

creating the **advantage**

## Fabricators share 'KNOWLEDGE' at ACT/NSW Conference.

*Fabricators can be a fairly secretive lot...after all; it is a very competitive industry they find themselves in. So when you hear that 3 MiTek fabricators are not only prepared to talk about their operations - but also share output data, EqA rates and production procedures, it's quite a coup for a MiTek Conference and those attending. Such was the case at MiTek's ACT & Southern NSW Conference; held late in 2014 at the Best Western Garden City Motel in Narrabundah, ACT.*



Continuing on with the popular: 'Whole of House, Whole of Business' theme; the conference attracted more than 30 guests (including 6 MiTek staff). Registration was at 12.30, giving those who had to travel some distance a chance attend without having to spend too much time behind the wheel in the dark. There was a lot to cover - so it was straight down to business, with Peter Hutchison welcoming all.

Tim Rossiter opened, with a brief but concise overview on the latest developments in Products & Engineering. He then followed with a presentation on Systems & Machinery. Mark Smiles took OptiFlow Scheduler through its paces including a review of recent additional features and how some current users are exploiting them - serving as the perfect segue to Tim's return talk on the importance of 'Knowing your Business.' This is where the first of the MiTek fabricators took centre stage. 'George Prothero (Owner of Alpine TrussPty Ltd in Wangaratta) has built a very successful business from the ground up,' said Tim. 'His experience in growing your business and knowing your business is invaluable. George is committed to improving the sustainability of our industry, not just his own business...that's why he was prepared to



# ACT/NSW Conference Continued

travel interstate to share his knowledge with others - an incredibly generous gesture,' added Tim. George showed working spreadsheets with real figures relating to real jobs - all to demonstrate how working smart can have a positive effect on output. 'This was a fantastic insight into plant management,' added Tim.

A short break for afternoon tea and a chance to stretch-the-legs beckoned.

Richard Moulton re-opened proceedings with a review of Sapphire Management. He was accompanied by the second participating fabricator: Darren Campbell, (Managing Director of The Truss & Frame Factory, Bathurst). 'He is a stickler for systems,' said Tim - 'he just loves them! Darren has been involved as Sapphire has developed - in particular, Sapphire Management. So much so, he is now using it to run the management side of his business day-to-day,' added Tim. Darren, like George earlier, was very transparent about how the system worked for both him and his team; presenting real life case scenarios and how they were implemented into his operations.

Richard then covered the last topic for the day: Sapphire Structure. Ray Nelson, Senior Estimator & Detailer at Oxley Timber in Bowral shared his experience with a down-to-earth, factual explanation of Structure and the advantages he saw it delivering. 'Perhaps the most comforting comment he made was: how easy they found the transition from MiTek 20/20 to Sapphire Structure,' said Tim.

'All three fabricators were incredibly open about their businesses, their operational procedures and their data - and they weren't afraid to take questions and more importantly, give frank, honest answers,' said Tim. Peter agreed: 'fabricators have expressed an interest to be included as presenters in these conferences and I think it's a fantastic forum for our



customers to hear directly from their peers. This was about information sharing for a common benefit. It really worked extremely well.' That's the sentiment Peter heard well into the evening as MiTek had organised several tables for dinner at a local restaurant, Belluci's in Manuka.

A few partners joined the conference contingent for an evening of fine Italian dining and friendly banter - with most calling it stumps at around 10. Some were in for a long innings though...as crowds pouring out from nearby Manuka oval (where Australia had just trounced South Africa in a one day match) seemed to inspire them for a 'few' more cleansing ales. Asked if MiTek intended to continue this successful conference format Peter revealed: 'this was only done with the very grateful participation of George, Darren and Ray. I'd love to say yes - but I think it definitely shows: MiTek need to keep coming up with something different to ensure our customers get the most out of each and every conference,' added Peter. 'We're already planning the first of our conferences for 2015 and anticipate it will be just as well received as this conference was!'



