

AUSTRALIAN STAINLESS

SPECIALISING IN STAINLESS STEEL AND ITS APPLICATIONS

#46
WINTER
2009

Vertical landscapes
Ecologically sustainable
stainless design

Barely there buildings
Construction-free stainless

Immortalised in stainless
New home for an Aussie icon

**Remaining competitive
and profitable**
Weathering the financial storm

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ASSOA

VERTICAL LANDSCAPING

ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN



With the population boom leaving less open space available for traditional garden beds, stainless steel is helping to reintroduce mother nature to an increasingly unnatural environment.

Ecologically sustainable design (ESD) promotes the use of existing resources to maintain biological balance. This allows for natural light and ventilation, reduced energy usage, water consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The need for this type of specification is so apparent that the Government has established the Green Building Council of Australia (GBA) to advocate sustainable property development.

City of Melbourne was among the first to demonstrate ESD in Australia, with its own office building Council House No.2 (CH₂). Green features such as natural lighting and temperature control earned CH₂ the first GBA six-star Green Star Certified rating.

Among CH₂'s green features is vertical landscaping created by ASSDA member Ronstan Architectural. The specialist tensile contractors at Ronstan developed support systems for these gardens, fixing grade 316 stainless mesh and cables to the building's exterior.

Ronstan's Rowan Murray said the benefits of green façades are now widely acknowledged. "Many new buildings include elements of active and passive solar design and have some sort of façade as a physical shade. Using plants as a shade element is becoming increasingly popular and there are opportunities for the stainless steel industry to provide essential structure as a platform for plant growth," he said.

'Living walls' can be more beneficial than conventional shading systems, both economically and environmentally. The plant's ability to cool via evapotranspiration provides natural insulation, lowering the building's running costs, while producing oxygen at the same time.

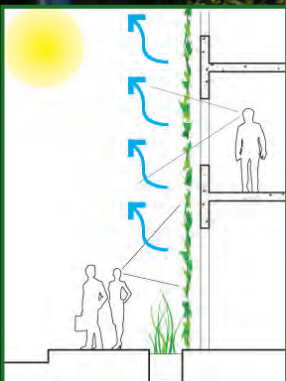
"This in itself provides a direct social and psychological benefit to the building occupants, driving people to engage with the building," Mr Murray said. "People actually enjoy the close proximity to plant life and stainless steel plays a big part in making this possible," he said.

Mr Murray said design considerations are important when specifying for this type of application, particularly "dead weight" from suspended sheet and plant matter, wind and rain force, but careful design ensures an efficient lightweight stainless solution.

Specifying ESD is also beneficial to your budget. "We love to see stainless used in intelligent ways with façades and the good news is that despite the current climate we are gradually seeing developers begin to take a more responsible approach to the upfront cost of ESD," Mr Murray said.

A recent GBA report denotes the value in green features, such as stainless façades, claiming the study proved that "green buildings make occupants healthy, wealthy and wise".

GBA recently awarded its 100th green star to a sustainable interior design at Stockland Head Office in Sydney.





'Zoo Booth' displays an innovative use of mirror finished grade 304 stainless steel and (bottom), from inside a Pop-up home office space assembled in a suburban back yard.

POP-UP STAINLESS SPACE NEW POTENTIAL FOR MIRROR FINISH

A multi-award winning building design is using stainless steel to reduce its visual impact.

'Zoo Booth' is a small free-standing kiosk at Victoria's Healesville Sanctuary and - thanks to its mirror finished stainless cladding - is very well camouflaged!

The design concept came from Melbourne company TS1 Pty Ltd, who launched Transportable Design 1 (TS1) Pop-up Buildings in 2006.

For the unique application at Healesville, ASSDA member Stainless Sections provided grade 304, 1.2 mm stainless steel sheet, polished to a No. 8 mirror finish to reflect the organic surroundings.

