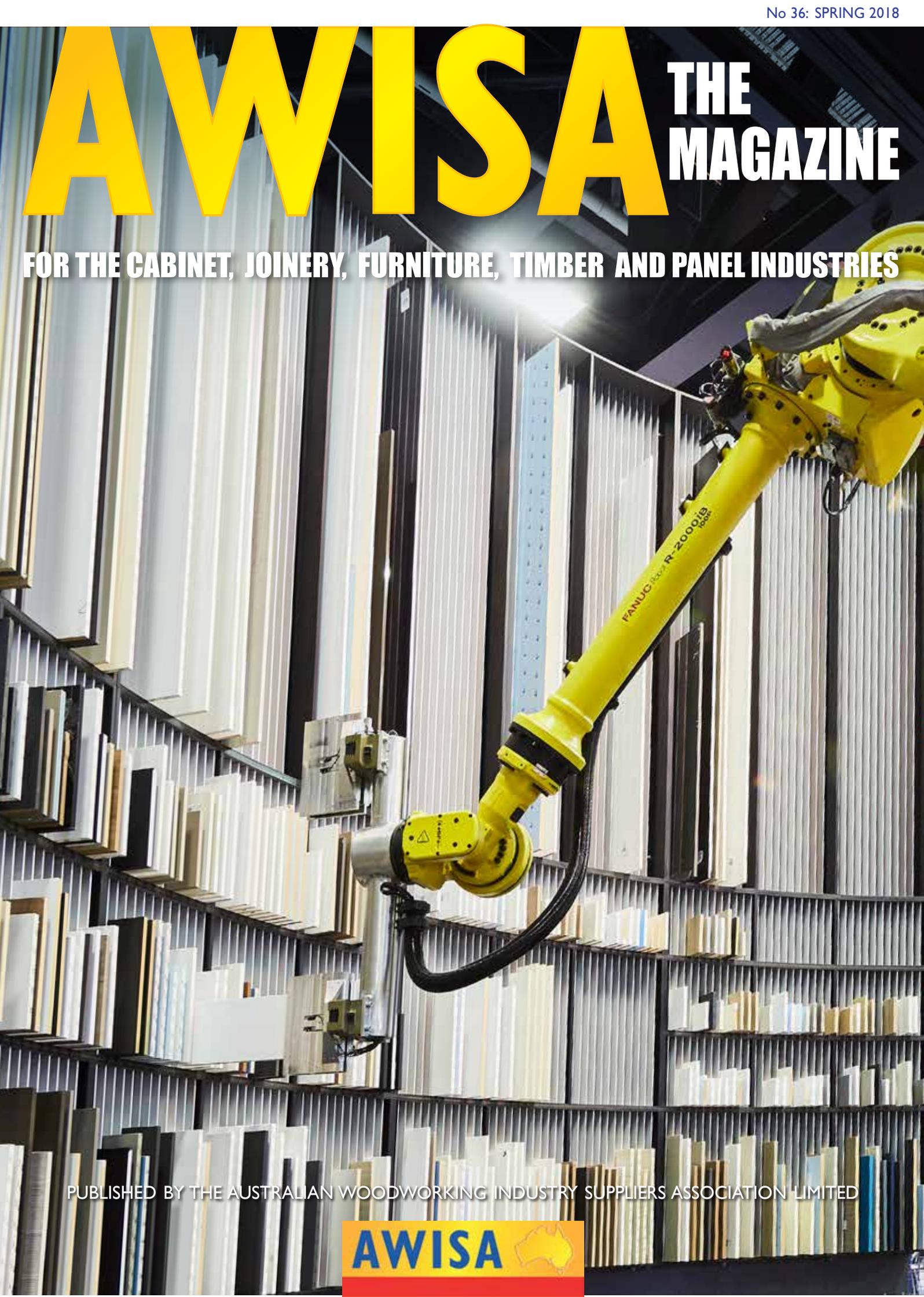


# AWISA THE MAGAZINE

FOR THE CABINET, JOINERY, FURNITURE, TIMBER AND PANEL INDUSTRIES



FANUC R-2000iB

PUBLISHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN WOODWORKING INDUSTRY SUPPLIERS ASSOCIATION LIMITED

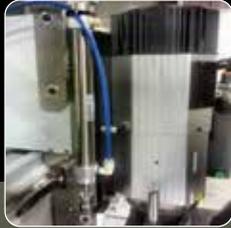


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# AWISA THE MAGAZINE

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Published by the Australian  
Woodworking Industry Suppliers  
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aluminium, plastic, stone and panel  
processing industries. Members include  
suppliers of machinery, materials, fittings,  
software and services. Membership and  
advertising enquiries are welcome.

## DEAR READER,

The AWISA trade show is over for another two years,  
and what a show it was. A new venue with a different  
configuration to any other venue in Australia presented some  
challenges. And everyone had an opinion about the show  
being split over two levels.

Some exhibitors and some visitors have expressed  
disappointment in the fact that the product categories were  
split. But the vast majority enjoyed the layout. Especially the  
exhibitors in AWISA Design, who for the first time ever did  
not have to contend with noise and dust from machinery –  
not that there is that much dust these days. Indeed, walking  
into the AWISA Design level was the first time ever that I  
have heard the murmur of conversations at an AWISA show.

I greatly appreciated some of the emails we received after  
the show. A Victorian visitor wrote: "I just wanted to say a  
massive thank you for putting on another awesome AWISA.  
I was at the event every day and enjoyed every moment. It's  
fantastic to see that many from the industry come together  
to showcase the latest and greatest, but also to share their  
knowledge. The effort the suppliers put in is second to none  
and greatly appreciated. It's a fantastic industry we are in and  
I feel very proud to be a small part of it. Many thanks and  
can't wait till the next."

And another Victorian visitor appreciated the fact that  
AWISA tries to make things as seamless as possible for  
interstate visitors. I summarise the comments as: "Online  
registration was a breeze; the airport shuttle bus was  
amazing; the luggage storage was very helpful; staff were  
most helpful with information and directions; the quality of  
exhibits was again impressive; and free food, coffee, water a  
plenty with exhibitors really making people feel welcome."

So, thank you to the 10,000 in the Australasian woodworking  
industry who took the time away from their businesses to  
attend. See you back in Sydney from 1-4 July 2020.

## Geoff Holland

General manager  
Australian Woodworking Industry  
Suppliers Association Limited

FRONT COVER: Robots were a theme at  
AWISA 2018. Shown here is Crossmuller's  
Hive, a vertical panel management system  
on The Wood Tech Group stand.

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[www.awisa.com](http://www.awisa.com)



by Rob Ditessa

# Winya and Manapan

## A tale of two Indigenous furniture businesses

**WINYA AND MANAPAN** are two Indigenous furniture businesses that strive for more than profitability, and their success fosters the increasing participation of Indigenous tradespeople in the industry.

Winya's showroom and offices are located in Sydney's bustling CBD. Debbie Barwick, a Kamilaroi woman from Bora Crossing (NSW) and entrepreneur, and Greg Welsh, a former CEO at Sebel Furniture, established Winya in 2015. Welsh explains to AWISA that the company supplies office and boardroom furniture, and supports training and jobs for young Indigenous people. "We make money. We are not a charity, but it is important to understand that what separates us is that we are Indigenous owned, and we made a decision that we are going to be majority Indigenous staffed. We also made a decision that wherever we can, we will engage Indigenous suppliers as part of our chain."

Located on Milingimbi Island (NT), Manapan is a high-end furniture making business operating under the auspices of the Yolngu people's Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA). Mark White, who founded the leading fit-out service company Ramvek, advises Manapan. He tells

Djulyandawuy  
Wanambi (Jason).

Photo by Martin Ewart  
(Manapan)



AWISA "I guess the way we measure success would be by the number of people we are employing. What we're doing is making beautiful furniture. We're using architects and furniture designers from around Australia and we are getting the local guys to build the furniture. The furniture is all built by them. We've got a master craftsman up from Melbourne who is teaching them the skills. We're giving all these young kids a purpose up there, and it's getting them off the welfare chain."

All the profits are re-invested back into Manapan, White stresses, and if they were to receive government assistance, it would last for a while, then run out, and it would be over. Welsh echoes the sentiment. "We do not receive any government funding assistance. I really want to dispel any idea about funding. We get no favours from government, other than the fact that we get an opportunity to pitch."

### Blueprint for success

In the government's policy there is not enough emphasis on creating a business that is going to last and employ people into the future, White suggests. Against this backdrop, his aim is that once the Manapan furniture business has been up and running for a while, they will blueprint it to use in other communities for other ventures, be it arts, metal works, or any trade. It is a blueprint for running a commercial business so it lasts. Everyone in Milingimbi is behind it, and they agree and understand it, and the employees work hard and want to get a high standard, he says.

"You've got to remember that this is a culture where they wouldn't have seen their parents or grandparents working because it's a welfare culture, but we're working with CDP (Community Development Program). So on Milingimbi Island, we get the guys from CDP, and they work with us and if they are keen and want to keep working, and we've got the work there, we can employ them. We're employing six at the moment, and we're employing them correctly as far as wages, superannuation, and holiday pay, go. We're introducing them into the path of work," says White.

### Cultural issues

Welsh says as more Indigenous people enter and learn skills and practices in modern factories and businesses, then that becomes what they are used to, and they will go on to run bigger businesses or move up on the business ladder and then bring other Indigenous people behind them. But there

are differences between Indigenous and white culture, such as the mourning process. "If an aunty or uncle dies, there's a mourning process in the Indigenous community, which is far, far more symbolic for them, than anything is in any Christian faith to a large extent. They will need to be away from the

---

*we are a resilient  
organisation...  
we put our  
money on the  
table*

---

work place for a few days. So what will happen is that you get an Indigenous kid who's scared to tell the boss he's not coming in tomorrow. He doesn't turn up tomorrow or for a few days. Then suddenly sometimes they don't come back to work because they're embarrassed to go back and face the boss. So we've had to be a far more resilient organisation and an accommodating organisation but that's part of the journey we've decided to take. Some of the things we've decided to do don't make us a charity. That's the journey we've decided to take."

**Apprenticeships**

For Manapan, getting apprenticeships for the six trained assistants is the biggest hurdle at the moment. White says it is very hard to give them apprenticeship training. "We're striving to bring them up to a stage where they could work anywhere in Australia. Because Aboriginal people are very much family bodies, they don't want to leave their families. They want to live and work on Milingimbi. So, this is why we're trying to bring a manufacturing business to the island. To teach these kids, we've got a master craftsman, a cabinet maker who has been working for 30 odd years, who decided to help me set this up. He lives up there six weeks on and two off, and he's teaching these guys the finer arts of building furniture. It's a long term project. We've got a group of second year apprentices, and their skills



are developing because they're loving what they're doing."

Isreal Gawuthal.

Welsh explains that part of the arrangement with product makers in Winya's supply chain, is that they put on an Indigenous trainee in their business. Winya finds a trainee, pays an Indigenous recruiting firm to screen the trainee and conducts a mentoring program to make sure that the trainee is committed to staying. "We put our money on the table. That is quite unusual. I don't think anyone is doing that today," he says.

Photo by Martin Ewart  
(Manapan)

The other major feature that Welsh says distinguishes Winya is its training programs in Darwin and Canberra gaols. Winya put ▶

Milingimbi elder Keith Lapalung, (former Australian cricket Vice-Captain) David Warner, and Manapan founder, Mark White.

Photo by Martin Ewart (Manapan)



A section of the fit-out for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Canberra. Winya worked closely with the team to provide a design with a natural look.

Photo by Winya



(Left to right) Josiah Baker, Djuliyandawuy Wanambi, Isreal Gawuthal (kneeling), Troy Gondarra, Robert Crisfield, Stanley Djingarryny, Mark White.

Photo by Martin Ewart (Manapan)

▶ together a program specifically with NT Department of Corrections who then worked with the local TAFE providing Certificate courses in woodwork with the long term objective that people leaving gaol with woodwork skills could find a job. "We've got desks that we used to ship from Brisbane and Sydney and Melbourne now made in Darwin for the Department of Defence across the northern end of Australia," he sums up.

**Triumph over distance**

Winya and Manapan have each in their own way triumphed over the tyranny of distance to create quality products for their clients and jobs for their communities.

Milingimbi is an island in the Crocodile Island group, 500 kilometres east of Darwin. White says it is the most remote part of Australia. The only way to move anything to or from the island is by the weekly barge service. Manapan furniture is moved to Darwin, and then transported by road to Melbourne for distribution. As it is impossible to compete with the larger scale assembly line manufacturers or cheap imports, Manapan decided on producing quality impressive products that would draw repeat customers who want high end furniture. He says, "At the moment, we've got more work than we can handle, which is pretty fantastic. We haven't got a big capacity, but we're

A bespoke boardroom table made for the ATO in Canberra. Detailed steel alloy frame-work was coupled with high grade veneer and solid timber edging. Greg Welsh says, "This is one of Australia's largest and most beautiful board tables near 7 metres long and 6m wide with perfectly book matched veneer."

Photo by Winya

Isreal Gawuthal

Photo by Martin Ewart (Manapan)



The Winya team holding the prestigious 2017 Sustainability Award for their 'Arnhem Lounge' with timbers sourced from Arnhem Land.

Photo by Winya



very happy at where we're at, at the moment. And we're still going strong, which is good."

Welsh explains proudly that the company has the ability, for example, to organise the manufacture, delivery and installation of 500 workstations today. In its business model, Winya engages manufacturers to make its product so that effectively Winya can claim a bigger scale production than anyone in Australia. Winya relies on its suppliers to do the right thing in the first place but it uses only ISO 9000 certified companies because they tie into its own ISO 9000 system, and Winya audits its suppliers. That is part of its quality control as well, he says.

Winya's local installation teams inspect the product before they install it to let Winya address any problems. The quality of its installation teams and the relationships in the chain pre-empt issues. "We've got the guy who's the installer who cares that it's a job that's going into that community because he's part of that community. So he makes sure it gets done well because he's the bloke that they all have a beer with at the local pub, whereas bigger companies fly in their installation teams to do these jobs. So it's cheaper for the customer and it gets a better result for the customer and it is increasing local Indigenous employment," says Welsh.

He adds Winya has identified all the tiny places around Australia where they have customers and how to best service them. It has taken about a year, and the work continues to develop what he says is probably the best regional and remote area logistics capability of anyone in Australia. "We know who the guy is who delivers that desk, say, to Tennant Creek who can actually install it for us, as opposed to putting it on to a main-stream courier and hoping that it gets ready and transferred six times through various warehouses and doesn't

get damaged at every step. We do everything, and that's why it works for us."

While Winya outsources its production, it designs its own products and has patents on them. For instance, says Welsh, Winya has done a range of workstations that overcome the problem of finger traps and the guillotine effect when the adjacent workstation goes up and down. "It's a quite simple innovation with desks, and shapes. We call them safety desks. They're little things but they add up to being quite a valuable feature for the customer."

#### Looking forward

Welsh sums up that many architectural designers still pigeon-hole Winya as doing craft while it is a serious furniture manufacturer. "We'll do north of five million revenue this year, from starting out two years ago. There's a journey there, that is harder because up to now Indigenous workers have not been part of this industry. I need to help these people through this because otherwise we're not achieving what we set out to achieve. And we're trying to achieve more. We're not a charity. It's a hand up. It's not a hand out."

In a wide-ranging conversation White reflects, "I would like to think we will earn a reputation for beautiful furniture, and I'd like to think our range will grow, and people will look forward to our next product. There are pieces that are going to be made only in small volumes, and there are certainly one-off pieces. We'd like to think they'd be collector's pieces. The furniture we're building is furniture that is going to become heirlooms. It's not going to be furniture which is just thrown out. It's furniture built to last, and handed down through the generations." ■



News and video

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# Figures tell the story

## certainly the biggest show ever



**IF FIGURES ARE** the measure of success, the AWISA 2018 exhibition in Sydney was a stunner - breaking all past records. Visitations were up 20 per cent on the Melbourne show in 2016.

