



## Crystal ball

It is the year 2050 and... Jerry Tyrrell predicts the future of the building industry where pre-fab rules and disputes disappear.

When I joined the industry in 1972 as a humble labourer, I was surrounded by lots of tradesmen who knew heaps about building. Today, there are still many contractors who know their stuff but there are also a lot of tradesmen who are like process workers doing repetitive tasks all the time, and they often don't know why they make silly and expensive mistakes all the time.

Other things have changed too. Sites are safer. Buildings are smarter and more environmentally friendly. We've got rid of most of the really toxic termite chemicals, and there is more use of panels and prefabricated components. So, where is the industry headed, and what do we all need to know and work towards?

### Buildings change people lives

I'm going to start with something that most of us don't think about – that is that the homes, offices and shops we build contribute significantly to the quality of their users' lives.

By 2050, governments will promote buildings that create happy homes and workplaces because this will reduce downstream social costs such as anti-social behaviour, depression, unemployment and violence.

Houses will be crafted sanctuaries for children to grow and blossom. Good design will be everything. This doesn't mean huge, because overall floor area per person will fall. It means the building will utilise direct sunlight and natural ventilation, have good acoustics between bedrooms and living, be different from adjoining homes and provide clever



Just like we want Nike, Callaway or Qantas, future developers and buyers will want quality brands and the added safeguard of an established name and reputation.

services for occupant use. Every home will have some outdoor space and medium density developments will be built around the well resourced recreational facilities to provide healthy choices to residents, especially their children.

Builders will proudly participate knowing the social benefits their good work provides. And, importantly, they will minimise client problems because no one wants the stress and cost of these fights. Everyone will therefore recognise that:

- Teamwork and tolerance between client and contractor is vital
- A building dispute should never arise
- Problems can be easily navigated between reasonable people

- No one will receive final payment until all reasonable major issues are dealt with
- Security of payment will protect contractors from clients who try to hold the last payment.

### On the production line

There is no doubt that most parts of a building can be factory made and assembled on site. And there are many benefits of this predictable, automated process: no weather problems, quality systems are more easily employed, most components are computer measured/cut/made to ensure proper fit and workers get to know the process really well.

In 2050, every possible component of