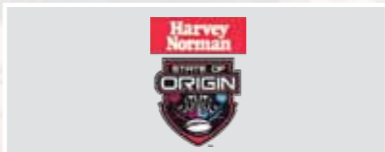


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As both a supplier and a customer, Fielders is aware of the need for efficient supply-chain management.

As part of the Hills Industries group, Fielders is a national company distributing a diverse range of products to the commercial, industrial and domestic construction markets nationally. Part of the Hills Building and Industrial Products division, Fielders manufactures a wide range of roll-formed steel products, including roofing and cladding, fencing systems, rainwater goods, gutters, flashings, sheet-metal fabrication, doorframes, structural decking, carports and sheds.

"The expectations that we place on our suppliers are no less than the expectations that our customers place on us." - Mick Ceravolo

Established over 100 years ago, Fielders soon gained a reputation for high-quality nails and roll-formed, corrugated and V-crimp sheeting. The company's enviable reputation continues today, and is greatly respected by both the

industry and general consumers. This positive reputation was a natural progression, considering that Fielders was formed from three well-reputed South Australian companies - Fielders Steel Roofing, Woodroffe Sheetmetal, and Cowells/Auspine Sheetmetal.

National Supply Chain Manager Mick Ceravolo claims this reputation stems from a company culture of high standards. "The expectations that we place on our suppliers are no less than the expectations that our customers place on us. Our suppliers understand the way that we go to market and conduct our business is vital to our survival," he explains. "Effective supply ▶

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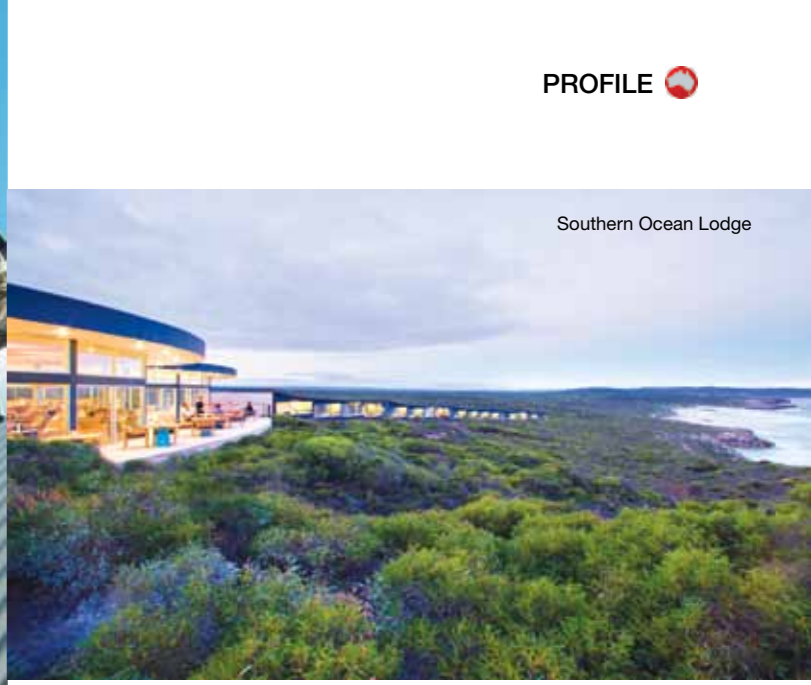
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"We've found that in order to maintain a strategic advantage in the ever-changing marketplace, it is necessary to change and modify the offer to keep ahead of the game."
- Mick Ceravolo

chain really matters to us because we offer a just-in-time service to our customers. For example, our clients can order a roof for a job up until 3 pm one day, and we'll have it manufactured and delivered on site by 7 am the following morning."

"If suppliers want to participate in our business, they need to be up to date with what we do. Our process is continually changing to reflect the needs of our customers. We've found that in order to maintain a strategic advantage in the ever-changing marketplace, it is necessary to change and modify the offer to keep ahead of the game."

