



**Casting Industry –**  
the career choice for  
makers, creators, and  
innovators

## Melting Moments – March 2022

### Presidents Report

They say time flies when you are having fun..... by that definition here in Victoria we are having a hoot ! Firstly to our AFI family and friends who have been impacted by recent weather events in NSW and QLD our thoughts are with you and if we can assist to support you through this then please reach out. Alan Cooke and the National Training committee recently met with federal educational authorities to progress the acceptance and implementation of the updated Patternmaking Qualification. We are looking forward to this being released in the next few months and we will keep you updated. The progress with training and the enthusiasm of both state and federal bodies to rejuvenate Australia's manufacturing industry skill base is important, we need all of our members to support this as well. At our March meeting - held in Geelong - AFI Vic presented 3 of the current apprentices with Certificates of Appreciation. IXL Castings also initiated a new annual award at our March meeting in honour of Bill Pratt and his achievement within the industry over very many years.



The National Conference is coming up fast. If you haven't already booked your place – good news - the organising committee have extended the Early Bird Registration discount to March 25<sup>th</sup>. See the flyer attached to the newsletter for more information and to lock in your place.

See you there 😊

*Amber Maxwell – AFI Victoria President*

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### AFI National

The start of 2022 continues to see business impacted significantly by the pandemic and variations in approach by each State & Federal governments, but what hopefully appears to be an approach that is more akin to living with the virus as opposed to the closing & re-opening of businesses & the economy as a whole.

From a foundry perspective the results for the quarter are generally fairly rosy, with order books full and energy costs returning to more sustainable levels. However, we continue to see a chronic shortage of labour, both skilled and unskilled, impact growth opportunities.

From an AFI National perspective we are looking forward to the Brisbane national conference from October 2021 to May 12-14, 2022. We are definitely expecting a turn out with representation of foundries from every state to celebrate together an exciting & vibrant industry.

As advised in the December report the National Council will continue to publish an annual Foundry Industry Report. If your foundry has not yet been contacted expect an email from Alan Cooke requesting data for the 2021 year. Please support this initiative as the industry data is the key source of information for State & National committee

members to lobby Council, State & Federal government for topics such as a National Training programme which works effectively for the needs of the industry, energy costs and usage, particularly with the push to 'net zero', and waste costs / recycling opportunities.

National Council have continued discussions with the Australian Steel Institute (ASI) after the signing of an MOU. As further information comes to hand it will be tabled through the various State & National AFI committees.

AFI representatives have also begun discussions with the National Skills Commission. The key objective is to highlight the needs of our members to cover shopfloor operators, apprentices, technicians, metallurgists and managers from the perspective of both training resources and potential migration support.

Finally, to enable the AFI to represent the industry effectively we need to know the issues each member is facing to enable the State & National bodies to advocate on your behalf. See you all in Brisbane May 2022.

*Brett Lawrence – AFI National President*  
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## **Apprentices and Training**

We continue to have 10 apprentices employed across Victoria with strong prospects for a further 2 apprentices to be engaged in the coming weeks. GOTafe continue to deliver training to this Victorian based cohort, however they have withdrawn from consideration for delivery of foundry trade training in NSW. This leaves the only current option for NSW based apprentices is to be utilise the Qld based SkillsTech for training.

In a significant development, the Australian Institute of Engineering (AIE) has received approval to offer engineering trade training in SA, are at the very early stages of seeking approval to train in WA, and are exploring the possibility of offering foundry trade training in NSW. This is on the back of Brett Ambrosio (ex-GOTafe) being employed by AIE as Executive Director of Education.

AIE are also now able to offer a Cert II in Engineering in Victoria. With the foundry electives chosen, this qualification becomes an effective pre-apprenticeship course for those that are already employed in your business.

## **Foundry In a Box**

The ongoing development and refinement of the Foundry In a Box kit, takes a big step forward on Friday 18/3.

