

# CONCRETE IQ

Concrete IQ is the official newsletter of Master Concreters Australia

ISSUE 3, 2015



**MASTER  
CONCRETERS**

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## PLATINUM SPONSOR



## SUPPORTING CONCRETE CONTRACTORS NATIONWIDE

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter following our recent transition to Master Concreters Australia.

Change is inevitable and for our association the time has come to expand our footprint and provide support and services to our colleagues under a central banner.

As many would be aware the role of an association is to provide support and services to members. An effective trade Association will also shape an industry and improve the environment for its practitioners under a united voice. Many contractors are so busy driving their company's operations that they forget to step back and look at how to influence the external factors that have a negative impact on their business. It is a sad fact

that many choose to sit on the sidelines and provide negative commentary on the problems in our industry.

Belonging to a trade association shows the wider industry you are invested in your industry. The Association provides many benefits for your organisation and a strong collective will provide a platform to make a positive change to our industry.

For our existing members there are exciting times ahead and we look forward to the positive benefits that a stronger organisation will bring. For those that have not had any exposure to a trade association, talk to our existing contractors about what the association has brought to the table for them. Just like the financial market it takes an investment to provide a dividend.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As you would no doubt be well aware the association has reached out to our interstate contemporaries and has embarked on the path of establishing a national association with aspirations of eventually supporting concrete contractors in all states throughout Australia. I am very excited by the opportunity to engage with concrete contractors in other parts of the country and I very much look forward to the injection of new ideas, support and learnings that will eventuate. To this end I say a very warm welcome to our new interstate members and I very much look forward to working together with you for the betterment of our industry. To date our association has been very successful in Queensland delivering on its promises of education, training, technical support and fraternity for the concrete contracting community and it is now time for us to come together and expand our mission beyond state borders.

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A very warm welcome to our new interstate members and I very much look forward to working with you for the betterment of our industry.

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I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge my predecessor Paul Curran for his outstanding work and

leadership during his three year tenure. It is a fact that without Paul's personal vision and drive our association would not be close to being where it is today. On behalf of all members and the board I say a huge thank you Paul and I look forward to your continued support and counsel. We also at this time have Don Budge retiring from the board. Don is an inaugural board member and from the very beginning he has been instrumental in establishing the extremely effective relationship that we have developed with our manufacturing partners. Again on behalf of all members and the board I extend a huge thank you Don and I look forward to your continuing support.

Change is an unavoidable and inevitable part of life and change challenges everyone to be accountable and to step up and embrace that which needs to be handled. All of us as concrete industry professionals know this only too well through our own personal experiences in the business. This is in fact a truism of life and our industry association is not immune to the reality of change as a constant. The real challenge is to lead in the face of change and the effectiveness of that leadership will in my view make or break an individual, a group, a family or an organisation. These themes are very much on my mind at the moment as our association launches into this exciting stage of its growth and development. know one thing for certain and that is the association has a dedicated CEO and Board who are all absolutely committed to do whatever it takes to achieve our objectives and we as a group welcome your support in our mutual endeavours.

Chris Jones,  
President, Master Concreters Australia



# MASTER CONCRETERS

### PRESIDENT

Chris Jones

### VICE PRESIDENT

Peter Martino

### HONORARY TREASURER

Greg Bess

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

David Lingard

### DIRECTORS

Warwick Dingle

Louie Mazzarolo

Keith McGinn

Brad Nairn

Albert Pizzinato

### DISCLAIMER

In preparing the MCA newsletter *Concrete IQ*, the editor uses his best endeavors to ensure that the information contained in the newsletter is true and accurate, but accepts no responsibility and disclaims all liability in respect of errors, omissions, inaccuracies or mis-statements contained in the publication.

## NEW MEMBERS TO MCA

The President and Directors would like to welcome the following new members to the Association:

- Alpine Group Pty Ltd
- Azzurri Concrete
- British Concrete Pty Ltd
- De Martin & Gasparini
- General Beton
- Prestons Concrete
- Traino Group

# CEO'S REPORT

Welcome to our latest edition of the Association newsletter, our first edition as Master Concreters Australia. We are now in the process of growing the Association throughout the country to provide support and representation to the wider concreting industry.

