

MACKAY ENTERTAINMENT CONVENTION CENTRE

WOOLLAM CONSTRUCTIONS
MACKAY QLD



SHOWCASE CONSTRUCTION FOR SHOWCASE CONVENTION CENTRE

Located on the shores of Whitsunday passage, Mackay is a magnet for extensive tourism activities, and is also one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. Mackay Regional Council is embracing the challenge of delivering adequate services and lifestyle opportunities in an exciting programme aimed at delivering key infrastructure for its rapidly growing community.

In planning the Mackay Convention Centre, the Council has adopted a goal of producing a showcase facility, purpose-built for conventions, trade shows and concerts. The Centre will have a seating capacity of up to 1000 people for dinner functions, and will also include a 1500 seat concert hall and breakout function rooms. Adjacent to the existing Mackay Entertainment Centre, the complex will be an iconic structure for the city when it is completed in 2009.

The Council has entrusted the construction of this landmark facility to Woollam Constructions. Woollam is Queensland's oldest construction company, this year celebrating the 125th anniversary of its establishment.

Over the years the company has forged a strong regional presence in Queensland and Northern New South Wales. Established in the late 1950s, the Mackay office now fuels a major portion of the company's growth. Company co-director Craig Percival, who started with the firm as a building cadet, has been the driving force in obtaining local work and ensuring the company remains actively involved the Mackay community.

Woollam boasts a strong brand and growing profile within the construction industry, despite having experienced the Great Depression, two World Wars and various recessions. The managing director, George

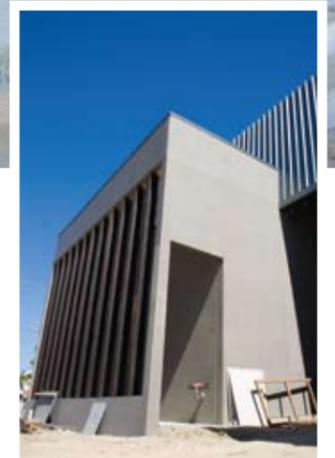
Bogiatzis, has worked for the company for more than 25 years, having also started as a building cadet. He says, "We strive to support the local communities we work in, not only through job opportunities but by getting involved with local projects and events." He went on to say that during its history, Woollam Constructions had employed and trained over a thousand apprentices, trainees and building cadets. The company has a clear policy of employing excellent people and nurturing young employees so they can reach full potential in their chosen fields.

According to Woollam's Executive Officer, Scott Wedgwood, the company's strategy going forward is to stay close to its existing clients. While the company's markets and customer base have varied considerably over the past 100 years, Woollam has continued to deliver quality, providing corporate clients with timeliness and dependability. It has striven to add value to every stage of a job, and is currently intent on developing its design and construct arm. That aspect of its business will allow it to guide clients from the inception of a project through to final completion; and will also enable greater efficiencies to be gained in the construction of projects through the design arm effectively dovetailing with construction teams. "We have a broad range of expertise, including cost estimators and planners, quantity surveyors and employees with

backgrounds in architecture, planning and environment as well as finance and accounting. This supplements our site-based team which includes experienced project and site managers who have specialised skills in each of our four main construction fields," Mr Wedgwood reported.

Brisbane based managing director George Bogiatzis said the 125th anniversary of the company provides a good opportunity to reflect on the company's achievements and growth during its lifetime, and to realise how firmly the company had become entrenched in the local communities in which it works.

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HOTMIX FIRM SEALS PLACE IN NICHE MARKET

Substantial projects such as the Mackay Convention Centre rely on inputs from small specialists as much as from larger subcontractors. Potholes-R-Us is one such enterprise, responsible for 40 mm thick hot mix pavement re-sealing of an adjoining road surface after sewerage and cable trenching activities.

Potholes-R-Us started in Mackay in early 2005, with the simple intention of providing reliable asphalt repair services to domestic and commercial sector clients, i.e. shopping centres, smaller sized businesses, car parks, and driveways for private residences. The philosophy of the company is never to compete on price, or to compromise the quality of workmanship and service.

Its primary equipment consisted of a specially designed asphalt trailer that is uniquely suitable for lower height areas such as underground car parks. The towing vehicle for the trailer is also designed for low and confined areas, able to tip its load sideways to both sides in the same way.

For reasons plainly related to promptness and professionalism, the company found that the demand for its service exceeded all expectations. As a result, it has added to its equipment pool on a regular basis. Despite

the original market targeting, the firm found that its operations became attractive also to mainstream building contractors in Mackay, such as Woolams Constructions, and this market segment now accounts for approximately 50% of its workload. These companies engage it to repair small damaged areas in roadways or car parks that may have been injured by machinery during construction, as well as for resealing activities such as that carried out at the Convention Centre. It guarantees its product, in a clear intent to leave its clients with peace of mind.

The company's work also extends now to larger asphaltting tasks for newly built car parks. It now boasts that it has a truck or machine suitable for any individual application.

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CONVENTION CENTRE USES UNCONVENTIONAL WALL TECHNIQUE

In tilt-up construction, concrete walls are poured in sections (sometimes called tiltpanels) onto prepared horizontal surfaces coated with appropriate "release" agents. These surfaces then form one side of the panels, and trowelling of the upper horizontal face forms the other. The panels may be poured either on-site, or in a precast concrete fabricating plant. After curing, the wall sections are lifted by one edge and placed into the vertical or near-vertical position. Additional reinforcement is provided in the panels to cater for the handling stresses. Joints between slabs, partly preprepared beforehand, are then completed to render the wall waterproof.

The technique is not new, but according to the Portland Cement Association of America, it is one of the fastest-growing building technologies in the US, with at least 10,000 structures being built every year. It has a number of distinct advantages which include: a more controlled environment for consistent quality; improved insulation properties in concrete walls; formwork economies; enhanced construction safety; improved durability; ease of maintenance; lower site labour and equipment requirements; and faster construction times. Slabs may also be poured against pre-formed patterned surfaces to create pleasing aesthetic effects.

Mather Concrete Services has supplied and installed tilt up panels to the Mackay Convention Centre. It specialises in this task, as well as carrying out suspended deck and commercial concrete work generally. The company has been in existence for three years and now employs 56 people, of whom 20 to 27 worked on the convention Centre project. A special finishing technique was used to achieve appropriate colouring, and a new kind of coloured concrete was employed. However, through the use of high quality tradesmen, Mather encountered no special difficulties with this process.

Other projects that Mather Concrete Services are working on in Mackay and nearby regions include terminus buildings, Interlink Court, Hastings Deering, Louisa Creek substation, the Moorvale mine site and the Daly Bay coal terminal.

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