

# MiTek®

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# FAB NEWS



Wil (Duilio) Crosariol (till recently, owner of ABC Frames & Trusses) was a pioneer in the prefabricated timber industry in Sydney for more than 50 years. He's seen a lot, done a lot – and with his retirement, 'goes a lot' of hands-on experience. Wil was born 50 km from Venice, Northern Italy. His father made the then arduous boat trip, (it took on-average 4 weeks to travel from most European ports to Sydney), escaping a country still struggling to achieve economic and social stability in 1953 - to Australia, full of hope and dreams of a better life for his young family. His mother followed the next year.

## Larger-than-life character 'CALLS IT A DAY.'

Australia was to benefit greatly from the influx of people not afraid of a hard day's work and keen to assimilate.

Before this story continues, there is a reason why Wil calls himself Wil with one 'L' because no-one could come to terms with 'Duilio' in the 70's. He didn't like Will with two 'Ls' because in the early days people would confuse comments like: 'will leave now / will be there / will have time.' But he has come to accept it in recent times because when sending emails or texts he sometimes (inadvertently) holds down the 'L' key too long and signs off as 'Will.' This industry needs 'characters' and losing one of the best to retirement

Tim Rossiter (MiTek NSW) has known Wil for more than 30 years and counts him as a friend. 'Wil probably has the most incredible work ethic I've ever seen. He has been an 'educator' to hundreds of builders over the years and a great supporter of timber prefabrication.' When he first started prefabrication was the new kid on the block...literally; so, having people like Wil championing prefabrication was integral to the success it enjoys to this day. The words pioneer and innovator are often used a bit loosely – but they definitely stick with Wil,' said Tim. 'He certainly makes an impression when you meet him too – usually on your



'WILL' be hard to replace. However, as the following 'will' attest: he has certainly proved himself as a 'WILL DO' man.

For anyone who has met or spoken to Wil it is hard to separate the 'character' from the 'man.'

knuckles. He uses those massive, well-worn hands of his to grind the palm of anyone brave enough to welcome a handshake,' added Tim with a hint of grimace in his voice. 'There's a picture of Wil on site, wearing the tightest fitting shorts I've ever seen – and this was in the 90's. I guess old habits are hard to change. Wil in his

## Larger-than-life character 'CALLS IT A DAY.' cont'd...

shorts conjures up images of Sydney's building fraternity in the late 60s - so beautifully created in (brick-layer), Nino Culotta's classic tale of an Italian's experiences with tradies in Sydney's west: 'They're a weird mob!'

Wil started as a carpenter in 1966 – then married (Sharon) in 1968. That's 51 years, a daughter, 2 sons and 3 grandchildren later; quite a legacy! Although, in its heyday ABC Frames & Trusses only boasted a few more than a dozen staff, it certainly left its mark on the Sydney landscape, handling some very complex and challenging projects over the years. A Catholic Church in The Horsley Drive, Fairfield is one such job Wil remembers fondly: 'It involved some oversized hardwood (W.A. Jarrah) trusses with half-scissor trusses, bolted together...not your everyday treated pine and metal plate combination.' They are completely exposed – with people still admiring their grandeur to this day. Another religious edifice: a Buddhist Temple with complex prefabricated domes still gives Wil the odd sleepless night. 'It's those 'special' jobs that you remember most. I am proud of what the business has achieved,' said Wil with a smile.

Over the years Wil developed an uncompromising attitude to quality – if you're going to do something, you may as well do it properly (a legacy from his father). He also found it hard to 'suffer fools' - especially on-site. 'To say I could sometimes... 'become a little animated' might be a bit of an understatement,' Wil admitted somewhat sheepishly. He then went on to give, what he openly admitted were only the tip-of-the-iceberg examples where things didn't fare well with tradies. 'Some of them don't listen – but the worst are the ones who can't or won't read the plans properly.' You get called out (knowing we've made all our trusses to within a millimetre of perfection) and chippies swearing nothing goes together,' a, still frustrated Wil lamented. 'Back-in-the-day, builders and carpenters were more problem solvers than today. They were more resourceful and, for most, took a lot more care in their craft. They were Artisans.'

Wil sees great merit in initiatives like MiTek's: Accredited Timber Truss Installer courses and TAFE for the next generation. 'Timber engineering has come a long way since the early days of Bostich...even Gang-Nail. It's important for trades to be up-to-speed with the latest development...and rule changes,' said Wil. He is positive about the future for the industry. 'I think when you've got world-leading technology and resources behind you, success isn't far away. I know they've changed their name a few times in the last 50 years...but MiTek and their staff have been a huge help along the way,' said Wil. 'I count Tim and Shan Sudar (both from MiTek) as part of the family – great friends, very knowledgeable and always there to help. I'd call them on weekends and if they didn't answer immediately, a response was never far away. It made our business feel part

of a bigger team, working together, with the same emphasis on quality and service.'