Following the organisational change to Master Concreters Australia the inaugural Annual General Meeting was held in September 2015. This saw a number of changes to board appointments. The President Paul Curran stepped down after three years in the chair and we thank Paul for his significant contribution during this time. Don Budge (board member) also stepped down due to an increase in the number of trade contractors coming onto the board. We welcome three NSW based trade contractors to the board; Peter Martino (as Vice President), Louie Mazzarolo and Albert Pizzinato. Founding member and Master Concreters stalwart Chris Jones was unanimously voted into the President's position. The directors and I look forward to an exciting period going forward that will see the Association grow and support our industry practitioners throughout Australia.

As part of the service delivery activities undertaken by the Association, we have commenced delivery of training in NSW. We will also be continuing our membership drive into NSW and engaging with concrete contractors who are looking to access our range of support and services that will benefit their organisations.

As part of our national focus the Association will look to engage with organisations who can provide services to support members throughout Australia. In this regard members should note that

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We have commenced delivery of training into New South Wales...”

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we have entered into an agreement with AutoTender and are currently negotiating terms with Doyles Construction Lawyers. Doyles have offices in each of the State capitals and can provide legal services to our members at a competitive rate.

This month sees the introduction of AutoTender – an online vehicle tendering facility for members to purchase vehicles. The facility is free to MCA members when accessed through the member's only section of MCA website. I understand that many of our members will have their own brokers. Members might be surprised to note that vehicle prices can be more competitive as the dealers are individually competing to supply your vehicle. Members are under no obligation to purchase a vehicle once they commence the process, however, you could be saving your company hard earned dollars by accessing this service.

Once again we are rapidly approaching the end of the calendar year and this ramps up the activity for everyone. Members are reminded of our 'hotline' service to assist in any issues affecting your organisation. Sometimes a quick phone call is all that is required to access advice on the myriad of issues that we face on a day to day basis.

David Lingard,  
CEO, Master Concreters Queensland

## 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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MASTER CONCRETTERS  
PROUDLY ACKNOWLEDGES  
THE SUPPORT OF OUR  
SUSTAINING MEMBERS





## DIRECTORS PROFILE:

# PETER MARTINO

Peter is the Executive Officer, Azzurri Concrete Group and its associated companies, a business formed in 2004 to drive the highest quality concrete placement services and concrete contracting services, efficiently and at a value for money investment, using all the skills and knowledge within the organisation to provide the highest benefit to those who are wise enough to engage there services.

Peter joined Azzurri Concrete in 2009 as a business consultant and in 2013 was appointed the role Chief Executive Officer with the responsibility for all aspects of Azzurri Concrete growth, corporate structure, transforming the business operations operating model aligned to the company's long term strategy.

Prior to joining Azzurri Concrete, Peter spent 20 years with several public listed companies such as UPS Global, CTI Logistics and held a number of senior executive positions including the head of Asia/Australia, CEO and General Manager of various business segments including; logistics, construction, finance, retail and marketing. Prior to his Asian postings, Peter was CFO of a textile company group which controlled Sheridan Australia, Maurice Kain textiles and other leading textile manufacturers. He also held a variety of senior roles working across Asia from his base in Sydney and Singapore.

Peter has been a fellow of the Institute of Public Accountants for the past 20 years.

Peter is a strong believer of the power of the collective and looks forward to improving the concreting industry through his association with Master Concreters Australia.

# INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS AND THE POWER OF THE COLLECTIVE

Business owners must constantly have one eye on their balance sheet to ensure revenue is healthy and expenses are in check, particularly when they're just starting out.

For many businesses, outlaying a membership to an industry association can feel like an extravagance, but it's important to look closely at the value these memberships can deliver and return, well beyond the initial investment.

Most Australian industries have a representative association, but what are the benefits of belonging to one?

## SHAPE YOUR INDUSTRY

Industry associations provide a mechanism for you to input into and shape the direction of your industry. They also represent their members in government, policy and other negotiations so having a voice in these discussions can be really valuable for your business.

## KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Industry associations often author reports or commission research into areas of its members' interest. As a member of the association, you'll often have free access to the latest industry information, trends, statistics or tools—this can only be a good thing for your business.

## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

As a central point of contact with a comprehensive database of businesses aligned to an industry, associations can effectively match supply to demand and act as a conduit to introduce its members to new projects, partnerships and other opportunities.

## POWER IN NUMBERS

When an industry works collectively, they have the power to effect change—whether it's to lift standards, create opportunities, mitigate risk, and more—an industry is more effective when it works together as a whole.

