

# STATE-OF-THE-ART

The Verde Townsville Project constructed by Hutchinson Builders is a 12 level 5 Star GreenStar Office.

**MAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY :** Hutchinson Builders  
**CLIENT :** Finders Street Tower Pty Ltd  
**PROJECT CONSTRUCTION END VALUE :** \$44 Million Base Build. \$16 Million Fit Out.  
**COMPLETION :** September 2013  
**ARCHITECT :** ML Design  
**SURVEYOR :** Mitchell Brandtman  
**STRUCTURAL/CIVIL ENGINEER :** Robert Bird Group

Whether you're a university student in Sydney, Canberra or Northern Queensland, a tourist relaxing on Hayman Island, a grocery buyer in Sydney's northern beaches or just enjoying a cold one at Murrumba Downs Tavern, you've probably unknowingly benefited from the expertise of one of Australia's longest-standing construction companies.

In an industry where boom and bust take their toll, Hutchinson is definitely a survivor, celebrating 100 years in May 2012.

"Since the onset of the GFC we've actually grown

from about 900 staff to 1300," says Hutchinson services manager, Alan Tayt.

Mr Tayt laments that "construction in Queensland fell off a cliff in 2008," then Cyclone Larry devastated the coast. Hutchinson continued to grow through their mining construction ventures but remained busy on the Queensland coast, particularly in Townsville.

That's good news for a city where an estimated 2500 construction jobs were lost during 2011.

If ever an area had desperate need of new infrastructure, it was Townsville. Even as the largest city in northern Australia, Townsville found itself playing poor cousin to Brisbane and Cairns, whenever major developers thought about regional investment.

Governments wanted to decentralise but found an acute shortage of regional accommodation.

It was a chicken-and-egg problem:

Government and private firms wanted regional office space, but did not want to commit without seeing movement on construction. Builders did not want to take large risks without firm tenancy in place.

Despite the stalemate, numerous entities got together to create the momentum that would eventually lead to the

construction of Verde, Townsville's first 12 storey 5-star green-design office and commercial/ retail precinct.

Once three State Departments committed to occupying significant floor space, Hutchinson took over construction in early 2012. It was a moment that the original site purchaser, Stephen Gosling of Sterling Securities, described as a "coming of age" for Townsville. "Townsville is one of the fastest growing centres in the nation and clearly deserves projects of this quality and vision," he says. "The city is experiencing a boom in investment now as it recovers from national disasters and stressful international financial conditions. Sustainability is the new construction norm. It's a national priority and with a project like Verde, the city will play its part in moving sustainable decentralisation and construction many steps forward."

In December 2007, when the 4040 square metre site was first purchased for \$7.5 million, construction costs were projected at around \$53 million but will be closer to \$80 million when the tower opens in September 2013. Verde takes up 2500 square metres of the larger site, which is part of a massive \$80 billion revitalisation of Townsville CBD.

"Verde lifts the bar in terms of green standards for CBD high-rise," says Mayor, Les Tyell, "and will attract more government services and investment."

Under Hutchinson's eco-friendly design, Verde received top marks from NABER Environmental Rating Agency for use of

ozone sensitive materials, energy-reducing window glaze and high-efficiency noise abatement. Adding to Verde's environmental credentials are energy-efficient lighting plus rainwater retention and recycling.

NABERS also noted Hutchinson's installation of energy-saving air-conditioning, comprehensive waste reduction systems, sustainably sourced building materials and reduced greenhouse gas emissions at all points of construction.

Townsville MP Mandy Johnstone, says that Verde has 'turbocharged' the Townsville region. "This is part of a strategy to locate a huge number of Government public servants in the area. This kick-starts the local economy, not just construction, but retail and commercial sectors."

About 350 full time jobs have been created during the 18 month building phase.

Hutchinson will continue to be active in the region, with the \$40 million Ergon Townsville office block now also under construction. It will boast the same eco-friendly reputation that Verde has acquired, keeping Hutchinson top-of-the-list as Australia's leading environmentally-focussed builder, for at least another 100 years.

