

# QMCA

2012  
ISSUE 2

The Queensland Major Contractors Association (QMCA) is the peak industry body representing Queensland's leading construction contracting companies and is dedicated to making the construction industry safer, more efficient, more competitive and better able to contribute to the development of Queensland and Australia.

This update gives an insight into progress on some of the Association's recent strategic priorities and the ways in which it works to improve the construction industry.

## Port Connect wins top safety award

**BMD Seymour Whyte Joint Venture has won the prestigious Queensland Project Safety Excellence Award 2012 for the Port Connect project.**

The award, presented by the Queensland Major Contractors Association (QMCA), recognises outstanding contributions to project safety and rewards the project team's commitment to raising the benchmark for safety excellence.

On the Port Connect project, the BMD Seymour Whyte Joint Venture's approach was to develop a generative (self sustaining) safety culture in which everyone is a safety leader, no matter what their role. Recognising that leadership is the key to creating and sustaining any culture, their approach was to help the whole team to develop leadership skills and to empower everyone to have essential safety conversations with colleagues.

By providing safety leadership foundation training to all 60 of their supervisory and management staff, BMD Seymour Whyte Joint Venture gave all key people enhanced skills and awareness of how to influence safe behaviour in others. At the same time, the 'Looking out for your MATE' program they introduced to their frontline operatives established the skills and framework for people to have safety conversations with their workmates. This interactive approach proved far more powerful than relying on systems and enforcement alone.

The Port Connect project team also established a new culture from the outset by moving their induction process beyond the industry norm of a long presentation focused on site rules. Instead their induction was an interactive training session designed to engage new starters in the companies' objectives, cultural expectations and an understanding of the role each person needed to play as a safety leader.

By building capacity in their team, the Joint Venture established safety responsibility and leadership across all levels. By developing their people's skills and their ability to initiate vital conversations, they protected everyone more effectively.



# QMCA President's message

## Current industry challenges

The Australian construction industry has shown significant weakness recently, with last month's figures contracting at the sharpest rate since September 2011. While the continuation of the Transport Network Reconstruction Project (TNRP) provided a good spread of work for a number of contractors, the scale of the projects has limited the involvement of the majors.

The increasing focus on regional Queensland is bringing improved social infrastructure to these areas and QMCA is pleased to be involved with this strengthening of more remote communities. On the flip side, QMCA members need to be aware and proactive in addressing the social impact of FIFO and fatigue when their employees are involved in projects that take them away from home for significant periods.

QMCA commends the Queensland Government for its fiscal discipline and strong focus on reducing red and green tape. If we are to maintain a sustainable industry and get the best project outcomes in uncertain economic times, we also need to work closely with government to find the best procurement solutions.

QMCA members are concerned that, in the current move away from alliance contracting, we risk moving back to adversarial models. The industry seems to fall into a cyclic pattern, going from relationship-making to relationship-breaking. I challenge clients and contractors alike to focus on the former so we can build a stronger understanding and cooperation in achieving the best outcomes.

Industrial action is another area that is concerning members. Protected industrial action is a legal right that QMCA members recognise in their role as employers. Unprotected industrial action without consequence is another matter and is not sustainable. A look at any public contracting company's annual returns shows that, whether boom or bust, earnings stay the same – low. QMCA members' clients have not been winners either over the past decade as input costs have risen. Arguably the only real winners have been employees who have gained regular incremental increases to what are already healthy rewards.

The Association looks forward to government taking appropriate action to find an appropriate balance between the rights of employers and employees and in the process providing a sustainable labour model. In the meantime, QMCA members must avoid the short-term convenience of continually upping the ante on wages.



## Health and well-being for our people

Mates in Construction (MiC), partly owned by the QMCA through BERT, continues to achieve exceedingly worthwhile results in its vital work of suicide prevention amongst Queensland construction workers. Following its Queensland success, MiC is now expanding to other States and QMCA wishes them continued success in this invaluable initiative.

The success of the MiC program has also been a catalyst for one of QMCA's newest projects, the QMCA Health Bus, which uses a similar model to help improve the health and well-being of our construction workforce. The Health Bus is a mobile service offering health checks on work sites throughout the State.

## Looking to the future

QMCA continues to evolve to meet the needs of our complex and changing operating environment and to support members in responding to today's and tomorrow's challenges.