And what does retirement look like for a man known for his tremendous 'work ethic?'

A holiday house in Gerringong holds fond memories, with the promise of more...the grandchildren more-than-likely to feature. Less than two hours drive south of Sydney this coastal resort town saw many hours spent with Wil and his children, fishing and prawning. 'More of that would be good,' said Wil. Yet another tale beckoned: with Wil recalling his father's exploits at making home-made wine and fresh-mixed salamis hanging in the shed. 'Dad would make about 800 to 1,000 litres every year...then proceed to give most of it away to family and friends. Some of the salamis succumbed to the same fate.' Wil continued on the tradition and has both his sons showing a keen interest in the skills handed down from generation to generation. Innovation invaded the home however - last year saw the home-made wines and vinegars progress from hand-corked to screw tops!

The family home complete with a back yard looking more like a market garden should keep Wil busy. 'We got rid of the chooks 4 months ago,' offers Wil laconically. Sharon wants to see more of Australia – however, both agree: 'those cruises around the Mediterranean look very attractive.' Sharon worked in the business for many years, keeping the finances in-check, so she has more than earned the comfort retirement should bring. One gets the feeling: cups of tea and snoozing off in front of the TV in the middle of the day won't be on the agenda for either!



# ‘A LOT has changed in TWO YEARS!’



MiTek held a ‘gathering’ in 2018 for valued Northern NSW customers and their partners at Port Macquarie. That was seen as more of a chance to get-together with a less formal structure. 2019 would be very different scenario. Many must have known returning to the Coffs Harbor venue meant this time: MiTek meant business! Serious subjects to be discussed...but also, in a relaxed environment.

‘The last time we had a ‘structured’ conference was in 2017,’ said Tim Rossiter. ‘And there have been so many advancements made with SAPHIRE™, new products (some deleted) and changes in building rules and regulations. MiTek have a new look too... so there was a lot to cover this time around,’ he added.

Registration was at 12 noon – then the group of 12 guests (from 3 fabricator plants) were welcomed by Andrew Bricknell. Andrew discussed trends in the building industry and the restructuring being implemented at MiTek both in Australia / NZ and globally...reassuring everyone present the changes made were going to be good for all.

Tim followed – drawing on the theme: whole-of-house, whole-of-business and how MiTek could help fabricators benefit from a more holistic approach. New products like PosiStrut Flooring Cassettes were a prime example of how new products and building systems could attract a broader customer base for timber prefabrication.



‘There are always changes to building codes – especially with greater advances in timber prefabrication engineering,’ said Tim. ‘Recent changes in the National Construction Code of Australia terminologies could have a huge impact for our fabricators!’

Tim cited several examples where a number of significant changes: ‘would affect all classes of buildings, including: houses, apartment buildings less than four storeys (low-rise), and apartment buildings above four storeys but under 25 metres (mid-rise). Tim also noted:



'A LOT has changed in TWO YEARS!' cont'd...

'mandatory sprinkler protection for buildings four storeys and above (with offsets) would also impact on the costs to construct in steel and concrete, further making timber prefabrication a more attractive construction solution'. All of these changes were implemented on May 1, 2019.

Afternoon Tea – then ushered in Richard Moulton to bring all up-to-speed with SAPPHIRE™. 'SAPPHIRE™ has been constantly evolving and improving. SAPPHIRE™ Management and SAPPHIRE™ Structure are so much more powerful and contain many more features than 24 months ago,' boasted Tim. The room stood silent for the next 2 hours as Richard demonstrated some 'real-life' case studies. 'They certainly were the focus of discussion at the Terrace Bar on conclusion of the day's presentations – and at dinner later that evening,' added Tim.

Of note: (given some recent internal restructuring) – it was decided this conference might serve as the ideal opportunity to introduce MiTek Asia Pacific's new nine-member Management Team. All were due to arrive a day early (in the morning) for a meeting. 'Only one was present,' touted Tim with a grin. A pall of thick fog

had descended on Sydney the morning prior to the conference – and if your flight was scheduled to leave Kingsford Smith Airport post 8:00am, you were going nowhere! Early bird Tim was aboard one of the last flights to exit Sydney for the next 10 hours; leaving the other 8 team members languishing.

'It was great to catch up with everyone – and to see the looks of excitement and enthusiasm on our guests when the latest developments in SAPPHIRE™ were revealed,' said Tim. 'We look forward to sharing the next instalments with our valued customers and their staff in Northern NSW next year.'



# DAY at the FOOTY!

Cathy Fraser, State Manager SA and Communications Manager, was a guest at the footy (AFL) in the 5AA Locker Room with the Tech boys from Footers Pty Ltd.

The game was Port Power vs Sydney Swans and pressure was brought to bear for her to become a Power supporter – really!



