

## ISAAC CONSTRUCTION: Contracting with Real Purpose

Isaac Construction is a Christchurch contracting organisation active in the horizontal sector. Jeremy Dixon, Isaac's Contracting Manager, is a member of our ACE Diploma Cohort 8 in Christchurch. Cohort members are encouraged to discuss the characteristics of their companies and Jeremy has revealed an extraordinary organisation putting back far more than it has ever taken from the Canterbury landscape in its 50 year history.

The late Sir Neil Isaac from Timaru worked in the construction industry in the years leading up to World War Two then volunteered for service with the New Zealand and British Army as an Engineer. He met Lady Diana Isaac, also in the British Army on a troop ship bound for India in 1946. They married in Delhi and as contractors built irrigation dams in remote parts of India before settling in Christchurch in 1950 and establishing the Isaac Construction Company.

Sir Neil and Lady Diana bought a property in Harewood with a view to establishing their home. After digging an irrigation storage lake, Sir Neil decided the property would be of better value as a quarry for road metal; much of which was initially used in the construction of Memorial Avenue, a major arterial route now servicing Christchurch Airport. Commercial quarrying on the Harewood site continues to this day. However, the effort being put into rehabilitation of worked out areas and the importance of this to the organisation is what makes Isaac Construction extraordinary.

Brian Warren, Isaac's Chief Executive, is required to run an efficient and profitable construction company but with a very clear purpose. The profits of the Company are used solely to fund the Isaac Wildlife Trust.

The Isaac Wildlife Trust was established in 1977 with the purpose of creating an idyllic and safe environment for New Zealand wildlife. Peacock Springs Wildlife Park now covers 1000 hectares and is home to a range of endangered species including the Tuatara, black stilt, Kaikariki and Kiwi. In 2006 the trust bred 7 varieties of endangered species in partnership with DOC. The trust has also established a number of academic scholarships in geography, environmental science and conservation with Canterbury and Lincoln Universities.

This is a company with extraordinary ideals, but a straight shooting set of core values.

Brian Warren notes that *"the simplicity in our purpose should be balanced with an equally simple set of values to ensure buy-in on both sides of the equation"*.

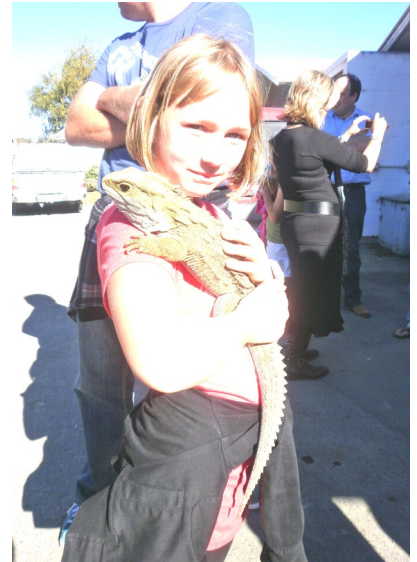
At a recent family open day at the Springs, the 120 staff members brought around 400 family and friends as guests and proudly showed them around.

*"This plus the positive feedback we are receiving from staff surveys suggests that there is a high level of alignment of purpose and values underpinned by solid staff engagement"* said Brian.

The Isaac ideals extend to ensuring that they keep abreast of the very latest thinking and match this to the training of their people.

They are partners with the Christchurch Polytech in 'TradeFIT', a trade training programme with an eye to the future and are strong supporters of a number of industry training organisations. They understand the value of leadership and continuous improvement and have recently included Dip MEEC in their training portfolio.

**It comes as no surprise that the Isaac team have won numerous Canterbury Contractor of the Year awards for innovation, commitment to training and outstanding contract outcomes.**



**Tuatara: "Mayor of Peacock Springs and friend"**

**isaac**

**Combining Construction with Conservation**

# ACE congratulates Camilla Gibbons New Zealand Young Engineer of the Year 2011



In the last edition of CE News we profiled Camilla Gibbons as our first ACE scholarship winner.

We will risk over exposure of this exceptional young person by again bringing her to your attention; this time as the...

**IPENZ Young Engineer of the Year 2011!**



## Project Management students observe Lincoln Road team smashing their programme

In our last newsletter, we reported on the Lincoln Road team of Fulton Hogan, NZTA and Aurecon and how they had adopted Lean Last Planner to help win back over 16 weeks of delay to their programme. In November, Amanda Warren took her current cohort of NZIM Diploma in Project Management students for a site visit to see how the team were getting on.