In February this year, QMCA released its 2012 Major Projects Report in conjunction with CSQ and BIS Shrapnel. We are just about to begin a major update of this valuable report, which we plan to launch in the first quarter of 2013, followed by an annual update and reporting cycle thereafter. This publication is a highly-regarded tool that provides the industry with projected figures and perspective for future planning.

QMCA is also currently undertaking a member survey seeking feedback from members on their vision of how QMCA should evolve in the future.

**Tony Hackett**  
President  
QMCA

# Insights into indigenous employment

**Earlier in the year, QMCA hosted an indigenous Employment Knowledge Transfer Forum with senior officers of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). This was a follow-up workshop requested by (former) Chief Operations Officer, Emma Thomas.**

The forum was an opportunity to share lessons learned over the preceding year as a result of the various strategies contractors had applied to meet their (often self-imposed) targets for Indigenous employment.

QMCA invited Kelly Smyth (Regional Development Australia Far North) to present on the practicalities and real-life lessons of placing and retaining Indigenous employees in remote mining jobs. Brett Schimming (Construction Skills Queensland) provided detail and context on complying with the Queensland Government's 20% policy.

Miles Vass and Joshua Hannon from TMR provided an update on TMR's reconciliation policy, practice and initiatives. Future enforcement of the 20% policy was discussed with a focus on allowing flexibility to set relevant and achievable targets for individual projects. CSQ, as the enforcement arm of the 20% policy, assured participants that their interactions with contractors were based on flexibility and individual project realities but stressed the importance of the reporting requirements and increased contractor compliance.

Leighton Contractors, Origin Alliance and BGC Contracting representatives also presented an overview of their respective programs, initiatives and the lessons learnt since the last workshop.

## **Pointers to success**

The presentations highlighted some common themes in achieving sustainable success with Indigenous recruitment and retention:

- Commitment from the Executive through to the shop floor
- Integration and embedding of strategies through all business processes and systems
- Recognition of commercial imperatives as well as the role of Indigenous employment in contractors' social licence to operate
- Realisation that success is achieved through small steps
- Importance of education throughout the businesses – cultural inductions are key
- Respect, recognition and consideration of key cultural differences (acknowledging an Indigenous culture that has developed over more than 60,000 years)
- Taking a long-term view rather than ticking a box – two employers had extended probationary/training periods to get people work-ready as well as to test their commitment
- Seeking commitment from the employee as well as from existing staff and the employer
- Robust mentoring and support mechanisms.

QMCA members remain committed to encouraging Indigenous employment but believe the best results will be achieved through a flexible, planned and integrated approach rather than a fixed percentage of man-hours target.

## DATE CLAIMER

**2013**

### **QMCA Major Projects Report**

(jointly sponsored by Construction Skills Queensland)

### **Launch**

**Wednesday 20 February 2013**

**7.15am for 7.30am (concluding by 9.00am)**

**Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre**

*Get your free copy of the Report at the launch*

# Annual Dinner a memorable success



**Approximately 450 leaders from the contracting, engineering, consulting and government sectors filled the ballroom at the Sofitel Hotel Brisbane on 4 October 2012 for QMCA's 2012 Dinner and announcement of the QMCA 2012 Queensland Project Safety Excellence Award.**

As well as showcasing the innovative safety approaches shortlisted for the award, the dinner provided an important social opportunity and inspiration from a memorable after-dinner speaker.

The speaker, Todd Russell, shared one of the greatest stories of Australian mateship, courage and survival ever-told. When a minor earthquake rocked the small town of Beaconsfield in Tasmania, collapsing one of the tunnels in a local gold mine, Todd and fellow miner Brant Webb survived for 14 days almost one kilometre underground in a 2 x 4 metre pocket of air.

Without food and water, Todd and Brant survived only on hope while rescue teams worked around the clock to free them, aware that the slightest mistake could bring the roof collapsing in on them.

The image of the two men walking back to the outside world with their arms held high in triumph is one that millions around the world will remember along with their incredible story of courage and survival against the odds. It was inspiring to hear the details of Todd's and Brant's endurance and amazing rescue first hand.

Pat Welsh, one of Australia's leading sports journalists and commentators, again did an outstanding job as MC for the evening.

QMCA thanks the sponsors of the dinner – BERT, Boral, Cardno Bowler, Coates Hire, Construction Skills Queensland, The Construction Training Centre, Hastings Deering, and WorkPac.