Held in Australia's premier exhibition, convention and entertainment precinct, the new multi-billion dollar International Convention Centre (ICC) at Sydney's Darling Harbour the 2018 Sydney show represented a quantum leap into the future.

AWISA chairman Brett Ambrose said the Sydney Darling Harbour facility is absolutely world class. "Plus it had all the benefits for visitors of being adjacent to Sydney's CBD, public transport, hotels, restaurants, harbour cruises and other attractions."

He was enthusiastic about the success of the show. "I was delighted with exhibitor enthusiasm for the new venue. AWISA 2018 received recognition as the largest trade show of its type ever held in Australia."

Mr Ambrose said visitors were truly amazed at the quality of exhibitor's sites. "It was more like a motor show with many exhibitors having world class sites."

He said that from a commercial point-of-view the feedback he has received confirmed that the show venue exceeded expectations and was particularly industry participant-friendly.

"The show and venue offered a 'refuelling' stop and meeting place. It also provided opportunities for companies to hold their own side events, and for industry-related trade associations to network. This was a prominent and pleasing feature of the show, and one we will to continue to encourage," he said.

Features of AWISA 2018 included 120 companies exhibiting over 28,000 square metres of floor space, and the separation of machinery and design on different levels of the ICC.

Holding the show on two different levels of the ICC was a progressive, innovative move. AWISA Design on the upper floor was away from the working machinery on the first floor and offered plenty of quiet, relaxing spaces.

Some attendees said they found the size of the show over two levels a bit daunting and struggled with navigation despite the small army of people decked out in red AWISA tee shirts to guide people around.

Mr Ambrose said he detected an overwhelming mood of confidence at the show. "Innovative and leading edge - while past shows had been good, this year there was a real confidence in the future of the industry," he said. "The exhibition is a flagship event for industry across Australasia and quite rightly so."

"The show was certainly on a par with the best of the international European shows."

Mr Ambrose said the industry must continue to drive its own destiny. "We need to look after ourselves and not rely on government or others to hold our hand." ■

### AWISA 2020 to take place in Sydney

Following the success of AWISA 2018, the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association Limited has announced that AWISA 2020 will take place from 1-4 July 2020 at the ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre.

by John Halkett

# Get ready - the robots are coming



**IT COULD EITHER** be the stuff of a horror sci-fi movie or the dream of a better tomorrow, but either way the robots are coming and they will be able to think too.

As evidenced at AWISA 2018 in Sydney robotic systems, together with artificial intelligence software, are now firmly established as an integral part of the cabinet making industry.

Australia is certain to follow overseas trends. The Frankfurt-based International Federation of Robotics (IFR) estimates that 9,900 robots were installed in central and eastern Europe in 2017, up 28 per cent from the year before. The IFR projects a 21-per cent compound annual growth rate in robot installations in the region by the end of this decade.

Homag automation specialist Hartmut Schrage and Homag's Australasian managing director Ross Campbell are both enthusiastic about the opportunities robotic development and artificial intelligence are able to offer industrial-scale cabinet making and joinery industries.

"Already robots are more than capable of carrying out heavy repeatable tasks, especially where labour is hard to find. Basically tasks that people just don't want to do," said Mr Campbell.

He said that currently there is an emphasis on statutory robots doing repetitive materials handling and processing tasks. "However, the next generation of robots are likely to include humanoid design, that is, robots that move independently and undertake more complex tasks."

"Also robots will have artificial intelligence capabilities. They will be able to learn and undertake increasingly complex tasks. So we will see robotics pushing the boundaries and being completely integrated with CNC machine manufacturing, resulting in systems connectivity, improved production and greater precision," said Mr Campbell.

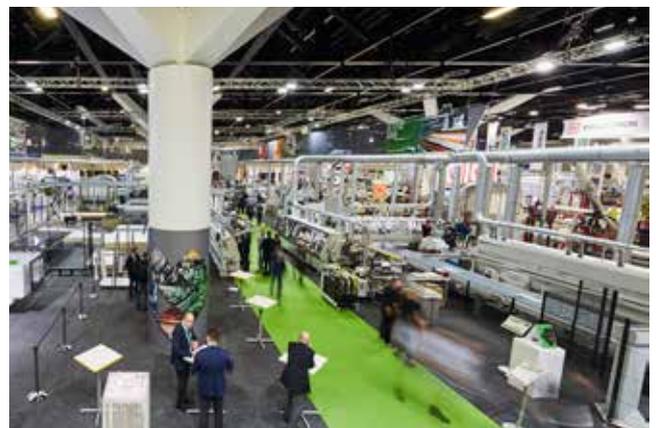
Already robots are able to carry out some complex construction tasks. A new construction method developed by Swiss engineers is using robotic arms to fabricate and assemble the wooden parts of buildings so geometrically complex they would previously have been virtually impossible to construct.

The researchers from science, technology, engineering and mathematics university ETH Zurich named their method Spatial Timber Assembly (STA). The method claims to enable the development of longer lasting, robust buildings much more complex in design than is possible using traditional wooden construction methods, that presents architects with the option of using timber-based material to develop an even greater range of buildings.

The researchers began by developing a computer-based design program to calculate the exact shapes, positions and angles of all parts necessary to create a geometric structure, highly rigid, and with solid load-bearing capabilities. Using this program designers simply need to decide on the shapes needed, and the STA program will make all necessary calculations.

Left: Hartmut Schrage, Homag automation specialist and Ross Campbell, Homag's Australasian managing director enthusiastic about the benefits of automation.

Right: Biesse has developed a cyber-physical assistance system, an artificial intelligence platform with a range of features that enhance interaction between machine processing centres and technical support.



Researchers went on to develop an algorithm that enables precise positioning of all parts using specially designed and built robotic arms. This algorithm continually calculates the arms' motions throughout every stage of construction until each part has been precisely placed.

The Austrian industrial company Hirtenberger has now spent millions of Euros automating two production units at the factory to meet surging demand from the likes of BMW, Mercedes, Volkswagen and Audi. And it's not alone as companies across Eastern Europe are ramping up investment in automation to cope with a labour shortage that started after the 2008 financial crisis, and after curbs were lifted in 2011 on worker flows to richer countries in the European Union.

While policy makers and economists in many parts of the world worry about the potential social negatives of robots displacing humans, in Europe automation is seen as a godsend for companies that want to avoid losing market share.

Even where companies pay attractive wages this doesn't appear to be enough to persuade young people to take up associated jobs, or to make up for demographic trends that indicate a shrinking, aging population. Economists warn the labour shortage could have a crippling effect on some of Europe's economies before the end of this decade. Companies in developed economies, including in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Britain are already complaining about the scarcity of workers.

Meanwhile over at Biesse what is being called a cyber-physical assistance system or Sophia has been developed. This is an artificial intelligence platform with a range of features that enhance interaction between machine processing centres and technical support.

"Now customers have access to a whole host of services that simplify work management and improve the productivity of their machines and systems," states Biesse literature.

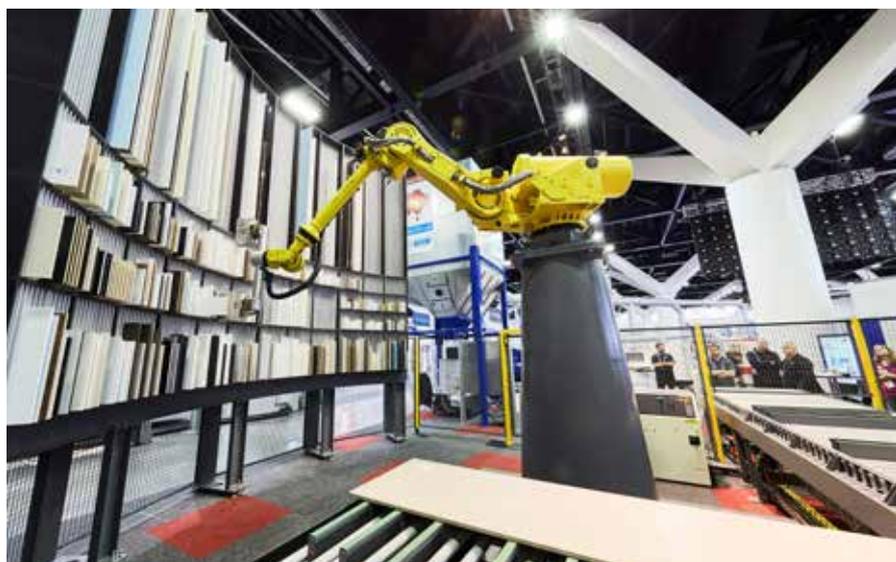
Biesse advice describes Sophia as a digital platform that provides users with access to detailed machine information and initiates concrete actions to optimise performance and monitor the quality of the work produced, anticipating the causes of faults and providing clear solutions to resolve any processing anomalies.

"The data gathered and analysed by artificial intelligence is transformed into useful data to help optimise customer

production and product quality, providing extremely valuable opportunities for growth," says Biesse advice.

Sophia enables access to Biesse's entire interconnected global service network and has access to a web portal, ensuring customers all over the world receive quick and decisive responses and solutions.

The Wood Tech Group introduced the Crossmuller "Hive", a revolutionary vertical panel management system designed and manufactured in Australia for Australian kitchen and joinery production. White HMR carcass material and MDF



colour panel doors can be automatically barcode scanned directly to the Hive to be stored then arranged into cabinet lots and retrieved in order of choice. For example, by job number, box type, or kitchen lot, directly to the assembly line. Daily or hourly production can easily be monitored and updated for effective and efficient delivery times, essentially saving valuable floor space, eliminating trolleys cluttering factory floors.

Robots and artificial intelligence will be coming to your workplace sooner or later, they promise real benefits in terms of productivity, cost efficiencies and labour savings.

However Homag's Ross Campbell reckons managing directors will still be needed at the helm - at least while he is around. ■

The Wood Tech Group's stand featured Crossmuller's Hive, a vertical panel management system designed and manufactured in Australia.



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# Young cabinetmakers and joiners

## train for Worldskills Global Skills Challenge

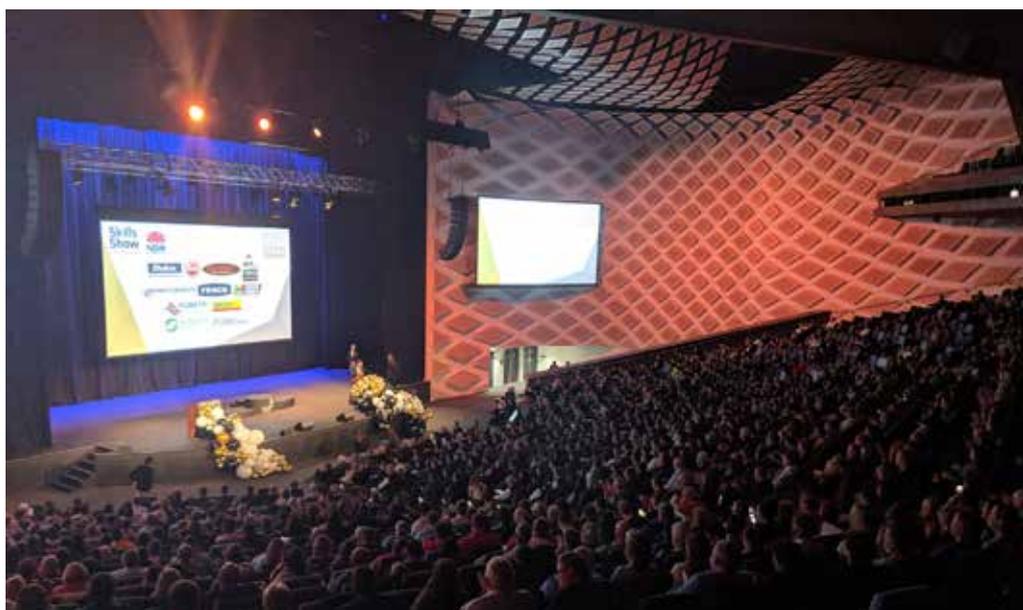
**A MONTH PRIOR** to AWISA 2018 taking place at ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre, the halls filled with the sounds of various activities, including woodworking machinery. The Worldskills Australia National Championships were in town as part of the Skills Show.

During the championships Worldskills selected its Skills Squad team from some of the successful winners. The Skills Squad consists of 23 young Australians covering skills in carpentry, cabinetmaking, joinery, industrial mechanics, refrigeration and air conditioning, beauty therapy, cookery, electrical installation, fashion technology, 3D digital game art, plumbing and heating, automobile technology, bakery, vehicle painting, and bricklaying.

The Skills Squad will train alongside their dedicated experts and mentors for 10 months in the lead up to the WorldSkills International Competition being held in Kazan, Russia in August 2019.

Before the Russian competition the Global Skills Challenge will take place in May 2019 (location to be confirmed in either SA or NSW). This is a four-day training exercise for young people from over 15 WorldSkills member countries to showcase

their skills. The 2019 Global Skills Challenge is a simulated international competition where international guests will compete as part of their training across 20 skills in the lead-up to the 45th WorldSkills International in Russia. For the 23 young Australians (2018 Skills Squad) taking part in the four-days of competition this is the final selection process to determine their place as a Skillaroo and represent Australia at the WorldSkills International Competition. ■



by Rick Lee

# Masters of magic

**DEEP BENEATH** the surface of the earth, far from the warming rays of the sun, there's a magical world where heavenly things are created to the delight of young and old alike. No, I'm not talking about Narnia, Fantasia or Middle Earth, I'm describing the kitchens of the International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC Sydney) and the creations of Pâtissier and Chocolatier, Daria Nechiporenko.

It's extraordinary to think that beneath Sydney's brand new convention centre lies one of the largest commercial kitchens in the southern hemisphere. At over 3,000 square metres, the main kitchen is a hive of activity, twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week. In addition, there are twenty-five finishing kitchens and an 800 square metre kitchen in the ICC Sydney Theatre. Staffed by forty full-time and over one hundred part-time professionals, the facility is a marvel of systematic

organisation, and it needs to be. In the month of May alone, the kitchens catered to eighty different events. Within the first eight months of operation, they catered for almost one million visitors to the centre.

With fresh food brought in from ninety different suppliers, the emphasis is on locally sourced NSW ingredients. Food supplies enter the facility and are immediately separated according to the category they belong to. Raw meats go to separate preparation areas to fish and dairy, vegetables and fresh fruits have their own departments to avoid cross-contamination. Meticulous hygiene control is vital. Every item of food is followed through the system using an electronic temperature monitoring system to ensure optimal storage conditions. Nothing is left to chance.

When AWISA organisers first booked ICC Sydney caterers for an event within the AWISA Design level hosting architects, they were pleased to find chocolates as part of the available menu. Further investigations revealed a surprising capacity for the ICC Sydney kitchens to produce their own unique and mouth-watering creations. Marketing and Communications Manager, Lesley Gurney, took me down to the twilight world of savoury pastries, sweet desserts and chocolate treats, to meet Executive Pastry Chef, Jerry Lagudas, and Jr. Sous Chef, Daria Nechiporenko. I was delighted to find them hard at work in the climate-controlled chocolate room, built specifically for the purpose. Daria explained that temperature and humidity play an important role in producing the finest chocolates.

It is perhaps a measure of the standard of ICC Sydney catering, that 38-year-old Daria was the winner of the Australian heats of The World Chocolate Masters competition, and will represent Australia at the finals in Paris later this year. During the three-day event, Daria will compete against nineteen contestants



from around the world to become the World Chocolate Master. Contestants must produce innovative designs based on the theme, Futropolis, challenging finalists to think about chocolate in relation to our lives in future cities. Designs must be futuristic and display architectural elements, but above all, they must demonstrate innovation in flavour.

