

creating the **advantage**

Sydney Metro Conference back on the agenda.

'We're regularly in touch with all our fabricators and MiTek Conferences have always proved successful - especially in regional areas,' said Peter Hutchison. 'So we thought: let's bring that formula to town - literally, and have a Sydney Metro Conference.' Sydney fabricators have enjoyed the annual MiTek Golf Days but a formal, sit-down conference had not been held for some time...and there was a lot to catch up on!



First challenge: choose a suitable venue with the facilities to accommodate 30 fabricators and MiTek staff. Rooty Hill RSL ticked all the boxes and more. Located in the heart of Western Sydney (some 30km from the CBD) this massive complex housed an AMF Bowling Alley, M9 Laser Skirmish attraction, Fitness and Aquatic Centre and a Novotel Hotel - where the conference was held. 'We'll be coming back here for future events,' said Peter - 'it just proved so central for everyone. Lots of parking - and easy access from most areas of Sydney.'



Venue chosen and guests refreshed for a 9.30am start and it was time to open, what would prove to be, an information-packed day. After Peter welcomed all it was straight into a presentation by Amanda Ling. 'Not me as Amanda,' said Tim Rossiter, emphatically - 'but the real Amanda Ling...in the flesh!' For many of the conferences held in NSW and around the country in the last 12 months, Tim has been front man for Amanda's video presentations. 'I'm sure they appreciated Amanda a lot more than me,' joked Tim. The Help Desk presentation is always a good way to kick-off a conference as it deals with real-life scenarios and sometimes introduces fabricators to new MiTek services they may not have been aware of in the past.

Tim didn't have to wait long to take centre stage though; Product Updates & Panelisation developments were next on the agenda. One of the products he introduced was of particular interest to the Sydney fabricators: PosiStrut Floor Cassettes (PFCs). Ideal for multi-storey developments (a growing market in Sydney) PFCs could be a real plus for fabricators wanting to expand their customer base. Tim also covered much of what was on offer at the recent FRAME conference held in Melbourne a few weeks earlier.

Next up: Justin Read from Buildsoft - then a buffet lunch. After the break came Cameron Wake with some Machinery developments, then Tim returned to give his own spin on: 'Knowledge is Power.' Mark Smiles was next, covering: MiTek Business Support (in keeping with the conference theme: Whole of House, Whole of Business). Mark also presented an overview on OptiFLOW & Scheduler.

It was a long day - but there was still more to come: a SAPPHIRE Suite update, presented by Richard Moulton. For some, this would be their first introduction to SAPPHIRE. 'We had only allowed about 50 minutes for this presentation - but such was the interest it generated; time ran away from us,' said Peter. Unfortunately this meant several guests had to leave before Peter and Andrew Bricknell could make some very important presentations.

Plaques were given to: Lawmans Frame & Truss (20 years) and Mittagong Timber & Trading (15 years). Two more plaques had been organised - one for Belmont Timber (30 years) and The Truss & Frame factory (20 years). Unfortunately the owners of Belmont Timber couldn't make it to the conference and Darren Campbell from The Truss & Frame Factory was one of the guests who left in an effort to avoid peak hour traffic for his drive back to Bathurst.

'I'm keen to make these Sydney Metro Conferences a more regular event,' said Peter. 'The interest shown on the day and positive feedback we have received tells us our customers welcome these information-based forums. Plus, there's always something new on the horizon at MiTek...and these conferences are the best way to keep everyone up-to-date with the latest developments.'



Leading the W.Ay.

MiTek's commitment to the W.A. market has never been stronger - this was well vindicated with an impressive team heading across the Nullarbor to bring W.A. fabricators up-to-speed with the latest developments and services on offer. Once again, the conference was held in the Pagoda at the Esplanade River Suites Hotel in Perth. Overlooking the Swan River, this venue is the ideal place to hold this informal, yet very informative annual MiTek Conference. The theme: 'Whole of House, Whole of Business' really set the agenda for the day - MiTek wanted to demonstrate how every part of a fabrication plant can be made more efficient and, most importantly, more profitable!