# 2013 QMCA Executive announced



Tony Hackett



Hugh Morrison



Tim Phelps



James Schirmer



Peter Anusas

## **President**

### **Tony Hackett**

Tony is the Civil Manager, BGC Contracting. He has extensive experience in civil and mining construction and operations spanning over 25 years. Tony's management experience covers a variety of areas; mining operations, civil construction, estimating, and general management. With a focus on safe and efficient delivery, Tony has been involved in major civil and mining infrastructure delivery throughout regional Queensland. In his role as QMCA President, Tony is dedicated to QMCA being the recognised independent and effective advocate of major contractors legitimate interests.

## **Vice President**

### **Hugh Morrison**

Hugh is the Engineering Manager for Queensland and the Northern Territory for Baulderstone and has over 25 years' experience in construction. Hugh has been involved in most aspects of civil construction across Queensland, NT and Victoria. Hugh was previously on the QMCA executive for a number of years and he believes that senior managers of major contractors have a role to work with government and clients to address common issues for the benefit of the construction industry as a whole.

## **Secretary**

### **Tim Phelps**

Tim is the National Engineering Manager for Fulton Hogan Construction. He is a Fellow of The Institution of Engineers Australia. He has more than thirty years of industry experience in the delivery of a wide range of civil engineering infrastructure in Queensland and NSW.

## **Treasurer**

### **James Schirmer**

James is the Manager Business Development at Golding, and has spent his career working in the industry. James has a diverse range of industry experience having worked in the building, civil engineering, mining and process engineering sectors in Queensland and the Northern Territory. He has been QMCA Treasurer and a member of the QMCA Executive Committee for a number of years.

## **Committee Member**

### **Peter Anusas**

Peter is Abigroup's Infrastructure Manager for Northern Region which encompasses Queensland and Northern Territory. With over 23 years in construction, Peter has worked with a diverse range of clients and sectors in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia.

## **Committee Member**

### **Berry Freshney**

Berry is Operations Manager, LNG and Resources Infrastructure with Leighton Contractors Northern Region. Berry is responsible for delivery of Infrastructure projects associated with the increasing demands in the LNG and Resources sectors. Berry, a Mining Engineer, brings his expertise from a wide diverse range of projects such as, Gunpowder Mine and Solvent Extraction, AMCI Infrastructure, Broadmeadow's Sustaining Operations and APLNG Water Treatment Facilities to various delivery models including Alliances (CoalConnect Alliance, Eastern Busway Alliance), Design and Constructs (Ipswich / Logan Motorway, Northern Access Road Project), to construct only (Bruce Highway upgrades, South West Transport Packages).



Berry Freshney



Dale Gilbert



Greg Sparkman



Daryl Young



Mike Robbins

**Committee Member  
Dale Gilbert**

Dale is BMD's General Manager Northern Region. In this role, Dale supports project teams and clients throughout all phases of the project. This includes management of current resourcing effects and requirements for successful project delivery including stakeholder management and the alignment of the project goals and deliverables. With 25 years experience across engineering, mining and construction disciplines, Dale combines his wealth of practical knowledge with his strong commercial and corporate expertise to ensure infrastructure delivery of the highest calibre. Dale has experience in delivering project overseas, an understanding of current resourcing effects and requirements for successful project delivery including stakeholder management and the alignment of the project goals and deliverables.

**Committee Member  
Mike Robbins**

Mike is Laing O'Rourke's Director Northern Region and was appointed to that role in January 2012. He is also a Board Director of the Australia Hub. Mike drives the implementation of Laing O'Rourke's strategy to deliver a profitable performance from the core business operations in the Northern Region. Mike brings over 25 years of heavy civil engineering and complex construction experience to his roles. Since joining the Laing O'Rourke Group in 1984, he has held a series of senior executive positions leading the company's core construction and infrastructure delivery businesses, including Managing Director for the Europe hub, accountable for all building and civil engineering works in Europe. His focus on design for 'buildability' and quality delivery are industry-renowned. He has gained wide experience in both heavy civil engineering and major building projects.

**Committee Member  
Greg Sparkman**

Greg is the Executive Manager for Infrastructure at Thiess Queensland. He is a Fellow of The Institution of Engineers, Australia with over thirty five years experience in the heavy civil industry.