When asked why she chose chocolate as her speciality, Daria admitted she fell in love with the alchemy. "You take a few simple ingredients like cocoa powder, butter and sugar, mix them together and magic happens." Daria has been working with chocolate for seven years and says she never tires of the challenge to produce something new. She's inspired by other chefs and also looks to the twenty-year veteran, Jerry Lagudas, for guidance. Jerry brings experience from the world-renowned kitchens of Harrod's of London, and The Atlantis Palm Dubai among others, to the ICC Sydney pastry kitchen.

When it comes to inspiration for her designs, Daria likes to take simple forms and refine them. "I'm always looking for new ideas," she says, as I watch her scrape the excess hot chocolate from a shell-shaped mould; I start to salivate and can already hear the snap of tempered chocolate. "Flavour is the most important thing of course," she says. "but it must be elegant and appetising." Ingredients like nuts, spices and fruits are kept in minimum quantities. Daria explains that they need to be as fresh as possible to maintain the quality.

As the chocolates are displayed and we prepare for the photographs, Jerry adds a touch of theatre with the addition of dry ice, creating a swirling fog that spills from the table and down to the floor. I can't help thinking of Daria's earlier comments, there really is a touch of magic in this fine culinary art. ■



by Diwa Hopkins  
Economist  
Housing Industry Association



# House prices are falling and that's good for affordability

**EASING DWELLING** price pressures continue to provide some affordability relief for home buyers. Following a number of years of strong price growth that had eroded affordability, this is now levelling off and in some markets, prices are declining. National dwelling prices were unchanged over the June 2018 quarter and up by just 1.9 per cent over the year. This, in addition to average earnings now growing faster than dwelling prices, has driven improvements in the HIA affordability Index. Affordability improved over June 2018 quarter and also over the year to June (the index registered increases of 0.4 per cent and 0.8 per cent, respectively).

At \$555,323, the estimated national median dwelling price gives rise to a monthly mortgage repayment of \$2,752, under current interest rate settings. Such a repayment would account for 40.1 per cent of an average wage. While this is well above the 30 per cent threshold – what is typically considered a share of income that is affordable – it is a much-needed improvement on previous quarters.

Across the capital cities, affordability has improved over the past year in Darwin (+7.4 per cent), Sydney (+6.8 per cent), Perth (+6.2 per cent), Brisbane (2.1 per cent) and Canberra (1.0 per cent). Affordability deteriorated in Hobart (-10.5 per cent), Adelaide (1.7 per cent) and in Melbourne (-1.3 per cent).

Despite declining dwelling prices bringing about very welcome improvements to affordability – particularly in the Sydney market (with affordability improvements in Melbourne on track to follow) – it is the source of much angst. Headlines feature weekly, if not daily on the state of these cities' respective housing markets with varying prognoses.

In Sydney, dwelling prices are now 4.5 per cent lower than a year previously, while in Melbourne prices have been falling since late last year.

The evolution of the dwelling price cycle into the current downturn was widely anticipated and can be considered as a matter of routine. Typically a downturn lasts around 12 to 18 months, with the size of the fall modest relative to the immediately preceding increase.

Thus far the current cycle is playing out accordingly. The latest price reductions follow an upswing that produced an 80 per cent increase in Sydney prices and a 60 per cent increase in Melbourne prices.

There is good reason to expect the current cycle to continue to transpire similarly to previous cycles. That is, there is

strong evidence of an even balance between the underlying demand and supply of housing in these key markets which will underscore a regular price cycle. In Sydney and Melbourne in particular, rental price growth has remained steady at just over 2 per cent per annum. That rental price growth has been steady at a rate just above inflation despite large variations in dwelling prices and the coming online of a large stock of new housing indicates that supply is well matched with the underlying level of demand.

In Sydney in particular the market has only recently reached balance, following years of a persistent undersupply in housing, placing strong upward pressure on dwelling and rental prices. The hallmark of this undersupply is that on average Sydney has been home to the strongest rental and dwelling price increases among all the capital cities over the past ten years.

Of course there are the outlier markets where wider economic problems are afflicting the housing markets and dwelling price downturns a transpiring as more protracted than has historically been the case. In Perth and Darwin, both rents and dwelling prices have been declining for over three years. From the strict point of view of affordability, this has offered improvements for both renters and home buyers (in markets that had previously been notorious for poor affordability).

It is though an unfortunate symptom of the resource boom and bust cycles, the latter of which is currently plaguing both of these cities. In particular population dynamics have followed these cycles and currently both cities are seeing more people leave for interstate than are arriving, resulting in spare capacity in their respective housing markets.

Over the coming months and perhaps into early 2019, the doomsayers will use the fall in house prices to predict dire consequences. It is easy to forget that house price declines occur frequently and at this stage there are no structural problems emerging that would give credit to predictions of anything other than a typical house price cycle playing out in coming months.

Perhaps the most significant challenge for the HIA is that the boom in building in recent years has pushed up the cost of building a new house. As the cost of existing homes falls it will become difficult for new homes to remain price competitive and this will ultimately weigh on the number of new homes being built. ■



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# The role of tooling technology in cabinet and cabinet door manufacturing



Kitchen cabinets are a central focus of modern home designs, as the kitchen is perhaps the most used room in the home. We cook, dine, socialise and entertain in our kitchens. The kitchen becomes the centrepiece of the home, and many of today's open floor plans incorporate the kitchen into the primary living space. The cabinets are a focal point in any kitchen and must be both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

Hardwood construction dominates high-end cabinetry, however, European influence and modern laminates provide affordable alternatives that offer an upscale look and feel.

Regardless of the material used, construction quality is of paramount importance, and each presents certain manufacturing challenges. In either case, correct tooling technology will assure the desired finish quality and optimal manufacturing efficiency.

## The challenges

Manufacturing timber cabinet doors meets the same raw material challenges traditional furniture makers face. The various wood species commonly used in cabinet manufacturing have different hardness ratings and grain structure, which must be addressed through proper tool design and operating parameters. Failure to design or utilise cutting tools, with respect to the cutting characteristics of the various wood species, will result in defects such as chipping, tearing, splintering of the work piece and significant repair work or reject loss. Add the fact that door components are generally manufactured across different machines (CNC router, moulder, spindle moulder, tenoner), and the various tools must be accurate enough to provide joints which are both visually perfect and structurally sound.

Because of the primary components, including particleboard, surface laminates, and edge banding, and the basic manufacturing process being accomplished using a CNC or saw and edge bander, European-style slab doors may seem easier to manufacture. However, challenges can still arise due to the quality of the particleboard, characteristics of the laminate, and style of edge banding that is used. Common particleboard with a large-flake loose core can be very challenging to machine without plucking the core and adversely affecting the integrity of the banded edge. Modern laminates feature textured surfaces, made from wear resistance components, which are increasingly difficult

to process. Finally, the banding process is becoming more critical, as manufacturers strive to achieve a perfect, seamless edge between the laminated and banded surfaces.

## The solution

Using tooling technology, the solutions are relatively simple, and evolve around one key principal; cutting pressure is the root cause of most cutting defects, including chipping, ripped grain, crushed grain and chipped laminates. Cutting pressure can be controlled through the proper application of cutting tool geometry.

The solution must begin with thoughtful tool design, which employs the correct cutting angles for the raw materials being processed. Generally speaking, the harder the work piece, the lower the cutting angle must be in order to prevent pre-splitting and defects ahead of the knife. Achieving ideal cutter speed and chip-load is critical, as the velocity of cut and amount of material being removed are the keys to maintaining ideal cutting pressure and heat dispersion. Utilising shear to slice through the work piece reduces cutting pressure and provides better internal support of the material being processed.

## Continuous Improvement focus

Tooling technology continues to increase production efficiency, through improvement in precision, design, sustainability and cutting materials. Leitz produces precision tooling systems, using advanced cutting materials and designs, which are both flexible and adaptable to meet modern production demands. Leitz applies advanced cutting technologies in a manner which continuously improves the manufacturing process, by optimising quality output and manufacturing efficiency. Moreover, Leitz works to educate manufacturers as to the availability and proper implementation of current cutting tool technologies. Understanding how tooling can limit or accelerate the manufacturing efficiency is critical, as the investment in cutting-edge tooling technology will always return greater value to the bottom line.

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# Total solutions

There can be little doubt, this year's AWISA exhibition made a massive statement about the condition of our industry, and the view of all those I talked to was that the show was a resounding success. Bigger and brasher than ever before, confidence in the health of woodworking in Australia oozed from every exhibit. Visitors were excited by the scale and comprehensive nature of the show. Once dominated by machinery manufacturers, there's a feeling that the exhibition is now 'total solution' orientated, with hardware and software playing equal parts in providing an all-inclusive experience for attendees.

Visitors were able to gather information on all aspects of design and production and delve into ways to improve their business. The separation of hardware and machinery onto different floors of the brand new ICC building, and the inclusion of a design café, allowed visitors to sit and chat with suppliers without having to do battle with dust extractors and routers. Indeed, I saw several machinery representatives and experts taking advantage of the relaxed atmosphere in the design café lounge, to discuss production solutions with clients.

A high level of sophistication was evident throughout exhibits, international brands bringing valuable resources to the end users, while Australian manufacturers enjoyed the spotlight on equal terms; this is what exhibitions are all about. But while the exhibition has grown bigger, stands more impressive, the greatest change I see when compared to past exhibitions, is in the way suppliers and manufacturers approach the market, offering solutions rather than being focused on sales alone.

Homag's Ross Campbell explained that his company focuses entirely on solutions these days, and will not tolerate salespeople who don't embrace this approach. He judges the success of the exhibition by the amount of interaction with clients rather than numbers sold. It's a similar story from hardware suppliers who have moved to more educational strategies.

Trevor Wilson, of Wilson and Bradley, tells me of the need for more interaction with clients in showrooms, in a similar way to that achieved at the exhibition. He says that many cabinet shops are selling themselves short, often talking clients out of more expensive hardware because they don't understand the benefits it offers their own customers. He believes it's the job



Rick Lee has over 38 years experience in the woodworking industry. He now works as a consultant and trainer and can be contacted at Right Track Business Consulting on 0412 237 456 or at [rick.lee@righttrackbusiness.com.au](mailto:rick.lee@righttrackbusiness.com.au).



of industry leaders to educate workshops in these matters, so that they can give added value to end-users. "The exhibition gives us the opportunity to do this," said Trevor.

Perhaps the most significant evidence of the change in focus since early exhibitions, is the rise and rise of software as part of the total industry landscape. Nowhere more evident than the Planit Cutting Edge Solutions stand. Where once, in the earliest shows, stood two lonely guys and a computer, there now stood a two storey exhibit featuring forty plus staff and an array of computers worthy of a NASA control room.

I spoke to Blake Cugley, Planit's national marketing coordinator, about the transformation of the company since it first exhibited. He believes the growth of software is due to that same recognition, that complete solutions are needed to achieve maximum efficiencies, software integration being a vital component in streamlining production processes.

Anthony Passmore, Planit's Australian founder and managing director, is proud of the company's growth and its place in the modern industry. He's seen the company built from the ground up, and battled the skepticism from clients who could not envisage the value in software solutions. "In the early days," he tells me, "we had a trickle of visitors through the stand, now Planit has one of the busiest exhibits in the entire AWISA exhibition."

These days, Anthony spends more time in boats and on the water than he does in front of computers; he's earned it. "I leave the hard work to the boys and girls now," says Anthony. "We have a brilliant staff who understand customers and can

help them find the right products for their needs. When I'm out on the water enjoying the breeze, I can remember those first exhibitions and how far we have come."

I have to admit that as pioneers go, Anthony Passmore has done it the hard way. And by the look of his company's impressive presence at AWISA 2018, Planit is in good hands. I can see the industry continue to evolve, software will be part of it; there will be new developments, advances in robotics perhaps, and new solutions to old problems. When the exhibition rolls by in 2030, who knows what we may see and how it will compare. ■



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by John Halkett

# Industry applauds machinery pioneer

## with 60 years on the clock

**MANAGING DIRECTOR** of Leda Machinery Bruce Evans certainly deserves a gold watch for his 60 years plus service to the industry. Always a South Australia boy he started work as an apprentice saw doctor for his father in 1959. After getting a feel for how the industry ticked he quickly started into the machinery sales and service side of the industry.

working machinery specialists. The company now has working mechanisms in all capital cities around Australia to provide our flat panel and wood processing industries with the best value for money equipment to serve their particular needs.

Leda Machinery has its head office and warehouse in Adelaide with around 1,000 machines in stock, plus a substantial holding of spare parts to support the thousands of Leda and Ledacraft machines already in use around Australia.

Bruce says Leda Machinery has always been about top quality woodworking machinery at affordable prices.

Leda Machinery initially concentrated on importing a wide range of woodworking machinery from Taiwan, and then later from China. The company developed a national wholesale network where Bruce supplied to other dealers. He also operated a retail business in South Australia.

Leda Machinery has had the exclusive KDT agency since 2005. "This agency has dramatically expanded our business as machines are both competitive and extremely reliable. They sell well. Their quality is world class and they enjoy a significant price differential with other brands," says Bruce.

KDT offers a complete range of wood working machines. The company is a leading machinery manufacturer serving the cabinet making industry in over 40 countries. With four divisions, Edging, Cutting, Drilling and Auto Line and the highest growth rate among all major equipment providers in the industry KDT can be found in many factories all over the world.

Today Leda Machinery has grown from humble beginnings in 1992 to be a nationwide woodworking machinery enterprise with dealers and service back up in every state.



Bruce Evans ... applauded for his pioneering role over 60 years in developing a wood working industry across Australia.

Bruce has well-and-truly established himself as a pioneer in the wood working machinery importing business. In 1971 he established Acme Saws and Machinery as a family business. Acme Saws and Machinery quickly become involved in a number of brands, including Weinig moulders and panel saws.

Bruce established his present company, Leda Machinery in 1992. Fully Australian-owned and operated Leda Machinery is recognised today as a dedicated and experienced wood



Bruce has also made a valuable contribution to the cabinet making and joinery industry overall. He was a member of the original AWISA committee and instrumental in helping set the groundwork for today's AWISA exhibitions.

After 60 years in the business Bruce has sold his business to some of his staff and will leave a legacy of machinery importing and development unrivalled across the industry. He will continue to provide advice and mentoring as long as he is required, but says he is keen to play a bit more lawn bowls and advance his passion as a car enthusiast.

"Also five grandkids and more family time sounds attractive to me," he says.

No one in the industry can but applaud Bruce Evans for his pioneering role over 60 years in developing a wood working industry across Australia, and being of service to industry. ■



Bruce Evans was a member of the original AWISA organising committee. From left: John Cover, John Tiddy, Richard Small, Robert Schloeffel, Peter Rowley, John Bainbridge, Bruce Evans, and Geoff Holland.

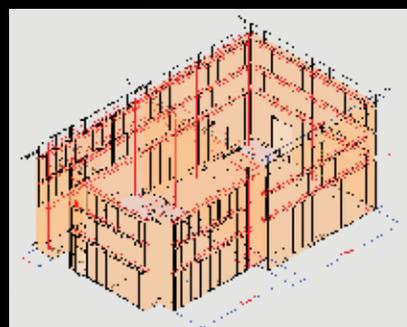
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# Shield Casework's table saw fence makes the cut

Shield Casework launched in 2011 as a spin-off of the Kansas City-based experiential design firm, Dimensional Innovations. At the time, the current president of Shield Casework, Stephen Hopkins, was working in Dimensional's Innovation Lab. His team was tasked with developing a specialised sink that would mitigate the spread of infection and illness. The sink was designed to light up as a reminder to employees to wash their hands frequently.

The sink received fair feedback. It was a nice solution, but people were intrigued elsewhere. The star of the show revealed itself to be the solid surface cabinet in which the sink was encased. The solid surface was nonporous and waterproof, making it particularly easy to sanitise. Stephen realised that because the material didn't harbour bacteria it was perfect for any healthcare environment, and thus, Shield Casework was born.