After a casual coffee and informal introductions Peter Hutchison welcomed all for a 10am start. The formalities were kept very brief, as there was a lot to cram into the day. Six fabricators were represented... 'a good response,' exclaimed Kevin Taylor, MiTek Branch Manager W.A. Tim Rossiter (with the help of Amanda Ling) refreshed everyone with the latest from MiTek's HelpDesk - then introduced some Product Updates. Peter Trenaman followed with a comprehensive overview of the Buildsoft system and some of the new features it offered. It was Richard Moulton who took centre stage next for a SAPPHIRE™ Suite review. He demonstrated some of the latest developments and assured all Beta testing was going well.

Time for lunch - and a sumptuous buffet spread it was too! Plus, an unexpected, but very welcome guest turned up: Kevin's predecessor, now well entrenched into a life of retirement, Gavin Nash! Gavin was the face of MiTek in W.A. for more than two decades so this opportunity to catch up with old friends was well received. But with barely enough time to digest their meal fabricators were ushered back to their seats ready for the next wave of presentations.



Tim Rossiter spent 5 minutes highlighting the importance of: 'Knowledge is Power'...providing the perfect link to the next topic: MiTek Business Support. Mark Smiles presented this and the following segment on OptiFlow & Scheduler. Like the rest of the day, these presentations supported the theme: 'Whole of Business' - as they outlined some of the many services and products MiTek have readily available to fabricators wanting to improve operational and production efficiencies. 'Two fabricators, in particular, are very keen to adopt OptiFlow Scheduler into their plant's operations,' announced Kevin. Kevin knows there are still some challenges to be overcome in the W.A. market - a market still keen on double-brick and 'stick-build' roof construction. 'But we are continuing to make great inroads into a buoyant industry,' added Kevin.

Peter was quick to agree: 'W.A. is forecast to have 27,000 starts this year - that represents some fantastic opportunities for our fabricators. Queensland and Victoria are up too, with NSW not far off the mark either.' As for the conference...Peter was delighted with the attendance and the feedback. Peter closed the day at 4pm and invited all to stay on longer for a chat and a drink. A few lingered - but not for long - as most were eager to put some of the day's information into practice in their plants!



Melbourne breakfast means business.



We've all heard of the 'Business Lunch' but what about the 'Business Breakfast?' Well MiTek Melbourne decided to put their own spin on this theme and invited fabricators to an action-packed, 2-hour conference held at Merrimu Function Centre (near mega-shopping-centre complex, Chadstone)...for an 8.30am start! Mark Smiles organised the breakfast conference at this popular venue - briefing all the speakers to 'keep the momentum going with informative and fast-paced presentations.' For the guests the morning would be far more laid-back as a sit-down hot breakfast was the order of the day. 'It's worth going to Merrimu just for their breakfast menu,' quipped Mark.

Peter Hutchison welcomed all - then it was Tim Rossiter first out of the blocks. He had 20 minutes to give a Product Update, covering: the Split Hanger, Concealed Purlin



Cleat (the new CPC80), Trip-L-Grips, Mk IV Girder Brackets, the all-new Hip Girder Bracket and PosiStrut Floor cassettes (PFCs). This form of prefabricated flooring was of particular interest to those fabricators with customers involved in multi-story developments. Tim also managed to cover the latest changes in Australian Standards and Building Classes...all without taking a breath!

Cameron Wake took centre stage next. Equipment was on the menu. The Robogenix Easy Saw, Owens Uppercut Saw, MiTek Matchpoint BLADE and new Wizard PDS were the first pieces of machinery covered. Cameron also gave a brief overview on: the Apex KwikTable Press, Apex Floor Cassette Jig X-Press Floor Press and the MiTek IO Link, including an introduction to the second-hand equipment section of the MiTek website.