*For more information contact Hutchinson Builders, 83-87 Duckworth Street Garbutt QLD 4814, PO Box 7261 Garbutt QLD 4814, phone 07 4755 8000, fax 07 4755 8055*





## QUALITY AND LOYALTY ABOVE ALL

**“Verde Towers is probably the best managed project I’ve ever worked on,” says Queensland Reo Fixing manager, Washington Mendes.**

“Once construction started, everything ran so smoothly. It is one of the few projects I’ve seen up close where the management were happy, the site owners were happy, the unions were happy, the workers were happy. It has been a pleasure to work on.”

In fact, according to Mr Mendes, a number of the managers from the various construction companies involved, recently quipped that they were sorry to see the construction coming to an end, such was the harmony on site.

It’s a great outcome for a project that had something of a chequered start. Queensland Reo Fixing actually quoted on the structural reinforcement of all the concrete, at least 4 years before work commenced. Both the tendering companies and Townsville locals were becoming exceedingly frustrated with the “hole in the ground on Flinders Street” but Mr Mendes believes that “it has all worked out very well, now we are so close to completion.”

Under the conditions of construction in North Queensland, it is important that project management is without unnecessary drama.

“There are enough things that can go wrong as it is,” says Mr Mendes.

The simple costs of construction in North Queensland tend to be higher than other parts of the country. In such a cyclone-prone area, building codes require around 10% more steel in all concrete reinforcement. This not only adds to the cost of the materials, but increases transport costs and the cost of placing the concrete into the structure. It also increases labour costs with the need for more experienced staff to get the coded ratios right.

The costs of labour in the region tend to also be higher, as compensation for the probability of extreme weather conditions. And those weather conditions themselves, particularly heavy rain, can add to costs by shutting down sites for anything up to 3 months at a time. “Meanwhile, workers continue to be paid,” says

Mr Mendes. “Extreme weather systems can destroy businesses. Cyclone Larry alone killed off many, many building projects in the area. Companies just folded.”

This makes companies like Queensland Reo Fixing both pioneers and survivors in such a difficult business environment. There is no cutting corners in North Queensland construction. Not in materials quality, and definitely, says Mr Mendes, in the area of industrial relations. “Professional relationships between management and workers, between construction company and the community, is key to success.”

For this reason, Queensland Reo Fixing has made a point of building a reputation in the sunshine state, of being strict on deadlines, budgets, timelines, planning and safety.

It is a company emphasis that has seen the steel and concrete reinforcement service company expand rapidly into such diverse areas as civil engineering projects, mining, prestressing slabs, formwork reinforcement, footings, piers, in situ wall reinforcing, stairs and lift wells. All that in just 15 years.

“It’s about getting good people – we have team members who have 40 years experience in this sort of work. You can’t find a substitute for that kind of experience.”

Mr Mendes says a project like Verde is gratifying from so many standpoints. “Obviously, it has been 12 months or more of solid work for our team. We’ve done everything on this project from footings to reinforcement of every floor, up to level 12 and the roof. It has been gratifying to see our workers enjoying the project. But more than that – you can feel the effect this project is having.”

With so many projects having been pulled in recent years, with the devastation of Cyclone Larry, with the impact of the GFC on investment up here, the locals are seeing something tangible, that really looks impressive.

**For more information contact Queensland Reo Fixing,** PO Box 85 Townsville QLD 4810, mobile 0405 613 851, website: [www.qldreofixing.com.au](http://www.qldreofixing.com.au)





# A GREEN STORM-PROOF SKIN FOR VERDE

Between the abundant sun and the extreme winds and storms of cyclone season, the striking facade of Verde Townsville has to be able to withstand elemental forces without compromising aesthetics. SGI Architectural supplied a brilliant, eco-friendly solution, with customised Alpolic® /fr cladding.