From left Florin Tudor, Kevin Brennan, James Suchanek, Will Hall, Jason Sage and Adrian Gruber



Adrian with Footy legend Russell Ebert.

# PAR-FECT...AGAIN!



**'How does he do it year-after-year?' was the murmur coming from the crowd assembled. Yet again, idyllic conditions greeted all at the Victoria Park Golf Club in Herston, on the northern fringe of Brisbane's CBD. 'Not a breath of wind, the sun shining and blue skies as far as the eye could see,' boasted Toby Holloway – hinting that he somehow played a part in this golfer's dream scenario.**

A record turn-out saw 54 players gather at 11.30am for registration and a light lunch of bacon and egg rolls and a freshly brewed coffee. MiTek had the course for the afternoon so several points of tee-off were organised around the course to ensure a quick finish and reduced delays. Usual fare: 4-ball Ambrose and a shotgun start.

There was a little bit of controversy on the day with a quiet rumble getting louder as word spread of the feats of Ross Cichocki (Trusstec). He had monstered a drive on the longest drive hole...a smashing 360 metres plus; nearly 60 metres better than his nearest rival. Had he been training with the Chinese swimming team? Was Lance Armstrong a friend on Facebook? 'I think we'll ask him

for a 'sample' before tee-off next year,' quipped Toby. 'I didn't see it – but it must have been one hell of a shot!'

Most of groups were back in the clubhouse by 4.30pm and relished the cool ales that greeted them.

Nibbles were also on hand as the 'serious' side of the day got underway – counting the scorecards! It wasn't long before the 'officials' emerged from their deliberations to a rowdy group ready for rewards or regrets of chances lost.



PAR-FECT...AGAIN! cont'd...



Before announcing the winners, Toby was keen to officially acknowledge the sponsorship partners on the day: Westbeam, Tilling Timber and Dindas. 'The MiTek Queensland golf tradition is always a highlight on the calendar – but it's made even better when generous sponsors come aboard. All three are integral to our industry and I thank them for their contributions,' said Toby.



**TIME FOR THE RESULTS:**

**1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE**  
Graham Leddy (Versace),  
Paul Spicer, Bob Ryder (DTM Timber),  
David Thomas (Wesbeam)  
*with a nett 47*

**LAST PLACE (NAGA award)**  
Paul Lees (MiTek),  
Adam Healy, Owen Thomas (Versace),  
Greg Downie (Wesbeam)  
*with a nett of 68*

**LONGEST DRIVE -  
9th Hole**  
Ross Cichocki (Trusstec)

**2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE**  
Graham Legerton, David Harwick,  
Robb Walton, Paul Smith (Bunnings)  
*with a nett 49*

**NEAREST THE PIN**  
**3rd** - Shane Moore (Trusstec)  
**6th** - David Royston  
**11th** - David Royston  
**16th** - Glenn Jerome (MiTek)

**STRAIGHTEST DRIVE -  
12th Hole**  
Tim Routledge (Trusstec)



# QLD Gala Dinner was a WINNER!



'The list of plaques and memorable moments were mounting – so instead of going out to fabricators, we thought a night of fun and laughs might be more appropriate,' said Danny Lake, Northern Regional Manager NSW, ACT, QLD, NT, WA. A Gala Dinner at the prestigious Rydges Southbank was to prove the perfect scenario for the more than eighty fabricators, MiTek staff, partners and friends that attended.

Rydges South Bank is located in the heart of Brisbane's arts and entertainment precinct. Sweeping views of Brisbane River greeted guests as they assembled in the foyer for pre-dinner drinks. Half an hour later all were ushered into the main dining room...with the first of many awards being presented as entrees made their way to the tables. Peter Hutchison made the presentations, and the first of many a hand-shake and photo opportunity to unfold as the evening progressed.

Andrew and Heather Bricknell relished the chance to escape Melbourne's bleak weather and mingle with the crowd. 'Andrew sees these events as a great way to bring customers together and meet face-to-face,' said Danny, who was MC for the night.

Midway through the evening a special guest speaker took to the stage. 'I thought something up-beat, motivational might go down well,' said Danny. And he was right! Courtney Hancock, the only woman in history to win all major Ironwoman titles in the same year, gave some insights into what it takes to be the best. The underlying theme: lots of hard work, self-belief and commitment!

After dinner, awards, desert and more awards, the room had settled into a comfortable air of frivolity, with laughter echoing from table to table.