**Committee Member  
Daryl Young**

Daryl is Northern Region Operations Manager for McConnell Dowell and in this role ensures projects are delivered on time and on budget, with a major focus on safety and environment. He has over 30 years experience in national and international construction. His relationship based negotiation approach is complemented by his tenacity in contract management and his ability to guide high performance teams to success.



# The history of QMCA

Until 1993, major contractors Australia-wide had been part of the nationally-organised AFCC (Australian Federation of Construction Contractors) as their industry body. Then, as a result of some issues in other States, it was decided to disband the AFCC.

Ric Barton, Queensland Manager for John Holland Construction, felt that there was still a real need for major contractors in Queensland to have a common forum and an organisation that would represent the interests of the industry.

Ric therefore revived a pre-existing Queensland-registered employer organisation, the Australian Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (AFCEC), which had retained its registration although it had been dormant during the era of the AFCC. He canvassed the support of the managers of other major construction companies in Queensland and, in 1994, the AFCEC was brought back to operational life.

Despite initially retaining its old name, the AFCEC intended to represent the interests of all the major contractors in Queensland, as the AFCC had done. At that time, multi-discipline engineering work was experiencing a significant lull while building was well represented by the Queensland Master Builders Association (QMBA) so inevitably civil engineering issues tended to dominate the revived organisation's attention.

Interestingly, the interstate head offices of some of the majors were not enamoured with the idea of this Queensland-based contractor organisation, and so membership was initially an informal arrangement while credibility and industry acceptance grew.

The initial executive was:

Ric Barton	President	John Holland Construction
Ian Harrington	Vice President	Abigroup Contractors
Craig Porter	Secretary	Leighton Contractors
Peter Lyons		Thiess
Graham Fitzsimmons		Concrete Constructions
Terry Cogill		Bielby
John Seymour		Seymour Whyte

Within a year of restarting, the AFCEC had approximately 12 member companies. The executive met every two months, initially in Thiess' offices. Over the next few years, a number of significant issues were addressed including:

- Lobbying to Main Roads Department about the format of contracts
- Transferring industry body representation, previously held by the AFCC, to the revived AFCEC, which included appointing employer representatives to the Board of the Industry superannuation fund and Building Industry Redundancy Fund
- Successfully lobbying for a training allowance to be included in the cost of all the contracts in the Brisbane to Gold Coast Motorway – this significant achievement provided the core funds to increase skill-based training in south-east Queensland
- Improving industry understanding and effective use of Enterprise Agreements
- Modifying the civil pay scales to allow a career structure based on skills for all wages personnel
- Developing the core skills assessment and skills record and training modules, in conjunction with an industry training group, for all civil construction workers.

An annual AFCEC dinner was revived to help reduce the isolation of construction teams and to create a social setting to display the industry's achievements to government and guests.

In 2001, the Queensland Safety Award was introduced to encourage and highlight the industry's commitment to safety. The initial winner was Leighton Contractors for the Inner City Bypass project. Subsequently, the organisation strongly encouraged the formation of Safety Managers and Officers of Queensland Incorporated.

The AFCEC Board worked hard to establish the credibility of AFCEC within the industry and its acceptance as a major employer organisation by contractors, clients and unions alike. By the early 2000s, the organisation had successfully taken over the role previously played in Queensland by the nationally-based AFCC.

As Queensland's industrialisation grew and resulted in significant multi-discipline projects, the Board decided that the time had come for AFCEC to change its name to the Queensland Major Contractors Association and to include contractors who delivered structural, mechanical and process projects as well as the traditional civil projects. A new logo was designed, the name was changed and a new era for the organisation began.

*The Queensland Major Contractors Association acknowledges and thanks Ian Harrington, a past President, for recording the early years of the Association.*

# QMCA 2013 General Members' Meetings

**Monday 18 February**

5.45pm for 6.00pm

**Wednesday 20 February**

7.15am for 7.30am

(concluding by 9.00am)

**Brisbane Convention and  
Exhibition Centre**

**Monday 25 March**

5.45pm for 6.00pm

**Monday 27 May**

5.45pm for 6.00pm

**Monday 29 July**

5.45pm for 6.00pm

**Monday 23 September**

5.45pm for 6.00pm

**Monday 25 November**

5.45pm for 6.00pm

Annual General Meeting

**Venues and guest speakers  
to be advised**



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