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BUILDING EFFICIENCY

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A.G. Coombs
Together we achieve the extraordinary

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



PHILIP COOMBS
Executive Chairman

TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE THE EXTRAORDINARY

Welcome to the first edition of A.G. Coombs publication, *building efficiency*.

The 2005–2006 period has been an exciting one in terms of the continuing development of the A.G. Coombs Group. It has been particularly pleasing to see that the milestones achieved have provided further evidence of the Group's advancement as an innovative, leading provider of engineering and building services, from projects and maintenance, through to technical facilities management and advisory solutions.

Equally important is that A.G. Coombs' success has come as a direct result of the Group's ongoing commitment to its core values. That is providing quality, value-driven solutions; continued investment in its people; good corporate citizenship; the tradition of proactive leadership; and its steadfast dedication to the principles of teamwork and continual improvement.

Through its commitment to these core values, the A.G. Coombs Group is well placed as a truly corporate entity, to advance its objectives in what should be an equally exciting, challenging and rewarding period ahead.

I commend our publication to you.



A YEAR OF GROWTH



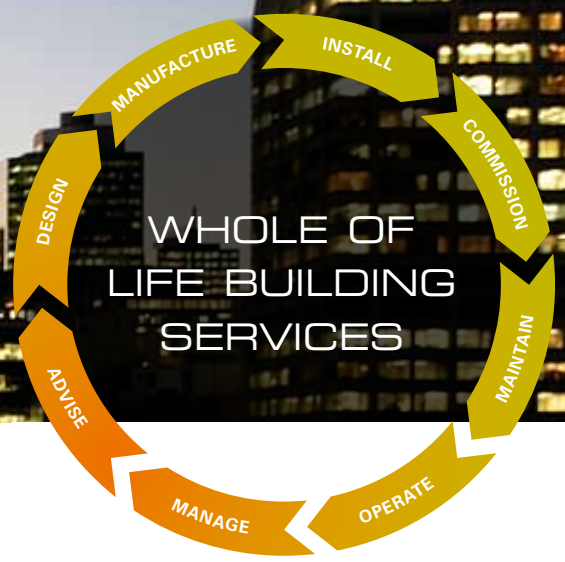
RUSSELL
TELFORD
Managing Director

The 2005–2006 period has seen the A.G. Coombs Group continue to develop and consolidate a business platform to move forward. We have had a long term plan to develop diversity within the Group and to encourage growth in areas other than our core projects business.

The A.G. Coombs Group has broadened its customer base and the extent and scope of the services provided, as well as advancing our prime objectives through ensuring tighter integration of the different businesses in the Group.

The A.G. Coombs Group prides itself on its 'people' focus. We have a very strong view about business perpetuation and we have a fundamental commitment to the fostering of staff career paths at all levels within the Group. Given the present and escalating skills shortage in the industry, we are particularly fortunate in having this staff development focus as part of A.G. Coombs' culture and we are continually realising the benefits of this long standing investment. One of the pleasing outcomes of this culture is our recent Commonwealth Minister's Award for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices 2006 (Melbourne Region).

MANAGING DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



AND PROGRESS

This people aspect is also very much a vital component of A.G. Coombs continued growth, and in the case of A.G. Coombs Servicing and Integrated Technical Management, it has been evidenced by the high level of responsibilities we have taken on for our direct clients and major facilities management providers such as Jones Lang LaSalle, United Group Services as well as other key clients.

One of the key components to our success this year has been the ability to seize on opportunities in the marketplace and coming off the back of the high construction cycle running up to the Commonwealth Games, A.G. Coombs has made a number of important advances in a Projects and Advisory sense. These include our role as Independent Commissioning Agent in the innovative 6 Star Council House 2 project, and our input at a very early stage into the feasibility and optimisation of the engineering and commissioning of the chilled beam technology retrofit at 500 Collins Street.

A.G. Coombs clearly see opportunities in the provision of an integrated approach to engineering service delivery and the commissioning process, driven in part by market drivers such as the ABGR and

Green Star building rating schemes and the desire for good practice energy efficiency and building performance outcomes.