Mark Smiles followed with MiTek Services! This included an update on Snapshot Benchmark Business reporting, the latest developments with OptiFlow & Scheduler and the latest Training Courses available. That left Richard Moulton less than an hour to bring everyone up-to-speed with SAPPHIRE. Richard's live demonstration (taking the program through-its-paces) covered everything from Management right through to Structure and Layout sheets. 'It was supposed to be a 10.30 wrap-up,' said Mark - 'but a lot stayed back to see more of SAPPHIRE in action.'

More than a dozen truss plants were represented, with twice that amount of guests. Plus, there was a good-sized contingent from MiTek there ready to answer any questions - including Stephen Fray and Andrew Bricknell. Peter was extremely happy with the way the seminar went. 'Having a Breakfast Briefing meant we didn't eat into too much of the fabricator's day, however I wouldn't mind seeing a format where the Briefing might be split in two in the future,' said Peter. 'Maybe we could have all the equipment and product presentations in the first half of the day followed, after a break, by an all software session. That way guests can come for part or all of the Briefing. We might try something like that in future and see how it is received,' added Peter. 'In the end, it's about finding what best fits in with our customer's needs.'



Redland Bay day...again!



Redland Bay Golf Club is the home of the QLD PGA Senior Championships (Pro-Am). So, in keeping with that tradition, MiTek welcomed their own selection of 'would-be' Pros...and seasoned 'Amateurs' for the annual golf day. The gently undulating fairways and manicured greens, combined with plush native bushland, home to a colony of koalas and abundance of birdlife, set the scene for a great day - full of challenges and fun.

A shotgun start at 8am was organised - with all having to get there earlier to register and sort out teams. Usually MiTek golf days adopt a 4-ball Ambrose game - but, due to some late cancelations, a 3-ball Ambrose, 18-hole event was held. This late change didn't deter the 10 teams who took place - it actually meant the game finished a little earlier (more time for drinks). After hot coffee and Bacon & Egg rolls, some formal and not-so formal introductions it was time to tee-off.

'Everything was going well - until I noticed some rather ominous clouds gathering,' said Wayne Hondow. It never rains in Queensland - it pours! And it did...for about 10 minutes. 'It was enough to leave some soaked, however most had time to take refuge under one of the

many small huts scattered around the course. 'I was worried it might set in...but the rain went as quickly as it came,' added Wayne. Every group had a cart to make manoeuvring around the course a little less strenuous - 'I think they forgot to charge ours the night before; it was so slow,' a frustrated Wayne conceded. Just as well they remembered to charge the drinks/refreshments cart though - as that was kept busy all morning!



After the last group entered the clubhouse, scores were tallied and drinks served. The aroma of a delicious roast buffet lunch soon lured all into the function room. Wayne thanked everyone for the day and proceeded to announce the winners...and those who didn't go so well.

Winners:

Craig Klinge (MiTek) - Shane Moore (Trusstec) - Wade Hastie (Trusstec)...Nett score of 60

Runners up:

Hans Neuzerling (MiTek) - John Cannard (Dindas Aus) - Alex Wolter (Redland Bay Roof Trusses)...Nett score of 63

NAGA Award:

Wayne Hondow (MiTek) - Steve Phillips (Tillings Aus) - Dave Ruddy (Big River Group)...Nett score of 72

Longest Drive: Sean Hale (TTF) 245m

Straightest Drive: Wade Hastie (Trusstec)

Nearest The Pins:

Sean Hale (TTF) - Paul Lees (MiTek) - Wade Hastie (Trusstec) - Frank Monement (Australian Timber Trusses)

Business Card Draw: Tim Facooory (Versace Timbers)

Lucky Door Prize: Matt Colley (Tillings Aus)