What started as purely a solid surface healthcare company grew quite rapidly. In 2014 Shield Casework moved out of Dimensional Innovations and into its own space with an expanded list of offerings.

"We've been growing in size and products ever since. We make a lot of products now, from sports lockers to retail shelving and more, and we're continuing to grow our offerings all the time," explains Chris Williams of Shield Casework.

Shield has fine-tuned its manufacturing processes to keep up with a steady stream of orders. The manufacturing facility houses a number of high tech tools to build products more proficiently. Formerly, the team adopted CNC technology to aid in the production of its casework goods. "We used a CNC to cut material before installing our table saw fence, so we had to rely on the CNC a lot more in order to ensure we made accurate cuts."

This was feasible for a period of time, but it wasn't the most time efficient process for Shield Casework. So, Shield looked to TigerStop for lean manufacturing technology. The Shield team decided to automate its SawStop table saw with a TigerStop TigerFence automated positioner. The SawStop table saw is known for its incredible safety features, and coupled with the TigerFence for increased speed and accuracy, the newly automated table saw proved to be a powerhouse.

Shield Casework's production processes have since shortened dramatically. Rather than pulling out a tape measure, measuring and marking casework material with a pencil, walking around its SawStop table saw, setting a manual



fence, and walking back around the saw to make their cut—now all the production team has to do is type in their desired measurement into the TigerFence controller or pull up a pre-saved cut list, and press start.

"Now, we can use the TigerStop to get accurate cuts on the table saw, which means we don't have to rely on only the CNC quite as much. This improves our workflow and allows us to deliver products to the fabrication floor faster, ultimately getting products out the door and to the customer more quickly," explains Chris.

Chris details that operator labour time, scrap waste, setup time, and rework have all dramatically reduced since implementing the TigerFence. "Yes, we've seen a change in all of those factors. Our cuts are more accurate, which reduces our scrap waste, results in fewer recuts parts, saves time and labour and increases productivity. The TigerStop is also easier to set up, which further improves productivity. All of this allows us to fabricate and deliver products faster."



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by John Halkett

# Off-site building component manufacturing opportunities for Australian joiners

**THERE IS GROWING** international momentum towards off-site manufacturing in building and construction industries. Brian Reid of CHP argues that more of this activity should, and could be undertaken in Australia, rather than elsewhere.

Brian says the increasing move to off-site manufacturing of building components is here to stay. "The logic is compelling and relates to less material waste, reduced construction schedules, almost no effects from wet weather delays, a much safer workplace, better engineered and finished end product quality, and the list goes on."

However, he says disappointingly there has been a marked increase in construction companies looking towards overseas manufacturers to supply manufactured products and components for their building projects here in Australia.

"At CHP we believe we have an obligation and responsibility to protect our domestic manufacturing base. This includes looking for market opportunities and growth here, and not see our manufacturing market and capacity disappearing off-shore."

Brian believes that Australian manufacturers can compete favorably against imports. "We just need more critical thinking and a genuine commitment to innovation, engineering and manufacturing activity here, where design, engineering, technology, equipment and infrastructure already exists."

"There is probably a need for greater flexibility on the part of present manufacturers to adapt their technology, machinery and factories, but the key message is to use this existing infrastructure to manufacture structural building components and systems for domestic housing and commercial projects."

"Too many companies in the past have had a single-minded focus to set up individual premises with tooling to suit their unique engineered systems falling short in terms of additional funding for growth. They are quite often limited to the manufacturing activity within which they initially established their business."

He says a network of joinery shops, furniture manufacturers, cabinet makers and shop fit-out businesses already exist across the country. "What if we could engineer and design building systems that would entirely lend themselves to the use of existing equipment and infrastructure to manufacture both housing and commercial products right across Australia, both in city and regional areas?"

"Most of these businesses have the essential resources, space, infrastructure and skills required to manufacture the new generation of high tech building components and systems now increasingly in demand."

"We believe this is a key in transitioning to the new off-site manufactured building systems economy, and the anticipated

The increasing move to off-site manufacturing of building components is here to stay.

Joiners do not have to increase the number of homes they work on to generate more turnover, they simply need to manufacture more of the home.





volume of both housing and commercial building. It will also provide a compelling opportunity for existing Australian manufacturers.”

Brian adds that there would be some initial investment and factory restructuring required in preparing established manufacturing premises. He notes, however, that the majority of costs have already been committed in ‘big ticket’ items such as the factory sites, automated machinery, plus the high level of skill required in these operations.

He says, cutting to the bottom line, that joiners do not have to increase the number of homes they need to work to generate more turnover “They simply need to get involved in manufacturing more of the home. Also they don’t have to look further afield for the work they can stay within the boundaries they currently operate within.”

Brian reinforces his call for current Australian manufacturers to use their existing technology and expertise to take advantage of the off-site manufacturing building components momentum and undertake the work here, rather than see these opportunities disappear offshore. Brian can be contacted at [chpmodular@gmail.com](mailto:chpmodular@gmail.com). ■



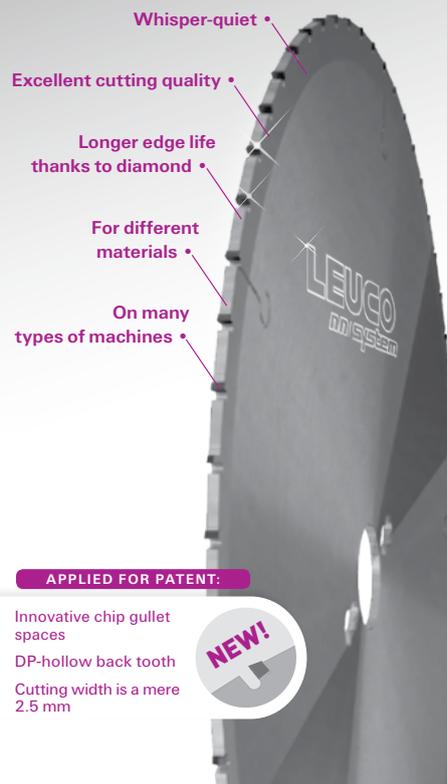
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# New and flexible Blum LEGRABOX profile

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The world is complicated enough and requirements for individuality and a wide range of design possibilities are becoming increasingly popular. Therefore, it's even more important that these requirements are met in a simple way. That's why Blum strive for technically sophisticated product innovations, to make things easier.

Blum now offers an innovative drawer runner with integrated product intelligence for LEGRABOX. The new BLUMOTION S runner will replace the LEGRABOX profile with BLUMOTION and TIP-ON BLUMOTION, and instead only one cabinet profile will be needed - BLUMOTION S.

## Simply better - BLUMOTION S

What sets BLUMOTION S apart is a unique intelligent product feature that automatically adjusts the dampening path during installation, so the right dampening is implemented for each motion technology. Keeping assembly straightforward, the components of the different motion technologies remain the same, as do the drilling and fixing positions.

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# Biesse Group Oceania

## appoints new chief executive officer



From left, Canzio Costantini, Oceania Sales Manager; Michael Bullock, CEO Biesse Group Oceania; and Federico Broccoli, Subsidiaries Director of Biesse Group.

Biesse Group recently announced the appointment of Mr Michael Bullock to the role of chief executive officer (CEO) Oceania.

Welcoming Michael Bullock to Biesse Group, Mr Federico Broccoli, Subsidiaries Director of Biesse Group stated that "Oceania is an extremely important region for the company, and after an extensive search for the right candidate, we are pleased to welcome someone of Michael's calibre." Broccoli continues "We are confident Michael's experience will lead Biesse Oceania to new heights and further develop our Australian and New Zealand subsidiaries. Biesse has very important market share in these markets and our strategic plans for growth are based on opening the largest showroom in Oceania. The new Biesse Oceania 2000m<sup>2</sup> showroom will be operational in September 2018, with a campus grand opening following in first quarter 2019".

Michael brings close to a decade of general management experience to his new position during his previous career at Kone Elevators. He holds an honours degree in Mechanical Engineering, a Graduate Certificate of Management and has worked in senior executive roles in South East Asia and Australia.

"This is an exciting time for Biesse Group Oceania, and I am thrilled to assume the CEO role" said Michael Bullock. "I look forward to leading Biesse Group into the next phase of growth, where we will focus on service and innovation to become an even more customer-focused company".

Mr Bullock is based at the new Biesse Group Oceania Campus in Sydney and commenced his role as Biesse Group Oceania CEO on 4 June 2018.

Biesse Group is a global leader in the technology for processing wood, glass, stone, plastic and metal. It designs, manufactures, and distributes machines, integrated systems, and software for manufacturers of furniture, door/window frames, and components for the construction, shipbuilding, and aerospace industries. It invests on average 14 million Euro per year in R&D, boasting over 200 registered patents. It operates through 12 industrial sites, 39 branches, and 300 agents and selected dealers, exporting 90% of its production. Its customers include some of the most prestigious names in Italian and international design. Founded in Pesaro in 1969 by Giancarlo Selci, Biesse Group now counts 4100 employees throughout the world.

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# MAG Assembly creates brilliance with Homag

It could be said that the majority of customers who have invested in 4 and 5-axis machines never truly use them to their full potential. That's not the case with specialist company MAG Assembly in Auckland. MAG Assembly combines creativity with its HOMAG 5-axis machines to produce not only a wide range of wholesale signs but also some of the most unique projects you will ever see. From waterproof cases submerged in a shark tank containing an Xbox One or illuminated sky signage mounted 25 storeys up, to custom steering wheels and motorcycle crank case covers machined from billet aluminium. There is not much that MAG Assembly has not achieved with its HOMAG machines.

Flashback to 1998 when Mike Parsons and Gary van der Geest teamed up to create MAG Assembly, contracting their engineering services back to their former employer who had downscaled its soft drink dispensing manufacturing plants worldwide. Via a business contact, the duo were approached by a large signage company, to produce 1000 lotto stands and shortly thereafter their first light box sign, and the rest is history. Now celebrating its 20th year of operation MAG assembly has grown to become New Zealand's leading wholesale sign fabricator and provides end-to-end solutions for some of the most prominent global brands including GoPRO, Xbox, Dragon eyewear and Hyundai.

Their 19,000 square foot factory is outfitted with in-house paint booths, a machine shop, metal fabrication and assembly bays, call and collect departments, plus general engineering; and has over 50 staff working two shifts nearly 24 hours a day. The end-to-end supplier employs a creative team of five fulltime engineers with Gary's son Nick van der Geest, who design and assess everything from high rise sky signage, to pylons and all other types of illuminated and unlit fabricated signage.

"Nick and the team from Tech Services are the brains trust, what we have done well is we have set up a full tech services team made up of young engineers. We old guys are no good at making up a CAD drawing or running a CNC, and these young engineers are full of awesome ideas. I like to go up to the young bunch and deliver them a brief and ask them to come up with something that will blow the customer away," said Gary

"We do a lot of work with LED screens and that seems to be where everyone is at these days. There's large sky signage 20-25 storeys up in the air. A lot of people steer away from jobs that large but MAG Assembly has got a reputation of not being afraid of having a go at the trickier jobs," Gary said with pride.



When looking at the kinds of projects the team has taken on, it is hard not to be in awe of their skill. The company has achieved much success and growth over the last 20 years, but as the saying goes 'a master is only as good as his tools' and its growth required machinery upgrades. Gary and Mike have integrated that logic into their business methodology to create a business that is creative, efficient, and effective and customer focussed.

"One of the things we wanted to do was run efficiently as a wholesaler using good gear, so that we can keep costs at the right price so our end users make a good margin." said Gary

"When we invest in good, cool machinery, we make sure that it not only differentiates us from everyone else, but also give us an advantage over the competition while doing it efficiently and accurately as part of the equation."

#### Getting the right tools for the job

During its expansion the team sought out solutions that would align to its business objectives and production standards. The scale and scope of the work that MAG Assembly produced raised significant challenges when looking to upgrade and invest in new machines. These challenges included finding a machine that could;

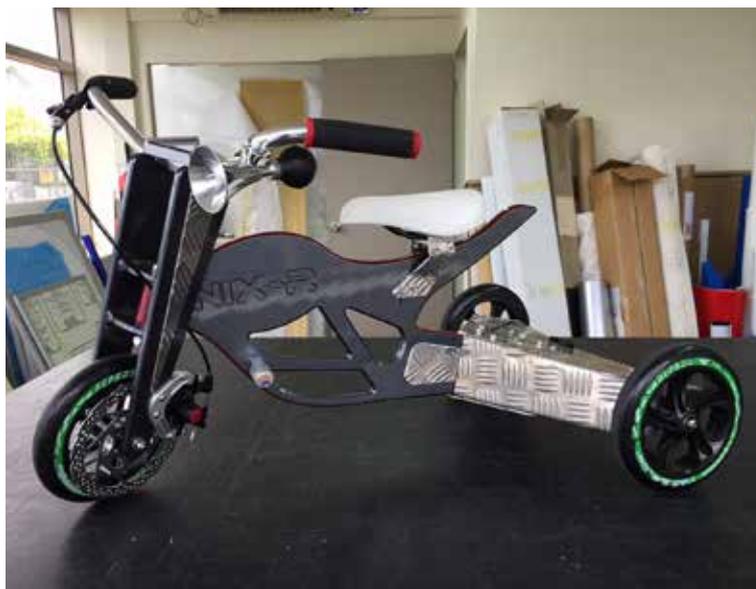
- Increase production and manage larger material sizes for the production of sky signage and pylon signs.
- Efficiently produce high quality products using a wide range of materials including plastics, Tru LED, ACM and aluminium.
- Offer a routing solution that was reliable, durable and rigid with vacuum for sheeting.

"We do very little work with wood. We mostly stick to aluminium and plastics." Nick stated, "We wanted a router so we needed a gantry machine that could manage the sheets."

"We looked at range of leading metal fabrication machine brands that do not have vacuum and use clamping only. We also found that the gantry machines that are used in the marine industry still weren't rigid enough"

"No one did a really rigid router, and this is what you want for good surface finish on metal, so you can increase feed speeds and production time. You can push the machine harder due to the rigidity."

After discussions with New Zealand based technical sales consultant Alexis Pantelides, it was determined that HOMAG had machines that fit MAG Assembly's production criteria and was willing to make any necessary modifications. ▶





► “HOMAG has the machine that guarantees cutting aluminium from stock, and it really is the most rigid machine that we could get that had vacuum,” said Nick.

However Nick went on to say that, many other brands weren’t willing to back the capability of their machines.

“We looked at a range of their competitor’s brands but when we told them we wanted to cut metal on the machines they all disappeared and didn’t want to deal with us. HOMAG stuck around and said they would make it work”.

“The industry is very small, and we all talk. A few guys have used cheaper solutions coming out of China and they all have had a fair share of ‘interesting’ units that aren’t quite as well built as German units.... Interesting outcomes indeed,” chuckled Gary.

#### Expanding capability

In 2013 the company took delivery of a standard WEEKE BHP 200 Vantage 4-axis that was later modified and fitted with a c-axis and coolant system. The machine increased capability and efficiency that gave them a massive competitive advantage.

“We had the WEEKE which was the biggest one in NZ at the time and allowed us to cut the large ACM sheets, which no one else could do.”

“And that was good because when we were building large sky signs or pylons we could cut the panels out of the large sheets and in doing so increase efficiency,” said Gary.

“We wanted to make sure we have that really good gear because we push our machines hard and we are busy running two shifts nearly 24 hours a day, it is pretty intense.”

“We needed a second CNC because we were running out of capacity and if the other went down then we would have a backup. The last thing we needed was a cheap machine that would break down a lot because it couldn’t handle the job”

The WEEKE now serves as the backup machine to a second bigger HOMAG BMG 311 which was purchased to help manage an increasing production demand and enhance MAG Assembly’s capability. The HOMAG 5-axis CNC received factory modifications to its spindles even further to increase its performance.