Public Private Partnership projects, where the provision of long term maintenance contracts are bundled with the design and construction of the facility, are also driving a change in thinking toward a greater focus on the effective and efficient operation of plant, equipment and building management systems over the very long term.

Having an integrated approach, particularly in terms of 'green' commissioning and maintenance, with Green Star accredited engineers and commissioning staff, and demonstrated expertise in a number of projects to date, positions A.G. Coombs as an industry leader in this area.

This has placed A.G. Coombs in a leading position in pursuing for this growing market segment and is a comfortable fit with A.G. Coombs' strategy of moving toward the provision of a total solution approach to services that complement our core business.



500 Collins Street, Melbourne
The unique challenges of a chilled beam technology retrofit.



John Gorton Building, Canberra
Balancing environmental concerns with a heritage building.





500 COLLINS STREET - CHILLED BEAM CHALLENGES MET BY GREEN STAR PROCESS



The virtually airtight facade at
500 Collins Street, Melbourne.

Chilled beam technology promises to deliver optimal energy outcomes for building owners and occupiers, but the technology presents its own unique challenges, not the least of which is that the building facade has to be virtually an airtight envelope. A.G. Coombs were on hand to provide the solutions and to collaborate in providing some 'smarts' in the project delivery process.

Implementing a staged conversion of a large CBD building from an aging dual duct air conditioning system to a leading edge energy efficient chilled panel system presented a number of major technical and project management challenges to the design and installation teams on this project.

A strong partnering strategy fostered between the teams to deliver the Green Star outcomes required by the client has been instrumental in meeting these challenges and the success of the building's conversion.

A.G. Coombs' involvement with the project commenced during the design process, with the provision of facade pressurisation tests to determine the air tightness of the facade; an important determinate in relation to the design of the chilled beam system and the ultimate energy performance of the building. A special test rig developed by A.G. Coombs provided variable pressure and air flow to a sealed section of a typical floor. Testing to demanding international protocols and standards provided critical information to support the decision to implement the chilled panel solution for the building.

The testing required close collaboration between the designers and A.G. Coombs and is believed to be the first time such testing has been carried out in Australia to these protocols.

Once in construction, the initial installation of the chilled panels was optimised for performance and constructability and a comprehensive commissioning strategy based on CIBSE guidelines was implemented to achieve the stringent Green Star outcomes. This process was reliant on a close working relationship between the designers and A.G. Coombs engineering and commissioning teams and will continue through each stage of the project to the



HVAC – WHAT'S DRIVING THE FUTURE?

final hand-over, when the system will have been optimised through a 12 month tuning process. Early resolution of a number of design, installation and commissioning details have provided benefits to the team and ultimately a better outcome for the client and future tenants.

A key insight from the Green Star approach has been that resources are refocused to bring commissioning forward to fully integrate with the project delivery process. The benefit of this approach is that site resources are utilised more effectively and costly wastage and abortive works are reduced, offering a significant opportunity to reduce total costs.

Another attribute of the process is the creation of a knowledge-base, progressively capturing and integrating important information from the system design, installation and performance tuning phases. This will be a key resource supporting not only the efficient operation and maintenance of the system, but also ongoing enhancements and performance optimisation.

500 Collins Street in many respects sets the benchmark for major CBD building refurbishments and demonstrates the intrinsic value that the Green Star approach can bring to a project team through smarter project delivery strategies.

The provision of air conditioning to buildings has become a complex business. Simple systems to provide heating and ventilation have evolved into the sophisticated Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) technology that we know today, but what is driving change in the future and how will it affect these systems?

The drive to sustainability and energy efficiencies, together with significant cost increases for energy and in particular electricity and supply capacity shortfalls during peak loads, will provide much stronger justification for a range of technologies. These include various heat recovery methodologies, thermal storage options, the increased adoption of gas fired technologies including cogeneration and combined energy plants, decentralised power and thermal plants and load shedding arrangements. Plans for mandatory externally initiated load shedding of HVAC plant are already under consideration.

The pursuit of energy efficiency will see advanced glass technologies developed to substantially reduce external thermal loads. Trends in IT developments see a move back to centralised server environments, and coupled with the move to LCD screens, will reduce overall internal heat loads. Both these effects will reduce HVAC plant sizes.

