

# PROFILE:

## Chris Piacentini

### Page Steel Fabrications, Victoria

Page Steel Fabrications has recently invested heavily in specialised CNC equipment to dramatically reduce fabrication times and cost for developers and builders. ASI National Marketing Manager, **David Ryan** talks with Page Steel director, **Chris Piacentini** about where this commitment is leading and new opportunities emerging.

**DR:** Chris, you're a new member to the ASI. Why did Page Steel rejoin?

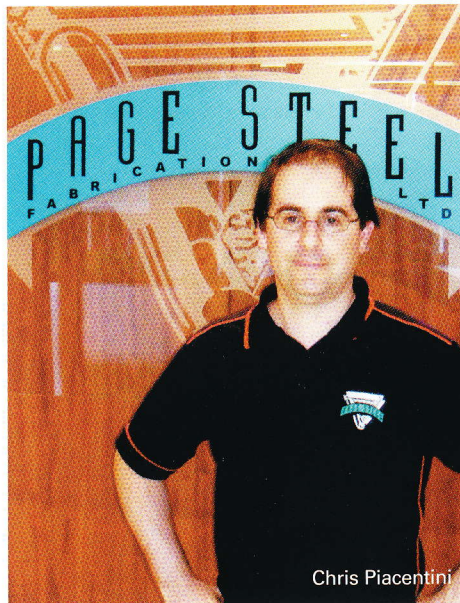
**CP:** We wanted to become engaged in the multi-storey push through the ASI. We knew from Ian Cairns that the ASI fabricators group had developed an array of systems and a strategy and a good team is still working on it. We also want to become engaged with the ASI's Local Content sub-committee.

**DR:** You have invested heavily in equipment and systems. What is your capability and how do you see the future for Australian fabrication?

**CP:** Our current capability equates to 200 tonnes of steelwork a week providing there is a full shop. We really only look six months ahead and we see a booming market in the shopping centres, warehouses and mining segments.

We have invested in layout and new CNC equipment such as a beam line, an angle and flat line and plasma and oxy cutting and a section blaster at the beginning of the process. And we have more equipment arriving.

We have also loaded up on technology with our own drafters and engineering so we can offer more of a Design and Construct (D&C) approach. On the concept of increasing service levels, we have an elaborate tracking system based on scanning of bar codes that can enable the client to fully trace progress throughout manufacture, painting and delivery via the web. Longer term, we see lots of mining development and the need for warehouse space which is a good forecast for structural steel fabrication.



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**DR:** There has been a sizeable shift in steel prices. How do you see this affecting the market?

**CP:** The steel industry is going to have to convince clients to move away from fixed prices to more dynamic rise and fall arrangements. Currently we are struggling to sell this concept.

**DR:** What do you see as the greatest issue facing steel fabrication in this country at the moment?

**CP:** The issue of imported steel fabrications is my greatest concern because we are losing work to unreasonable prices. Builders now have often taken the risk with imported steel and are becoming familiar with it.

Our counter tactic has been to get our costs down through savings in technology and less rework. Our plan is to rely on our new strengths of business development, modeling and engineering to adopt more of a D&C approach as per the steel contractor model.

*Page Steel is working with OneSteel Market Mills and the ASI to offer modern competitive designs tailored to a fully automated process. Two major machines have been purchased from the US, customised specially for multi-level structures of structural steel. Page Steel is the only fabricator in Australia to use the SteelTrack® software package that gives real-time reporting and monitoring of every member on every project. All information is gathered by multiple customised electronic scanners using barcode technology.*