The news was great with the project now back on track, the team having succeeded in claiming back over 4 months of lost time and the project is singing along. Both Amanda and the students were thoroughly impressed at the level of professionalism and integration demonstrated by the team on the day. Privileged to join an actual last Planner weekly production meeting, the group were able to witness first hand this ace team in action.

The team have truly made the Last Planner tool their own and have come up with a unique adaption which has been key to bringing the site foremen (the 'Last Planners') into the programming role. Phil Skinner, project manager from Fulton Hogan and our generous host for the day explained how each fortnight, of their own volition, all the site foremen come into the office for one to two hours to plan in detail the next fortnight. Post-it notes are their main tool and they work into considerable detail.



*Project Manager, Phil Skinner, Fulton Hogan explains how the post-it notes are a vital tool in the weekly and fortnightly programming sessions.*

Amanda Warren, teacher and facilitator of Lean Last Planner on ACE's DipMEEC, exclaimed "Wow! I am very impressed with the way this team is using Last Planner. It is almost unheard of the get site foremen away from the site and into the office for this length of time, let alone to work so collaboratively with each other. The fact that it is their idea too is very encouraging and goes to prove that those at the coal face truly are the key to unlocking programme opportunities and really cranking up productivity. The design and management team's job is to support them and to provide them with whatever they need to keep that handle turning,

***well done Lincoln Road, a superb job!"***



# Building on a 75 year Business and Community Heritage

## Introducing Trevor Breen

### Member of ACE cohort 8 Christchurch

I work for Breen Construction, a family business in Alexandra, Central Otago. The company was started by my Grandfather in 1937 and currently employees my 2 brothers and father full time and my mother and sister in part time roles.

To maintain continuity of work over the years we have developed a broad skill base and work in the residential, commercial and civil markets. We employ 80 staff consisting of laborers, apprentices, carpenters, foremen, project managers, quantity surveyors and designers. My current role in the company is Construction Manager which includes project management, directing 8 project managers and resourcing projects from our pool of 60 trades people.

After graduating from Otago University 1995 with a Bachelor of surveying I worked in Cromwell as a graduate Survey for 4 years. In 1998 I became a registered surveyor with a good range of experience in cadastral surveying, Subdivision design, Land Development, and resource management.

1999 I left New Zealand and back packed around South America for 6 months before heading to the UK with a 2 year working visa. Over the next 6 years I worked on a number of different construction projects as a site engineer including HSBC tower at canary Wharf London, Terminal 3 at Heathrow and the Channel Tunnel rail link. At the end of 2004 I returned to Alexandra to join the firm.

I am a keen sportsman and enjoy following rugby and cricket in the local scene. These days I keep fit by getting involved in a range of outdoor activities that Central Otago offers including, running, mountain biking, tramping, Backcountry skiing, fly fishing and hunting. In 2010 I became an elected member of the Vincent Community Board for the Central Otago District Council. I enjoy the opportunity it offers to be involved in how our community is run and developed.

My number 1 priority is my wife Vanessa and my 20 month old daughter Eden. In December this year we are expecting our second child.

Breen is a very well-known brand in central Otago. Versatility has been a key to our survival in a 'boom-bust' market over 75 years. We are keen to grow our company and have recently opened a branch in Oamaru close to where Holcim are looking to establish a new large scale cement plant and where hydro development on the lower Waitaki still looks likely. Our competitor and client base is widening and it is important that we build sustainable competitive advantage into the business. I am hoping the DIP MEEC course will be an element in this.

# BREEN



ACE's southern man!

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# Inspirational Third World Leader helps turn Project Chaser into Organisation Builder

**Anthony Leighs addressed ACE Cohort 8 in Christchurch recently. We went well overtime with questions coming thick and fast, but for very good reason!**

Upon leaving school Anthony Leighs was keen on an Army career. However, these thoughts turned into a 4 year cadetship with Downer, then still active in civil and commercial construction in the South Island. The aftermath of the late 80's collapse saw Downer withdraw from the south Island. Anthony was laid off so took the opportunity to gain experience in the UK and in the Middle East. Upon returning to Christchurch 16 years ago, Anthony had seen and learned enough to know that the old adage *"construction is different, now get over it"* needed to be challenged. Leighs Construction was formed as the vehicle he would use to put his thinking into practice. Today Leighs have 189 staff having

increased from 37 before the first earthquake on the 3rd of September 2010.