“HOMAG sourced a true spindle and a micro lubrication system, because it is 5-axis the coolant had to run through the spindle so it would not tangle up with the hoses,” says Nick.

“They also reached out to Leitz Tooling Systems to design a custom saw blade that connects to our 4-axis WEEKE and the HOMAG. It’s a custom profile with carbide inserts 200mm in diameter. We use it for profiling and can run it at 40 metres a minute.”

“On the HOMAG we have an aluminium tabletop so we are able to run normal fixtures as well. But what we did was machine up a triangular t-nut that slots into the bed of the HOMAG set up.”

The investment on the two machines is paying off and



they have performed brilliantly while living up their reliable reputation.

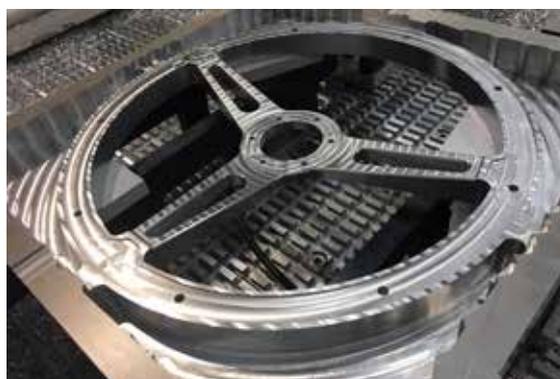
#### No fear of tricky projects

The team tackles requests that range from the extravagant to bonkers. In 2013, they were approached by a creative agency representing Xbox to build a custom display box as part of the global launch for the new generation gaming console. The catch was, make a waterproof box that had to stay upright while being submerged in a salt water shark tank at a depth of 3.5 metres for one week.

Nick reverse engineered a GoPRO case and machined the box on the WEEKE, the Xbox ONE was placed in the box and sent to the bottom. One week later it was opened on live TV, dry as a chip. This is just one of many successful projects.

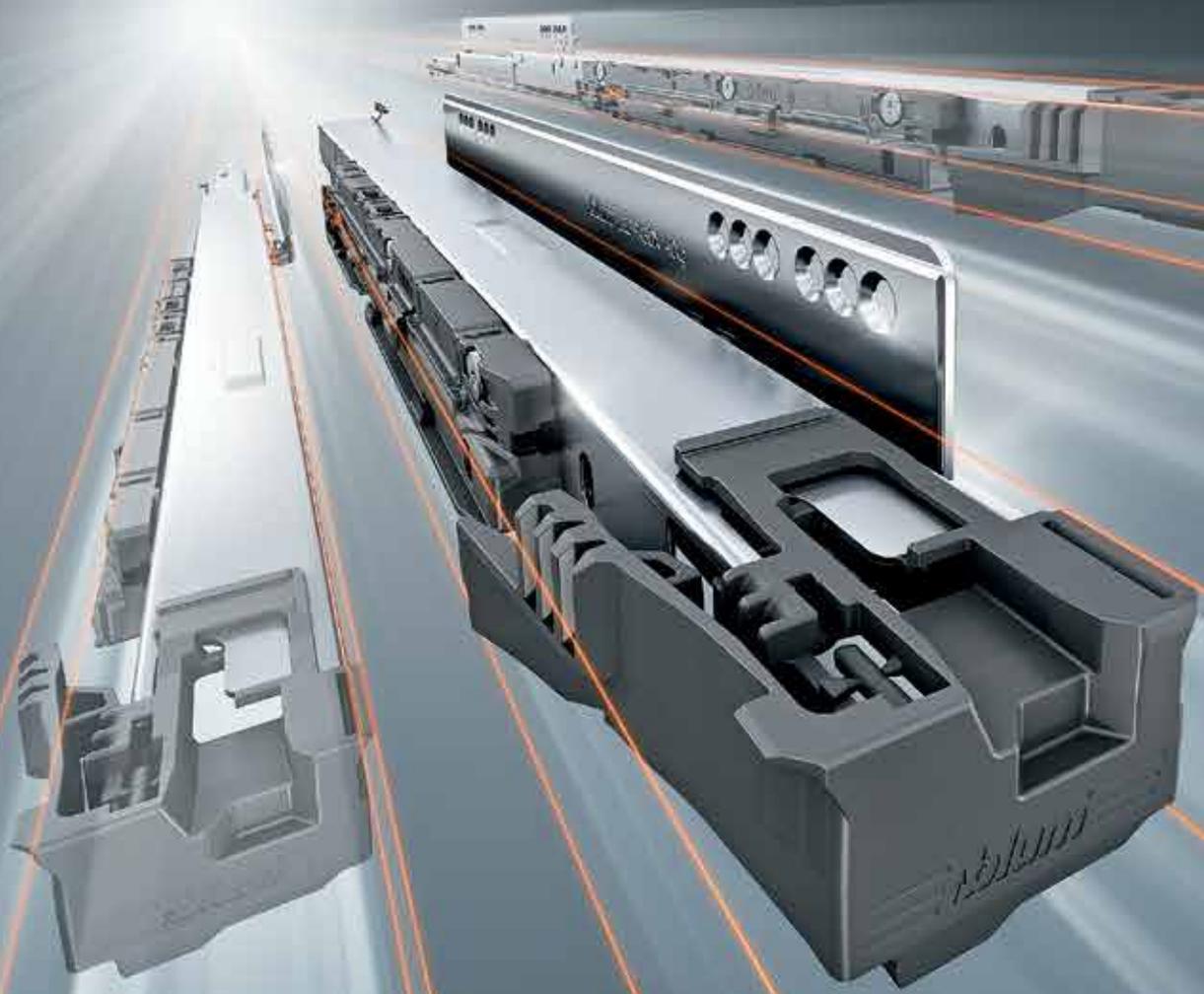
"We enjoy building a whole range of different projects, most of it is related to wheels as those projects tend to get the boys excited and the guys have a lot of fun with it", said Gary. "We built a trike out of 16mm aluminium plate, and machined a custom steering wheel for my sports car".

MAG Assembly's work showcases not only their skillset and creativity but also highlights what a HOMAG 5-axis CNC can do. Not only is this machine capable of mass production but also helps creative minds bring their ideas to life.




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by Simon Hodgson

# How to make social media work for you <sup>1</sup>



**A MONTH** after Mark Zuckerberg's appearance before the US Senate in April, where he apologised for his company's inability to prevent the theft and abuse of data of millions of Facebook users by Cambridge Analytica, Zuckerberg found himself in much more amicable surroundings – the F8 Developer Conference. As a departure from his softly-spoken apology at Congress, the Facebook CEO looked re-energised and occasionally charmed his audience with optimism and belief.

His address, while often poking fun at his own appearance before the Senate, had one common theme – positivity. He announced a new platform called "Dating", a "Clear History" function (seen by many as a "catch up" to Google and Microsoft) and new technology that can recreate the rooms in your house using only photos.

But, the overriding theme was Facebook was "very sorry – but we're not really going to change".

This is a concerning attitude given a recent Gallup poll found that 74% of respondents were very concerned or somewhat concerned about invasion of privacy, while only 11% said they had no concerns at all.

However, social media has been proven to be very effective in business marketing and Zuckerberg knows this. Facebook's income continues to rise rapidly – from US\$4 billion in 2012 to

US\$40 billion in 2017 – and 98% is from sponsored posts and advertising.

In 2018, not having an active and efficient social media presence is akin to having an analogue brick phone and wondering why you're not receiving calls. In our industry, a substantial portion of customers and leads are using social media which makes it almost impossible to reach that audience if you don't also have a presence. A recent Pew Research Centre study found that 68% of American adults are Facebook users. Among 18 to 24-year-olds, 78% use Instagram and 45% are on Twitter. Even among Americans 65 and older, 37% are social media users. And Australian figures would be comparative.

But accessing all those customers takes time - and money. It's not enough to just have an account, you also need to be active and engaged - and, most of all, responsive. For those of us who are still trying to get our heads around Google and its constantly changing algorithms, it can seem like it's just too hard to also set up and manage our social media accounts.

## **But it's vital we do - so what's the answer?**

Rebecca Foster has been working in IT services for more than 20 years. Working primarily in IT projects, and marketing and communication services, Rebecca moved into the world of social media and has specialised in the field for the last eight years. She is the founder and

lead advertising strategist of House of Social, which assists companies in setting up social media strategies and platforms, managing social media accounts, including content and copy, plus providing training and consultancy services.

In a recent interview, I asked Rebecca what social media channels she recommends for our industry and why? She quickly pointed to Facebook, Instagram, Houzz and Pinterest to engage with homeowners, and added LinkedIn as a vital business-to-business communication.

Facebook boasts 15 million active Australian users per month\* and 2.2 billion worldwide, making it the world's largest social media networking site. Rebecca said Facebook leads the way in terms of share of hours users spend over any other social network. With Facebook Business Pages, a company or brand attracts more users, achieves more visibility, gets likes and shares and provides engagement with users. With its large user base, and because likers have friends, Facebook offers higher probabilities of amplification or the multiplier effect as activities of likers are shown in their friends' newsfeeds, extending a brand's reach throughout the Facebook network.

"Facebook is constantly making changes to its algorithms and making it harder for Business Pages to achieve organic growth. Facebook has great



advertising features and the ability to directly target your market, a feature Google Analytics does not have," she added.

Instagram traffic is driven by gorgeous and covetous images, making it ideal for the renovation industry. It has grown significantly and now has more than 9 million active Australian users\* per month. Rebecca pointed to the power of the hashtag, and explained that hashtags are used to bring a brand to the forefront of a future client's mind. "I'd recommend that businesses use this platform to further promote their services utilising all relevant tags. Instagram allows up to 30 hashtags per post and it has better reach if added as the first comment. Use hashtags that are popular, related to your industry and products, and about the products displayed in each specific post," she said.

Houzz is a platform for inspiration and ideas and is specific to the home design and renovation industry. Rebecca said a profile on Houzz is essential for anyone wanting to be top of the game within the renovation industry. Likewise, Pinterest provides similar ideas but it is a female-dominated platform. "Speaking to many people in the renovation industry, it is usually the woman in the relationship that has a strong opinion on fixtures, fittings etc. We recommend watermarking all your images so that when people save them, your brand is attached," Rebecca added.

Rebecca said LinkedIn is the perfect place to expose your business to current and future members who are also on LinkedIn. It is also a great opportunity for you to create a group where your members can converse in an open or private environment.

Rebecca made a distinction between Google's search engine and social media platforms. She said Google search results will favour websites and companies that have Google+ pages. The more Google products you have, the higher your business will appear in the organic Google searches. "While the numbers of active Australian users are low (55,000\*), updating your Google+ page at least once a month is important to maintain your organic growth. The social media aspect of Google+ attracts different kinds of people – some people avoid Facebook and Twitter, in favour of Google+, allowing us to reach more people," Rebecca said.

Of course, any investment of time and money must generate a return so I asked

Rebecca about the metrics used to track ROI (return on investment) when using social media. Her answer is that it will be different for every company, depending on their goals. She explained: "What is your aim for being on social media? Is it to get sales, create awareness of your brand or maintain loyalty?"

Rebecca provided the table below and explained that, while your aim may cross the line into another aim, you need to have one key aim in mind when embarking on any Social Media program.

"Having a Facebook Pixel installed on your website, Schema and Google Analytics is a must if you want to track your ROI on social media. If you are serious about using social media, and taking advantage of the biggest, most powerful and affordable advertising platform, you will invest in this setup", Rebecca added.

She pointed out that the majority of scheduling tools have reporting options ▶

Awareness	Sales	Loyalty
Web Traffic	Web traffic	Time spent on site
Web traffic referrals	Time spent on site	Repeat visits
Search volume trends	Bounce rate	Content acceptance rate
Followers, Fans, Friends	Repeat visits	Followers, Fans, Friends
Social mentions	Content acceptance rate	Repeat Social mentions
Share of Voice	Followers, Fans, Friends	Share of Voice
	Social mentions	Recommendations and reviews
	Share of Voice	Social Connectivity among purchasers
	Social connectivity within sales funnel	Customer Service metrics
		Net promoter score

▶ and said she strongly recommended finding a scheduling tool that works well for you so you are planning and scheduling posts in advance, rather than coming into the office each day and racking your brain to think about what to post. "Have a plan - have themes each month or quarter and post when your audience is online! Facebook and Instagram have great insight tools to show you what days and times your audience is online so use them", she emphasised.

I then enquired as to whether campaigns which offer a prize in a contest on Facebook work and why? "Absolutely they do" she said with a grin. "Everyone is wanting to be a winner, so if you have a great offer and have a killer campaign setup - watch your social media presence grow."

Rebecca pointed out that there are rules around Facebook contests, so be sure to be across those before launching a contest. If you don't, you risk your Facebook Page being taken down and you will have to fight to get it back. "The main one to be aware of is you cannot ask people to share the post or tag friends in the post. Yes, you may see these all the time, but if you are offering a serious prize, Facebook will be watching," she explained.

So, what are the biggest mistakes companies make with social media? Rebecca said, "expecting that simply having a social media presence will bring thousands of engaged customers and grow their business with no effort". She emphasised that any social media presence is not "set and forget".

"You need to have a strategy. You need to map out your goals. You need

engaging content and images. The algorithms on all social media platforms are changing constantly. What may have worked six months ago may not now," Rebecca said. For example, earlier this year, Mark Zuckerberg announced the algorithm was changing to prioritise Mark's original aim for Facebook - that it be a "social" platform. "Business posts in particular need to be conversational. Talk to your audience - don't preach or ask too many questions - add copy that will make them want to talk to you and respond," Rebecca said.

Rebecca also pointed out a reality of today's social media landscape - "You have to incorporate a level of advertising. I know it's hard for some people to get their head around this as part of a free platform, but the reality is that it is the biggest, most powerful and affordable advertising platform."

My next question was about the split of expenditure across various social media. Rebecca was quick to answer. "You need a social media strategy - don't let anyone tell you any different. You need to figure out where your target audience is hanging out on the internet - is it Facebook, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, or some other online nook you're not yet aware of? You also need to make sure your brand message is one that will resonate with your target market on social media. What information are they looking for? What problem can you solve for them? And where do they want to find the solution?"

The answers to the above questions, Rebecca says, will help you create your plan and, therefore, the split of time and expenditure across various platforms. "The real goal is to get a consistent

engagement from your posts via each platform, and create a following of people who are interested in being part of your journey," she added.

When asked if every retailer and manufacturer in our industry needed to have a social media presence Rebecca responded, "Looking at the statistics on online users, and the fact that the average person checks their phone 150 times a day, you absolutely want to make sure you are there, too. Social media posts provide an opportunity for the public to find your new web content and click through to your site. And because those posts will primarily show up in the feeds of followers and people interested in your product, that traffic is typically very targeted. It won't just boost your traffic numbers - it will bring in the type of visitors you want to attract."

For me, the message is clear - social media requires specialist knowledge. Much in the same way you utilise specialist draftspeople, tradespeople and machinery in your business, you should be engaging with a social media specialist to make sure your presence is managed properly.

My thanks to Rebecca from House of Social (Rebecca@houseofsocial.com.au) for her time and excellent advice. ■

\* Statistics compiled by SocialMediaNews.com.au for July 2018. Source: Vivid Social - Social Media Agency. Figures correct as of 31/07/18.