Stainless Sections' Roy Carter said mirror finished stainless was the ideal material to achieve low visual impact in a natural setting whilst maintaining durability in an elemental location.

TS1 is an expandable, relocatable space, completely construction-free and can be assembled in one day. It has become a popular solution to extending a living or work place, retail space or even for use as a spare bedroom.

TS1 Director Nadja Mott said her vision reflected a transient, nomadic lifestyle: her creations are transportable, low impact and fully recyclable.

Mr Carter said the emerging market for reflective buildings has prompted further innovation to achieve solar reflection capture.

"This material allows concave shaping to be achieved which enhances marketing opportunities for mirror finished stainless in the growing green building market," Mr Carter said.



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Remaining PROFITABLE AND COMPETITIVE

James Johnson, Millatec Pty Ltd

Now is the time as an owner of a small or medium enterprise to move back into the coalface and be involved in all facets of your business. As a business owner, no one spends less money, identifies opportunities to improve productivity more or reduces waste better than you.

In the current economic climate it seems especially pertinent to discuss tools that can help you remain competitive and achieve break-even or be profitable.

The four key areas are:

- Financials
- Human resources
- Marketing
- Systemisation

Controlling your finances

When it comes to managing your finances, structure is vital. It is imperative that you plan your cash flow on a week-to-week basis to ensure debts can be paid when due. Ensure tax liabilities are allowed for. If you can't meet your payment dates, talk to your creditors or the ATO: most will work with you, but they will take action if you are not open and honest.

To effectively monitor spending and avoid unexpected cash flow shortfalls, your financial reporting needs to be up-to-

“Banks do not want to see you go out of business ... they will help you stay afloat”

date. An ideal target is end of month plus 10 working days. To ensure reporting and recording is useful, filing of all financial transactions - including accruals - is vital.

A network of support is fundamental to the sustainability of your business. It is important to

establish and maintain an open and honest relationship with your bank - during times of profit and of loss. The bank will understand the long-term fluctuations of your business and will be your best source of information on current services that suit your needs. Remember, banks do not want to see you go out of business - they will help you stay afloat.

For example, they have developed a range of new products to help with cash flow.

The current economic climate is a great time to negotiate for better deals - from freight to materials - and it is an ideal time to negotiate new leases.



Human resources: maximising productivity

Employees are the bones of your company. Have high expectations of your staff and make them known. Just as important as setting a high standard of work is letting your staff do their job and being flexible enough to make them want to stay. At the same time it is advantageous to not have any staff member who you are afraid to lose: no one should be irreplaceable.

A large part of managing human resources is managing risk. Employee training is invested time and money. Maintaining low staff turnover means retention of knowledge within the company and makes thorough training a valuable investment.

“A large part of managing human resources is managing risk”

MAKE SURE...

All systems are set to be timely and give the right information

Your marketing is timely and in line with your vision

You make time to have relationships with your bankers, suppliers and customers

You make decisions - right or wrong. Procrastination will destroy you and your business

AND.. Don't be afraid to ask for help from all and sundry

Marketing: sending the right message

If you want to maintain and grow sales, first and foremost be a marketing company. Invest in marketing as you would a new machine: work out the investment and expected return and research what is right for your business.

It is a great time for change so try the things that you have been putting off during busy periods.

The key is remembering that sales must lead production, and production must support the promise. This is a constant battle: they both need - and work just as hard as- the other. This needs to be reinforced daily.

“If you want to maintain and grow sales, first and foremost be a marketing company”

“If you have had a crippling 12 months, it is not too late to recover and come out stronger, wiser and more profitable”

Systemisation

Linking systems together means you maintain control of the business. Report and record weekly, monthly and quarterly. This not only helps in tracking financial movements but also ensures that in the instance of staff absence, the system will remain functional.