Even before the Canterbury quakes, Leighs Construction had made a mark on the Canterbury market. They were innovative and at their best when working with clients and projects with unique challenges. This has resulted in work on the African continent, in East Timor, and in repeat business in Antarctica where they are the only non-military construction organisation which has worked there for the New Zealand Government.

Anthony Leigh's interest in international challenges, had little effect on the company's profile in Christchurch. International success didn't directly translate into local support. As a result, the last 18 months has seen the company focus on its Canterbury client base which has meant building an understanding of the regional economy and in particular, carefully defining strategies which will add maximum value for Clients and the region in the post-earthquake environment.

Christchurch's centre city 'Restart' project has been particularly satisfying for Anthony. *"We have done an enormous amount of talking with Clients in the last 12 months while 85 substantial earthquakes and countless aftershocks shook the city. Much of the talk was driven by the fear that if the heart of the city dies, rebirth will be nigh on impossible. After 6 months there was this "ka-ching" moment when the concept of the Restart temporary retail precinct was born. It took two months to get Government on board and while circumstances compressed the original four month build programme into two, a small heart started beating again in November 2011. It's amazing what can be achieved around a coffee table!"*



A natural motivation for Anthony has been the desire to test himself and his team on challenging and exciting projects. He admits to having been a project chaser but readily accepts that today the best way to maintain his competitive advantage is by being an organisation builder and seeing his client base almost as part of his organisation. *"Having a team which will just do the job isn't enough. We all have to be on the same bus, taking the same journey. We all have to understand that we are in a service industry and while we know we must build to the highest technical standards it is the service standards which will build a sustainable future for Leighs"*. One of Anthony's biggest challenges is to develop the leadership which is emerging in a rapidly expanding team. *"To be a construction company of tomorrow, not just the best of today's, we have to redefine leadership"*

Anthony is active in Industry Governance. He is a Director of BRANZ and the New Zealand Master Builder's Federation amongst others and is keen to contribute to a better performing construction industry. He sees the New Zealand Industry as a mid-field player internationally. *"Parts of Asia are light years ahead with their emphasis on planning and the status of planners in the process. In New Zealand the No 8 mentality cannot continue to drive us and we need to gain a much better understanding of where we don't perform."* And who has inspired Anthony more than any other? President Gusmao, the first president of independent East Timor and a man Anthony believes has shown enormous courage, determination and resilience in making the independence vision a reality.







**In order of appearance from left to right:**

**Mano Ram**, Programme Manager, Block Projects at NZTA. His highlights include the networking, a better appreciation of the many theories learnt on the course, and increased confidence at solving problems and presenting. Mano had a major accident in January of 2011 and unable to walk for 2 months then had to use crutches to walk. In spite of this, he took the challenge of completing the course on time with an overall average of A+.

**Shaun Mitchell**, Project Team Manager at NZTA. His highlight was meeting and learning from other attendees. The Diploma has provided him with a greater awareness of the softer side of team dynamics, and how to manage change in a positive way. Shaun says he seems to have chosen most challenging year possible to do the course with over 8000 earthquakes, having a red zone property and dealing with EQC, a new baby, a burglary, running a marathon, and changing jobs.

**Simon Pollard**, Contracts Manager at Downer. Simon enjoyed understanding his personality profile, the real life experiences of guest speakers and sharing experiences with others on the course. He found each module gave him a new challenge to implement into the business, some minor and others substantial enough to change the way they do business with great results! He too had a baby 4 months ago so with 3 kids under 3 & 1/2 years old it has been a challenging year!

**Tim Manning**, now Executive Divisional Manager of Industries and Paving at Fulton Hogan. He really enjoyed having two days a month to focus on the business, rather than in the business. He says *"Back then my business felt like a 6 month old baby with teething pains and lots of nappy changes. It now feels like it's at school, toilet trained, great advances, but different focuses and still no spare time."* And why is the analogy of raising kids close to his heart, well he welcomed his third daughter 3 months into the course. With 3 children under 4 years old; things have been pretty busy.

**Nigel D'Ath**, Principal Asset Manager for NZTA in the Bay of Plenty. Nigel's highlights were the motivational speakers, the breadth and depth of course material and the people he met on the course. He has gone on to apply Lean, Last Planner in his NZTA project with considerable success. During the year, he has gained a new position, supported an active teenage daughter and maintained positions on a local subdivision committee and Community Patrols NZ (Night Owls).