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- Domenic Martino from DTech Joinery

*"The Planit stand has been sensational, these guys do a great job."*

- Michael Hayler from Cobram Kitchens & Cabinets

*"The atmosphere and variety basically, it's a very good show."*

- Toby Paton from Sir Lancelot's Kitchens



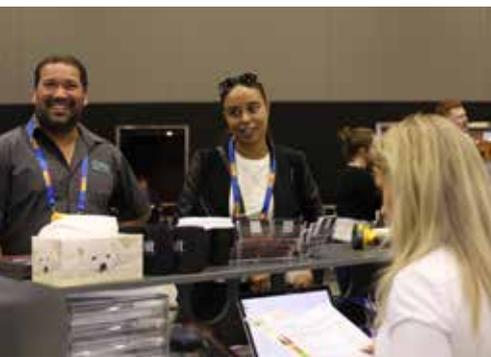
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# Visitors made the show at Planit's stand during AWISA 2018



When AWISA 2018 took place in the newly opened ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, Planit Cutting Edge Solutions displayed its six brands of software and technology across 234 square metres of floor space, resulting in the largest stand in the company's history.

The hype leading into the show promised something special, and it certainly lived up to that hype. All exhibitors put on a show, with larger and more sophisticated stands. Visitor numbers were up 16% on the 2016 show and broke the 10,000 mark for the first time in the show's history.

With more stand space in 2018, Planit was able to feature more of its solutions to customers. With 40 staff and representatives on the stand, Planit's presence was stronger than ever, and the company was delighted by the response of visitors who stopped by. Planit's demo pods were consistently busy with demonstrations of Cabinet Vision & S2M Center as visitors came to learn more about ways to increase automation in their businesses. Dave Strickland from Cabinet Vision made the trip to the show, and commented, "There has been a lot of foot traffic and that's encouraging. It means the market is good, and it's growing. From the customers I've spoken too, they are happy. They're looking to grow their businesses and they want to learn more". The new features of Version 11 also brought many visitors wanting to see them in action, including the new rendering engine and machine control settings now available in Cabinet Vision and S2M Center.

In 2018, Planit introduced the 'Alphacam Zone' to showcase the diversity of its solutions. As part of the Alphacam Zone, Planit was excited to have Jason Walker from Alphacam join the stand. During the show, Jason commented, "I've been very impressed by the scale of the show, especially the presence Planit commands - they represent our brand so well." Planit's team was excited by the response of both existing and

prospective customers and by being able to showcase the versatility and flexibility that Alphacam can bring businesses.

With an increased spotlight on design throughout the 2018 show, Planit's design based solutions receive a lot of attention. Vortek Spaces attracted many visitors to see virtual reality in action, with demonstrations of the walk through feature of Vortek Spaces a common occurrence. Many Cabinet Vision customers came to see how easy it was to take an existing job and produce the walk-through in Vortek Spaces without having to redraw the job – a big time saving factor for those customers. These demos were allowing visitors to imagine the new experiences that they could begin to offer clients. Jonathan and Mathieu from Vortek Spaces Canada made the journey to support the team during the show. Mathieu commented, "It was great to come to AWISA to not only interact with visitors, but we've been able to make good contacts to increase the number of Australian materials we're able to have in Vortek Spaces."

The laser measuring portion of the stand was consistently full with visitors enquiring about various options for their businesses. Whether it be laser measuring for benchtops and introducing automation to processes, through to the range of Disto handheld linear laser measurers Planit had in conjunction with Leica Lasers. As the saying goes, 'there was something for everyone' and Planit appreciated meeting so many new customers through this part of the stand. Laser measuring is an emerging aspect of businesses in the industry. Paul Hansen from ELaser made the trip out and expressed "it's been fun coming and seeing the excitement and meeting people who are keen to learn more about streamlining processes in their business."

Following the expansion of the AWISA Design area, Planit's second stand on level 4 was a great addition to the 2018



show. It allowed the company to make new connections with a wider audience, as well as showcase the design solutions in a quieter and relaxed atmosphere.

Comments from visitors to Planit's stands included Michael Hayler from Cobram Kitchens & Cabinets who said "The Planit stand has been sensational; these guys do a great job". Toby Paton from Sir Lancelot's Kitchens said "The atmosphere and variety basically, it's a very good show", and Domenic Martino from DTech Joinery said "The best thing about it is being able to have all my questions answered, meeting people, seeing how everything is...it's good to see the technology working and on display".

Planit's national marketing coordinator Blake Cugley commented, "Planit chose to invest in such a large stand to capture the community aspect of the Planit stand, allowing for both

existing and new businesses to interact with our staff and solutions. Planning for AWISA 2018 started 6 months after AWISA 2016 in Melbourne, with close to 8 months specifically spent ensuring the stand itself provided the functionality we needed. We're proud to be involved in such a first-class event. But as usual, it was our customers that made the show. We want to thank everyone that stopped past either of our two stands."

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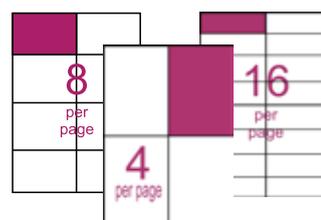
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# The perfect blend of technology and craftsmanship



With a long history of design and manufacturing starting back in 1977, Ciam creates furniture for bars, pastry shops, ice cream shops and restaurants. Since taking over from his father in 2006, president Federico Malizia has taken the company into its 40-year celebrations with a series of sizable investments including an automatic Flexstore EL magazine and a Gabbiani g 2 panel saw.

The company has also set up the Ciamuseum, which as well as being a showroom to showcase its productions, features spaces to welcome its customers.

"We've come a long way", explains Federico Malizia. "The company my father Giuseppe set up began with three employees and it built countertops for shops. In the eighties we moved to the production of modular furniture for bars and display cabinets for pastry shops. At the end of the eighties we moved to larger premises and changed our target. We no longer dealt directly with end clients, but we started working with shop fitters and designers for whom we produce every type of furnishing. Our catalogue mirrors this growth. At the beginning we had 100 products, now we have reached 14,000. We work directly with clients such as Eataly, Illy, McDonalds, Starbucks and with designers creating bars and restaurants worldwide".

Working with SCM for over 20 years, the relationship has continuously grown. "We currently have a SCM Tech z5 five axes work centre and a series of classic SCM machines that help us in the various machining operations," said Federico.

With substantial growth in its woodworking manufacturing, Ciam chose to complement its current SCM range with the Flexstore EL and the Gabbiani g 2 panel saw. "The Flexstore

EL allows us to place a different material in each station, and the magazine then supplies the panel saw which can machine with speed and precision and on 'batch one' productions," explains Federico. "This cell has been active for a few months and since then the overall production has been simplified. Now we can do something in two hours that beforehand used to take us a day and a half."

"The electronics linked to the panel saw are also an important step forward. We can label the product with the client's name, a solution that, for example, we need to be able to bring over to the metal department, where we still have to manually label the individual pieces."

The new additions to the Ciam warehouse have allowed the company to continue producing their world-renowned products in-house, while combining state of the art technology with Italian craftsmanship.

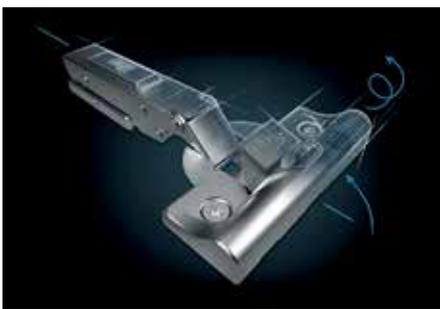
"We have a continued strong increase in volume, so in spite of efficiency improvements with our new machines, we have had to reintroduce weekend shift to manage the production," says Federico. "I don't think it is out of the question to say that there will be further SCM additions in the coming years."

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# Innovation leader Hettich reports great success at AWISA 2018

The AWISA 2018 exhibition held in Sydney from 4 - 7 July was an unprecedented success for Hettich, with nearly double the number of visitors on the stand from the 2016 Melbourne event and the unveiling of Hettich's latest innovations, WingLine L folding door system and SlideLine M double track system.

Hettich's sleek black 300 metre square stand stood out among the crowd and drew in thousands of engaged and interested visitors. The stand design was ideal for walking guests through the new product ranges with many commenting on the functionality of the technical and ease of use for the trend display.

"Over 10,000 people visited AWISA this year which just goes to show that trade exhibitions are important element to the industry – and Hettich is proud to be a leader in terms of innovation and quality," says marketing manager for Australia, Corene De Ninis.

Undoubtedly the highlight of AWISA for Hettich was the unveiling of the new award winning WingLine L folding door system. The stand was designed to allow visitors to view, and experience, the full range of Hettich products in the technical areas, before guests made their way down through the centre of the stand to reveal the new WingLine L product during their stand journey. There was strong interest from guests as they experienced the WingLine L unique functionality, design flexibility, innovation and various applications first hand. The WingLine L folding system complements the folding and sliding range. The WingLine L push to move, pull to move and pull to move Silent are new features for the current reliable and popular WingLine system to enable kitchen manufacturers to position themselves for the future, directly benefiting from Hettich's commitment to innovation and design. The WingLine L on display was equipped with Hettich's unique push to move soft close technology which, when combined with the exceptionally smooth opening action the profile offers, create the perfect quality folding door system.





In addition to the new WingLine L range, Hettich's new products and applications included:

- Use of Hettich products in overhead applications, WingLine L and SlideLine M double track
- Popular ArciTech and InnoTech Atira waste systems
- Sensys hinge in obsidian black, available in a range of opening angles
- Extensions to the stunning Magic lighting range
- Bathroom and vanity innovations
- ArciTech extended range of organisational elements
- InnoTech Atira designer profiles
- Interactive eServices package.

There were a number of new and exciting products which Hettich test marketed on the stand for the office sector and large room dividers.

Visitors were able to see and experience for themselves how Hettich products could work in the home or commercial environment to make any living space beautiful.

"We couldn't be happier with the success of the AWISA expo. It's going to keep our sales team very busy, and set us up for a positive year going into 2019," says Corene.

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# Concelo by Hideaway, redefining what to expect from a waste bin

Concelo by Hideaway is a brand new waste bin range that was launched to the market at AWISA 2018 in July. Concelo by Hideaway has been designed to deliver a bin without compromise. It takes all the best features expected from a Hideaway Bin and improves them, totally redefining what is expected from a waste bin.

7 years of research and development by the well-known New Zealand owned and operated company Kitchen King Ltd, has seen every element of the waste bin re-engineered and tested to ensure it delivers both the form and function that should be expected from a premium kitchen appliance. Concelo by Hideaway boasts not just a clean design aesthetic that complements premium drawers, it also helps keep the kitchen looking and smelling clean. Managing waste can be a challenge, but Concelo is the easiest bin in the world to keep clean, all parts unclip and can be easily hand washed to keep them looking crisp and clean.

Concelo boasts a new Active Lid designed to help control odours. The Active Lid is hidden from sight at the top of the bin inside the cabinet and drops down to close over the buckets when the bin is closed. When the bin is opened, the lid lifts up and away to allow an unhindered running action.

Concelo bins run on smooth synchronised runners that include a fluid damper for a seamless closing action. Like all Hideaway Bins, the runners over-extend to ensure the back bucket will come clear of the bench top.

Flexible mounting options allow Concelo to be top and or side mounted, meaning it can be mounted into any cabinet width for design flexibility. Mounting at bench height allows the most ergonomic positioning of the bin to easily dispose of waste.

Available in 2 colour options; Arctic White to match ever popular white drawers, or Cinder to suit the growing trend for darker coloured hardware. Concelo is also compatible with electronic push to open mechanisms. When combined with

the Active Lid, users now have the perfect hands-free waste bin solution. Concelo redefines what to expect from a waste bin, why compromise with anything less.

Hideaway Bins and the all new Concelo range are distributed by Hideaway's partners ~ Nover, Hafele and Galvin Hardware.

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# Vacuum in woodworking

Vacuum technology is ubiquitous in the woodworking industry. The possibilities for using vacuum are very versatile. But the subject of vacuum is often an unfamiliar topic for many wood processors and woodworkers, not to say a strangely uncomfortable one. We would like to share some useful information in this and the next three issues to explain different types of vacuum generation, their benefits and drawbacks and, not least of all, highlight the issue of economic efficiency. Today we will begin with a few basic thoughts about the subject of vacuum.

## Vacuum – what is it, really?

In woodworking, vacuum is mainly used for:

- Clamping on CNC routers
- Holding and transporting panel materials and work pieces with handling equipment
- Moulding and veneer presses

In wood processing, vacuum is used for:

- Drying sawn and construction timbers, and
- Impregnating wood.

Vacuum is most often used for vacuum clamping on CNC routers and other machining equipment. The holding force of vacuum is used to quickly and securely fasten panel materials or solid wood parts during woodworking, without leaving pressure marks. Handling equipment and assembly robots also often get their holding force from vacuum.

In purely physical terms vacuum - which is also known as underpressure - is a pressure range in which the pressure is lower than atmospheric pressure. The atmospheric pressure at sea level is 1,013 millibar (mbar), but constantly decreases in relation to altitude (Fig. 1). Weather conditions also influence the atmospheric pressure. In the context of vacuum technology, we simplify calculations by rounding the atmospheric or ambient pressure to 1,000 mbar. Pressures less than 1,000 mbar are referred to as vacuum or underpressure.

The most common unit of pressure for vacuum is millibar (mbar), although according to norms, this pressure range is supposed to be indicated in Pascal (Pa). In vacuum technology, we assume absolute pressures which theoretically start at 0 mbar and end at 1,000 mbar (= atmospheric pressure). The woodworking industry still often uses bar, minus-bar (-bar) or the specification of pressure in percent (%) (Fig. 2).

## Forces when clamping with vacuum

Will the clamped work piece hold? Is the vacuum sufficient or is the vacuum pump's performance strong enough? These are questions that everyone has asked – at the latest when the spinning tool is approaching the clamped work piece.

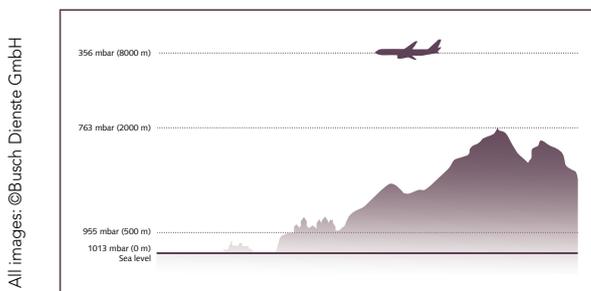
From a purely theoretical perspective, the pressure between the work piece and the machining table, supporting surface or suction cup is reduced during clamping by extracting air and generating a vacuum. The atmospheric pressure is now higher and presses the work piece onto the machining table, thus 'clamping' it.

Physical pressure is defined as a force that affects a specific area. Pressure is thus a function of force and area (Fig. 3).

In practice this means: the larger the supported work piece, the greater the holding force. This can be best explained with an example:

A solid wood board is placed on the CNC router grid table for processing, and a seal is created with a rubber seal that fits the dimensions of the board (Fig. 4). A vacuum pump extracts the air between the wooden board and the grid table within the sealed area.

Figure 1: Atmospheric pressure depending on altitude.



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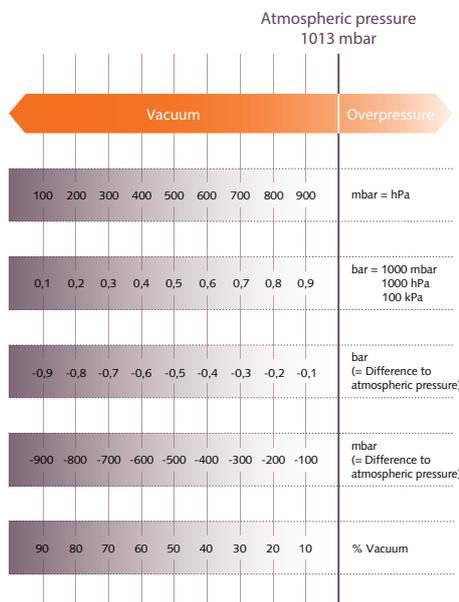


Figure 2: Standard pressure units used for vacuum.

