant. For our NSW members there is an additional State funding incentive of \$2000 payable after 12 months. Funding is also available to complete the Recognition of Prior Learning process in Queensland (for experienced workers). The Government has mandated that there must be a contribution paid by the individual and members going through the Association will only be required to pay \$50.00

The Association and our training provider are committed to working with members to support them throughout the whole process. this can be daunting even for companies that have put on trainees and apprentices before. If you have any questions or are unsure on what route to take contact the office and we will step you through the process.

On a final note, members would be aware that our facebook page is live. We are receiving plenty of visits to our page. Please join us in spreading the word by liking us on facebook.



CEO'S REPORT

SUSTAINING MEMBERS



MCA NOW ON FACEBOOK



Like us and go in the March draw to win a \$50 Bunnings voucher. Simply search 'Master Concreters Australia.'

GET A BIG SAVING ON YOUR NEXT CAR OR WORK TRUCK PURCHASE

MCA has partnered with AutoTender to give you FREE access to their vehicle tendering system!

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU?

It means the next time you're looking for prices on a new car or work truck, you can post your request to AutoTender.com.au and use their network of reputable dealers to get you the best deals around. Forget the stress and bother of going to dealership after dealership, or spending hours looking through websites.

Login to the members only section of the MCA website and click on the autotrader link to get your tender rolling.

FREE FOR BEING AN MCA MEMBER

Normally we charge a fee of \$49 to put a request up on AutoTender, however because you're a member of MCA, you can place requests for FREE.

A GREAT WAY TO BUY A CAR

Instead of hunting around from dealership to dealership, trawling through pages and pages on confusing websites, AutoTender gives you one simple way to make the dealers do the work for you.

SAVE MORE ON YOUR VEHICLE DEAL

AutoTender pits the dealers against each other, so you know you're getting the best deals around - no hard sales tactics, no stress. Just the best deal at the best price possible.

FULLY LICENSED FINANCIAL SERVICES

Through our partnership with UFleet.com.au, we can help you with the best financing and salary packaging options for your new car, and streamline the application process.



MEMBER'S PROFILE CONCRETE PARTNERS



Concrete Partners was established in June 2015. While the company itself is young, the directors, David Jones and Tim "Timbo" Kruger have been in the concrete industry for a combined total of 40 years.

With more than 25 years in the concrete industry David has a vast array of experience in all facets of concreting. From owning and running his own businesses, to helping set up other national businesses overseas, David has dealt with all levels of client management, from government to local builders. Timbo has more than 15 years experience in the concrete industry demonstrating project management skills "second to none". His ability to organize and motivate men to produce their best work, combined with coordination of suppliers and subcontractors, are some of his best assets.

Having worked together previously, David and Tim maintained a great mate-ship whilst running their own businesses. They came together to form Concrete Partners to provide a better and more reliable service to its new clientele. This included more available full time staff to complete numerous projects each day and to then come together to work on larger ones.

Along with skilled staff, Concrete Partners wanted to provide a professional and safety conscious environment for that staff and for clients. In today's world it is so important to have the right equipment, staff and administration to back up what is expected by the mid to large civil and commercial building companies.

During the process of building Concrete Partners and the number of skilled staff, there were many jobs that were 600-800m² that required at least eight men. David had been researching ways to keep up

accuracy on larger pours, when extra labour had to be brought in. The skill level and reliability was often an unknown and difficult to control, where it could lead to putting more pressure on the regular staff. This research led to the purchase of a Ligchine Max Laser Guided Screed, which allowed for the use of 4-5 skilled crew without those other pressures being put upon them.

Even with the industry going strong, there is much diversity in projects and not all require the use of the Laser Screed. David and Tim wanted to see the Laser Screed being utilised as much as possible. They decided that it would be good to wet hire the machine to other concreters for a small square metre rate, which allowed the hirer the peace of mind that costs would not escalate in the event of time delays, which can easily occur from day to day.

David says, "The screed is set up on the back of a trailer so that it can be easily transported to site. We usually allow an hour to set up the screed before concrete arrives. The Laser Screed keeps up with how quickly the pumps can place the concrete. All that is needed on site is water for us to wash down the machine on completion.