# Footy Tipping for 2014



**With the completion of the AFL season, the winner of the popular and hotly contested MiTek Footy Tipping competition for 2014 was: Ryan Kelly from Precise Prefabs (Vic)**

In second place we had Paul McElhinney from Bowens Timbertruss Geelong while third and fourth spots were taken by Lyn Merchant, also from Bowens Timbertruss and Justen Jackson from Capeview Frames & Trusses respectively.

Congratulations and thanks to all participants for this year and we look forward to testing our skills in 2015.

# Unmasking some fun.

MiTek have hosted some very impressive events over the years - so it came as no real surprise when staff at MiTek Queensland decided to throw an official MiTek Masquerade Ball. Traditionally a feature of the carnival season in 15th century Renaissance Italy...in particular, Venice, Masquerade Balls call (sometimes) for elaborate costumes AND a mask. Fortunately for the 80 attendees of this ball the dress code was after 5, but masks were definitely encouraged.

Held at the impressive Brisbane Marriot Hotel, overlooking the picturesque Brisbane



River, the evening started early (6pm) with pre-dinner drinks. After a chance for MiTek staff to mingle with customers and their partners, it was time to move into the main ballroom. A formal, sit-down, three course feast awaited, plus an impressive comedic and illusionist performance. There was a DJ to keep the dance floor moving, while others opted to table-hop the night away. For most, masks had well and truly been removed...against tradition, well before midnight!



'It was meant to be a bit of fun and a chance to say thankyou to our customers and their partners - and MiTek staff' said Wayne Hondow. 'It was great to see how many made an effort.' Whilst all enjoyed the night, there are no hints of it becoming an annual event. 'This was meant to be something special - so I think we will keep it that way; maybe try something different next year. Special thanks has to go to Kayleen Schwartz for all her efforts organising and coordinating the night,' added Wayne.



# And the skies parted...



*All week it had rained heavily in Sydney and surrounding suburbs. The forecast for MiTek's annual NSW Golf Day was bleak - flooding was predicted in several outlying areas. It appeared as though the perfect run of sunny, cloudless days for this much-anticipated event were over. The end was nigh! But then as if by Divine Intervention the sun rose - 'and the clouds receded like scrolls being rolled up.' 'I couldn't believe it, we had this perfect window of opportunity for a great event,' said Tim Rossiter - 'and, looking back, I think it rained for the next few days after the golf!'*

More than 40 players, including some MiTek staff ventured to the Glenmore Heritage Valley Golf Course in Mulgoa...the regular venue. Boasting a great view and 27 challenging holes, this course has proved a favourite over the years. Only 18 holes were needed for the 4 ball Ambrose format. The teams included some regulars...and a few new faces to the NSW event; most notably, Geoff and Sue Holland who had travelled all the way from Bendigo Truss in central Victoria. 'Geoff and Sue both love their golf; I don't think it would take too much arm-twisting to get them to play a game,' laughed Peter Hutchison. Several NSW fabricators had come some distance too - from as far north as Taree and south as Wollongong.

Registration, coffee and a quick chance to get reacquainted was at 7.15am - with a shotgun start at 8.00am. The golf was interrupted by moments of brilliance (mainly from Steve Turner) and for others only 'Divine Intervention' could save them...but didn't! 'It was a lot of fun,' added Tim. Andrew Bricknell agreed, adding: 'these events are very important and an excellent chance for me to spend some valuable one-on-one time with our



NSW fabricators.' It was Andrew's 5th consecutive NSW golf day!

Lunchtime came too quickly - with the gods still shining on the day. It was time to recall and reward the morning's events. As the aroma of a welcome lunch wafted across the 18th hole, you could already hear some lamenting or lauding their performances.