Because of this, Fielders is highly selective when choosing its suppliers and subcontractors. "It's extremely important to pick the right suppliers," Mick explains. "Accordingly, we monitor the suppliers and have expectations of them. We're in a global economy and – say, for argument's sake – that Australian suppliers can't comply; there are a myriad of competitors out there willing to fill the gap."

The company also employs a range of techniques to ensure that its exacting standards are met. "Our reporting mechanisms are such that on every order, there is an expected delivery date and volume," Mick states. "We also insist on delivery performance reports from suppliers, which we double-check on our system to ensure that they are legitimate." ▶



“The majority of our suppliers have been pivotal in our overall growth and success.”

- Mick Ceravolo



Adelaide Airport Terminal

This is a necessary measure in the building industry, as Fielders is proud of its reputation for quality goods and wishes to maintain this. “Unfortunately, some suppliers believe that their job is done as soon as the stock is received,” Mick says. “However, this is not the case. At Fielders, we are very mindful of the end use of any product and ensuring that it does what we’ve stated it will. We therefore need to take very seriously any products that we’ve manufactured that seem to be non-compliant. We go to great lengths to investigate why, and make the necessary adjustments to our manufacturing or distribution process. We expect no less from those that supply to us.”

These high standards are applied to the company’s supply base and subcontractors in the stringent review processes that Fielders has established. “For all suppliers, we have review processes, which are particularly pertinent to our major suppliers. The timing and frequency of the review depends on the importance of the supplier to us. In some cases, its monthly; in others, it might be quarterly,” Mick says. “At these review meetings, we sit down together and discuss the performances. If they don’t



Southern Ocean Lodge

meet the previously agreed KPIs, we agree on remedial action.”

These open channels of communication have led to suppliers and subcontractors contributing significantly to the company’s accomplishments to date. “The majority of our suppliers have been pivotal in our overall growth and success,” says Mick. “They’ve helped in terms of being open with us and having a genuine desire to improve the overall supply-chain process. It also helps in terms of generating lengthy partnerships.”

Long-term relationships allow for a deep understanding and mutual goals to be formed between Fielders and its suppliers. “Our overall intention is to establish long-term relationships; we certainly don’t change suppliers at the drop of a hat. Long-term relationships are beneficial for

many different reasons, not least of which is ongoing continuity and improvement in our products,” Mick says. “To achieve this, communication is vital. We need to be able to sit down and discuss any issues with our suppliers, and be confident that they will take on board what we have to say and make the necessary adjustments for the betterment of the whole product.”

As part of the Hills Group, environmentally sustainable initiatives are considered by Fielders to be essential. “We take the environmental side of things very seriously. Some of our major corporate suppliers already have environmental platforms in place, so we work closely with the existing programs. Some of the smaller companies that are key to our business are committed to learn over time. Essentially, they tend to rely on suggestions that we might have, in terms of the product they supply us, how

it’s packaged, and how it’s manufactured.”

“Within our own operations, we embarked some 18 months ago on a harvest program with our waste managers to ensure that minimal quantities of products go to landfill. In relation to the products that we actually manufacture, they’re totally recyclable,” Mick concludes. “So the product itself that we create has the maximum permissible recycled content, without affecting the integrity or quality of the product. We continue to use products that are recyclable, with proper identification to alert our customers that it should be recycled. We also try to minimise the amount of additional labels that go on each product, things like that. The environment is something we always consider.”

To find out more about Fielders or the Hills group, visit fielders.com.au

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Big W Distribution Centre, Monarto

A BIG PROJECT

Retail giant Big W was looking to rebuild its distribution centre at Monarto, South Australia, to become the company's hub for Australia's western and southern states. This project was the first opportunity for Fielders' on-site rolling of the KingKlip 700 concealed roof cladding. Thirty-seven thousand square metres of the cladding were used, in addition to 5,000 square metres of Colorbond walling, and 4,500 square metres of KingKlip Colorbond crank curved canopies. Due to the magnitude of the project, Big W also took advantage of Fielders' 20-year Watertight installation guarantee and maintenance offer.