AFI(Vic) will demonstrate the FiaB at the Viewbank College, STEAM Futures Conferences 2022. With registrations including teachers and students from multiple schools, this event gives our industry a great opportunity to highlight the range of career opportunities that we have. We fully expect that this event will lead to further FiaB demonstrations and workshops.

To help promote FiaB and careers in the metal casting industry, we are making progress on a video of the process. This video will highlight 11-12 year old youth making moulds, preparing and pouring metal, then recovering their castings. The total enthralment shown by both the young people and their parents give every indication that this is a really strong positive way to engage youth in our industry.

Looking ahead, our FiaB (and video) will be demonstrated at the AFI National Conference in mid-May.

## **Bill Pratt**

On Wed 16/3, in a special AFI(Vic) event, Bill Pratt OAM and 2012 AFI Legend was acknowledged for his contribution to the Foundry Industry, and celebration of his 100th Birthday. Needless to say that on this momentous occasion, Bill has received letters from the Queen, Prime Minister of Australia, State Governor, and Premier. Following celebrations with family members, Rotary, friends and his Bowls Club Colleagues, this AFI cake was the 8th that Bill has cut !!

Bill commenced a Patternmaking apprenticeship in 1937 as a 15 year old. He recounted that his first job was sweeping the floors of the Pattern Shop, which he said was somewhat better than the new Moulding apprentice who had to collect fresh horse manure from around the local streets. The manure being used as a binding agent for core making and moulding.

Bill recalls that he worked with Doug Maxwell's father in his early days as an apprentice and in 1939 received the inaugural Institute of British Foundry (IBF) Beasley Scholarship.

Over the years Bill has trained 40 to 50 apprentices, as well as being a State Examiner for Pattern Making Practice and Theory for 12 years.



A strong contingent of the AFI fraternity converged from Melbourne and Ballarat to join current and past Backwell IXL foundrymen along with past Legends Dennis Keenan, Kuno Brautigam, John Zach, Murray Brown, Peter Klein and Doug Maxwell to hear of Bills remarkable career.



### **Bill Pratt Acknowledgement Award**

The Bill Pratt Acknowledgement Award is sponsored by IXL Metal Castings for a Newcomb Secondary College P-Tech student who undertakes a work placement with a Geelong based business, and then continues with that business towards an apprenticeship or cadetship. The initial award value

is \$250 towards the student's learning costs or new job related tool costs within the first year.



The inaugural award recipient is Lachlan Rollo. As a P-Tech student, Lachlan undertook work placement with IXL Metal Castings in 2021 and subsequently has now taken up a Foundry Moulding apprenticeship with IXL.

Congratulations to Lachlan !!

### **White Industries Ipswich**

In keeping with the metal casting industries long standing Circular Economy credentials, Bruce and Craig White have seized the opportunity to purchase the former Bradken Ipswich foundry site.



When Bradken said they would be closing the facility both Bruce and Craig saw this as an opportunity to grow their business. The facility is still quite modern in both the Foundry and Machine shop and complements their Dalby operations. With the acquisition, White Industries bolsters its capacity in the Australian foundry sector and

increases its stake as the largest privately-owned foundry group in Australia.

Well done to White Industries for committing themselves to Australian Manufacturing in the most tangible way possible.

### **A King - and Queen - size Throne**

No, I'm not talking about his and hers toilets !! In a remarkable example of the huge variety and complexity of metal castings project that our businesses can become involved in, Billmans Foundry Castlemaine can add yet another masterpiece to their already impressive catalogue of works over many years. For those that can get to Lorne, Victoria. Go to the end of the pier to observe in close detail the magnificent bronze "Throne of Potentiality" designed by international artist Steven Vaughns.



In over 300 man hours, Billmans produced the multiple castings and welded them together, to give the end result of a more than 4m high throne that could seat 2 adults comfortably.