**Karl Ashby** is now Contract Manager with Downer Estate Management. Karl began the course with Hastie Group and decided to move his career to Downer during his studies. He is enjoying the challenges of his new role as key account manager and his project was based on the work he has done applying his learning to developing the relationship with his new client.

**Tony Fairclough**, of Tonkin and Taylor. As a consultant on the course, Tony enjoyed learning in an open and safe environment alongside clients and contractors. A popular member of the cohort, Tony was thrilled to be graduating with a great bunch of colleagues.

**(Not Pictured) Dion Sinclair**, now Downer's National Technical Manager was very proud as he has worked hard to complete his diploma having been one of the first intake five years ago. Dion was side-tracked from his studies by a significant promotion taking him and his family to a completely new part of New Zealand so he was delighted to be finally getting the diploma finished! He feels it has broadened his thinking particularly around challenging the status quo – looking for ways to break the mold in an industry which has remained relatively unchanged for many decades.

## **NZIM Diploma of Managerial Excellence in Engineering and Construction Level 6**

Not only has this been a bumper year for ACE graduations, it has also been a bumper year for ACE babies too! No fewer than 5 babies have been born to some very proud fathers and mothers.

This year's graduates have excelled in their assignments, and course director Tim Warren said *"Our graduates are either getting smarter and/or they have already been taking on board much of the great work carried out by many of their mentors, most of whom are past ACE graduates too."*

Eight people graduated this month at the NZIM December 14th ceremony, the largest group for any one qualification. Rosy Kurera of NZTA also achieved her Diploma this year too having left partway through to, yes you guessed it, have a baby! Rosy was overseas for the December 2011 Graduation ceremony but will receive her formal graduation at the July 2012 event next year.

Amanda Warren, course tutor and one of the founders of ACE commented *"I have been constantly amazed at the difference in each cohort. Each year, they seem to come to the course more equipped with not only knowledge of Best Practice but with more and more challenging questions and energy to see real change happen in the Industry. We are now into fourth and fifth generation graduates whose mentors and their mentors are also ACE Alumni and who have each climbed their career ladder. The compound learning is really showing. I am thrilled by the effect that these guys and girls are having on their projects, their businesses and the industry at large"*.

**Registrations are NOW OPEN for the Academy for Constructing Excellence's 10<sup>th</sup> Dip MEEC cohort which will commence in Auckland in February 2012.**

2011 has been a milestone year for the Dip MEEC programme:

- The largest ever pool of graduates will gather on 14 December 2011 to receive their diplomas
- The ratio of attendees to graduations is at an all-time high
- The diploma has been launched in the South Island with cohort 8 commencing in Christchurch in September 2011
- Our first tuition scholarships were taken up in 2011
- Our new risk module with Derek Salkeld attracted widespread interest attracting 20 additional attendees to cohort sessions while ancillary in-house courses were run to satisfy demand.

There is no better time to develop leadership capability than in a recession; to ensure that you weather the uncertainties and are well positioned for the upturn which we know is around the corner with a decade of re-construction in Christchurch, an accommodation shortage looming and momentum building with leaky home remediation.

**ACADEMY DIRECTOR TIM WARREN has identified 5 keys to effective targeted leadership development to make the best use of a constrained training budget:**

- 1/ make leadership development core business :** Leadership development has in many organisations defaulted to an HR function, but in reality is a core success factor in driving organisation performance and results.
- 2/ segment high value leadership** – In recessionary times focus on leadership roles that are critical to business and picking individuals that can be fast-tracked job relevant learning experiences.
- 3/ define strategic leadership behaviours** – Focus on targeted outcomes not tasks.
- 4/ Identify critical leadership gaps** – Look at where future roles lie and then focus quickly to “work up” key individuals rather than using a blanket approach.
- 5/ Provide access to a peer network** – There is no more effective way of validating new understandings and experience than sharing with peers.

**The Dip MEEC has a part to play in all of these key areas.**

Cohort 10 will be Auckland based.

**Registrations close on 31 January.**

Cohort 11, our second South Island based programme is planned for a mid-year start in Christchurch.