SGI worked closely with Brisbane-based facade fabricators ACLAD Pty Ltd who specifically engineered the project's Alpolic® /fr to withstand cyclonic wind loads.

Alpolic/fr is composed of a non-combustible mineral core sandwiched between two skins of 0.5mm thick aluminium. The result is a highly stable, lightweight and durable material that can be bent, curved or shaped to meet the requirements of any design. The lightness of the panels also makes for a rapid and safe installation process, which is a major bonus for builders.

SGI supplies Alpolic®/fr to projects around Australia, in a range of finishes including Solid, Metallic, Sparkling and Prismatic colours. There is also a new NaturArt Series featuring Stone, Timber, Metal and Abstract finishes, which have been created through the use of a unique image-transfer coating system.

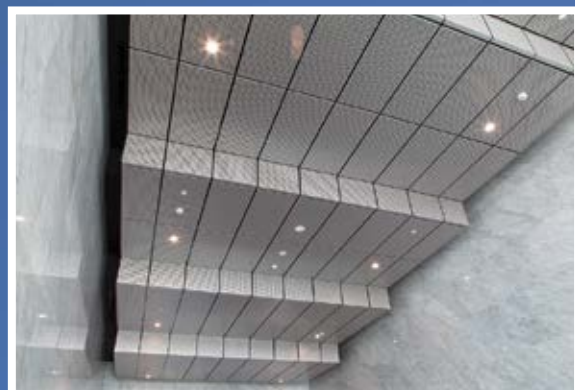
The surface coatings for all SGI's Alpolic® /fr panels are based on a three coat, three bake Lumiflon based fluoropolymer paint system,

applied using a Die Cast system to ensure a uniform colour and a smooth, UV-resistant and low-maintenance finish. Alpolic® /fr also carries the Eco-Specifier tick, which makes it a positive benefit for Green Star projects like Verde, which was the first building in Townsville to achieve the Five Star Green Star certification, which recognises an extremely high level of sustainability in materials, methods and engineered systems.

For over 25 years SGI Architectural have been supplying quality building facades to the Australian Construction Industry including eco-friendly Alpolic fr Aluminium Composite Panels, Prodema Timber Composite Panels, Swisspearl Cement Composite Panels, Moeding Natural Clay Tile Facades, Eurobond Non-Combustible Rockwool Cored Sandwich Panels as well as Architectural Glass.

Other recent projects SGI Architectural have contributed their expertise and quality products to include Queensland Children's Hospital and Robina Hospital in Queensland; Fiona Stanley Hospital and Cockburn Community Health Centre in Western Australia; PEGS School in Victoria; and Randwick Racecourse, T2 Sydney Airport, Chifley Square and Top Ryde Shopping Centre in New South Wales.

*For more information contact SGI Architectural Pty Ltd, Unit 31/5-7 Inglewood Place, Baulkham Hills NSW 2153, phone 02 9620-7988, website: [www.sgi-architectural.com.au](http://www.sgi-architectural.com.au)*



# A UNIQUE POUR FOR VERDE



**Handling the logistics of pouring concrete 12 storeys off the ground is all in a typical day's work for Mick O'Rourke.** Mick's company, O'Rourke Concrete Constructions has literally laid the foundation for some of North QLD's largest building projects over the last 17 years. And not just the foundations – each floor in each multi-level construction requires a concrete floor and support. It's not something that will get thought about much once the carpet goes down and the staff moves into the office space of the new Verde in Townsville.

"The Verde project is one of a kind," says Mick. "There's no other building like this – particularly in Northern Queensland."

Mick cites several issues which make Verde something very different in Australian construction. "You might be surprised to hear that the climate in Townsville poses peculiar problems when pouring concrete for a multi-storey building."

"The large fluctuations in temperature for example, create extreme stresses on concrete which have to be taken into account," says Mick. "The formulae for this pour at Verde are unique."