Linking the following systems is a good place to start:

- Quoting (capture all costs)
- Processing orders (no job starts without a written PO)
- Producing job cards
- Purchase orders (nothing gets in without one)
- Time capture (measure productivity)
- Stock
- Invoicing (nothing gets out without one)
- Financial accounting

If you have had a crippling 12 months, it is not too late to recover and come out stronger, wiser and more profitable.



CASE STUDY

MILLATEC

2004

- \$1.4m loss
- High staff turnover
- Decreasing sales
- Mixed systems
- No bank relationship
- 50% on-time delivery
- High external product rejection rate

2008

- Profitable
- Low staff turnover
- Increasing sales
- One DRC system
- Close bank relationship
- 95% on-time delivery
- .005% external product rejection rate



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NEW FLEXIBLE LEARNING FOR STAINLESS APPRENTICES

At the beginning of 2008, ASSDA was successful in its application for funding from the Federal Government for a project focused on the integration of e-learning into industry. The funding has seen ASSDA create a Workforce Development Strategy and a Flexible Learning Delivery Pathway incorporating e-learning, with plans to develop an additional e-learning module titled *Practical Skills of Surface Treatment* to complement the existing Gas Tungsten Arc Welding Module.

The Workforce Development Strategy provides an industry-wide framework in which to address the workforce challenges for the stainless steel industry: skills shortages, staff retention, knowledge retention. This document assisted ASSDA in defining what the industry requires in training, skills development and the retention of employees.

The body of the project sees ASSDA working in conjunction with SkillsTech Australia and multiple industry partners to develop e-learning as a form of theory training for apprentices aiming to acquire their qualification in stainless steel fabrication.

ASSDA created a Flexible Learning Delivery Pathway that gives apprentices and employers the choice of conducting training both online and within the workplace. This form of training is beneficial to the apprentices as they are able to work at their own pace, in a location of their choice and in a non-threatening learning environment. For the employer the pathway is economical as the apprentice can conduct their study in the workplace, therefore reducing time spent away from the workplace.

Using ASSDA's *Stainless Steel Specialist Course* and existing resources within the TAFE system, SkillsTech Australia has developed an e-learning system based on the required competencies for a qualification in fabrication, with a particular focus on the unique requirements of working with stainless steel. These training modules offer learning through video, audio, text, images and interactives that are interesting to the apprentice whilst teaching them the underpinning knowledge they require to develop a skill.

In March 2009, 12 apprentices were inducted into the e-learning program for Stage 1a at SkillsTech. This stage is now complete and feedback from the apprentices has been extremely positive. Stage 1b has now commenced and will see the apprentices training solely within the workplace with a workplace mentor to oversee their theory training and instruct them in their practical experience.

This is an exciting development aimed at positioning e-learning as the training method of choice within the stainless steel industry and will help meet ASSDA's goal of building a strong workforce with a focus on quality and innovation.

If you are interested in viewing the Workforce Development Strategy or learning more about the learning options becoming available for apprentices, call ASSDA on (07) 3220 0722.



STAINLESS SCREENING COMBINING STRENGTH & STYLE

Melbourne based designer Pierre Le Roux began working with steel 15 years ago, more recently with stainless.

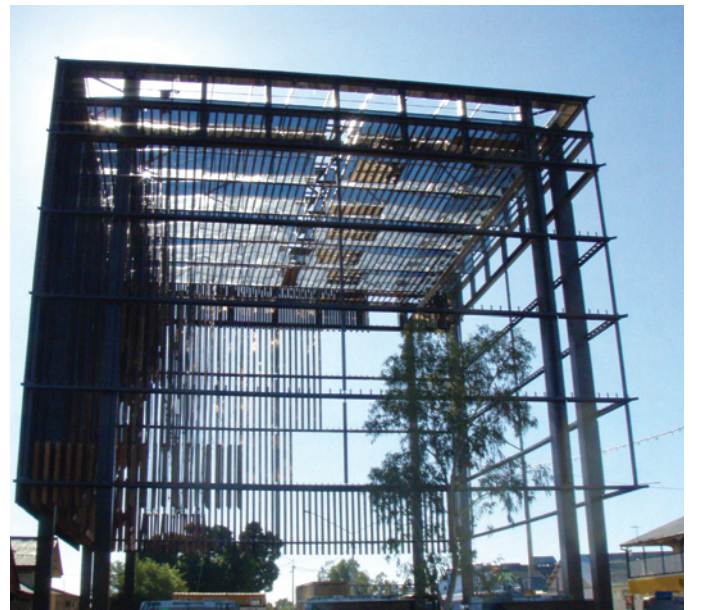
"I love the high-tech, reflective quality of stainless," he said.