**Calculation:**

Atmospheric pressure: 1,000 mbar  
 Vacuum pump underpressure (working pressure): 200 mbar  
 Wooden board dimensions: 1,000 x 500 mm  
 Pressure differential:  
 1,000 mbar – 200 mbar = 800 mbar  
 = 80,000 Pa [N/m<sup>2</sup>]  
 Supporting surface = clamping surface  
 1,000 x 500 mm = 500,000 mm<sup>2</sup>  
 = 0.5 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Holding force  
 F = p x A  
 F = 80,000 N/m<sup>2</sup> x 0.5 m<sup>2</sup> = 40,000 N  
 = 4,000 kg

This means the solid wooden board with a surface of 0.5m<sup>2</sup> is held by the vacuum with a holding force of 40,000 N, which theoretically corresponds to the board pressing on the machining table with a weight of 4 tonnes.

If, under the same conditions, a solid 150 x 150 mm wooden board was clamped, the holding force would be F = 80,000 N/m<sup>2</sup> x 0.0225 m<sup>2</sup> = 1,800 N = 180 kg.

Now the question is how powerful the vertical holding force of the vacuum has to be to securely clamp a work piece. The example calculations show that the holding force for panel materials with large surfaces can be evaluated less critically than smaller wooden pieces or materials that are air-permeable or have uneven surfaces that lead to leaks.

In practice, the necessary holding force is difficult to determine as different operational or clamping factors, cutting and feed speeds and directions, materials and frictional resistance have to be taken into account, so rules of thumb are normally used.

**Various possibilities for vacuum clamping**

An essential distinction is made between three possible vacuum clamping procedures:

- Grid table
- Nesting method (suction technology)
- Console system with vacuum blocks

**Vacuum technology parameters**

In principle, there are three parameters to be considered when selecting the most suitable vacuum technology.

**Ultimate pressure**

The ultimate pressure indicates the vacuum pump's highest possible achievable vacuum level, or the lowest underpressure.

**Pumping speed**

This is understood to be the volume of air that a vacuum pump can extract within a certain period of time. The pumping speed

$$\text{Pressure} = \frac{\text{Force}}{\text{Area}} \quad \left[ p = \frac{F}{A} \right]$$

Figure 3: Pressure is the force that acts on a defined area.

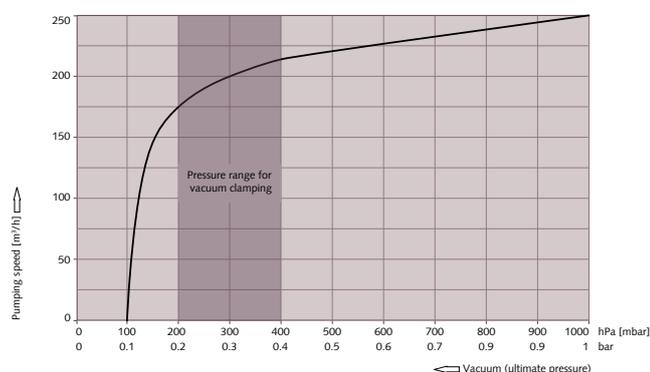


Figure 4: The pumping speed curve shows the relation between pumping speed and ultimate pressure.

is influenced by the geometry (volume) of the vacuum pump and its speed. The higher the pumping speed, the faster the air is extracted, and the ultimate pressure is achieved. High pumping speeds help compensate for leakage, for example, when using the nesting method.

**Power consumption**

Mechanical vacuum pumps are usually driven by an electric motor. Depending on the construction principle and efficiency factor, vacuum pumps consume different amounts of energy. To achieve the greatest possible energy efficiency, it is important to select a vacuum pump that produces the necessary performance with regard to ultimate pressure and pumping speed and simultaneously has the lowest possible energy requirement.

All three parameters are dependent on each other. Firstly, the pumping speed decreases as the vacuum pump gets closer to achieving the ultimate pressure (Fig. 4). Secondly, a vacuum pump's energy requirement is lowest at a certain operating point.

Designing vacuum generation perfectly is difficult for laypeople, which is why we always recommend consulting a vacuum specialist.

In the second part of our "Vacuum in Woodworking" series, we will take a closer look at the different types of vacuum generation.

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# Bathroom cabinet solutions by Solu



Solu's range of anodised aluminium door edge profiles give doors and mirrors a sleek, durable finish suitable for wet area applications. Available in flush and wrapped edge the profiles suit 16, 18, 19 and 25mm board. The new black anodised range was well received at AWISA 2018, and complements Solu's black Shadowline (pictured), Lamiline and Thinline handle profiles, as previously featured in AWISA eNews. Solu also presented at AWISA 2018 its vanity cabinet support solutions - the 2 x 1 construction rail, floating cabinet support system, and glass shelf brackets.

Trends for metal finishes prevail in kitchen, bedroom, and living room joinery and into al fresco cabinetry with chrome and mirror finishes set to make a comeback. Solu's aluminum edge profiles have far reaching applications for residential, retail and commercial projects, where both a decorative and hard-wearing finish is specified.

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Featuring a minimalistic design, the STILI range can be fitted floor to ceiling or floor to wall, adding to its versatility. Designed for easy installation, the STILI system has been rigorously tested to ensure product longevity.

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Woodtron exclusively specialises in the design, manufacture and service of state of the art CNC woodworking machinery. The company focuses on providing a very personal service as it strives to partner with the long-term goals of customers. Because Woodtron designs, manufactures and sells its own CNC machines it knows them back to front and this helps the company provide the very best of service to all customers. Drawing on over 30 years of experience, Woodtron understands the needs of the Australian wood working industry. As a result, Woodtron can provide fully customised solutions to suit customers' needs, whether that being cabinets making, shop fitting or even plastics.

Woodtron's focus when designing machines is quality, efficiency and reliability. Designed with the latest CAD software, modelling and simulation is conducted to assure high levels of rigidity and reliability. To complement the machines Woodtron uses only the highest quality components

from all over the world to ensure long-term reliability of the machines.

All technicians are factory trained and are only dedicated to Woodtron's own CNC routers, so they have the expertise and knowledge to provide support and service.

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# Flexijet 3D - not just a measuring system

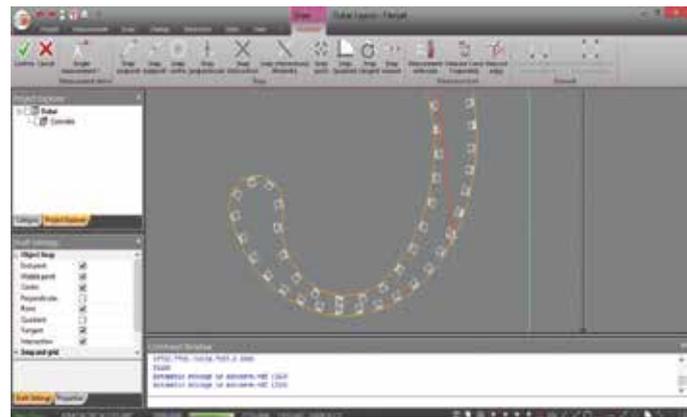
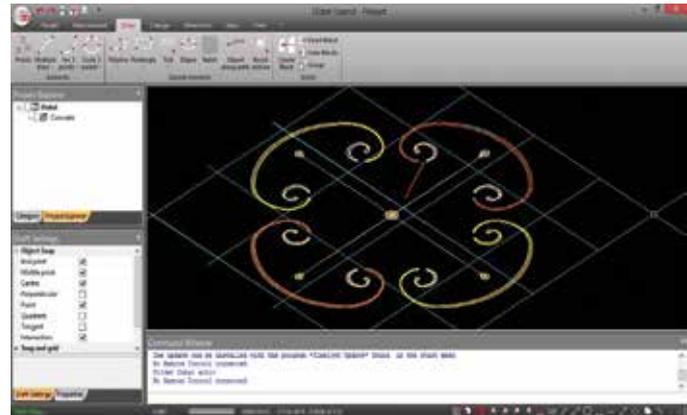
## measure, draw and set-out

Since its release in Germany 2006, the Flexijet 3D laser measuring system has been used worldwide to provide accurate site measuring across many industries. Within the joinery, shopfitting, stone masonry and architecture disciplines to name a few, Flexijet 3D will site measure and draw a 3D or 2D CAD model instantly. It is so versatile that it accomplishes site measuring tasks with speed and accuracy. It not only handles mundane tasks like measuring walls, pipe penetrations, bulkheads, windows and many other elements with ease, but will handle the most demanding measuring assignments.

But it does not stop there. Flexijet 3D is not only an innovative laser site measuring system, but has many inbuilt functions that make site installing and site set-outs so simple in a way that users may have never dreamed possible.

Imagine being able to import a CAD drawing into the Flexijet 3D software, selecting a CAD point from a drawing and seeing the Flexijet 3D measuring head rotate and point the laser to that specific CAD point on the construction site. This is one of the many additional functions that Flexijet 3D can perform with ease.

The following example illustrates this perfectly. Zabeel Palace is the Dubai residence and administrative headquarters of the ruling royal family of Dubai. During construction, the helipad and driveway entrance required the installation of a large mosaic design containing LED lighting recessed into the paving. A total of 14,000 positions for the mounting brackets needed to be marked and drilled on site. How would one accurately complete such a task? With the Flexijet 3D 'projection' feature of course. Simply import a DXF file that



comprised the CAD points representing the 14,000 mounting positions and select the 'Show CAD Points' function in the Flexijet 3D software... it's that simple.

The accurate marking of relevant installation points were completed on site in less than 30 hours. Using conventional set-out methods, the time estimated would have been approximately 160 hours, not to mention the reduced accuracy.

The German manufactured Flexijet 3D, is a measuring system that has not only revolutionised site measuring but its additional functionality has enabled it to be an invaluable aid in on-site set-outs and installations. With Flexijet 3D, users can not only measure and instantly draw measurements, but its additional in-built functions will make other site tasks more precise, efficient and ultimately save time and money.



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CAD screen shots, left: DXF of 14,000 CAD points imported into the Flexijet software... FlexiCAD.

Detailed view of the imported CAD points.

Above: Projecting each CAD point with the Flexijet 3D laser on site.

Left: The final result. A perfectly set-out installation.

# Smart material handling and storage

## capacity complements manufacturing systems

At the leading edge of wood processing manufacturing systems integration and automation Holzher is able to offer the complete suite of CNC machining centres, edgebanders, beam saws, vertical wall saws and automated panel storage and retrieval systems, plus the software to integrate entire manufacturing processes.

Weinig and Holzher Australa's managing director Neil Forbes says serious cabinet making and joinery factories have already embraced material handling and storage technology.

"To that end the Holzher StoreMaster 5110, while a newer entry into the market has been quickly deployed by a number of industry companies to great effect."

"An intelligent, material handling solution the Holzher StoreMaster 5110 ticks all the boxes in terms of enhanced productivity, panel inventory management, optimising panel utilisation and worker safety," he says.

Mr Forbes indicated that the name simultaneously describes the storage system. "The StoreMaster 5110 stands for a simple-to-operate, intelligent solution for panel material handling. Customers can select from many pre-configured

basic versions to find just the right solution to meet their particular requirements."

The StoreMaster system consists of the basic version comprising a storage and retrieval feature for panel stacks as well as horizontal storage locations for pre-determined layouts. The panel material can be 'booked in' on the control computer integrated into the system, where it can be managed in the master file for storage and subsequent processing.

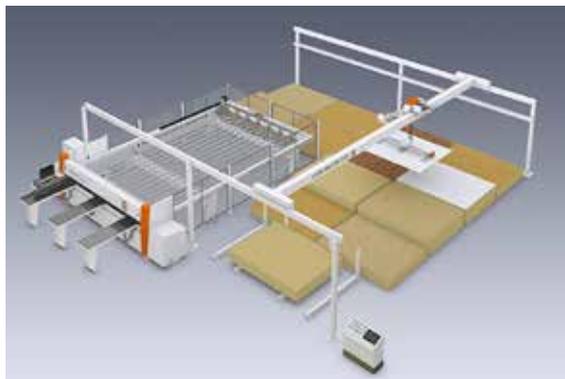
The intelligent storage software, which already divides the panels up into 'clusters' as determined by consumption statistics, eliminates any delays in supplying the panels to the panel cutting saw or router. Even when new panels are stored in the system, the storage software simultaneously calculates the time required to guarantee optimised material flow to machine processing centres.

Mr Forbes adds that the StoreMaster system also reduces the workload for employees enormously and eliminates waiting time for stackers or helpers.

"Within the sense of development to Industry 4.0, the storage software in combination with Holzher optimisation

An intelligent, material handling solution the Holzher StoreMaster 5110 ticks all the boxes in terms of enhanced productivity, panels inventory management, optimising panel utilisation and worker safety.





Holzher StoreMaster 5110 material storage and retrieval system.

software offers perfect control right from the office of material consumption and operational work flow," says Mr Forbes.

The Holzher StoreMaster panel storage system is suitable for a variety of formats and materials. The panels can be positioned by the manipulator in a chaotic as well as assorted structure. In each case, exactly the right panel is selected by a computer during removal.

The intelligent design of the StoreMaster storage system and the virtually unlimited possible uses of the manipulator, open up completely new methods of innovative storage that can be precisely tailored to individual company requirements.

"Our StoreMaster system ensures perfect storage on up to three levels and can be used in all spaces with heights greater than three metres. Multiple machine processing centres can be charged and as many storage bins as desired set up for storage and retrieval," Mr Forbes concludes.



Part of the Weinig and Holzher international contingent at the AWISA 2018 exhibition, Ingo Homeyer, CEO, DDX Software Germany; Michael Epp, key account manager Holzher, Germany; Neil Forbes, managing director, Weinig Australia, and Gregor Baumbusch, CSO Michael Weinig AG.

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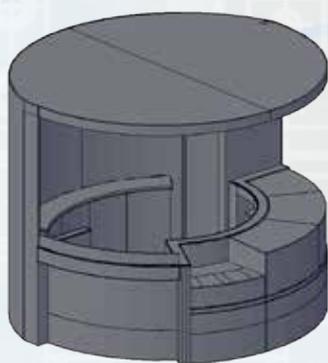
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# New Zealand kitchen group's conference held at AWISA 2018

The largest and the longest of the many meetings and presentations that took place during AWISA 2018 was the two-day conference of Mastercraft Kitchens. 70 New Zealanders crossed the Tasman to attend the conference which included factory visits around Sydney.

"Mastercraft Kitchens (NZ) business owners thoroughly enjoyed escaping the New Zealand winter to attend both our annual conference and the AWISA 2018 exhibition", said group general manager Kevin Belz. "Our people were very impressed with the scale, scope and professionalism of the entire AWISA show this year, which is a credit to the AWISA team. Combining both events at the magnificent new International Convention Centre, in Darling Harbour, worked well for us and our supply partners, most of whom were also involved at AWISA. We'll certainly be keen to combine these events again in the future." ■



Mastercraft Kitchen owners and their supply partners enjoying their annual conference in Sydney ahead of visiting AWISA 2018.





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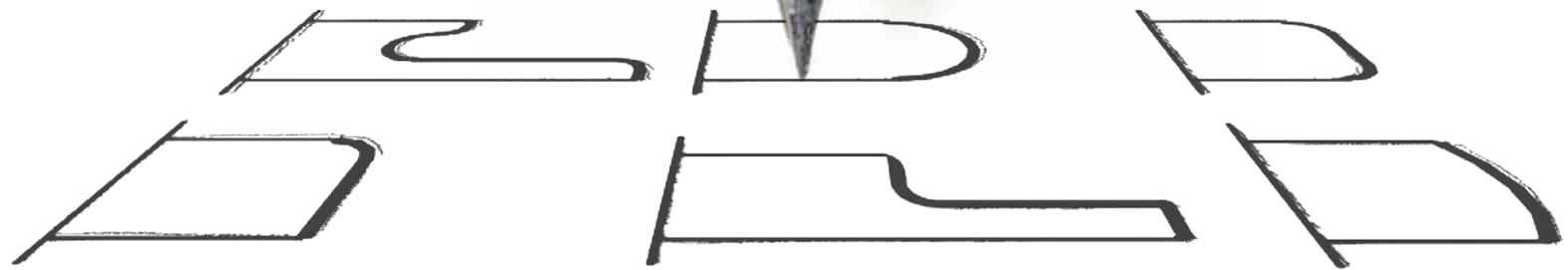


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completion of their trade training.



