



# HOME AWAY FROM HOME

**MAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY :** Icon Co  
**CONSTRUCTION VALUE :** \$37 million  
**COMPLETION DATE :** December 2014  
**STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS :** Northrop Engineers  
**ARCHITECTS :** Group GSA Pty Ltd

Setting new standards in quality student accommodation, Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street comprises of 5 buildings, surrounding 2 central courtyards covering approximately 15,000m<sup>2</sup> of gross built area.

Behind the red-brown brick façade of Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street, so reminiscent of a 19th century streetscape, lies stylish facilities that could not have been dreamt of at that earlier time.

Private ensuite bathrooms, air conditioning, wireless internet and sleek modern kitchens hide behind Icon Co's face brick work that fronts this new construction, due for completion by December 2014.

Icon have been working on the \$37 million, 665 bed student accommodation buildings for around 14 months. A key design feature has been the blending of the buildings with their surroundings, keeping in style with older Ultimo structures.

The 5 towers of the Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street development complement the surroundings, reaching between just 3 and 8 storeys high in keeping with the area. The Urbanest Sydney

Central, Wattle Street towers surround two courtyards and provide 430 student rooms, comprising studios, twin share rooms and 4, 6 and 8 person apartments, all with ensuite facilities.

As with other Urbanest student accommodation developments, secure parking is provided for 86 bicycles and 30 motorcycles; there are no parking spaces. The student living experience is completed with on-site communal recreational areas including a fully equipped gym, BBQ and entertaining areas, communal kitchen, games area, cinema and administration office. Free iMac internet stations are also installed throughout and Foxtel will be available on the communal big screen TV.

Icon are no stranger to design and construct contracts for residential multi-unit developments like Urbanest. Residential construction is core business for Icon, and forms the lion's share of their contracts. The Melbourne-based company entered the NSW market in 2012. Following a 17 year history in Melbourne, Icon have made a concerted

effort to expand across the Eastern Seaboard, extending first to NSW. In the last few months a new office has been established in Brisbane.

Of 200 employees, about 100 are employed in NSW. Ten office staff were involved in Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street, with onsite workers at peak construction periods approaching 250 in number. The use of modular construction systems greatly assist in building the project as quick as possible.

Crews were required to work around the challenges of contaminated land at the 15,000m<sup>2</sup> site, with heavy metals and asbestos contained on site when off-site disposal was not possible. The contamination constraints required alternative site management approaches to ensure both contractor and environmental security. Variations to designs ensued to allow for the contamination issues, including landscaping solutions and ground floor construction slabs.

Icon Project Manager, Nick Economos, said through using a two-pronged approach to mitigate contamination - offsite disposal coupled with onsite containment - Icon responded to the difficulties with flexibility, allowing the project to achieve sound environmental and safety objectives.

In the mean time, Icon have plenty of other projects in NSW to keep them on the go. All are within Sydney, and all include multi-unit residential developments. Current projects include a \$107m mixed-use development at Burwood, \$88m residential apartments development at Rosebery, 212 apartments and retail at Archer Street in Chatswood, and a \$40m, 20 storey residential tower at Bondi Junction comprising 100 apartments and two levels of retail.

It's easy to see why Icon have carved a name for themselves in reliability and quality in the multi-unit residential sphere. An 1850s undergraduate off to the newly established Sydney University would be astounded at such sites.

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## KWIK AND EASY

Waco Kwikform manufactures, hires and sells a range of scaffold and formwork products that include some of the industries best known brands such as Kwikstage and Wedgelok. Operating in Australia since 1984, Waco Kwikform is recognised as a leading supplier operating over 30 locations in Australia and New Zealand with people and equipment capable of providing engineering solutions that embody service and quality from the ground up.

Kwik-Deck is an internationally proven high-quality, fast erect and strip formwork system, now available in Australia. Manufactured by Waco in its ISO 9001/2008 accredited factory, the modular interlocking fit between panel, beam and drop head not only ensures a quality concrete finish, but also make the system extremely safe from set up to dismantling. A simple hammer blow disengages the Drop-Head wedge, lowering beams and panels to allow stripping and cycling, while retaining props for back propping.