1st place: GEM Frame and Truss team: David Hewitt, Ashley Quirk, Barry Warren and Danny Bright

2nd place: Westview Frames & Trusses team: Wayne Brady, Mike Alexander, Steve Turner and Scott Plumber

3rd place: Precision Frame & Truss team: Bill Plesko, Julie Plesko, Peter Hutchison and Stuart Branch

NAGA Award: Trueform Frames & Trusses team: Bill Twitchen, Gilbert Hancock, Tony Wilson...and Shan Sudar

Longest drives: Rob Armour and Steve Turner

Nearest the Pin: Danny Bright and Steve Turner

NOTE: Even though regular NAGA recipient, Shan managed to improve his standings this year by one (coming in second last), he was still awarded the NAGA mantle. 'Some traditions should never be tampered with,' joked Tim.

On a more serious note though: 'It's 25 years next year,' exclaimed Tim. 'We want a huge turnout next year. The event has already been booked and we're looking to up-the-ante with prizes and surprises on the day. This will definitely be a case of: first come, first served - so book early to ensure you and your team are guaranteed a spot,' stressed Tim. 'It will be one to remember.'

Peter Hutchison closed the day, thanking all who came and presenting anniversary plaques to the following long term MiTek fabricators:

Neil Phillips - Truss-T-Frame - 25 years

Troy Carrol - Campbelltown Frame & Truss - (belated) 20 years

Wayne Brady - Westview Frames & Trusses - 20 years



# The pretend plant...with real issues!



*The latest MiTek conference to be held in Orange in Central NSW utilised the same venue as several times before: The Central Caleula Motor Lodge; but that was where similarities to any past meetings ceased. This time the format was designed to cater specifically to the audience attending - small to medium fabricators. 'It was a deliberate decision to create a tailored, targeted conference, one that might prove more relevant for the fabricators who had registered to attend,' said Tim Rossiter.*

The scenario for the day revolved around a 'fictitious fabrication plant' based heavily on real data and real day-to-day operational, manufacturing and management challenges. 'We created a true-to-life 'truss-only plant' (Get Trussed) - even an imaginary manager (Grant). We established what type of equipment the plant used, the operational procedures it applied and the staff employed,' added Tim. 'In 4 hours we took attendees through a series of possible situations which might occur in your typical plant over the course of 12 months.' It took everyone through what might happen; step-by-step, week-by-week, month-by-month...creating a believable story in parallel with their prefabrication plants!

Peter Hutchison was very impressed with how the day panned out: 'Tim, Bruce Wells (FSM & MiTek NSW's IT guru) and Mark Smiles put a lot of work into this - and it really came together extremely well. They took their audience on a real 'life-of-a-truss-plant' journey...it was a eye-opener for some.'

Past formats have seen MiTek presenters focus on a particular segment without it necessarily relating back to a sequence of events. Presenting in 'blocks' or 'units' like this is often an ideal way to educate and inform a broad-based audience to a specific product, service or system - but might not be the best way to talk to a core group or target market.

'This new format allowed everyone to see how things could unravel in a plant and how, with the proper tools, training and systems; sometimes dramatic changes could and/or should be implemented...all with the aim to increase output and profitability of a plant,' said Tim. 'It gave us the opportunity to build a case study over a period of time and discuss what might occur and how each and every problem could become an opportunity to improve and improvise.'

SnapShot, ProfitCentre, Truss Plant Analysis, ideal and achievable EqA, OptiFlow, OptiFlow Scheduler, MiTek 20/20, BatchCut - and several machinery options were all interwoven into the new format. 'Bottlenecking - both good and bad were included,' added Tim. 'We really wanted to create a warts-and-all picture for those fabricators present. We wanted them to see how poor knowledge gathering could give an unreal view of a plant's efficiencies, how to identify things that are done well or where things need to improve.'



# Riding for other's lives.



Unlike some past MiTek conferences where a presenter might talk for an hour, then open the floor to questions from the audience, this new format welcomed vigorous debate and input throughout. 'We wanted those present to throw us a few curve balls, to create what-ifs?', said Tim. 'It made the scenarios more real, more challenging. It also proved: through inclusion, MiTek can give fabricators both large...or small, the tools, advice and systems to get more out of their plant and to make their business more sustainable.'

