

builder'smate

100TH

WELCOME TO THE 100TH ISSUE OF **BUILDER'S MATE!**

We are very proud of what we have achieved since our first issue in September 2003 and grateful for the support we have received from readers for so many years.

A milestone like this is always a good opportunity to reflect on how far we've come. In our case, we'll look back not only on BRANZ and *Builder's Mate* itself, but the building industry as well. The last 16 years have seen a few challenges but also some giant strides forward. Today, we are building warmer, drier, safer and more comfortable homes than we ever have.

Builder's Mate was launched in September 2003 as a short, easy-to-read publication aimed specifically at builders on the tools. The face of the publication for many years was BRANZ technical writer Des Molloy. His "Dribblings from the old geezer" were plain-English advice in his own unique style from someone who had been >



*Dribblings from
the old geezer*

WIN!



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there and done that. Many people will have met Des more recently as one of the BRANZ seminar presenters travelling around the country.

Technology

The focus of *Builder's Mate* was always practical, hands-on advice, complementing BRANZ books and seminars and *Build* magazine. It was an ages-old style of passing on information. The digital revolution was still in its early stages – *Builder's Mate* had been going for 4 years before the first iPhones appeared on building sites!

There has been an avalanche of great new digital services launched in recent years that have transformed the way we work. Consider:

- BRANZ Maps – the online tool that gives specific location details [earthquake, climate and corrosion zones, wind region and zone, rainfall intensity] for a given address
- ePubs – BRANZ books available in digital format
- ALF – the Annual Loss Factor (ALF) online tool developed by BRANZ to support the industry in designing more energy-efficient houses
- apps – *Builder's Mate* has covered dozens of smartphone apps that could be useful to builders on the tools.

Weathertightness

Perhaps as a sign of things to come, weathertightness was one of the topics in the very first issue, focusing particularly on the high-risk areas of parapets and balconies. The Weathertight Homes Resolution Service had been set up just 9 months earlier in December 2002. *Builder's Mate* had already been running for 3 years by the time the Weathertight Homes Tribunal was established to adjudicate over leaky homes. Advice around ensuring homes were weathertight appeared frequently over the years.

Weathertightness has been one of the biggest challenges to the industry, and we are not through it yet. As the Law Commission pointed out, "The phenomenon of buildings developing weathertightness and related problems in such large numbers results from a basket of contributing factors." Several investigations have tried to estimate the scale of the problem. A 2009 report said the most likely estimate was that 42,000 homes could need repair at a total cost of \$11.3 billion. A subsequent estimate of affected homes, calculated in a different way to the 2009 study, was considerably higher.



Rules changes

Over 100 issues, *Builder's Mate* has covered many significant changes to laws and regulations:

- The Building Act 1991 was replaced by the Building Act 2004. This introduced building practitioner licensing [which only became mandatory for carrying out or supervising restricted building work 8 years later in March 2012] and accreditation of building consent authorities. It also brought in a new Building Code. The homeowner gained protection from mandatory warranties.
- Significant changes to the Building Act became law in November 2013, including higher penalties for work done without a building consent and changes to the work that doesn't require a consent.
- Major consumer protections came into force from January 2015, including mandatory written contracts for residential building work costing \$30,000 (including GST) or more, mandatory disclosure and a 1-year defect repair period.

Health and safety

We covered health and safety a lot, with good reason. Construction has the second-highest number of fatalities of all industries and in 2017 overtook manufacturing to have the highest number of work-related injury claims. There are positive signs emerging, however. The construction industry had fewer deaths in 2018 [five] than 2017 [eight].

One of the big changes was the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, which came into force on 4 April 2016. The law was part of a package of measures that aims to reduce workplace deaths and injuries by 25% by 2020.

Builder's Mate has covered a wide field in health and safety, from asbestos to the more recent focus on the threat from silica dust.



Sustainability and climate change

Sustainability and climate change are big issues today. One of the biggest changes in sustainability in the last 16 years has been the huge fall in the cost of photovoltaic generating systems. These didn't exist in any meaningful numbers when *Builder's Mate* was first published. As recently as the start of 2014, there were just 2,000 PV systems on New Zealand houses. But the costs of buying and installing a system fell by thousands of dollars, and suddenly installation numbers exploded, with over 23,000 houses having PV systems by mid-2019.

Domestic wind generation never took off, despite quite a lot of research and testing. Issue 27 (December 2007) reported on trial turbines set up by Vector on the roof of the Waitakere City Building in Auckland and in Waitangi Park in Wellington. The costs and the limited energy output from small turbines meant that houses never saw small blades sprouting as quickly as the commercial giants. [New Zealand today has 19 commercial wind farms operating or under construction.]