For the second time in 3 years Wayne managed to take out the NAGA award. 'It's not really something to brag about - but I was more focussed (like all) on having some fun...and catching up with friends and colleagues,' stressed Wayne. There were no lady players on the day; something Wayne would like to see in the future - however several did turn up for the lunch. 'Special thanks go to Robin Schwartz who took more than 250 photos,' added Wayne. The photos were even loaded into a projector for all to view during lunch - a



great way to reminisce the morning's events. 'Once again, it was a great event, well organised and run by Toby Holloway, and well appreciated by all. It was good to see Andrew Bricknell attend because he is always keen to reinforce relationships with customers and this is an excellent format for getting to know everybody on an informal level,' added Wayne. 'We'd love to see more attending next year though - these days are a lot of fun!'



The only birdies were ducks!



'What can you do? The rain actually added a different dynamic - there were a lot of laughs...and friendly banter. Camaraderie was high.

At 1pm and the last of a soggy, soaked troupe made their way into the clubhouse. No-one whinged about the weather; in fact, the mood was very upbeat as all found the conditions challenging, but the company fun. After all: it was all about the day and not about the outcome...until Peter read out the results after a splendid BBQ lunch (and a few drinks). Somehow these golf days tend to become competitive - regardless of the conditions. 'I actually felt like a 'drowned rat' while presenting the prizes,' said Peter:



Nearest the Pin - on 8th hole was Glenn Tilling & on 11th hole was Barry Edgley

Longest Drive - was Shane Hicks

Winning Team - was Team 6 Tillings

Runners Up - was Team 2 Alpine Truss

3rd Place - was Team 7 Dindas ably assisted by Andrew Bricknell

Thanks have to go to Julie Sloan and Glenn Johnstone who bravely weathered the weather patrolling the course, camera-in-hand to capture the event. And a special note to Sue Holland - unfortunately the only lady to play on the day. 'As usual Sue didn't appear to mind taking the whole thing in her stride and actually seemed to relish the occasion,' said Peter.

'We would love to make this an annual event,' said Andrew Bricknell. 'These days have proven very successful in NSW & Qld, because it's not about business as much as it's about spending time together and building relationships. I think a lot of positives come out of these events and I would like to establish an annual golf day - a tradition in Victoria...but we might try and hold it a bit earlier in the year next time.'

The inaugural Victorian MiTek Golf Day was planned to perfection (mostly by Mark Smiles, Victorian Branch manager). The venue: the pristine Rosebud Country Club (on the Mornington Peninsula, an hours drive south of Melbourne). This idyllic locale boasts not one - but two 18-hole courses and one of Melbourne's most vibrant Bowls Clubs! Superb corporate facilities, a stunning clubhouse and 4-star accommodation...complete with restaurant, bar & bistro ensured this day would be a memorable one. And it certainly was.

Mark got an inkling something might 'compromise' the day when he saw the weather report the day before. 'I thought it better to be safe than sorry and made a quick call to the clubhouse - and booked 18 buggies. It looked like there might be a bit of rain,' said Mark, somewhat sheepishly. He set off early from home on the day of the event...and noticed the further he drove, the closer he got to a large, looming black mass - precariously hovering over Rosebud.'

Breakfast, in the form of hot tea and coffee...and some bacon and egg sandwiches greeted the nearly 40 keen golfers. Registrations over and the 4-ball Ambrose event was underway. A 9.30am tee-off! 'There was a slight drizzle; not enough to dampen anyone's spirits though,' said Mark. 'I'd brought my wet weather gear (just-in-case), but noticed many wore just slacks and a polo shirt.'

Participants could have been forgiven for thinking they were on the set of Russell Crowe's latest biblical blockbuster, Noah; such was the deluge! 'I think it was about hole 5 or 6 for the first few groups,' said Mark. 'It just got darker and darker - if you were at the footy, they would have turned the lights on 3 holes back.' If it had been an England/Australia Test match the Poms wouldn't have left their hotel!