### **Around the Traps**

*1. The biggest foundry facility development for many years is progressing well at Beckwiths, Coburg. On completion, this exciting project will be a fitting memorial to recently departed AFI Legend Terry Beckwith.*

*2. Unfortunately CSIRO have made the decision to shut-down Lab22. Word is that the printer is on the move and will continue to be available for the innovators amongst us to produce those complex geometries that just aren't possible in traditional*

*moulding / coremaking methods. Stay tuned for further announcements !!*

*3. The back end of 2021 saw the departure from Keech Castings of General Manager, Brad Clark. Brad played a large part in the success of Keech over the 10 years of his leadership. Sadly, he has left our industry.*

*Out of change comes opportunity, with the Joint General Manager role now being shared between Quinn Petrie (formerly Production Manager) and Mark McNamara (formerly Technical Development Manager). Well done and congratulations to both.*

*4. Following 2 years of absence due to the covid pandemic, the Lost Trades Fair is back this coming weekend (19/3 and 20/3) in Bendigo. Engineering Patternmakers Stuart McCorkelle and Steve Miller will demonstrate their skills, with Moulder, Dave Tatti, producing greensand moulds, while Alan Cooke will be on hand to explain to onlookers that these trades are definitely not lost and that there's opportunities in the metal casting industry right now !!*

*6. Academic, Jesse Adams Stein has published Industrial Crafts in Australia: Oral Histories of Creativity and Survival. The focus group for this publication is Engineering Patternmaking. Many members are sure to find items of interest in this publication. Google search the title and check it out.*

*7. Next Wed 23/3 AFI (WA) have a presentation from Gary Savage relating to his Churchill Fellowship studying application of John Campbells principles to methoding. Contact AFI(WA) Secretary, Adrian Camps for the opportunity to further your knowledge of producing good castings.*

### **NEXT AFI VIC Meeting**

Our next event will be a site visit to Swinburne University of Technology to learn about Industry 4.0. The date (yet to be finalised) will be either Wed 27/4 or Wed 4/5. Keep your calendar clear and look for the meeting notice in mid-April !!

# Early bird registration extended to 25 March 2022

## Limited reserved accommodation selling fast!

*Australian Foundry Institute 56th Annual National Conference*

## Don't stop thinking about tomorrow

**Rydges South Bank, Brisbane**

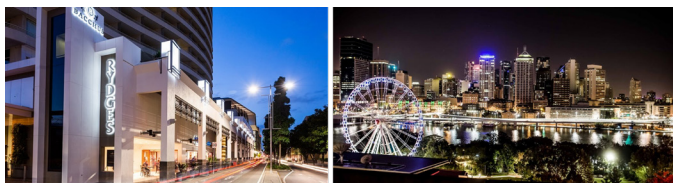
**▶ 12-14 May 2022**

[www.aficonference.org](http://www.aficonference.org)



Hosted by the Australian Foundry Institute QLD

**The Australian Foundry Institute Queensland Division invites you and your organisation to join us at the Australian Foundry Institute 56th Annual National Conference.**



The conference will bring together delegates such as CEOs, foundry managers and supervisors, technicians and engineers, operating personnel including: moulders, patternmakers, furnace operators and casting technicians, market development managers and industry suppliers.

This annual event will feature speakers who are experts in their respective fields, including:

- ▶ Dr Roger Lumley, **AW Bell**
- ▶ Dr Steve Dowry, **RMIT University**
- ▶ Simo Saletic, **PLM Hive**
- ▶ Chris Morgan, **InfraBuild Recycling**  
**and many more...**

We also invite you to join us for a Site tour at Skillstech **TAFE Queensland**, home to a \$10 million foundry which was completed in 2009 and is the only training specific foundry in the southern hemisphere.

**Some great social functions are also on offer:**

**President's Reception -**

Soleil Pool Deck, Rydges South Bank

**Strike Bowling -**

Wintergarden, Queen Street Mall

**Gala Dinner -**

Level 12 Rooftop, Rydges South Bank

Don't forget accommodation can also be booked at your time of registration, but we urge to you to get in quick as it is set to be a very busy weekend in Brisbane with the 2022 NRL Magic Round being held the same weekend as our much anticipated event.

## Register now at [www.aficonference.org](http://www.aficonference.org)

Book before early bird registration closes on 25 March and save \$100 off the full registration price!