### FIAA ISMAA SUCCESS TO DATE - INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

During its first six months FIAA's ISMAA Apprenticeship Mentoring program has demonstrated extremely positive outcomes which are bucking the trend of poor progression of training rates in the sector. With NCVER data showing that the 2017 National Apprenticeship completion rates still below 50%, the FIAA mentors and support staff are certainly providing a positive injection into the industry.

#### Some key statistics and outcomes are:

- With over 230 Apprentices enrolled in FIAA's program
- Direct feedback from employers and supervisors stating:
  - Less absenteeism and improved punctuality
  - Clearer individual goals and career aspirations
  - Visibly improved attitudes and work performance
  - A fresh set of ears and eyes helping to keep apprentices engaged
  - Fewer outside issues impacting work time
  - Improved Communications across the team

### TESTIMONIALS

*"I would like to thank you personally (FIAA Mentor) and FIAA for the assistance this mentoring program has provided to a number of my apprentices. It has given them valuable guidance and reassurance during some difficult times they are personally having. This assistance in turn has helped them to concentrate on their own tasks whilst at work."*  
- **Matthew Stanborough, Operations Manager, Designer Living Kitchens**

*"AMS Furniture currently employs six apprentices and two trainees at our Lisarow site. In recent months we have partnered with FIAA to offer a mentoring program to the five eligible apprentices. In that time, I have observed all of the individuals involved grow in confidence and improve their communication skills. I would not hesitate to recommend the ISMAA mentoring program to any business that employs apprentices and will continue to encourage any new apprentices to sign up with the program."* - **Adam Tasker, Production Manager, AMS Furniture**



For further information, please contact  
**Fiona at FIAA ISMAA**  
**Phone: 0419 786 836**  
**Email: [ismaa@fiaa.com.au](mailto:ismaa@fiaa.com.au)**

\* Applies to ACT / NSW / SA 1st and 2nd year apprentices / trainees only.

# Making saving time a priority

The Tekform drawer range has been extended with a 'slimline' version, engineered specifically for the demanding high-end kitchen and bathroom markets. The new generation Tekform Slimline drawer features a sleek look with narrow 14mm side panels, offering an efficient utilisation of the drawer space.

For simplicity, the Tekform Slimline drawer uses the same drilling patterns for the runners as the first generation of Tekform drawers - enabling easy drawer interchangeability and flexibility in use. To boot, the new Slimline is available in both white and anthracite grey to perfectly suit the contemporary design of today's furniture.

Tekform Slimline offers a luxury extension to the Tekform family of drawers. Thinner walls for design and space requirements and the same quality Tekform drawer features including: superior vertical and horizontal stability, smooth operation and reliable and consistent closing at various speeds – all with the world-leading Titus damper built-in.

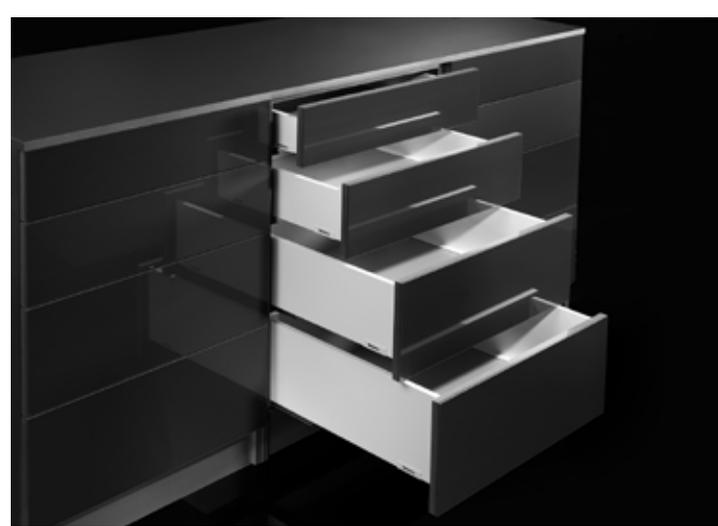
## Complete the look

Create a distinctive look with colour-matched sinkware, tapware, profiles and handles from Titus Tekform.

Designer sinks available in brass, copper, gunmetal and matt black are perfectly off-set with matching tapware for a bold statement encompassing the latest European trends. A comprehensive range of Capri handleless profiles or Stefano Orlati handles in complementary styles and finishes add the finishing touch for a kitchen that's sure to impress.

---

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# Wood, clay and a dog in the Italian countryside

In 2013, Weronika and Marco decided to risk it all and go live in rural Monferrato in the Italian countryside, where they now make their living by creating wood and clay objects for everyday use in the home and kitchen.

Weronika majored in Italian during her Erasmus exchange programme, while Marco majored in Philosophy at the University of Turin, where he also worked, though in the field of information technology. He would often visit a carpentry shop to learn how to restore furniture, as his grandfather had been a carpenter, the source of his passion for woodworking. Eventually, Weronika completed her

It went well - very well. Today they sell almost exclusively to customers outside of Italy through their company Bianca & Sons, named after their dog Bianca.

"We were intent on getting certain results with our products and we knew we could reach such results sooner if we worked full time rather than as hobbyists in our spare time. We had a terrible experience in the beginning with a used machine we bought which had a defect we had not been able to spot inspecting its exterior, but that caused it to work poorly," said Marco.

After a year of trying to figure out what was wrong, they concluded that it was damaged. And so, Bianca & Sons became the owners of a new, small SCM minimax combination machine.

"Our past experience helped us understand how fundamental a machine's precision is to doing things well. Money saved on an initial investment is actually money lost. We have followed this philosophy ever since, with all the machines we have purchased."

Creating products that are meticulously handcrafted requires machines that can provide a particular level of automation. This was the main driver behind Weronika and Marco's decision to buy a minimax. "When a machine comes with too much automation, you rule out a certain type of woodworking and lose what distinguishes handcrafted products from industrial products, with which we can't compete," said Marco.

"This means that it is essential for us to use machines that offer the carpenter a certain level of freedom. Greater automation means lesser creativity, less craftsmanship; it means stripping the handcrafted product of its very nature. Our SCM minimax has been able to offer that, and more."

---

## *machines that offer a level of freedom*

---

studies and Marco quit his job, and both embarked on a year long journey around the world, mainly to clear their heads and figure out what they wanted to do in life. Marco enjoyed working with wood, and Weronika became passionate about it as well as she watched him restoring furniture. And so, they asked themselves, "Could we survive creating wooden bowls and chopping boards?"

They first dove into the unknown by going to live in the countryside, and then again by beginning to create wooden products and selling them online.



---

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by Ces Luscombe  
All About labels

# Labels ain't labels

For those of you old enough to remember the old Castrol oils advert where the phrase "Oils Ain't Oils" became part of our vernacular we introduce "Labels Ain't Labels".

As some of you know we recently exhibited at the AWISA exhibition in Sydney. We spoke to many in the industry with real horror stories about their experiences with labelling of cabinetry. These experiences can be avoided just by using the right labels.



So, do some of these experiences sound familiar to you? These comments were from visitors to our stand at AWISA 2018:

- "Our guys spend ages picking the labels off the cabinets."
- "We damage the cabinet sometimes getting the labels off."
- "We use special solvents to get rid of the residue after we peel the label off."
- "We know not to leave labels on for more than two days because then we can't get them off."
- "We buy label sheets (at a big retailer) and they don't come off the cabinets."
- "I bought an off the shelf label printer because it was cheap. Now the labels costs are really hurting and I can't get them off the cabinets."

These people haven't bought the right labels. The frustration is obvious to these people as they see it as a very small part of their overall operation but often it is the source of the most complaints from workers. When they are shown how the right label comes off the cabinets it is a revelation to them sometimes. It is amazing how long people will put up with something that is obviously not acceptable to their business but the time to change is now.

Do you know that if someone spends an extra 10 minutes per day cleaning up after labels then that is 50 minutes per week or 43 hours per annum. You can easily save all this time, money and frustration. The irony is that often the right labels are cheaper to buy.

There are several removable adhesives we can provide for all sorts of printers. All About Labels will send you a free sample of the labels for you to test apply to the cabinets.

With the right label/adhesive combination the labels can be applied to the job and then removed when required, simply and without residue. All About Labels specialises in these labels so you can avoid the horror stories. We make them in sheets and rolls for all different printers.

---

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**„To be one step ahead of  
the market,  
you have to take a couple  
of steps at once.“**

Josef Wochner,  
Head of Josef Wochner



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# Award winners travel to AWISA 2018

In 2008, the Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association established the John Tiddy Memorial Award to commemorate the late John Tiddy's contribution to the Australasian furniture and woodworking industry.

This year six apprentices received all-expenses paid overnight trips to the exhibition. At a brief function on the floor of the show, the winners received their certificates plus cheques for \$2000.00 each as contributions to their training course fees.

From left: Brett Ambrose, chairman AWISA Ltd; Sarah Price, Queensland winner; Alexander Adamo, South Australia; Kevin Dirks, Western Australia; Grant Robinson, Victoria/Tasmania; Bradley Fisher, New Zealand; William Bayliss, NSW/ACT; and Michael Tiddy representing the Tiddy family.



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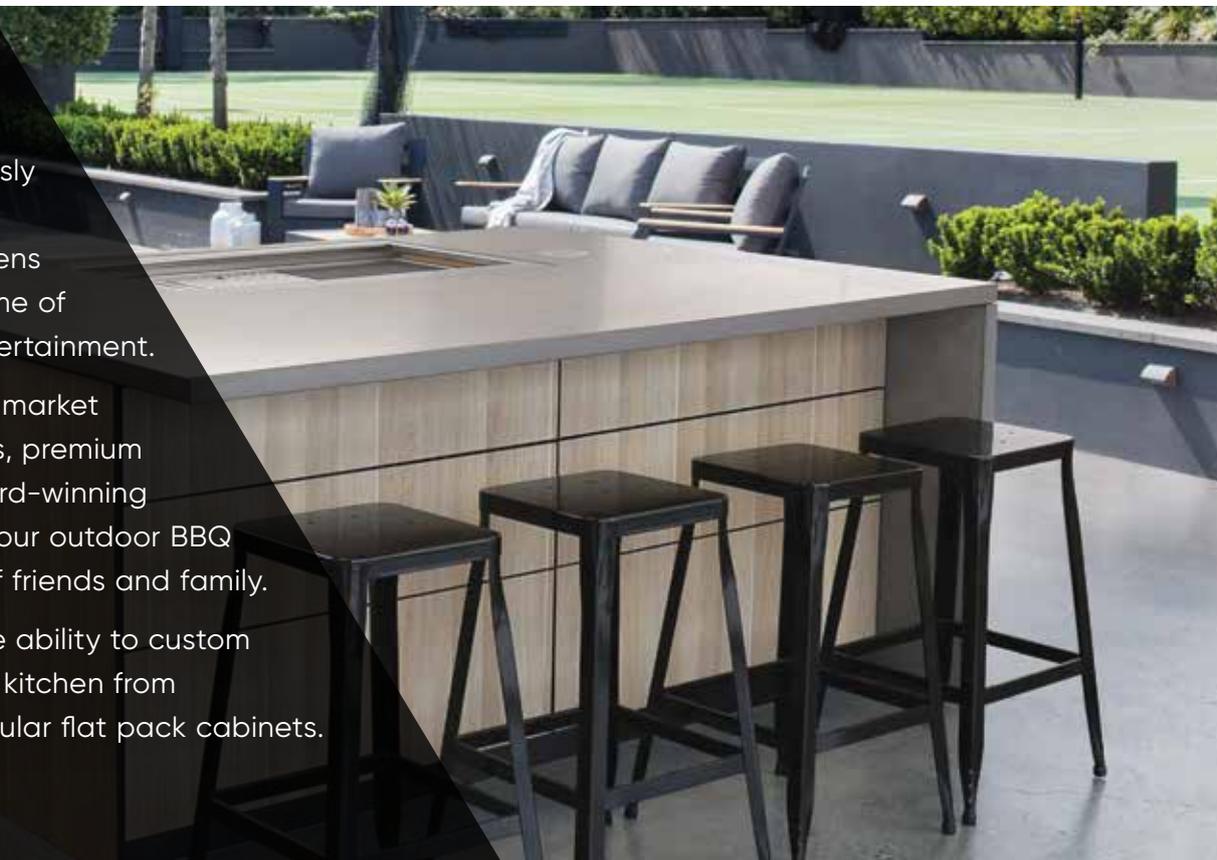
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# Australian Woodworking Industry Suppliers Association Limited

## AWISA The Association



AWISA was formed in 1986 by the principal suppliers to the Australian woodworking industry. The main aims of the association are to present industry exhibitions, publish industry magazines, co-operate with other organisations, and to uphold the highest ethical standards and encourage members to do the same.

Membership applications are welcome from Australian based companies, and from overseas companies with Australian agents or distributors that are also members of AWISA. Membership of AWISA includes suppliers of woodworking machinery, cabinet and furniture hardware, panel products and surface materials, portable tools, computer software, materials handling equipment, dust extraction equipment, components, and general plant and safety equipment.

## AWISA The Exhibition



The exhibition has been held regularly since 1988, and attracts furniture manufacturers, cabinet makers, kitchen manufacturers, joiners, shop and office fitters, and other wood, timber and panel processing industries. Architects and interior designers also attend.

The next AWISA exhibition will take place in Sydney from 1-4 July 2020 at ICC Sydney, Darling Harbour, Sydney. For more information visit [www.awisa.com](http://www.awisa.com) or phone Geoff Holland on 0412 361 580.

## AWISA The Magazine



AWISA's magazine is published quarterly and is distributed free to a database of over 13,000 end users in the industry. AWISA's editorial policy is to produce quality editorial about business and technical issues that affect the woodworking industry, and to provide members with a means of disseminating information about their products. The association welcomes input from both members and end users about subjects that should be written about in the magazine.

## AWISA The Board

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[www.awisa.com](http://www.awisa.com)



## DISTRIBUTION

AWISA – The Magazine is distributed free to a list made up of companies that attended the last three AWISA exhibitions, plus the client databases of some major AWISA members. To be added to the distribution list send an email to [info@awisa.com](mailto:info@awisa.com). (AWISA Ltd may at some time in the future charge a subscription for personally addressed magazines)

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BY HIDEAWAY

## Clean, Redefined

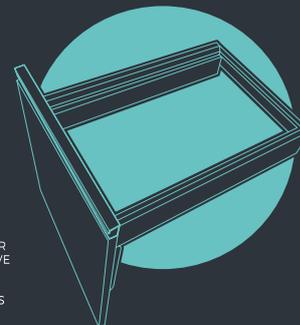
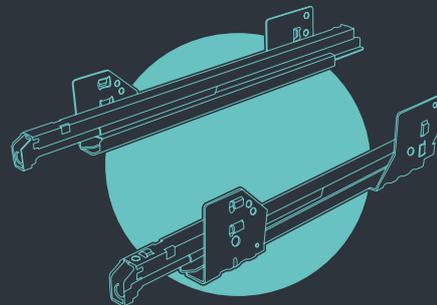
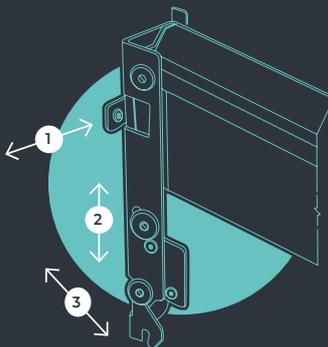
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