Richard Moulton gave everyone an update on MiTek SAPPHERE™ and how it would improve plant operations; then Tim took centre stage to review the day's presentation. 'We're the first to admit: this new conference format isn't right for everyone - but the basic rules are the same,' said Tim in closing. As for those who attended? The response seemed an overwhelming 'yes' as putting much of what MiTek had to offer into 'context' really struck a chord. 'I think we owe it to our fabricators to try and make the education process as interesting, as relevant and as easy to understand as possible - this conference was a great step forward,' said Peter.

The challenge, looking ahead, might be to see where 'Get Trussed' is in 12 months time and how 'Grant' is getting on with the changes suggested?

Peter closed the day thanking all who came and presented Anniversary plaques to the following longterm Mitek fabricators:

Ben Perry - Hay Timber Frame & Truss - 25 years

Joshua Barlow - Hitek Frame & Truss - 10 years

***EJ Jones, Brad Montgomery (Detailer Bay Timber), Ben Cairns (Detailer Bay Timber), Linc Gossage (afternoon manager Bay Timber), Terry Jones (my husband), Erin Doyle (we train with Erin), Michelle Pepperall (Nova Cranes and we also train with Michelle).***

***Last year some staff and friends from Bay Timber & Building Supplies thought it might be a good idea to participate in the MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Gong Ride - one of Australia's most respected and spectacular one-day community bike rides. Fortunately they have short memories...and decided to do it again - with a few more participants.***

Over its 32 year history the MS Gong Ride has become a Sydney cycling tradition famous for its atmosphere, spectacular scenery through national park and ocean road, wonderful volunteers and the generosity of its riders and supporters.

Since 1980, hundreds of thousands of cyclists have taken the challenge of riding to Wollongong and raised over \$30 million dollars to support people with MS.

The event was held on Sunday, November 2nd with nearly 10,000 lycra-clad participants assembling at Sydney Park from 6am for the 4 hour plus trek south to Wollongong. Elechia Jones (EJ), the Financial Controller at Bay Timber is no stranger to physical extremes (an avid Triathlete) but admits the constant headwind left her and the rest of her group well worn after a gruelling 90km ride. 'I don't like the wind in my face...and I definitely don't like hills,' she exclaimed.

EJ had triathlete training friends, Michelle and Erin, husband Terry and workmates Linc, Ben and Brad to keep her company all the way - so spirits were kept high. 'We weren't out there to break any records (although some do take it quite seriously),' added EJ. 'For us it was about getting out there for a good cause and taking in the experience - enjoying several stops along the way. There's some pretty impressive views along that stretch of the coast.'

The race finished in Thomas Dalton Park in the northern suburbs of Wollongong. Awaiting EJ and all the other riders was a welcome (healthy) lunch and the chance to rest some very weary muscles. A carnival atmosphere had been organised with a wide array of food vendors, rides for kids and some live music. 'We didn't stick around,' said EJ - 'as all were keen to get back home.' Would they do it again: 'absolutely - we're already planning to get an even bigger group together next year to try and raise more money.' For this year's event EJ and her friends raised over \$1,800!



# 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.*

## VIC



Capeview Frames & Trusses - Peter Sherrin, Keith Donohue, Mark Warren, Scott Anderson - 35 years



Leonard Andrew Walker Pty Ltd - Rod Papworth - 15 years

## NSW



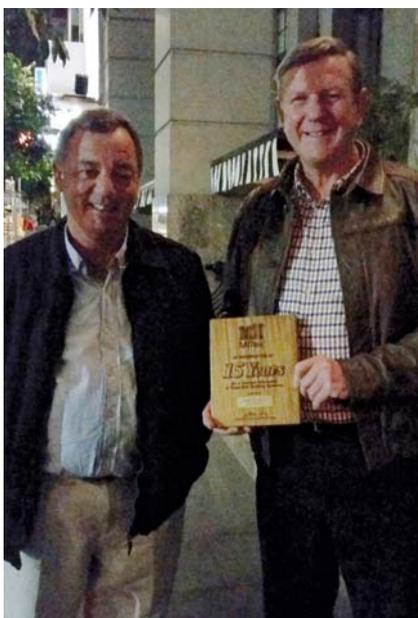
Apex Wall & Truss Pty Ltd - Paul and Audrey Bastow 10 Years