While some sustainability gains have come from technological advances and falling costs, others came from rule changes. A significant

one was the enhanced insulation requirements in Building Code clause H1 *Energy efficiency* introduced progressively. A special one-off issue in 2007 covered the details.

The rules around insulation were boosted again when, in July 2019, it became compulsory for rental homes to have ceiling and underfloor insulation installed where practicable. [The requirements will be boosted further with the upcoming healthy homes standards.]

The building industry will have an important role in the current moves to make New Zealand a low-carbon or net-zero carbon economy. *Builder's Mate* touched on this briefly. BRANZ has a considerable body of research under way to support the industry in this.

Natural disasters

Sustainability and building resilience are close cousins. Coping with natural disasters and creating more resilient buildings has been a recurring theme in *Builder's Mate*.

The October 2011 issue explained liquefaction, which had been such a notable feature of the major Canterbury earthquakes. In August 2012, we provided guidance on repairing plasterboard after an earthquake and in June 2017 on earthquake-strengthening a timber subfloor.

A HARD DECISION

BRANZ is constantly reviewing how it supports the industry and gets out important information and research. After looking closely at industry needs and the changing ways people are looking for information, we have made the hard decision that this 100th issue of *Builder's Mate* will be the last.

Of course, BRANZ will still be making available all of the content that you have found in *Builder's Mate* – the plain-English guidance, the easy-to-understand drawings and the photographs. If you need to find a key piece of information in a hurry, a great place to start is www.branzfind.co.nz. This free digital search tool covers a wide range of New Zealand building information from BRANZ, Standards New Zealand, MBIE and others. Keep an eye out too for our new

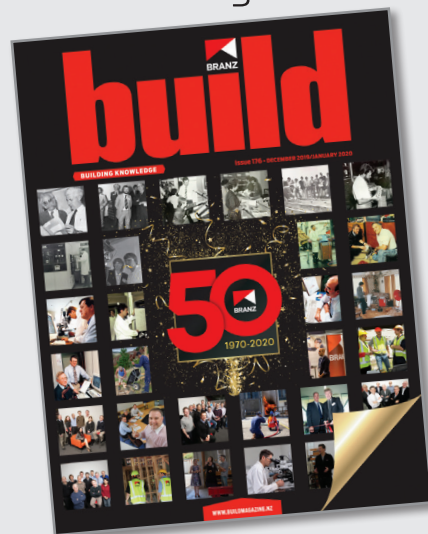
website and a new search tool powered by artificial intelligence, coming soon.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who supported *Builder's Mate* in different ways, such as the people who wrote "Mouthpiece" articles for us. We were able to reach so many people through the generosity of the retail chains, BCAs and other organisations who have distributed *Builder's Mate*. A special thanks to the team at The ToolShed who have sourced the great prizes for our competitions and handled the prize handovers.

Finally, we would like to thank our readers over 16 years. Thank you for your support, and we wish you well in all your endeavours. If you want to get in touch, you can reach us at branz@branz.co.nz.

build

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Competition

Here is a tool



What is it?

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A ToolShed Cordless Hammer Drill worth \$249!

This great kit includes a ToolShed XHD brushless hammer drill, a 3Ah Li-ion battery and charger.

Great for drilling metal, timber, plastic, composite board and masonry products.

The prize is provided courtesy of The ToolShed.

All you need to do is tell us the name of the mystery tool at the top of the page.

Email your answer to buildersmate@branz.co.nz. Put "February Competition" in the subject line. The message should include your answer, your name, postal address and phone number. One entry per entrant please.

Don't forget to tell us where you picked up your copy of **Builder's Mate**! The winner will be the first correct entry drawn at 9 am on Friday 13 March 2020.



The winner of **Builder's Mate 99** was Brett Barker of Tauranga. Brett wins a Makita jobsite radio. The mystery tool was a sledgehammer.

Pictured October winner Nick Crowe receives his Milwaukee hammer drill and impact driver kit prize at the Tool Shed Petone.



Terms and conditions:

Entry is open to all New Zealand residents except employees and immediate families of BRANZ and The ToolShed shops. The competition will close at 9 am on Friday 13 March 2020. The prize is not transferable for cash. The judge's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into.

HAMMER 'N' NAILS AND MYSTERY TOOLS

Issue 1 introduced the cartoon characters Hammer 'n' Nails, drawn by Aucklander David Fletcher. Their antics for 16 years were enough to fill a book – and did, when the cartoons were collected into a small publication in 2018.

Also there from the start was the mystery tool competition. Some of the tools were easy to guess, but some were absolute stinkers. Do you know what this tool is?

HAMMER 'N' NAILS

PHEW NAILS, THAT'S THE LAST TIME YOU HAVE A CHEESE SANDWICH!



Competition

Here's a tool



What is it?

WIN!

[It is a bossing stick, used to work sheet lead to a required shape.]



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