**There were many reasons to celebrate some significant milestones with MiTek Queensland fabricators and long-time MiTek staff – so a special occasion was in order.**





**QLD Gala Dinner was a WINNER! cont'd...**



Peter Beverland, the CEO of Australian Timber & Trusses in Nerang – a well respected pioneer of timber prefabrication received a prestigious award for 40 years as a MiTek fabricator. He then made a short speech regarding the state of the industry and how far it had progressed in four decades. ‘Peter was extremely positive about the future and glowing in his praise of how mature it had become. He cited a ‘family’ atmosphere and how supportive all were of each other. He also said the ‘family’ theme could be reflected in the way many families played a role in timber prefabrication businesses (husbands, wives, sons and daughters) – with generations now carrying on the legacy of their parents. Really heart-warming stuff,’ said Danny.



‘The night went in a flash – you looked up and it was nearly midnight. I think the staff were kept very busy waiting on our guests – so it came as no surprise when we were told last drinks as 12 o'clock chimed.’

It was a night to remember and ensures our MiTek Queensland Gala will always be something special.’



QLD Gala Dinner was a WINNER! cont'd...





# TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

**Timber prefabrication in WA has made great inroads over the last few years, with many in the local building industry impressed with the speed of construction and reduction of on-site waste. But there are even more advantages - and MiTek WA are keen to promote them, so another 'gathering' was organised. The latest: an 'education' focussed event for their fabricators and staff... and their builder customers. There were even important issues on the agenda for the engineers and certifiers, TAFE lecturers and industry suppliers who attended the breakfast and information session.**

'We wanted to make sure the first session was an industry focussed event,' said Brad Ridolfi, MiTek Branch Manager WA...important given Sean de Praza was our first speaker after breakfast.' Sean is from the WA Building Commission (Building & Energy) – one of their Principal Building Engineers.

Held at the Matilda Bay Restaurant, the theme for WA's latest 'event' was based around prefabricated timber wall framing – design, installation and compliance. WA is transitioning towards a framed building environment, with prefabricated roofing a later bloomer than in most other states. A growing number of builders and developers have taken to timber prefabrication eagerly and want to profit from the benefits it brings to a 'more-of-house' construction. So, converting to wall frames seemed a natural progression. More than 75 guests attended the all-day, 3-part event.

Breaking the event into 3 specific stages was the logical format as each section catered to different target market...with some overlap. The first stage: themed an 'Industry event', the second: 'Fabricator Sales Section' and the last: 'Fabrication Designer & Software.' The industry attendees left at morning tea, while the MiTek fabricator staff remained.

As stated, Sean opened the day by covering On-Site Compliance. He was soon followed by Tim Rossiter, GM Building Solutions MiTek Asia Pacific, who got straight into timber prefabricated wall framing and its engineering. 'I started from scratch,' said Tim. 'It was important to ensure everyone had a sound knowledge of the basics and how far modern timber engineering could improve wall frame design and capabilities.' Richard Moulton, GM Software Products MiTek Asia Pacific was next, also focussing on wall frames – but from



more of a software perspective. Like Sean and Tim, his presentation was a brief but informative 30 minutes, leaving plenty of time for questions.

After a short break Brad launched straight into Costing and Software. This had a distinct sales focus for Fabricators and their staff. Once again Tim covered Engineering and Richard Software. But this time all concentrated on how MiTek can help its Fabricators and their sales staff promote the use of wall frames and deliver a more-of-house solution to their customers. 'During the day we also discussed the use of tools like the EasyCat and PosiStrut Apps,' said Brad. 'There are also data sheets and comprehensive brochures to highlight the advantages of all aspects of timber engineering, from roof trusses to wall frames, the software and the Engineered Building Products required. We wanted our customers to be aware that we have the tools to assist them in every facet of their business,' added Brad.

After lunch Andrew Bricknell, Managing Director MiTek Asia Pacific, got the second



half of the day off to a flying start, giving an insightful overview of the building industry, both local and national. He also updated all on the most recent organisational changes within MiTek...and how MiTek were, more than ever, committed to the growth and development of all their licensed fabricators.

Tim followed, promoting the engineering of wall frames. 'I wanted to impress upon the fabricators the benefits of a pre-engineered solution...and that it was compliant. This was the perfect segue to Richard's presentation of MiTek SAPHIRE™ and its ability to design and calculate 'racking forces' required in a structure. 'That was the big show-stopper

on the day,' beamed Brad. 'The feedback I got was this could be a real game-changer.' Drawing on real-life examples, Tim was able to demonstrate advances in design, which in-turn, improved load-bearing capacity.

Richard returned to give several more demonstrations of SAPHIRE™ and show how the program can include bracing and other Engineered Building Products required to manufacture and install prefabricated timber wall frames. He also covered some of the latest developments in SAPHIRE™ and how MiTek's latest software product can be instrumental in the day-to-day operations of a truss plant.



It was a jam packed but extremely successful day, with much covered. 'I think the format worked extremely well,' smiled Brad. 'Some travelled from as far away as Albany (400+ km) in the south. Every year the crowds get bigger – I think it vindicates everything MiTek can offer to our fabricators, their staff, clients and others involved in the WA building industry,' he added.