Accurate Roof Trusses - Andrew Behmer - 30 years



Josh Barlow, Hitek Frame & Truss - 10 years



Trusses Plus - Doug Burgin - 15 years



Dona Homes (Aust) Pty Ltd - David Dickson - 25 years

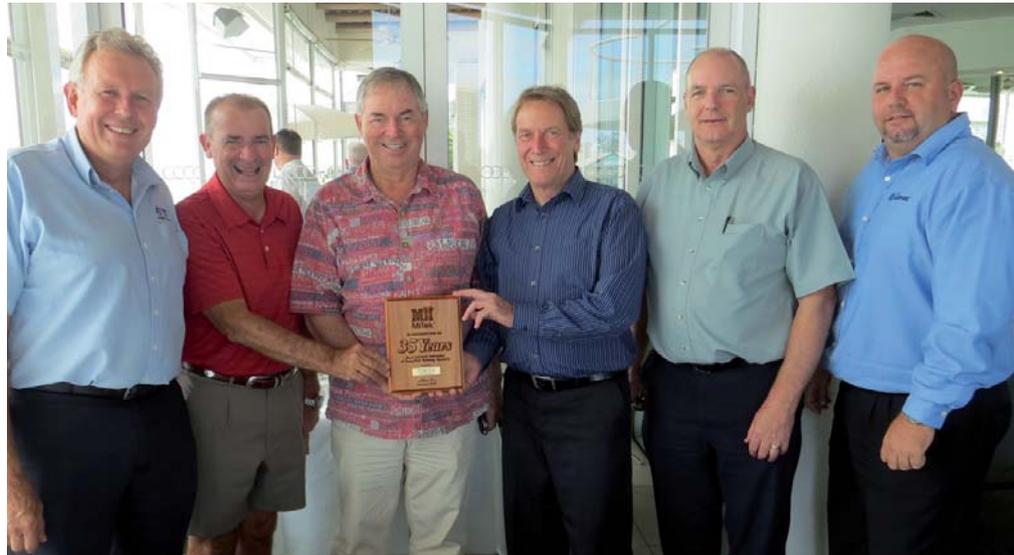


Ben Perry, Hay Timber Frame & Truss - 25 years



Neil Phillips, Truss-T-Frame Timbers - 25 years

Qld



Peter Beverland, Tom Donohue, Leon Hill, Australian Timber & Trusses - 35 years



Troy Carroll, Campbelltown Frame & Truss - 20 years



Bob Sorenson, Kym Bensein Hervey Bay Roof Trusses - 25 years



Wayne Brady, Westview Frames & Trusses - 20 years



Lindsay McBryde, John Piccinch - Mini-Truss - 10 years

# MiTek Queensland Fabricator NRL Tipping for 2013/2014

*Although a little late we can still acknowledge the winners of the 2013 season which is now a long time behind us. The winners of the popular and hotly contested MiTek QLD NRL Footy Tipping competition for that season were:*

## *In first place*



Lee Van Embden - DTM Timber pictured with Brett Bolden receiving his prize - a North QLD Cowboys Home game membership.

## *In second place*



Rob Taylor - Redland Bay Roof Trusses who won a Brisbane Broncos Awesome Foursome Membership

## *And in Third Place*



Peter Smoothy from Simon Home Frame & Truss who won a Supporter Jersey of his choice - the selection being a Qld State of Origin jersey.

## *And for the 2014 NRL Footy Tipping Competition year we have:*

### *In first place:*



Sean Hale, Toowoomba Truss and Frame with his prize, 2 x Full season memberships to Brisbane Broncos

## *In second place:*



Terry Howard, Howard and Sons Stanthorpe who won 2 x Brisbane Broncos 4 game memberships.

## *And in 3rd Place*



Peter Smoothy, Simon Home Timber, Frame and Truss Toowoomba with his prize, a Supporters Jersey of his choice.

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