The screed still has tolerances, but not as many as hand screeding. Although, this was not our main reason for purchasing the laser screed, as we believe in our guys keeping up their own skill set. We wanted to be able to pour larger areas on consecutive days and not have our staff fatigued at the end of the pour. Extra effort can then go into the finishing process and there is less stress all round. We personally have found that the staff morale at the end of the day is so much better."

UNEVEN CONCRETE SLAB LEAVES BUYER WITHOUT A FLOOR TO STAND ON

In the recent case of *Actron Investments Queensland Pty Limited v DDS Project Management Pty Ltd & Ors*, the Supreme Court of Queensland was required to consider the liability of the designer of a concrete slab in circumstances where the slab had been designed according to specifications, but did not meet the requirements of a subsequent purchaser.

The decision by Justice Mullins serves as a useful example of the steps a contractor can take to protect themselves from liability to subsequent purchasers for negligent design.

WHAT HAPPENED?

This case arose from the purchase of a commercial building by Actron Investments Queensland Pty Limited (Actron) in 2007. The building had been designed with a free floating and independently moving concrete slab, which was shown in the drawings as susceptible to both surface movement and settlement. The designer had been effectively asked to do the design as cheaply as possible while still obtaining certification, in order to maximise the sale profit.

The building was certified post-construction and put up for sale with the marketing material stating that the floor had been designed for forklift use and referring prospective purchasers to the engineering drawings for the “*pallet racking requirements/loadings*.”

Following purchase, Actron failed to refer to the drawings or consult an engineer before installing pallet racking and it soon discovered that the concrete slab had become extremely uneven and damaged due to the added weight. As a result, forklifts could not be driven over any of the expansion joints in the floor and some of the pallet racking was unusable and had to be taped off.

Actron issued proceedings alleging that the builder, designer and certifier (and others) had breached their duty of care and engaged in misleading and deceptive conduct and claimed more than \$1 million for rectification costs. During the trial, Actron settled with both the builder and certifier, and accordingly the Court was only required to consider the liability of the designer of the concrete slab.

WHAT DID THE COURT DECIDE?

Recent decisions of the High Court have concentrated on the importance of “vulnerability” in determining whether a subsequent purchaser is owed a duty of care by the designer of the building. There is a presumption that a purchaser of property (which are necessarily detailed and complex transactions) is in a position to protect itself by, for example, imposing special conditions or carrying out investigations.

In this case, Actron knew that the intended use of the warehouse would exert a downward force on the concrete slab, yet did not investigate the drawings or consult an expert to confirm that the slab could bear that weight. Furthermore, it agreed to the deletion of a standard

clause in the contract which would have made the purchase subject to obtaining a satisfactory building inspection report.

The Court therefore concluded that no duty of care existed and the proceeding was dismissed (with Actron likely ultimately paying the designer’s costs).

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

A lesson from this case for design (and other) contractors is that they should ensure that drawings or other design documents clearly specify any limitations or restrictions on use of the works. While this may seem obvious, such transparency will avoid the risk of later being responsible for any loss suffered by subsequent purchasers.

It is also important to make sure that it is the buyer who bears the responsibility for confirming the building is suitable for its intended use. Designers and contractors thus escape the onerous and impossible task of ensuring that the design and construction is suitable for all uses, however subjective. Therefore, you should always be cautious when offering any “fit for purpose” warranties and ensure that, if you do, the “purpose” is specified and defined within the contract.



Thomson Geer is a large Australian commercial law firm with offices in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

In conjunction with Master Concreters Australia, we are offering all members complimentary access to the Thomson Geer Help Desk. This service enables you to access specialist legal advice from experienced practitioners at no cost to you and with the convenience of a phone call, so that you can make

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timely and considered decisions for the benefit of your business.

For more information on the Help Desk, please contact:

P: +61 2 8248 5810

E: legalhelpdesk@tglaw.com.au



BIG ROLL UP FOR INAUGURAL MCA SYDNEY GOLF DAY

Members and guests came together on Monday 5th December 2016 for the inaugural MCA Sydney Golf Day at North Ryde Golf Club. Over 100 registered players turned out for what was an unseasonably warm Sydney Day. Despite an early start the temperature was nudging 30degrees by late morning, with the drinks cart being kept busy ensuring our players were suitably hydrated. Players then retired to the clubhouse to escape the heat and enjoy a sit down meal and prize giving.