Le Roux's popular custom made wine rack design has attracted clients from both retail and domestic markets. Often doubling as a wallscreen, the unique rack is fabricated from grade 304, 3mm stainless steel sheet supplied by ASSDA member Dalsteel Metals Pty Ltd. Each bottle holder was hand polished to achieve a personal finish.

Le Roux's company produces custom made stainless pieces including sculpture, architectural and landscape features.

Stainless domestic furniture and screening is becoming increasingly sought after and demand is largely surpassing supply. "The most common thing people say to me is that there's just nothing out there, so they come for something unique," Mr Le Roux said.

Creating one-off pieces to meet client specification means customer satisfaction and artistic flexibility. "This makes for a very rewarding profession," said Le Roux.



TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AUSSIE ICON IMMORTALISED IN STAINLESS

A 200-year-old Australian icon has been immortalised in a new stainless steel home.

The 'Tree of Knowledge' is cherished as the birthplace of Australia's labour movement. It is believed that shearers gathered under the tree in 1891, striking for workers' rights.

The \$6 million timber and stainless steel memorial was officially unveiled earlier this year in Barcardine, Queensland to house the remains of the tree following its death in 2006.

ASSDA Accredited fabricator St Clair Sheetmetal supplied and installed 6.5 tonnes of mirror finished stainless steel cladding to achieve a highly reflective surface and provide a durable and stunning monument.

"We clad all the trusses of the mirror finish stainless steel so it looks like a cathedral inside," David St Clair said. "The panels make the light reflect down underneath and takes away the brown of the building," he said.

The heritage-listed site is now protected from the elements and the Tree of Knowledge has been given a new lease on life.

2009 STAINLESS STEEL FABRICATION FORUM

REGISTER NOW for the Stainless
Fabrication Forum

Friday, October 23, Brisbane

What is the Stainless Fabrication Forum?

A half-day forum for fabricators, distributors and other stainless steel industry participants to listen, share, debate and network.

Why should you attend?

In these tough economic times, you need to stay informed of current issues affecting your business. This will give you the chance to share knowledge, debate the issues and catch up with colleagues and competitors at a low-cost, convenient event.

What is included in the program?

- Stand-up working lunch
- A tour of the Stoddart Foodservice Equipment showroom and manufacturing facility at Sunnybank Hills

- A Fabrication Forum featuring a panel of 5 speakers on the following topics:

"Emissions trading and how it will affect you", Paul Gallimore, CTC Consulting Group

"Sustainable manufacturing", Mark McKenzie, QMI Solutions

"A specifier's perspective on accreditation", speaker to be confirmed

"Distributor accreditation: the way forward", Peter Moore, Atlas Specialty Metals

"The e-learning pathway for apprentices", Ian Woods, SkillsTech

- Option of banquet dinner & drinks

How much does it cost?

\$275 for ASSDA members
(\$330 for non-members)

\$110 for optional banquet dinner & drinks
(all costs include GST)

Go to www.assda.asn.au to download the registration form.

FORUM SPEAKERS INCLUDE

- **PAUL GALLIMORE** CTC Consulting
- **PETER MOORE** Atlas Specialty Metals
- **MARK MCKENZIE** QMI Solutions
- **IAN WOODS** SkillsTech

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