Waco Kwikform supplied over 1350m<sup>2</sup> of Kwik-Deck to Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street, a multi-unit dwelling, which contains 5 buildings covering 15,000m<sup>2</sup> with heights ranging from 3 to 8 storeys. Additionally, Waco Kwikform supplied over 9000m<sup>2</sup> of industry leading Kwikstage/Wedgelok scaffold, delivering compliant temporary access solutions on the project.

Kwik-Deck offered several solutions to complexities arising from slab, column and beam transitions on the Urbanest Sydney Central project, including a range of panel and beam sizes, an infill patching system, plus an ability to interface with traditional formwork systems. Waco Kwikform's existing Kwikstage/Wedgelok components are compatible with Kwik-Deck, which simplifies initial set up and provides lateral restraint. It is these features, that contribute to safety, speed and cost effectiveness of the Kwik-Deck system.

The unique challenge presented in the Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street project, demonstrated the benefits of combining the Kwik-Deck system with Waco Kwikform's existing product range and technical expertise to provide a total solution to any building project.

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## APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

**Demolition – the start of any major re-development.** As old buildings are torn down to make way for new developments, the rest of the project management team are hard at work setting up for the construction to come. But demolition and civil works are far more involved than just running a bulldozer through the site.

We spoke to George Magoulas (Human Resources Manager, Metropolitan Demolitions Group) to get some insight into their work on the Urbanest Sydney Central, Wattle Street site, and how they positioned the site ready for an efficient build process.

“Demolition is a major project. It involves a range of stakeholders, particularly in a tight spot such as Wattle Street,” George says. “We work with telecommunications, electricity and gas suppliers, local government and business and the lead developer to ensure the site is safe to demolish, then we work in a methodical process dismantling the structure.”

Wattle Street was well within the scope of Metropolitan Demolitions Group's expertise, and they were able to complete the project on time

and on budget, handing the site to the builder in a clean, workable condition with well over 90% of the original site being recycled in one way or another.

“This is very important to us,” explains George. “We aim to deliver a high quality project on schedule, otherwise it'll effect the construction phase, delaying the processes in place and ultimately impacting budget and program.”

Since commencing work in demolition over 42 years ago, Metropolitan Demolitions Group has expanded the business dramatically to include recycling, civil, remediation, earth works, consultant services and property development.

“Although we're now a multi-faceted business, we focus our efforts on demolition, civil and recycling as our core drivers,” George says.

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Urbanest Sydney Central,  
Wattle Street, NSW



## THE SPECIALISTS TO LOOK UP TO

**When building projects to the scale of Urbanest, it is important to work with sub-contractors and suppliers that can handle complex builds and communicate effectively with the many stakeholders involved in the project.**

When selecting partners for the Urbanest build, Icon Construction knew they needed specialists such as AP Ceilings.

AP Ceilings are experts in the design, build, supply and installation of end-to-end wall and ceiling solutions. Rather than focussing on full building projects, AP Ceilings say that they are able to offer better solutions to their customers by focussing purely on walls, ceilings and facades.

“Plasterboard, framing and external façade cladding are our core specialities,” AP Ceilings says. “On the Urbanest project we were awarded to supply and install external framing, internal wall and ceiling framing, plasterboard sheeting and POD installation.”

While the team say that some extreme patience was required with the PODS design and system, there was no major delays in

the installation process and they were able to deliver on time and on budget.

“When you are dealing with a lot of builders, suppliers, developers and contractors, it’s important not to complicate your offering, they should know what your speciality is.” AP Ceilings says. “We get in and get the job done with a minimum of fuss.”

Looking forward the team of over 50 workers have just finished 177 units in Marrickville and are now preparing for some large high end developments, 132 units in Rushcutters Bay, 134 units in Redfern and 60 units in Lidcombe.

“There is a big demand for medium and high density residential at the moment,” AP Ceilings says. “Our expertise and work history ensures we are able to deliver for top tier builders and developers time after time.

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