Congratulations to Forum IT who took home the MCA Sydney Trophy and our runners up VEK Tools and 3rd place team CSG. Well done to all the players who took home prizes on the day and thank you to all our members who took time out from their busy schedules to join us for the Annual Golf Day.

Master Concreters would like to thank our principal sponsor cbus for anchoring the event. Also a big thanks to the team at AUSREO for keeping the players watered and Hanson for sponsoring the pre round BBQ. We would also like to acknowledge our numerous hole sponsors from the manufacturing, supplier and service sectors, whose support directly contributed to a very enjoyable day.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Sydney Golf Day in December.



Winners: Forum IT



WHY SUCCESS IN 2017 WILL DEPEND ON WHAT YOU DO DAILY

Ideally you are just coming back from a well deserved period of downtime over the Christmas break and have come back ready to win big in the game of business in 2017.

But did you know that over 90% of business owners don't really have a clear idea about the results they would like to produce in the month ahead, let alone the next 12 months? If you are one of the 10% of businesses that have some clear, written and specific goals you would like to reach in 2017, then the following will be of benefit.

It has been said that your daily habits are a reflection of how you invest your time and therefore the quality of your focus. If your daily habits are aligned with your priorities and goals, you should accomplish and produce the results you are looking for.

The following is a 5-Step approach to achieving your goals in the year ahead:

1. Define what specific results you want
2. What are the key ingredients required?
3. Determine the priorities
4. Know the specific actions
5. Implement daily habits with your goal in mind

For example:

1. Specific Results

Peter is an electrician who has a #1 objective this year to manage his cash flow much better than in previous years. His specific goal is to have a minimum of \$50,000 in his trading account at all times.

2. Key Ingredients Required

- Detailed monthly cash flow forecast
- Invoice as soon as possible after the job is complete
- Increase prices
- Consistent gross profit margin
- Improve job productivity

- Follow up debtors promptly/automated
- Put aside allowance for profit first
- Monitor profitability of all jobs

3. Main Priorities

- Review invoicing and debtor management systems and procedures
- Review pricing model
- Renegotiate terms with suppliers
- Redo contract with review on payment terms with customers
- Choose a job management software that syncs with Xero

4. Specific Actions to Take

- Schedule 3 hours weekly to work on financial systems
- Implement an automated debtor follow up software
- Set up separate bank accounts for tax, profit, salaries
- Implement team KPI's on productivity

5. Daily Habits

- Check/update cash flow forecast
- Ensure invoicing has been completed and sent off for complete jobs
- Review all jobs and profitability

In this case the daily review of cash flow forecast, ensuring that invoices are sent on time and also the profitability of each job should only take 20 minutes, however the discipline to do this daily will be reflected in producing key results in the long term.



Article kindly provided by

PROTRADE United
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HOPPT AUSTRALIA



Hoppt Australia sells a comprehensive range of concreting equipment including walk behind and ride-on trowel machines, concrete vibrators in sizes up to 60mm, drive units in diesel and petrol and a selection of quality hand tools.

Based in Sydney with dealers across Australia and a branch in Warana on the Sunshine Coast Hoppt has established itself as a supplier of quality equipment at affordable prices backed with excellent service.

Hoppt arguably leads the trowel machine market with eleven models in their line up ranging from the 24" edger to the premium 46" finishing machines. All models are matched to HONDA engines according to customer preference with the GX160

popular on the 36" machine while the larger GX270 is fitted to the 40" and 46" machines with the big GX390 and option on the 46" model. Hoppt engineering and HONDA power is a tough combination to beat.

Another specialty are concrete vibrators in hard tip and rubber tip varieties ranging from 28mm to 60mm on 6m flexshafts with selected models having a 9m option. Drive units to match these are either HONDA petrol powered or HATZ diesel.

One of their popular sellers is the SiteVibe hand held concrete vibrator powered by a HONDA GX35.

Hoppt Australia Managing Director Peter Evans commented recently that the company has a combined 100

years' experience selling construction equipment even though we are only in our fourth year in Australia. Now that's experience. So next time you are looking for new concreting equipment give the guys at Hoppt Australia a call on 1800 0 HOPPT or 02 8090 5999.

It's worth asking about our special deal on 46" trowel machines. It's only while current stock lasts so I'd be quick.

Hoppt Australia, **QUALITY YOU CAN TRUST** and service to back it up.

www.hoppt.com.au



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EXCELLENCE IN INDUSTRY AWARDS

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