Fielders' mobile rolling mill provided substantial benefits in the construction of the project. According to architect Mark Newton, of MNIA Architects, "It was convenient and provided cost savings to our client." Jim Rorison, of Cladding and Roofing Contractors, agreed: "Fielders' mobile roofing mill provided substantial cost savings to the project. As the roofing sheets were rolled on-site, our handling costs were much lower and our speed of laying was much higher. The convenience of having unlimited sheet lengths in pristine condition was also very impressive."



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IMPROVE YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN

BY SALLY RAWSTHORNE

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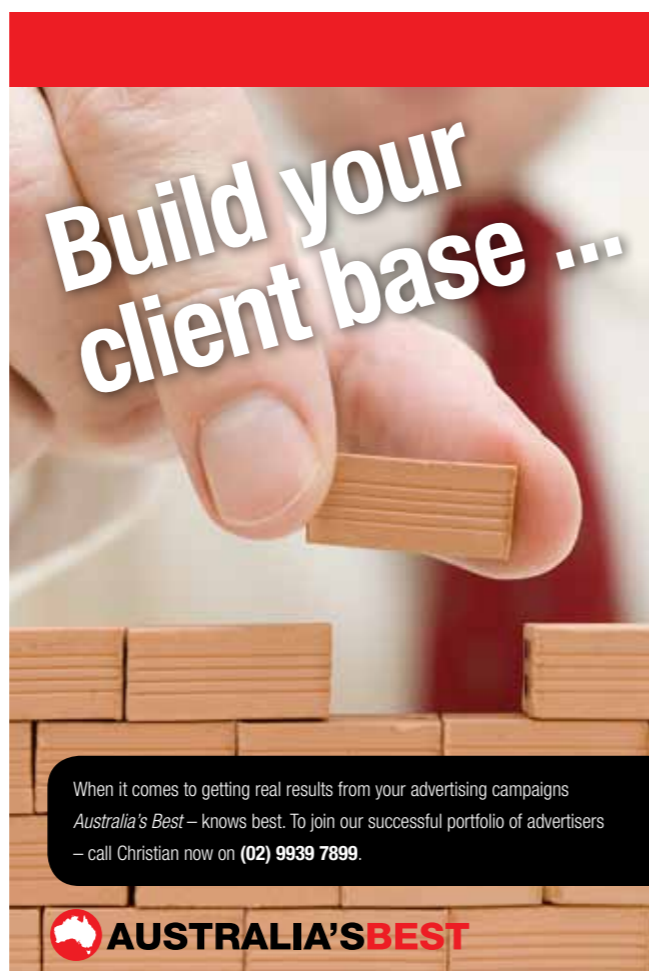
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With offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Bangkok, Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City, Logistics Bureau is truly the regional expert in global supply chain. As the largest supply chain and logistics consulting business in the Asia-Pacific region, the company has the objective of identifying and solving issues pertaining to these specialised areas. It also aims to address economic development issues and provide commercial solutions.

As Group Managing Director Rob O'Byrne explains, "Logistics Bureau is a management consulting firm that assists organisations improve their performance by guiding or supplementing the management team. We do this by means of a combination of additional resources

and expertise, providing an objective perspective and the application of advanced tools and methodologies. We also assist with providing interim management and project management to support change programs in the organisation."

Rob highlights that optimal supply-chain management is fundamental to the success of any business. "The supply chain function within almost every organisation is a critical component which enables the achievement of the goals of the organisation. It's an efficient supply chain that delivers the baked beans to supermarket shelves, the iron ore to the ship, the cash to the ATM. There really aren't many industries out there that aren't

reliant on an efficient supply chain to deliver the relevant products and services," explains Rob. "So it has a major impact of the cost of doing business and, ultimately, the bottom line of a business."

Logistics Bureau aids its clients in two main realms. According to Rob, "Our help falls into two main areas – improving customer service through more consistent and reliable services, and reduction of costs. This cost reduction can be achieved by means of a reduction in either capital or operating costs. In the current marketplace, all organisations need to be looking at ways to cut costs. For commercial organisations, this is to remain competitive, while government ▶