

## George's say

Welcome back to the first edition of WC Hammer for 2008.

I hope everyone had an enjoyable break over Christmas and relished the opportunity to indulge in some quality time with family and friends.

While the start of the year always seems to kick off a little slowly, the schedule for 2008 is shaping up to be both a busy and exciting time for all of Woollam's branches.

At the northern end of the network Woollams is helping to rejuvenate crucial community infrastructure, starting work on the \$10.5 million redevelopment of the Whitsunday Police Station. Within the year Woollams also is planning to have completed a major makeover of the Yeppoon Police Station and holding cells.

We're also embarking on yet another historic project for Mackay after winning the Mackay City Council tender for the town's \$20 million convention centre.

The PresCare Carina in Brisbane is starting to take shape as well, with work well under way on the 154-bed aged care facility. We've also secured a new site for the Brisbane office.

Down south, staff from the Ballina branch are focussing on plans to build a new rehabilitation unit at the Ballina Hospital.

Out of the office, it turns out Woollam's employees are commanding the spotlight after clinching a major Queensland Master Builders Association award and a number of sporting victories. Read on for more details ....



George Bogiatzis  
Managing Director



## Woollam's apprentice rewarded for outstanding work

**Left:** Rohan Thompson's dedication to the job was recognised with the QMBA Central Queensland award for apprentice of the year.

Woollam Constructions leading hand and star apprentice Rohan Thompson experienced a milestone year in his career in 2007.

Not only did the 41-year-old complete his apprenticeship, but he also took out one of the building industry's most coveted awards.

In July 2007 Rohan was named the Queensland Master Builders Association (QMBA) Central Queensland's apprentice of the year. He also came in third for the QMBA's competition for State awards.

The father of two finished his apprenticeship in October 2007, after putting in four years of hard work, training and an unwavering commitment to his new career.

Rohan collected his apprentice of the year accolade at a special QMBA awards' night held in Gladstone.

"This was great news. I wasn't expecting to win and it pretty much came out of the blue," he said.

"When I started I had a few goals I wanted to achieve, so I approached the job with a positive attitude, worked hard and made the most of the opportunity.

"I knew I didn't want to be on the nail bag at the age of 50 or 55 ... by that stage I'd like to think I'd be taking on the role of a foreman."

Rohan said his time with Woollams had been well spent.

"Woollams have been an excellent company to work for and since I started my apprenticeship with them I've had a number of opportunities to enhance my skills," he said.

Described by his colleagues as a 'conscientious and hard working' employee Rohan has completed a number of TAFE courses, receiving certificates in forklift operation, scaffolding, excavating, bobcat operation, grader and dozer. He also took on the added responsibility of being a workplace safety representative.

Rohan joined Woollams as an apprentice in 2003 after working as a plant operator for more than two decades.

The change of career, he said was part of his decision to try something different and upgrade his skills in a new line of work.

Since his first day as an apprentice carpenter on October 5, 2003, the Gracemere resident hasn't looked back.

Rohan currently is working as the leading hand for Woollam Constructions redevelopment of the Yeppoon Police Station and has a number of major developments as a leading hand already under his belt including the Callemondah Rail Depot in Gladstone, the Murray Street unit redevelopment in Rockhampton and as a foreman, Yeppoon Ergon Energy extension.

## Keeping it in the family



The Brodel family, originally from Mackay, are no strangers to Woollam Constructions.

There currently are two Brodel family members working for the company - Mark and his son Wade, and prior to this Mark's father Gus Brodel worked for Woollams at Mackay for more than three decades. Gus also opened the Mackay branch and was manager of the office for more than 10 years.

Mark said his brother John also worked for a time with Woollams before he left to take up a career in teaching.

Despite having strong family ties with the company, Mark who is Woollam's foreman at the Port Douglas Stella Maris Nursing Centre, said it was his love of carpentering that attracted him to the industry.

Mark completed his apprenticeship with Woollams and has worked for the company on and off for almost 20 years. For the past seven years, Mark has been working out of Rockhampton office.

It was during a 15-year stint running his own business however, that Mark taught Wade the tricks of the trade, guiding his son through a full apprenticeship.

According to Wade, who is the foreman for the re-development of Rockhampton's Benevolent Home, a downturn in the building industry in Mackay about eight years ago, meant both the Brodel boys sought work with a larger firm. They ended up working for Woollams and spent near on three years working together on a number of projects.

The father and son duo say they have always been pretty 'good mates' on and off the job site.

"Dad taught me everything I know and we've always been pretty good mates," Wade said.