Water consumption by cooling towers is coming under increasing scrutiny and will demand more efficient and better managed systems.

Indoor amenity paradigms will change; allowing the temperature to float in a range of 19 to 24 degrees will result in reduced energy consumption. Paradoxically, the demand for improvements in indoor air quality and the increased use of outside air will require HVAC systems to become more sophisticated to ensure internal conditions are consistently acceptable and operating costs and energy consumption reduce.

The significant escalation in installation costs, (with the overall air conditioning cost component of a new buildings increasing in the order of 8–10% in the last two years), is increasing the pressure for further efficiencies in how systems are designed, installed and commissioned.

Real and perceived threats from terrorism are already changing the way buildings are viewed and it is now a consideration in the design of HVAC systems, with air intake locations and filtration systems under scrutiny.

Overall sustainability will continue to be the biggest influencer of change. Market demand for low environmental impact and better quality buildings is growing strongly. Plant sizes will reduce over time as building envelope efficiency improves and internal loads reduce, tighter regulatory obligations will drive change and in response to this innovative technology solutions will prosper. Systems will become more complex and costly and they will be required to be better designed, installed and commissioned, and monitored and maintained.

All in all – interesting times ahead!



A.G. COOMBS AT COUNCIL HOUSE 2

Designed to be Australia's first certified 6 Star commercial office building under the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) Green Star Program, Council House 2 (CH2) is a world class test bed for new thinking and technologies.

As Independent Commissioning Agent (ICA), A.G. Coombs were able to develop the Green Star commissioning role and provide the project team with valuable guidance through the complex commissioning process for the project.

Whilst GBCA 5 Star indicates current Australian best design practice, 6 Star represents world best practice. To achieve this 6 Star status CH2 incorporates a range of proven sustainable design technologies as well as a number of innovative, leading edge design features including chilled beam systems, phase change thermal storage, wind turbine relief air/power systems, micro-turbine cogeneration systems, shower towers and black water sewer mining.

While these technologies, combined with the building's impressive architecture, are likely to ensure CH2 becomes an iconic building in the global drive towards a sustainable built environment, it is worth noting that the underlying aim of the building is to contribute toward the knowledge of the potential of these new technologies.

Green Star places considerable emphasis on the importance of commissioning as it sees commissioning as the key determinate of a range performance outcomes for the building, including energy consumption and CO₂ emissions, indoor air quality and thermal comfort conditions.

The objective of the Independent Commissioning Agent is to, 'provide independent commissioning advice to the client and the design team and to monitor and verify the commissioning of HVAC and building control systems'.

Appointed to the role of ICA shortly after the award of the construction to Hansen Yuncken, A.G. Coombs' role included:

- Provision of commissioning workshops reviewing the requirements of the CIBSE and ASHRAE guidelines, the requirements of commissioning management plans and Inspection Test Plans (ITPs).
- Development of generic guidelines for commissioning management plans and ITPs.
- Assistance with the development of the system integration ITPs.

- Review of commissioning submissions and provision of guidance to the construction team.
- Provision of independent reports to Melbourne City Council on the status of the commissioning activities.
- Review of the maintenance and operating manuals.

With A.G. Coombs' guidance, the project has now been successfully commissioned and placed into service, overcoming a number of technical challenges presented by the innovative technologies. An extensive tuning, testing and evaluation regime will now commence, enhancing and monitoring the performance of the building over the next 12 months to determine the value of the design concepts and new technologies incorporated in the building, providing a unique opportunity to verify a range of sustainable design strategies for the 21st century.

A.G. Coombs, through its demonstrated capabilities and Green Star registered professional engineers and commissioning technicians, is securing an increasing number of projects with Green Star requirements and are proud to be making a valuable industry contribution to the creation of sustainable built environments which minimise global warming impacts and create better, healthier working environments.



THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PROPERTY GROUP

The Victorian Government Property Group (VGPG) portfolio encompasses some 526,000 square metres of State Government occupied buildings. Located throughout Victoria, the portfolio is made up primarily of office accommodation and is a mix of owned and occupied, and leased properties. It includes regional government offices in major country towns such as Mildura, Horsham, Ballarat, Geelong and Shepparton, as well as a range of Melbourne CBD buildings including the principal State Government offices at the top of Collins Street. This area known as the Treasury Reserve, serves as the administrative centre for the Government of Victoria and accommodates the Premier and a number of Government Ministers and their departments. It also includes some of Melbourne's finest examples of the grand public buildings erected during the Victorian gold rush period, including the Old Treasury Building (built 1858–62) and 2 Treasury Place (commenced in 1859, completed 1876).

Jones Lang LaSalle are Facility Managers for the VGPG portfolio and as part of their Integrated Facility Management approach, they cover all the property financial, leasing and maintenance needs of the Government client. The JLL Facility Management team is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the 24 Government owned buildings from an

owner's perspective and as many of these buildings have heritage listing, ensuring that repairs or upgrades comply with stringent heritage classification requirements.

A.G. Coombs and Walker Fire Protection provide air conditioning and fire protection services, including after hours support to the Treasury Reserve and the other State owned and occupied VGPG premises throughout Victoria. They work closely with the JLL team to ensure the buildings systems are optimal; provide the required amenity to their Government occupants and do this as efficiently as possible; and that the buildings' safety systems are functioning. A.G. Coombs take a proactive and continuous improvement approach to improving the buildings' services, identifying and rectifying the causes of potential problems before there is an issue. Since the inception of the contract, occupant complaints associated with air conditioning have reduced markedly. The Treasury Reserve in particular is supported with a resident on-site team of trade specialists with 24/7 support. A stringent Essential Safety Measures management regime is also applied that includes a comprehensive and regular auditing system to assure the JLL Facility Management Team and the buildings' occupants of their safety.



The contract is now in its third year and A.G. Coombs are consistently meeting target performance levels for responsiveness and service. Said Jones Lang LaSalle VGPG Senior Facility Manager, David Morrison; "We view the whole process with A.G. Coombs as a very good partnership relationship."

A partnership relationship that will no doubt, ensure that these Victorian Government heritage listed buildings will be available for the use and amenity of all Victorians for many years to come.



JOHN GORTON BUILDING CANBERRA, A.G. COOMBS AND INTEGRATED TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT

It seems appropriate that the current home of the Department of Environment and Heritage should be named after John Gorton, the Australian Prime Minister who established the first Commonwealth Office of the Environment in 1970. Formerly called the Administrative Building, it was renamed in 1999 following the completion of a comprehensive refit. The brief for the refurbishment was to balance environmental concerns within the constraints of the building's heritage status, budgetary constraints and how staff would use the office space.

The original Administrative Building was part of Walter Burley Griffin's concept of the Parliamentary Triangle of significant public buildings integrated into a sweeping landscape vista. The Administrative Building sits on an axis, balancing the Treasury Building to its side and Parliament House at the triangle's apex. Like most public buildings designed in its time, it has a distinctive if subdued classical exterior, reflected in a symmetrical facade with vertical elements, simple surface treatments, basic column forms and an expressed portico.

The building has an interesting history. The five storey office block, including basement and two upper floor plant rooms, was opened, without ceremony, in 1956 – some thirty years after it was originally designed. Early public service tenants included the Australian Secret Intelligence Service who had covered over the light wells and the Department of Trade and Foreign Affairs who converted the remaining light wells into filing space. The Commonwealth Office of the Environment was also first housed in the building.

The building was closed in 1996 for a complete refurbishment. Because it was a building of significant heritage value, the classical exterior was retained; however the dark and sombre interior was demolished

and rebuilt along with the building services to meet modern standards for office accommodation, with a strong emphasis on reducing the building's environmental impact.

Environmental best practice initiatives at the time included:

- Reconfiguration of the air conditioning systems to provide a high proportion of fresh air and achieve significant energy savings. Air conditioning in various areas can be operated manually when the rooms are in use.
- Improved natural light – debris and roofing was removed from the large light shafts, allowing the natural light back into the office areas as was originally intended.
- High efficiency lighting systems, better output without increased energy costs. Dimmable high-frequency ballasts in the light fittings maintain correct ambient lighting levels. Fluorescent downlights used instead of dichroic light fittings. Movement detectors ensure lights are switched off in areas used infrequently, such as conference rooms and storerooms.
- The grey water from kitchens and break-out spaces is recycled and used to irrigate external landscaping. The cost of installation was offset by the reduced cost of providing traditional drainage.