## NETWORKING, MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Industry associations often provide opportunities for their members to attend networking functions, hear from guest speakers, and participate in workshops and seminars or to mentor newcomers to the industry, or vice versa. This can be a cost-effective way to participate in these kinds of activities, tailored specifically to the industry within which your business operates.

“

If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself.”

—Henry Ford

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## TRAINING

Many Industry associations have developed training programs tailored specifically to their industry and run by industry professionals. The training empowers your workforce and provides crucial skills that will improve productivity for your business.

## CREDIBILITY

Being a member of an industry association also brings with it a level of credibility and recognition. It demonstrates that your business was assessed by the secretariat and recognised as a worthy inclusion to the association—that's why many businesses note their memberships on their websites or business cards.

These are just a few of the many benefits of joining your industry association. Not only will your membership indirectly improve your bottom line, the cost of your membership fees are tax deductible. If you haven't already made the decision, act now.

# KEEPING YOUR FILES SAFE FROM TROJANS

Cryptolocker first appeared in 2013. It was a new kind of trojan – an ordinary-looking file that, when opened, releases malware into your computer. Cryptolocker's twist was that it would encrypt all the files on your machine and demand a ransom to decrypt them.

Now newer versions of these "ransomware" trojans are making the rounds, forcing many Australian business owners to choose between financing illegal activity and surrendering valuable data. So what can you do to protect yourself from these programs?

## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Unfortunately, there's no 'cure' once infected – if you decide not to pay the ransom, you're unlikely to ever retrieve your files.

So here's how you can prevent your computer or network from being attacked: most viruses and trojans arrive with unsolicited emails... To stay safe, it's a good idea to use a spam filtering service that will block almost all of these files as well as other spam. If you would like more details on this, please contact XCD IT.

## BACK UP REGULARLY

Backing up your files is the most important step you can take towards protecting yourself from ransomware. With regular backups, you can restore important files even if your network or computer is compromised. However, it

is vitally important that you back up your files to an external source. Otherwise, a Trojan like Cryptowall might encrypt your backup files too. XCD IT can assist with implementing an automated backup solution for your business.

## CONSIDER YOUR CLOUD SOLUTION

File syncing services like Google Drive and Dropbox are not safe either, they immediately mirror changes to files on your computer or network – even if those files have been corrupted. However, they don't perform incremental backups, which means that you can't retrieve an earlier version of a now encrypted file. That's where cloud backup services come in. Not only do they back up files in real time, they save copies of each file version in a separate location for future retrieval.

So, if you've moved to the cloud, ensure you have a backup solution in place as well.

XCD IT have been assisting businesses in the concrete and construction industry for over 10 years. If you require any assistance with computer or networking issues, or for a quote on IT equipment, please call us on 07 3112 2912 or email [sales@xcdit.com.au](mailto:sales@xcdit.com.au).



# ALIPHATIC ALCOHOL – THE CONTRACTOR'S BEST FRIEND

Aliphatic Alcohol is a water based compound designed for use on plastic (freshly poured and screeded) concrete. The compound is designed to reduce the early evaporation of moisture during the setting process. Aliphatic alcohol is also effective in reducing the effects of rapid drying when placing concrete during high temperatures, low humidity and high winds.

Members are reminded aliphatic alcohol is not a curing compound and has no effect on hardened concrete. All placed concrete must be cured in accordance with industry standards.

Use of aliphatic alcohol improves the quality of the concrete as a result of controlled water evaporation.

It can also reduce the likelihood of crusting at the surface during setting and instances of plastic shrinkage.

## APPLICATION

Application should be carried out immediately after screeding and bull floating. The mixture should be applied lightly and uniformly across the surface of the concrete. It should be applied under pressure so as to produce a fine mist (do not hold the spray nozzle too close to the concrete surface).

Once the compound has been applied correctly, proceed with the floating and trowelling operations. This will break the film created by the aliphatic alcohol. Under severe conditions or if further trowelling is necessary at a later stage, repeated applications may be required. Feedback from contractor members has indicated that the compound should be reapplied every time the surface is broken during the finishing process.

## PREPARATION OR RECTIFICATION

Use of aliphatic alcohol may well save you headaches further down the track and using this relatively inexpensive product is highly recommended by the Association.

# TOP TIPS FOR POWER TROWELS

Finishing concrete has always been about timing and is as much about being in the right place at the right time with the right tool. Contractors are now demanding greater tolerances and good power trowelling techniques are essential to delivering the floor to right specification.