Mark heartily agreed but in the same breath said it was a case of 'what happens on the job site stays on the job site'.

## Socceroos triumph in 34 degree heat and no reserves

The Woollam's Brisbane branch consultant's soccer team was kicking goals at the annual Project Services Soccer Tournament at Brisbane's Force Fields late last year.

The team of Woollam's lads beat three other teams made up of Queensland Government employees to bring home the champion's trophy as well as their corporate pride and a touch of heatstroke.

The round-robin comp, which kicked off at 1pm in unbearable mid-November summer heat, was played out under trying conditions with the mercury rising to 34 degrees and no reserves to speak of.

"The day turned out to be ridiculously hot," Brisbane payroll manager and mad-keen soccerroo Arno Tretter said.

"Winning the tournament wasn't a bad feat considering we lost our three reserves in the first game. When preparing the side it appeared we'd have heaps of players but on the actual day our numbers dwindled to only five."

In the end, Arno said that it was the team of George Bogiatzis, Luke Smith, Peter Todd - who had to leave after the first game, past employee Dave Seeney and himself who triumphed against the odds to bring home the sporting glory.

Rick Pawula also put in a good show of support and proved himself a valuable asset to the team in his role of water-boy.

"We were all quite envious watching Rick knock back the beers while we were on our knees," Arno said. "The rest of the team was made up of architects from the architectural academy and Building Services Authority."

Arno said the team won its first game 3:0 after losing three reserves, lost the second game 0:1, and then clinched victory in the third, must-win game with a score of 3:1. They took out the final game with a commanding score of 2:0.

"This was achieved with only a bare 11," Arno said.

"George was strong in defence, Luke and Dave, being the young guns, did heaps of running and I anchored in midfield, as the old legs were fading."

This was the second year the highly anticipated competition has gone ahead.



**Top:** The lads from Woollam Constructions put in a stellar effort. **Bottom:** Arno Tretter with the golden trophy.

## New HQ heralds era of growth for Woollam Constructions



**Above:** Woollam Constructions business development manager Scott Wedgewood, managing director George Bogiatzis and director Craig Percival outside the new Brisbane headquarters.

Woollam Constructions will kick off a new era of business growth with a change of location for its Brisbane headquarters.

The 124-year-old company recently purchased the former P and H MinePro building at 71 Lytton Road, East Brisbane.

Woollam Constructions managing director George Bogiatzis said the contract for the new office had been signed and plans for refurbishment were in progress. There will be more information to come in the next newsletter.

## Ben's mankini takes centre stage

**B**en Williams has worked for Woollam Constructions for the past three years and already he's making a name for himself.

Not only is the impressionable 25-year-old carving out an impressive career as a third-year apprentice with Woollams, but Ben's also scored himself a quarter-page spread in an international surfing magazine, modelling the latest mankini-cut swimwear.

Ben said his fluorescent green mankini made the front pages of well-read surfing magazine Pacific Longboarder after a close encounter in September last year with editor John Brasen at Angels Beach at Ballina.

The youngster was heading out for a surf after two solid days of celebrating his 25th birthday when his girlfriend whipped out his new surfing outfit.

Ben said a bet with his mates left him with no choice but to brave the wave in his Borat style bathers.

"I kitted up and funnily enough I met the editor of Pacific Longboarder, while I was paddling out for a surf," Ben said.

"He pulled me up and asked if he could grab a photo. I think he was pretty impressed. Well it got a good run in the magazine anyway."

Amusing swimwear aside, Ben does have a serious side to him and has helped the Woollam's most southern team on a number of major projects including the \$14 million

Crowley Village Apartments at Ballina as well as a number of renovations on the Ballina District Hospital and Ballina State High School.

Ben started full-time work with Woollams after completing four years at Lismore's Southern Cross University studying visual arts.

He said his dramatic change of career from the classroom to the job site came about because of practical reasons and the opportunities for career advancement Woollams continually offers.

"I reached the end of my degree and was supposed to do a five-day week internship without pay for six months," Ben said. "It was either go ahead with that and hope I landed a job or continue on working with Woollams where there's plenty of opportunities to learn new skills and a reliable income stream," he said.



Above: Ben models the new fashion in mens' swimwear.

## Projects

### Mackay Convention Centre

**I**n December last year the Mackay City Council announced Woollam Constructions had won the tender to build the town's new Convention Centre.

Construction work started earlier this year with the help of more than 50 Woollam's employees and subcontractors.

Woollam Constructions Director Craig Percival said the Convention Centre along with the Mackay Entertainment Centre were two of the biggest projects to be undertaken by the company in Mackay.

