

The jackaroo with the passion for solid timber

When the Global Financial Crisis hit Australia in 2008 and 2009, many businesses struggled. Some went broke, some are still struggling and others came out of it even stronger. TCDC WISE from the Central Coast in NSW is one of the latter. Through quality craftsmanship and vital business skills the company knuckled down and forged its way through the tough times and is now going from strength to strength.

TCDC WISE was established in 1988 by Tim Corlett and stands for Tim Corlett Design and Construction. Melbourne-born Tim completed his trade under a master craftsman, beginning his long love affair with timber and perfection for his craft. He has now established a shopfitting company that grew from a handful to 17 staff and has completed hundreds of projects Australia wide. TCDC WISE continues its growth by obtaining the latest technology and keeping abreast of the latest products and trends.



Its ongoing smart investments in new machinery from Homag Australia had surely helped it to increase capacity. Due to the efficiency of the machines and the successful interlink of the drawing software lead to a massive increase in turnover. In a period of 20 years, TCDC WISE purchased eight machines from the German machine supplier, including four CNCs, three edgebanders and one beam saw. The powerful Brandt Ambition 1650FC edgebanding machine forms the latest investment from Homag Australia.

The journey is the reward

Tim began his working life as a jackaroo on a sheep station in far north Queensland, hundreds of kilometres from the nearest town. Fixing fences and mustering sheep and cattle on horseback, Tim had visions of a life on the land. After a time though, the remoteness became too much and the pull of family and friends had him return to Melbourne. He

followed in his grandfather's footsteps and put his practical and creative passions to good use.

Tim started in the industry as a carpenter's apprentice in his grandfather's business Watts Construction based in Melbourne. Watts Construction, a large privately owned construction company, completed such works as the southern stand at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, G.J. Coles Bourke St and Miranda Fair. Under the tutelage of his late grandfather Mr Frederick Watts CBE, Tim gained the knowledge and the desire to forge his own way.

Eventually Tim moved to Sydney where he met local girl and future wife, Kelly. They settled on the Central Coast and as with many companies, started small in a shed next to their house with just a saw and an edgebander before they expanded the business. Tim established the company in the Central Coast suburb of Tuggerah with a factory size of 600 square metres before they moved to their recent premises in Fountaindale about four years ago. Now manufacturing in an area of 1800 square metres, TCDC WISE specialises in shopfitting, commercial furniture and interior fitouts.

Expanding and diversifying machinery equipment

To get where they are today, Tim needed to invest in the right equipment. Back in 1995, Homag sales representative Grant Jones walked into Tim's workshop and after some time Tim purchased a new Brandt KD56 edgebander; then the following year as his demand grew he upgraded the KD56 to a Brandt KD84C. Being very happy with the reliability of the machines and the quality that came off the machines, Tim continued buying Homag Group equipment over the years.

"Homag never let us down. I have built up a great professional and personal bond with Grant, who is always looking after us even when we weren't buying at the time," says Tim.

After having bought a BP80 CNC and a beam saw, the turning point was reached when TCDC took delivery of the Homag BAZ CNC router in 2004 and a Weeke Venture in 2005. "We experienced a real explosion in the business after we purchased all the machinery. The phone was ringing constantly and our workload increased tremendously," remembers Kelly, who also works in the business.

Tim says, "Without the BAZ we wouldn't have been able to do half of the jobs."

In 2008 TCDC expanded further and acquired Wise Products, a furniture manufacturer particularly focussed on the club industry. Wise manufactures functional and durable chairs, stools and tables. This procurement included a metal

fabrication, powder-coating and upholstery section making TCDC WISE a "One Stop Shop."

Perfect finish with a Brandt Ambition 1650FC edgebander

With the increase in workload and the demand for precise quality, Tim saw the need in upgrading their old edgebander. "Our previous Brandt machine still ran well but it wasn't as accurate as we needed it to be, so we sold it. Now with the new 1650FC we don't need to touch the boards at all when it comes off the machine. It's just perfect. Before we upgraded we needed to scrape the edges with a blade."

TCDC's Brandt Ambition 1650FC runs at least three quarters of the day. Therefore, Grant recommended a powerful machine to process a wide spectrum of parts. He says, "This is one of our most flexible machines in the Brandt range. You are able to run solid wood, laminated strips and it also has the capacity for large production runs at the same time. A great all-rounder with a very competitive price."

Edgebanding specialist from Germany

With over 50 years of engineering experience, Brandt - the edgebanding specialist from the Homag Group - stands for state-of-art quality from Germany and with an excellent price performance ratio. Brandt's annual production of 2,000 edgebanding machines makes it clearly a world leader in this market segment.

In the standard version, the Brandt Ambition 1650FC is equipped with a precision gluing unit, end trimming saw unit, top/bottom trimming unit and a multi-functional contour trimming unit. A perfect finish is guaranteed by the radius scraper, glue joint scraper and a buffing unit. The powerful motors on all of the units provide the unrestricted power that is needed to process a broad spectrum of different parts. To offer the perfect solution, Brandt includes a quickmelt gluing unit, plus the standard workpiece gap optimisation package for more effective production, also included are the separating agent and detergent spraying units. The versatility of this series is highlighted by the variable feed rate of 8-18 m/min.

The Brandt Ambition 1650FC is also equipped with the Homag Group's Multitouch display PowerTouch. The operating panel with full HD display in widescreen format creates clear and high-contrast images. Furthermore, it has ergonomic touch operation with gestures such as scrolling and swiping for simple navigation and intuitive operation of the machine. The machine data captures important operating figures such as number of pieces, production time or edge material quantity.





► Success through attention to detail

TCDC WISE has completed hundreds of projects Australia wide, working with prestigious national clients including Kodak, Telstra, Pirtek and JB HiFi. Their hospitality chairs and tables can be found in hundreds of clubs throughout NSW.

The range of clients speaks for itself. Tim's attention to detail, his integrity and a life-time warranty on their steel products form a base for establishing a prosperous business. "I wouldn't be where I am now without my staff," says Tim who is proud of his long-lasting crew. Most of them have been with him for 10 to 25 years. "They've enjoyed the high times with me and stuck it out through the tough times."

With the main competition in the metal sector being cheaper imports, Tim can only hope for more awareness in quality. They can beat foreign imports in the joinery section by relying on their ability of providing customised work and superior quality. "We always go the extra mile," says Tim.

It took them five tough years to overcome the GFC. "No one was spending," says Tim. "Now, there appears to be more confidence in the market. We are also finding customers prefer our high quality Australian made products."

Also considering the high demand in aged care, Tim looks optimistic for the future. "TCDC WISE is well set up for this industry we have the expertise, metal shop and the machinery for doing large quantity orders in this particular field."

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