The purposes of power floating are:

- To embed the large aggregate just beneath the surface
- To remove slight imperfections, humps or voids
- To compact the concrete and consolidate the mortar at the surface in preparation for other finishing operations.

The rule of thumb in relation to when to power float a floor is that your footprint should be approximately 6mm deep or less, with little or no bleed water present. Floors that fail to produce appropriate tolerances can be a result of finishers getting on the floor too early. Again timing is everything. Poor timing causes finishing problems. Any finishing operation performed while there is excess bleed water on the surface can cause dusting or scaling.



## JOINT SPALLING

A common problem when placing concrete are joint spalls that occur adjacent to joints in floors, slabs or pavements.

### CAUSES

The direct cause of joint spalling is loading at the joint. The indirect cause is poorly constructed joints that don't adequately support the loads applied to the concrete. The net result is a pavement or floor that will not meet the long term requirements of the owner.

There are four commonly used joint systems or fillers that can lead to spalling of joints in industrial floors:

**Left in Place Metal Keys.** These products are frequently used to construct shear keys in floors to transfer vertical loads, however, as the concrete shrinks over time and the joints open, a portion of the keyway becomes unsupported. Loading of this unsupported concrete causes cracking and spalling parallel to the joint.

**Plastic crack-inducing strips.** If the plastic strips designed to induce shrinkage cracking at joints aren't plumb, they have the same effect as metal key-ways. Often these strips end up out of plum due to concrete finishing. Over time a cantilever is formed on one side of the strip and this cantilever will ultimately fail.

**Elastomeric Joint Fillers.** While elastomeric joint fillers may do an excellent job of keeping water out of joints (if the fillers remain bonded) they are too soft to support traffic across the joint. When the joint is loaded, the sealer compresses and here is nothing to support the face of the concrete in the joint.

**High-Strength Epoxy Fillers.** Using joint filler with too high a strength prevents the joint from doing what it was originally intended to do – accommodate some movement caused by shrinkage and temperature changes. If the joint is tightly bonded by an inflexible epoxy and the concrete changes volume, a crack often forms next to the joint. The concrete between the crack and the joint is likely to spall.

When dowels are used to transfer loads across joints, they must also be installed properly. If dowels are allowed to bond to both sides of the joint or are bent or misaligned, cracking and spalling can occur.

In some climates joint spalling can occur if debris enters a joint while the joint is open in cold weather. When the weather turns hot and the concrete expands, the debris prevents movement and causes a compressive-stress build-up that results in joint spalling.

### PREVENTION

The best form of prevention for joint spalling is to construct joints properly. The following practises are recommended:

- Install load-transfer dowels parallel to the slab surface and to each other.
- Cut joints as soon after placement as practicable but not so soon as to cause ravelling or other damage.
- Fill sawcut joints to the full depth with a semi-rigid epoxy. After the concrete has had a chance to shrink, make provisions for a second, touch-up filling.



# NEW MANDATORY DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

## ...HOW IT CAN IMPACT YOUR BUSINESS

Mandatory drug and alcohol testing and fitness to work policies are now requirements under the Building Code 2013.

These sweeping reforms are an initiative of the Federal Government in a commitment to workplace health, safety and productivity on construction sites.

Minimum workplace policy requirements will be enforced by the FWBC on head contractors who will have until October 16, 2015 to have a compliant policy in place. Drug and alcohol testing, particularly on mine sites, have often proved problematic. There can be a number of potential adverse consequences for a business with an employee who fails a drug or alcohol test. For example, it could constitute a breach of the construction contract. If the superior contractor or principal is keen to have the contractor or subcontractor off the job, depending on what is in the construction contract, the failure of the drug test can be used as grounds to terminate the contract or otherwise place pressure on the contractor or subcontractor in negotiations for example, on variations.

Terminating or otherwise disciplining an employee who has failed a drug or alcohol test, can often cause significant employment law problems for the employer. Employers need to be very careful, have appropriate policies in place, regularly conduct appropriate training and ensure consistency and

fairness in the application of their policies. All employers should have their policies and procedures in this regard checked, preferably by an employment lawyer, in order to minimise the risk of an adverse outcome for the business.

McKays Solicitors' Employment team can assist your business in reviewing or drafting your workplace policies, employment agreements, and internal disciplinary processes arising out of drug and alcohol testing requirements.



For further information please contact us.

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## 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.





## MASTER CONCRETERS