

DATA

**News about construction and property in Australia and the World**

Issue Number 4/2009

1> Structural ink

An inventor is trialling a project to 'print' a building using 'structural ink' technology. The Italian firm is pioneering the use of structural ink which can bind any type of sand or gravel into a marble-like material. The ink is deposited by an automated nozzle, working in the same way as the jet on a computer printer, moving around an aluminium frame within which the structure is constructed. The futuristic structural ink technology is being tested near Pisa, where a British-backed company is attempting to 'print' a building.

Building, 18 September 2009, page 15

2> Solar park

Construction has started on two regional solar parks that will each generate enough renewable energy to provide 150 households with the same amount of solar power generated from a 2 kW individual household rooftop photovoltaic system. The parks, located in Bendigo and Ballarat, will be Australia's two largest ground mounted, flat plate, grid-connected solar parks and will incorporate the use of fixed solar panels and tracking solar panels to help maximise solar energy generation. The combined area for the two solar parks is in excess of 29,300 m², the approximate size of two Aussie Rules football ovals. The solar parks are an integral part of Victoria's \$42million Central Victoria Solar City project.

Sustainability Victoria

3> Space consortium

Foster + Partners have joined a European consortium which will bid to explore how structures could be built on the moon and the possibility of adapting materials found in space for building purposes.

Building, 18 September 2009, page 11

4> Building knock on effects

The end of the resources boom and the winding back of building activity in QLD and WA are flowing through to all parts of the economy – including the **tattoo industry**. One Queensland tattoo parlour reported that 'walk-in' traffic from bricklayers and labourers was down about 50% because of the drop in building activity. In Perth, a parlour owner said trade, mostly from miners, had fallen around 20% in the past three months, forcing him to take his trade on the road in an attempt to 'drum up' business from miners further north.

AFR, 27 July 2009

5> Indian summer

India has announced ambitious plans to generate 20 GW of electricity from sunlight by 2020. The International Energy Agency predicts total global solar capacity will be approximately 27 GW by that date. India's solar mission will seek to achieve its targets by seeking technological and financial support from more developed nations.

www.guardian.co.uk, 4 August 2009

6> Material costs fall

Prices for building materials such as cement, aggregates and sand in the UAE stabilised last month, after steep falls earlier this year due to falling construction activity around the globe. In the UAE, prices for lime gypsum, a key ingredient in cement and plasterboard, shrank by 5.3% compared with a month earlier, and the price of cement declined by 1.74%. The declines represent the latest signs of easing cost pressures in the struggling construction and property sectors.

Zawya, 23 August 2009

7> Breathing easy

A new understanding of the technology used by termites in the construction of mounds has made researchers think twice about the development of **sustainable, self-regulating buildings**. Researchers have digitally scanned a termite mound to understand how the mounds are able to 'breathe' without ventilation – by bulk air flow. The research has so far determined that, rather than temperature, termites regulate water potential in their communal mounds, constantly building and moving mortar through the complex structures.

Building Sustainable Design, September 2009, pages 35-37

8> Data overload

The amount of digital information stored by Australian businesses is growing at an alarming rate and organisations are struggling to manage the load. A recent survey of 400 senior information and communications technology decision makers in Australia and New Zealand demonstrates how organisations are leaving themselves exposed to unnecessary risk, reduced productivity and a lack of competitive edge. The results are highlighted in the report called 'The Great Information Glut'.

'The Great Information Glut', Hitachi Data Systems

9> Synthetic synthesis

Researchers at London's Imperial College are researching artificial photosynthesis as a possible alternative to the silicon wafers used to generate electricity in most solar power systems. The 'artificial leaf' project involves working out how leaves use sunlight to make useful molecules. The team then plans to build artificial systems capable of doing the same. These systems would be used to generate clean fuels, such as hydrogen and methanol, which would be used in fuel cells to make electricity or directly to power super-clean vehicles.

www.guardian.co.uk, 12 August 2009

10> Business confidence improves

Business confidence is rising sharply across European manufacturing, with the UK and Italy taking the lead, according to the latest KPMG 'Business Outlook Survey'. The report also highlights the fast turnaround in countries such as Brazil and China. Optimism about production trends is back at levels seen before the intensification of the global slowdown in late 2008. Nevertheless, the survey shows European manufacturers still expect they will be required to cut capital expenditure during the rest of 2009. The results clearly emphasise a position nearing the bottom of the economic cycle.

KPMG 2009

11> Sentiment on the up

The 9th edition of Davis Langdon's Construction Sentiment Survey reveals that sentiment continued to inch toward improvement during the third quarter. The Construction Sentiment Index improved 5 points to reach 64 – indicating that sentiment is definitely on the up.

www.davislangdon.com, September 2009

12> Davis Langdon announces global merger with DEGW

Davis Langdon and strategic space planning consultants DEGW have announced a merger. DEGW is a global market leader in its field and is best known for its work consulting on high-performance workplaces for Fortune 500 companies. DEGW's services in Australia and New Zealand focus exclusively on the strategic, pre-design stages of projects, specialising in how people and space come together to support organisational culture and improve business performance. They do not provide design delivery services and this will continue with the merger.

www.davislangdon.com, August 2009

For further information on the news items contact Davis Langdon, Research, on 03 9933 8800

www.davislangdon.com

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