The base building refurbishment also includes a water management system that reduces consumption. At the time it was one of the first such installations of its type in a commercial building in Australia.

■ Over half the concrete removed was recycled along with nearly three quarters of all glass, most of the carpet and 10 tonnes of timber.

■ The environmental impacts of all proposed products were assessed according to the manufacturing process, including wastage and energy consumption, as well as the installed environmental impacts. Final finishes and materials include:

- non-toxic, water-based paints and enamels for walls, doors and timber joinery,
- fabrics derived from natural fibres,
- using non-toxic dyes for workstation screens, and
- sheet marmoleum, a material produced from natural ingredients, in tea areas and equipment rooms.

Forest products, a feature of the building, were sourced only from areas covered by regional forest agreements.

The Department of Finance and Administration, who were responsible for the contracts, configured the tender so that as part of the refit, building services were

integrated into one package and let as a single entity. The Department also had a vested interest in ensuring the new building operated efficiently and effectively, since it was to be the other tenant in the refurbished building.

Although the building services package included mechanical, electrical and fire services, lifts and hydraulics, the Department wanted to achieve fully integrated services in the building, and wanted a single building services contractor instead of three or four sub-contractors. The end objective was to overcome any building defects and have a building that functioned correctly from day one.

A.G. Coombs formed the OCW Admin Services Joint Venture consortium with Grinnell Asia Pacific and were awarded the contract for the design, construction and commissioning of the building services. OCW sub-contracted the work while providing project management and contract administrative services. Project Architects Daryl Jackson Alastair Swain praised the quality of the work, the reduction in overlap of trade work and commended the cost benefits of the integration of services approach.

The OCW consortium subsequently won and went on to successfully manage a separate contract for a five year, fully

comprehensive maintenance contract for the building services with A.G. Coombs playing a central and increasing role. The resulting refurbished building and its modernised and well maintained building services provides high quality office accommodation and is a showcase for greenhouse abatement in construction.

In 2003 A.G. Coombs formed Integrated Technical Management (ITM) to meet the growing need for high quality and fully integrated technical facilities management. ITM provides specialist technology and building services management that addresses the increasing sophistication and interdependence building systems and the challenges involved in meeting increasing performance, regulatory and environmental requirements.

The life cycle maintenance of all building services for both the John Gorton Building and the nearby Treasury Building was tendered in 2005 by United Group Services who are the Facility Managers on behalf of the Commonwealth. ITM now provides comprehensive building services requirements for both buildings with their resident site managers and specialist trades teams ensuring the quality of the indoor environment and compliance with regulatory and environmental standards.



FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND ESD

Fire Protection Systems are one aspect of building services that hasn't been adequately explored with respect to sustainability. Walker Fire Protection is actively promoting sustainability initiatives to the building industry.

In the increasing effort to reduce the environmental impact of buildings, the effect that fire protection systems have has been largely overlooked to date. There is significant opportunity to reduce the amount of water they use over their life and to substantially lessen the extent of materials and other environmental impacts required for their installation and ownership.

Water savings

Fire pumps can be configured to incorporate either a recirculating test water tank or discharge test water to grey water recycle system to minimise the amount of water lost during testing.



Sprinkler system drain down arrangements can also be made to drain to grey water storage systems where this is installed to reclaim water usually lost when systems are modified. Alternatively sprinkler system drain down valves can be installed in existing buildings to allow the isolation and drain down of systems on a floor by floor basis, or by zones for larger floor plates to reduce the amount of water lost. This can also reduce the time and cost involved in modifications.

Materials

There are opportunities to use materials that are less detrimental to the environment.

Where possible: reduce the use of PVC sheathed cables and incorporate cables sheathed in low halogen type materials; limit or preclude the use of chromium plated sprinkler heads and incorporate natural brass or painted finish sprinkler heads; limit the use of galvanised pipework in exposed systems, replace with pipe finished with low environmental impact paint and limit or preclude the use of ionisation detectors and use alternative photoelectric types if allowed by code.