"We were really keen to win the Convention Centre tender," Craig said. "It is fitting that as we built Mackay's existing Entertainment Centre some 20 years ago, our next generation of Woollam's stars will be given the opportunity to be involved with another landmark Mackay building."

### Touch football champions

**T**he Woollam's touch football team from Mackay proved they were a formidable force on the footy field during last year's summer competition.

The eight-member team brought home the winner's trophy after beating their opponents Natural Wonders 6-3 in the December 12 grand-final.

This was the first time the Mackay branch had competed in the local touch football series and players said it was a great opportunity to get to know their workmates outside the office.

Post season reports say it was a 'fairly rough competition' with a few thrills and spills along the way. One bold young female player even suggested (with tongue in cheek) a few byes throughout the season may have helped the Woollam's legends make it to the grand-final.

Rough or not, the win (and the cold beers) at the end made it all worth their while. Congratulations to Kaitlyn, Craig, Cameron, Gary, Marie, Woody, Robbie, Kylie, Katie, Christian, Sarah-Jane and Ben!

## Staff profile

### David McNichol, 59

#### Site foreman



**W**hen one of Woollam's longest serving employees from Mackay Dave McNichol was 26-years-old, he lost his handsaw while working on the

original building of the Good Shepherd Lodge.

Dave was far from impressed as the tool in his words was 'a good one'.

Thirty-three years later, Dave is still with Woollams and back at the Good Shepherd Lodge helping out with the ongoing redevelopment of the aged-care facility as a site manager.

This time round however – none of Dave's tools have gone missing and the 59-year-old

now laughs as he recalls how upset he was when his prized handsaw was more than likely stolen.

Dave started with Woollams when he was 20-years-old and since then he's been involved with some of the company's biggest projects in the region including Mackay's Entertainment Centre, the town's community health centre, the redevelopment of the old railway station, as well as various building extensions to schools and hospitals in the area.

Outside of work however, life for Dave is all about getting outdoors and exploring outback Australia.

Dave and his wife Chris are huge fans of teaming up with other families and touring around the northern, central and western parts of Australia in their landcruiser.

Last year the McNichol's annual trip was to the Simpson Desert, which Dave described as a 'rugged natural beauty'.

# New faces

## Lori Kelly

### Administration



**B**allina Island resident Lori Kelly was fairly confident she had made the right choice to jump ship from her former employer to Woollam Constructions well before she was offered the position with the Ballina branch.

“As soon as I started telling people I was going for an interview with Woollams I received a lot of positive feedback and a few people made comments about the company being great to work for,” Lori said.

“It’s always good to hear this kind of feedback when you’re considering taking a job with another company.”

The change of scenery for Lori also means the mother of two, can make the most of Ballina’s scenic canal views during her walk to work each morning.

Lori said she relished the morning hike along Ballina’s canal walking track which runs off the end of Temple Street.

Lori and her husband Col, who are former Clarence Valley residents, settled in Ballina almost 12 years ago.

She said the family moved north from the sleepy Scottish town of Maclean so her two children Rebecca 20, and Dean 18, could tap into the benefits of a growing regional town.

“There were more opportunities here for the kids in terms of high schools, job prospects, sports and other community and social aspects,” Lori said.

“Not only is Ballina a real growth town, but it also has a good balance of natural beauty and commercial development which make it perfect for a sea-change.”

Lori started with Woollams on January 21 and is responsible for general reception and administration duties.

The newcomer said she was enjoying the new role and was keen to learn some new skills putting together contracts and orders.

## Maurice Spierings, 28

### Carpenter



**A**fter almost 18 years in the north-west Queensland mining town of Mount Isa, former Kiwi, Maurice Spierings and his fiancé Nicole were looking for a change.

Turned out, a sea-change was on the agenda and the couple headed east to the sugar capital of Australia – Mackay.

Maurice, worked with a couple of local builders in Mackay before joining up with the Woollam’s team as a carpenter at the beginning of 2007.

He’s currently working on the redevelopment of the Good Shepherd Lodge and apart from coping a bit of pressure

from everyone to set a date for his wedding, the 28-year-old is pretty happy with his lot in life.

“When we moved from Mackay we were looking for a different lifestyle somewhere with a few more opportunities,” he said.

“While I was in Mount Isa I was working mainly on houses, where as the jobs with Woollams are commercial so it’s a different aspect to the industry which I enjoy.”

Maurice is also one of Woollam’s undiscovered singing talents and is known for his lung busting songs on the job site.

On a number of occasions the former lead singer and guitar player has even been caught leading his colleagues astray at the local karaoke bar.

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## Newsletter contributions

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