**2011 has been a year of significant progression for the CCG with the following highlights:**

- Our inaugural annual members' event hosted in Wellington with key notes from the Productivity Partnership including the Chair, Bill Smith, and CEO of the Department for Building & Housing, Katrina Bach.
- Launch of CCG guidance "written by clients for clients" on the themes of Health & Safety (partnered with SiteSafe NZ and the Department of Labour) and Sustainability (partnered with NZ Green Building Council)
- Delivering a high quality events programme for our members with high profile speakers and experts in their respective fields
- Recommencement of our programme in Christchurch and providing the opportunity for some horizon gazing.
- Influencing Government and the Productivity Partnership industry reform programme
- Continuing to grow our membership and our portfolio of value add services to our members across the 3 regional centres in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch

**2012 will be a challenging year for New Zealand and our industry sector as we continue to address a number of challenges that will require us to work more collaboratively and deliver enhanced value for clients. The impact of the global financial markets will continue to impact upon the NZ economy as we emerge from recession.**

The rebuild in Christchurch is expected to kick start from mid-2012 onwards and we are pleased to see a change in behaviours in the region with clients seeking to develop relationships and share their forward work plans with their supply chain partners. An increased proportion of negotiated work is being reported in Canterbury.

Our work programme for 2012 remains strong and we will be hosting our second annual members' event on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012 in Auckland. The theme will be 'Managing major disasters' which will be geared towards taking the learning from the earthquakes in Canterbury.

***We look forward to your continued engagement in CCG activities throughout 2012 and wish you and your families best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.***



**Peter Cunningham, Chief Executive  
New Zealand Construction Clients' Group.**

Constructing Excellence New Zealand is a unique organisation working with a client base across all enterprises involved in creating and maintaining New Zealand's built environment.

**Its ambition is to enable those developing New Zealand's built environment to lead the world.**

Its small specialist team has comprehensive international experience coupled with an intimate understanding of the New Zealand scene.

Demand for Constructing Excellence's services is rising and we are keen to bring additional talent into the team. An ideal candidate will have an Industry relevant tertiary qualification, enough experience to have discovered the potential for transformational change in the sector, and the passion to play a direct role in achieving it.

This position is initially an Auckland based developmental role. Specific continuous improvement and best practice knowledge is not essential. The successful candidate will support the work of the senior consultants but with a view to taking on sole charge responsibilities at the earliest opportunity.

**Job description and further general information is available from  
Managing Director Tim Warren.**

Phone: 095757670 Email: [tjwarren@constructing.co.nz](mailto:tjwarren@constructing.co.nz)

**Applications close on: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

**Do you want to work  
on the industry  
and not just in it?**

**A UNIQUE CHALLENGE FROM  
A UNIQUE COMPANY!**





Continuation  
Cohort 8  
Christchurch

**2012 BLOCK 2**

Mar 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Apr 16 <sup>th</sup> & 17 <sup>th</sup>	May 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup>
Collaborative Working	Performance Measurement	Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
Integrated Teams	Perf. Meas.	Managing Change
		Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Continuation  
Cohort 9  
Auckland

**TERM 2 2012**

Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup>	March 29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup>	April 26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup>	May 24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup>	June 28 <sup>th</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup>
Project Feedback	Supply Chain Mgt	Collaborative Working	Lean Construction	Team Building
				Project Review
Supply Chain Mgt	Integrated Teams	Continuous Improvement In the Supply Chain	Leadership Skills	Project Review

STARTING 2012  
Cohort 10  
Auckland

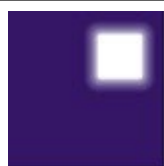
**TERM 1 2012**

22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb	29 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> Mar	26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> Apr	24 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> May
Course Outline	MBTI	Supply Chain Mgt	Collaborative Working	Lean Construction
				Team Building
Excellence	Supply Chain Mgt	Integrated Teams	Continuous Improvement In the Supply Chain	Leadership Skills

**TERM 2 2012 - 2013**

26 <sup>th</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> Jul	30 <sup>th</sup> & 31 <sup>st</sup> Aug	27 <sup>th</sup> & 28 <sup>th</sup> Sep	25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> Oct	22 <sup>nd</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov	21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb
Leadership	Business Strategy	Performance Measurement	Risk Assessment (Integrated Teams)	Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	Project Review
Communication Skills	Project Feedback	Finance	Perf. Meas.	Managing Change	Risk Management
					Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
					Project Review

**Note: Modules and dates are subject to confirmation.**



**Construction  
Clients' Group**  
CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE

## Coming Events...

**15<sup>th</sup> February 2012, 9:00 to 1:00pm - CHRISTCHURCH**  
**Procurement & Supply Chain Integration**

**29<sup>th</sup> February 2012, 8:30 to 12:30pm - WELLINGTON**  
**BIM—an introduction**

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2012, CCG Annual Members' Event - AUCKLAND**  
**Responding to a Major Disaster**