

Editorial



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Welcome to the first issue of our Journal for 2007. Curtin University of Technology and in particular the Department of Construction Management are delighted to be the hosts for this year's Australian Journal of Construction Economics and Building (AJCEB).

This edition of the journal has an interesting mix of papers. The first by Yu Lay Langston and Craig Langston investigates the energy and cost performance of thirty recent buildings in Melbourne, Australia. The aim of their paper is to report on typical values for embodied energy, operating energy, capital cost and operating cost per square metre for a range of building functional types investigated in this research. They conclude that energy and cost have quite different profiles across projects.

Kathy Michell, Paul Bowen and Keith Cattell use a soft systems methodology to explore the perceptions of stakeholders to a cost management system and develop conceptual models of theory and practice of cost management. They find significant differences between the perceptions of individual stakeholders concerning design team participants, participants' roles, and the purpose of the cost management system. They provide recommendations for structural, attitudinal and procedural changes to cost management systems in order to facilitate effective functioning in the achievement of client's needs and objectives.

The third paper by Gerard de Valence looks at the significance of barriers that firms considering entry into the construction industry might face. Drawing on the microeconomic characteristics of imperfectly competitive and oligopolistic markets the analysis finds that there are a dozen barriers to entry. Gerard identifies specific barriers, which leads to an analysis of how they operate and their significance (high, medium or low) in different market types.

John Greenwood analyses the impact of the introduction of performance-based code within Western Australia and gauges the effect and usefulness of alternative design solutions in commercial construction; using a case study project. The research reveals that there are several advantages to alternative designs and that all parties, in general, are in favour of the performance-based building code of Australia.

Finally, Michelle Watson's paper addresses the underlying, influential factors concerning skills shortages in the Australian construction industry. Michelle suggests influencing factors include funding, training statistics, employer expectations, financial limitations, Industrial Relations and immigration and notes that if skills shortages continue to exist, their effect will impact upon the overall performance of construction companies throughout Australia.