The heavens opened. Two called it quits at the 9th - the rest soldiered on. 'I have played at quite a few MiTek golf days,' said Peter Hutchison - 'mostly in NSW and Queensland. This was something else.' It's here where you might expect the: beautiful one day, perfect the next vs four seasons in one day line to emerge, but like all whom attended, Peter took it in his stride.



Fabricator Milestones

Over the past year the following MiTek fabricators achieved a significant milestone birthday and presentations were made to them as the opportunity arose.

QLD



Graham Leddy, Versace Timbers - 10 years

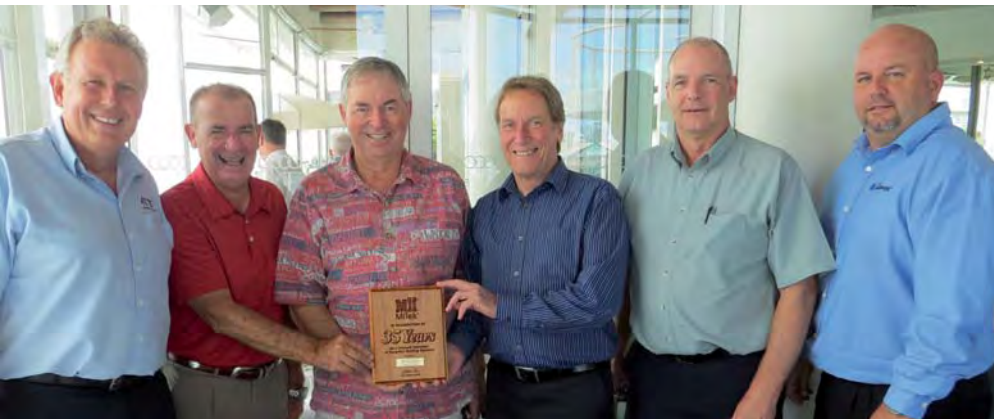


Trusstec Pty Ltd - 10 years - Shane Moore, Wayne Hondow (MiTek), Ross Cichocki

NSW



Darren Campbell , The Truss & Frame Factory - 20 years



Australian Timber & Trusses Pty Ltd - 35 Years - Left to Right - Peter Beverland, Tom Donohue, Leon Hill , Wayne Hondow, Hans Neunzerling, Toby Holloway



Bernie Wilson, Trussme - 15 years



Grays Sawmill Pty Ltd - 35 years - Eddie Gray & Janette Gray



Ray Nelson, Oxley Timber - 15 years

A life more lived.



Lawmans Frame & Truss Pty Ltd, Paul and William Mizzi - 20 years



South Pacific Roof Trusses, Jeff Hopkins - 25 years



Premium Trusses - 10 years - Peter Hutchison (MiTek), John Tory, Will Weston



Mittagong Timber & Trading Pty Ltd - Tony Magick - 15 years



You sometimes hear the saying: 'they'll probably make a movie of that man's life.' And it's usually because there's an extraordinary story to tell. John Walker lived that life...and here is that story - the very abridged version:

As a child, John lived in Prague (in what is now called the Czech Republic). He found himself the victim of the worst WW2 could throw at him...but he and future wife, Helen had the resilience and good fortune to survive. They wanted a better life, a new start and found themselves on a boat, heading to the other side of the world. With little more than a suitcase and a strong work ethic both set about creating a place to call home and a haven for the family they wanted. Working three jobs for the next two years saw John able to purchase a fledgling business called Belmont Box Company. It wasn't long before a flourishing Timber & Hardware business emerged. And in 1981 John decided to begin a timber truss & frame business. Licensed MiTek fabricator, Belmont Timber was born.

'John was a pioneer in this industry and always accepting of innovation,' said Peter Hutchison, MiTek State Manager Victoria, NSW & WA. 'What he achieved in his business life was only part of the impact this remarkable man made.'

