

RICK TURCHINI

MANAGING DIRECTOR,
BAULDERSTONE



When engineering expertise, technical innovation and superior construction management skills come together, outstanding projects are built. Baulderstone's track record includes delivering Australia's first ever green building, our most advanced nuclear medicine facility and numerous nation-building infrastructure projects including Brisbane's CLEM7 tunnel. Managing Director Rick Turchini brings over 40 years of civil engineering expertise throughout Australia and the Pacific to the task of steering the company's continued progress as a leading force in the sustainable development arena.
Interview by Willow Alianto

WA How do you think the construction industry as a whole has evolved during your 40-plus years in the trade?

RT During the past 40 years, the construction industry has played a key role in Australia's productivity, by delivering the infrastructure that government, businesses and communities need.

Baulderstone has been creating what matters for over 80 years and in many ways our history is representative of the industry's evolution. At Baulderstone we are proud to have delivered innovative and iconic projects, such as the world heritage listed Sydney Opera House and, just this year, the \$3 billion CLEM7 tunnel in Brisbane.

While the industry has become safer and more innovative, it has also become more complex. You only have to look at the myriad of contracting methodologies in use today – managing contractor, construction management, D&C, construct only, PPPs, early contractor involvement, alliances etc.

Each one of these processes tries to define a different approach to risk and relationships. Regardless of the contract type adopted, your success will always come down to the people involved and their ability to manage those risks.

I'm proud to say that the people we have in Baulderstone are some of the best in the business. We focus strongly on the planning phase of projects – identifying and mitigating against risks. We also adopt a strong partnership approach, communicating openly and with integrity with our clients. Over 90% of our business is return business – so it must be working.

The other major change has been a commitment to continuous improvement in workplace safety. From 2004-2009 Baulderstone recorded zero Class 1 Injuries and a 42 per cent reduction in our All Injury Frequency Rate. Although more work needs to be done, these results prove that our safety initiatives are effective.

WA Which infrastructure needs do you believe still require addressing in Australia?

RT There is anywhere between \$300 billion to \$700 billion worth of priority projects that, if not addressed, will constrain our economy and standard of living.

There is no reason why a country as wealthy as ours should not have world-class infrastructure: a road network that is the envy of Germany, public transport that makes Japan look second rate and port facilities that rival North America's.

What we really need is a proper plan, agreed to by all parties, that is systematically rolled out no matter who's in power. This would provide a pipeline of work that companies can depend on and plan for. It would stop the feast or famine approach we currently experience and would cut out the waste and inefficiency that comes from changing tack from one day to the next.

At Baulderstone, we have the people, we have the capability, but we desperately need government leadership to execute these nation-building projects.

WA How do you believe these needs should be funded?

RT There is no single silver bullet for funding our nation's extensive infrastructure needs. We need all of our resources, private and public, to deliver the infrastructure task that confronts us.

We need to make sure that we utilise the most appropriate financing structure and recognise that there isn't a "one-size-fits-all" approach that will work.

Major Australian banks tend to limit their contribution on each project to \$150 million. Even if all four major banks contribute funds, their maximum total contribution of \$600 million falls short of the \$2 billion to \$3 billion needed for some major projects. We may need around 15 banks, including overseas banks, to provide funding for the very large projects.

Getting the risk and return profiles right is also necessary if we want to maximise the number of prospective investors – superannuation funds in particular. Super funds don't have an appetite for construction. Potentially, their view could change if they employ people who can identify and assess the risks associated with investing in infrastructure assets.

And most importantly, we need to be efficient in how we design, procure, finance and build.

WA Discuss some of the recent projects you have completed which you are proud of.

RT Improved health care is vital to our nation's growth. Baulderstone is the leading builder in this sector, having completed over 50 major health and research projects in the past decade. We recently completed the Pharmacy Australia Centre of Excellence and the Australian Red

Cross Blood Service (QLD); the Alfred Hospital (VIC) and we are nearing completion of the last separable portion of the Macquarie University Private Hospital (NSW). We are also currently building the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Victoria.

Also in Victoria, we completed the Crown Metropolis Hotel, which opened in April 2010.

We have a track record of successfully delivering large-scale infrastructure projects such as the \$3 billion CLEM7 tunnel in Queensland and the \$630m Westgate Freeway in Victoria.

Our work in progress includes: the \$550m expansion of Port Botany; correctional facilities such as the Gatton South East Queensland Correctional Precinct; water infrastructure including the Eastern Treatment Plant and Sewage Treatment and Pumps Stations (VIC), and the Gibson Island Advanced Water Treatment Plant (QLD); and defence projects such as the Hardened and Networked Army Base (SA) and the Maribyrnong defence site in Victoria. Last year we completed an upgrade at the RAAF Base in Amberley, Queensland.

WA How is the growing momentum of Green Star design and construction shaping your approach to business?

RT Baulderstone is a pioneer of green building in Australia, having constructed the Henry Deane Building in Sydney, the first in the country to be awarded with green ratings in 2001.

We have invested in ensuring our people are well trained, experienced and astute. Baulderstone's Green Star Accredited Professionals and NABERS Energy and Water Accredited Assessor have a track record of delivering sustainable projects that set new benchmarks in sustainable building design.

A recent achievement for us is the substantial reduction in embodied CO2 emissions in the structural design of the 5 Star Green Star building on 121 Marcus Clarke Street in Canberra, which we are constructing for the Australian National University. We also recently completed our very own corporate and NSW headquarters, Triniti Business Campus, which despite being designed to a 4 Star Green Star standard, exceeded expectations and obtained a 5 Star Green Star rating.

WA You have some remarkable women on your team. How has Baulderstone encouraged their career progression in an industry that up until recently had few women in key design, project management, engineering or trades supervision roles?

RT At Baulderstone we proactively target women engineers through our graduate recruitment program. We are a member and sponsor of the National Association of Women in Construction, and we offer paid parental leave. In addition, we encourage career progression for all of our staff – men and women – through learning and development programs and flexible work arrangements.

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