Complicating the pour was the desire for the Verde project managers to achieve Green Star rating. This meant a high proportion of reconstituted material.

The sheer amount of green-oriented equipment in the building used to recycle water, store rainwater, as well as create huge amounts of storage for diesel fuel, also presented extra challenges for O'Rourke. "All these storage areas have to be created and reinforced, especially in a climate of high temperature variation and cyclonic building codes. It complicates the formulae," says Mick. "In total, we poured about 9,000 cubic metres – that's a lot of concrete, poured dozens of metres off the ground. You get one chance, you take a lot of time, and it has to be right. Logistically, it was one of the greatest challenges O'Rourke Concrete Construction has faced."

As a Townsville local, Mick found it personally satisfying to have his company's name on the Verde project. "It creates a major commercial and Governmental hub. It's a huge economic boost."

*For more information contact O'Rourke Concrete Constructions, 52 Powell Street Wulguru QLD 4811, phone 0438 893 416, email: [orourkeconstruction@bigpond.com](mailto:orourkeconstruction@bigpond.com)*



## ENGINEERED FOR EXCELLENCE ON EVERY LEVEL



**Early involvement by Shutterflex on the Verde Tower project in Townsville resulted in both an effective and highly aesthetic sunshading solution and a very cost-effective safety measure during construction.** Shutterflex have in-house engineering design capabilities, which enabled them to work with the builder and with the architects, ML Design, to conceptualise and manufacture customised products for the project.

Full-size prototypes were made and tested for cyclonic conditions, including a flying debris test, and a sun analysis carried out to assess optimum placement. Shutterflex then manufactured and installed 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of fixed aluminium grating-style sunshading in powder coated Teal Gloss and Eternity Silver Kinetic, extending from levels 4 to 11 on all elevations; and extruded aluminium Sunblades in Zeus White measuring 800mm x 75mm which form the vertical profile for the southern elevation and have been installed horizontally on key areas to protect the glazing.

Verde was designed with the facade set back from the slab edge, and the grating and its support structure of specially designed and extruded I-beams (1,200 in total) running from slab to slab providing total edge protection – a real cost-effective safety advantage for Hutchinson Builders.

“We are an engineered solutions company, with a strong engineering background in-house,” explained Shutterflex Managing Director, Peter Ryan. “Early involvement means we get to engage with the builder and the architect and have discussions around options and solutions. For Verde we were a fairly significant part of the design, and I’m very proud of the result – it looks great. We were on very stringent timelines as the screens were installed level by level to coincide with the 16-day pour cycle. Our supply chain had to be spot-on.

“Because Shutterflex use Australian metal and manufacturing on all our products here in Brisbane, we have total control over our supply chain,

which minimises risks. It is a feather in the cap of Australian manufacturing that smart design and manufacturing processes can deliver timely, optimum, cost-effective solutions for projects like Verde.”

From their design and manufacturing base in Acacia Ridge, Shutterflex have completed projects around the country, including Darwin, Perth and Sydney. Other recent Queensland projects include Cairns Hospital and Rockhampton Hospital.

The company’s designers work with 3D modelling, which allows for clearer communication with clients about designs. The workshop, staffed by trade-qualified metalworkers and skilled machine operators is equipped with CNC routers, an automated punching system and an injection moulding system for producing customised components for shutters.

The company’s capabilities include a wide range of aluminium shutters, louvers and screens, all manufactured under Quality Management Systems certified to ISO 9001. Shutterflex is also National Code Compliant, and dedicated to ecologically sustainable development and excellence in workplace health and safety.

“Having the ability to engineer, design and manufacture means we can create solutions which combine sunshading qualities with architectural aesthetics,” said Peter. “We are constantly innovating, that’s what motivates us.”

**Shutterflex**  
Setting the standard in shutters, louvers and screens.

*For more information contact Shutterflex, phone 07 3277 5428, website: [www.shutterflex.com.au](http://www.shutterflex.com.au)*