John and Helen both enjoyed skiing, often venturing to Thredbo or Perisher...and annual visits to their favourite North American ski resorts. John also loved the less 'frozen' water - an avid sailor. With his sense of adventure often a driving force, John decided at the young age of 62 to take on the notorious and often dangerous Sydney to Hobart race. He then held the record for the most consecutive starts - 26 in total. That meant he did his last at 88! 'I heard he was still calling the office and attending to work matters mere days before passing away,' exclaimed Peter.

Keen to give something back to the industry he so dearly loved, John was on the board of the HIA for 40 years, being recognised as a life member. He was also on the board of TABMA for 20 years, serving two stints as Chairman. Current Chairman, Peter holds the highest respect and admiration for John. 'I learnt a lot from John - my wife, Vicki and I spent many wonderful evenings at dinner with both he and Helen. Those moments will be sorely missed,' lamented Peter. 'Our thoughts are with his family: Helen, daughter Suzan, son Gary and grandchildren Eric, Matthew and Natalie. His other family - all the staff and friends at Belmonts will be feeling his loss deeply too.'

R.I.P. John Walker - friend & colleague - 14/7/2014 - aged 91 years.

Whole of House. Whole of Business.

The venue might have been the same as last year - but there was certainly a shift in focus on the theme. Held again at the idyllic 4-star, Opal Cove Resort in Coffs Harbour, the annual Northern NSW Conference attracted more than a dozen fabricators. 'I thought it was a very good turn-out,' said Peter Hutchison, MiTek State Manager NSW, Victoria & WA. 'Most of our northern NSW fabricators were represented...with some coming from as far as Port Macquarie and Taree. That's why we had a 12 noon registration - it gives people plenty of time to get there; without having to wake up at the crack of dawn,' added Peter.

Although Opal Cove Resort boasts a 9-hole golf course and numerous water sport and leisure activities there would be no time for frivolities...business was very firmly on the agenda! Peter welcomed all then handed the floor over to Tim Rossiter to go through Amanda Ling's latest 'From the Help Desk' presentation...and cover some product updates.

Justin Le Good from Buildsoft was next to adopt the conference theme - showing how their software could help fabricators day-to-day. An update by Richard Moulton on the progress of Sapphire Suite served as the ideal entrée to afternoon tea.

After a short break it was straight back to business. Tim Rossiter (with his own twist on Sun Tzu's insights) discussed 'Knowledge is Power' all the while emphasising: knowledge isn't all that useful if you don't use properly! Mark Smiles had the rest of the afternoon to cover the next two important topics: MiTek Business Support, then OptiFlow and Scheduler. The latter saw several fabricators follow up in the ensuing days to see if they could upgrade their existing operations - or in some cases, set up OptiFlow and Scheduler from scratch.

With the day drawing to a close it was time to head out onto the balcony, enjoy the sunset, a drink...and more importantly, the company of friends. A plaque commemorating 10 years as a licensed MiTek fabricator was given to Will Weston and John Tory; co-owners of Premium Trusses in South Grafton. Then it was off to dinner; a sumptuous buffet-style BBQ! A few fabricators who couldn't make it to the conference joined the (already large) group and the evening continued on with the success of the day.

Several MiTek staff, including Andrew Bricknell, Tim Rossiter and Peter decided to stay the night and get an early start next day. Tim headed north at sunrise; Peter took Andrew to the airport, and then headed south for the 5-6 hour trip home. Or so he thought! Barely into his



journey and Peter found his normal route, the Pacific Highway, at a standstill. Up ahead a truck had caused mayhem and there was no sign of an early opening. A few phone calls to find out if there was a short-cut...only to be told he was in for a long day, left Peter no choice but to 'go west' - and keep going west! Some 13 hours after leaving the Opal Cove Resort and Peter stumbled through his front door. 'There was the odd back-road, beaten path and downed tree along the way,' lamented Peter. A true Leyland Brothers adventure - in the guise of a 400km+ detour!



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