

Editorial



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Welcome to the second issue of our Journal for 2006. The University of South Australia and, in particular, the School of Natural and Built Environments, is delighted to have been the host for this year's Australian Journal of Construction Economics and Building (AJCEB).

From next year the journal will undergo a slight change to its name and will be known as the Australasian Journal of Construction Economics and Building. The AJCEB acronym will stay the same. The reason for the name change is the adoption of the journal by several Asia Pacific Regional Professional Bodies which will increase the readership to over 10,000. This is a positive step for our Journal and totally consistent with the internationalisation theme adopted by our Board of management. This increase in circulation will allow the journal to reach a greater and more varied population group both in terms of readership and authors and should result in an even better quality journal.

This issue of the journal is an interesting mix of papers from around the world.

The first paper by Giustina Consoli traces the architects' dilemma when Australia embarked upon a number of private prison projects during the 1990's. Those projects involved the competitive bidding for prison projects by consortia, which generally consisted of a correctional operator, contractor and architect. The architect's role in such projects was to satisfy the needs and desires of the operator, contractor and government assessors. As a result, the architect became a critical element in the successful delivery of the prison projects despite the sometimes conflicting issues that they were forced to grapple with. These architects reported: (a) uncertainty in undertaking large specialist projects, (b) grappling with their own expectations and those of other participating parties as to the role of the prison architect, (c) a desire to acquire a working knowledge of the philosophies of incarceration and prison design and construction, and (d) difficulties in working within a prison environment. These suspicions were raised in regards to conflicting and underlying objectives of the operators and contractors.

Rifat Rustom proposes the formulation of generic simulation models for analysing construction claims. Rustom maintains that while there are several techniques for analysing the impact of claims on time schedule and productivity, very few are considered adequate and comprehensive enough to consider risks and uncertainties. The formulation of the generic methodology presented in

the paper depends on three simulation models; As-Planned Model (APM), As-Built Model (ABM), and What-Would-Have-Been Model (WWHBM). The approach proposed allows for scenario analysis to account for the disputed events and workflow disruptions thereby assisting claimants in presenting their cases in a much more effective and professional manner.

Relationship contracting is the topic for Zuo and Zillante's paper. The construction industry has long been accused of poor performance. The confrontational attitude of its members and the resultant adversarial atmosphere has been identified as a major factor responsible for this poor performance. A cultural change is required to remove these barriers and to promote optimum project outcomes. Relationship contracting is promoted as a way to support the shift from the adversarial culture to the co-operative and collaborative culture within the industry and the project team. The authors use the Adelaide Convention Centre Extensions project as a case study and review the form of relationship contracting used in this milestone project. The paper documents the lessons learned and makes recommendations that can lead to improvements in future projects.

Due Thanh Luu and Willy Sher explore how obtaining competitive quotations from suitably qualified subcontractors at tender time can significantly increase the chance of winning a construction project. Amidst an increasingly growing trend to subcontracting in Australia, selecting appropriate subcontractors for a construction project can be a daunting task requiring the analysis of complex and dynamic criteria such as past performance, suitable experience, track record of competitive pricing, financial stability and so on. Case-based reasoning (CBR) may be an appropriate method of addressing the challenges of selecting subcontractors because CBR is able to harness the experiential knowledge of practitioners. This paper reviews the practicality and suitability of a CBR approach for subcontractor tender selection through the development of a prototype CBR procurement advisory system. In this system, subcontractor selection cases are represented by a set of attributes elicited from experienced construction estimators. The results indicate that CBR can enhance the appropriateness of the selection of subcontractors for construction projects.

The paper by Peter McDermott and Malik Khalfan suggests that the main driver behind the adoption of supply chain management (SCM) philosophy into the construction industry was the successes within other industry sectors. SCM is defined as a network of different organisations, linked upstream and downstream in a chain, aiming to produce quality and value in the services and products for the end consumers through integrated processes and activities. In order to achieve the optimised level of integration of the whole supply chain, the industry has responded in various forms. This paper discusses different initiatives by the researchers, construction industry, and the UK government in order to achieve

optimal level of supply chain integration. The paper considers a series of supply chain concepts and concludes with a brief overview and initial findings of a project undertaken by the authors.

The final paper by Yadeed Lobo and Suzanne Wilkinson explores the effects of occupational licensing on skills needs in the building industry in New Zealand. The research assesses whether the licensing regime being put into place in New Zealand would require new skills when voluntary licensing (2007) and compulsory licensing (by 2011) are introduced. The paper develops a deeper understanding of the effects of occupational licensing on an industry to determine the effects of licensing on future skills needs in the New Zealand building industry. The results show how occupational licensing will affect skills in the industry in two main ways: increase professionalism and increase specialization in skills. The impact on the New Zealand building industry will be to force a change in work practices, increase the move to offsite prefabrication and change the types of skills the industry requires. The paper serves as an illustration to other countries on how changes in legislation, and the introduction of regulation for an industry, can alter the work practices of that industry.

I hope that you will enjoy this selection of papers. Special thanks to the members of the Editorial Board who continually give up their time to review the papers. Similarly, I must thank three special people without whose help this edition would not have gone to press: Stephen Pullen who, not only acted as a reviewer but also took over as editor for paper 3 because of my conflict of interest situation; Jian Zuo who provided invaluable assistance with the formatting of this edition and Dana Stephens, my hard working assistant who administered the whole process and kept us all honest. I could not have done this job without their help.

The festive season is upon us and I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy Christmas and may 2007 be everything that you want it to be.

Regards

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Australia, December 2006.

Published by the Australian
Institute of Quantity
Surveyors and the
Australian Institute of Building

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Canberra ACT Australia

December 2006

Annual subscription \$77 AUD
Single issue \$40 AUD