And there are opportunities to reduce the quantity of materials installed and thus reduce the embodied energy required for the installation.

Sprinkler head relocates and additions are a common requirement in tenancy changes. Where possible consider the design of the space, matching sprinkler layouts to architectural grids and other relevant building features. Alternatively, providing blanked connections for future provisions can result in a system that requires less modification and result in a reduced environmental impact in the future. Consider a flexible sprinkler dropper system to make the system more adaptable to meet future tenancy layout requirements and minimise the amount of rework. Consider combining the pipe work elements of the sprinkler and fire hydrant systems into a common reticulation and thereby reduce the extent of pipe work installation.

Whilst this may not be an exhaustive list of the possible fire systems sustainability initiatives, it does outline considerable opportunity to lessen the environmental impact of the installation and ownership of these systems. All it requires is a little thought.



A.G. COOMBS AND SAFETYMAP



The well being of employees is extremely important to A.G. Coombs and as a result occupational health and safety is a major focus at all levels within the Group.

A.G. Coombs is one of the few organisations in the building services industry currently SafetyMAP accredited. SafetyMAP is a rigorous safety best practise quality assurance system applied by the Victorian Government's WorkSafe organisation. It requires adherence to highly demanding occupational health and safety standards and is subject to regular and independent auditing.

While A.G. Coombs has always had a culture of 'safety first' for all, around nine years ago and in response to broader safety concerns within the building and construction industry, Managing Director Russell Telford, with senior management and supported by the A.G. Coombs Board, instituted a formalised and continual process for evaluating their health and safety management processes.

Rather than call in outside consultants who would make their recommendations and leave, the management team, with support of the Safety Committee, decided that if these safety processes were to become an intrinsic part of A.G. Coombs' culture, they would have to take personal responsibility and solicit employee involvement in the strategy.

The Safety Committee then initiated a self assessment against the SafetyMAP criteria to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system and together with staff input and involvement, formulated a plan for the

achievement of accreditation and the ongoing improvement of the program.

A.G. Coombs has been SafetyMAP accredited since October 2000 and since that time their commitment to work place safety and the strength of their OH&S systems has achieved industry recognition as winners of the Master Builders Australia Excellence Award in Health and Safety in 2001, 2002 and 2003 and finalists in 2004.

A.G. Coombs Pty Ltd is now facing its third round of WorkSafe accreditation. There is a full audit every three years, with partial audits and checking conducted in the interim period. These audits ensure that A.G. Coombs not only demonstrate maintenance of their current level of safety, but that the Group has kept pace with the standards.

Russell Telford and the senior management team, together with strong employee involvement, are actively engaged in ensuring these safety standards are implemented and maintained throughout the Group and that safety remains an integral component of A.G. Coombs' culture and practice.

A SafetyMAP certified Organisation





A.G. COOMBS GROUP: AN APPRENTICE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

A.G. Coombs Pty Ltd was a winner of the Commonwealth Minister's Award for Excellence for Employers of Australian Apprentices 2006 (Melbourne Region) recently when the Australian Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, the Hon Gary Hardgrave MP, presented the Awards in Sydney.

The A.G. Coombs Group operates a structured and comprehensive Apprenticeships Program which currently employs 31 apprentices, and is set to grow to 41 in 2007. The company strives to ensure that each apprentice makes the most of their training opportunities to become effective and capable tradespeople with a great future in the industry.

A.G. Coombs supervisors look after the career interests of all apprentices, providing support and mentoring in furthering their careers, while experienced tradespeople ensure the apprentices receive the best combination of formal on and off the job training and experience.

Said Apprentice Coordinator, Darren Martin "Underpinning our Apprenticeships Program is a strong company culture that embraces the development of people and their careers with apprenticeships as an important entry point to the company. Employing apprentices and providing them with career pathways, training plans and great experience ensures that we retain our staff and remain 'The place to work'. This award recognises our commitment to apprentices and their future".

ALLAN COOMBS TRAINING AWARD 2006

The 'Allan Coombs Training Award' was introduced in 2000 as a mark of respect for the company founder Allan Coombs. The award is presented to the trainee or apprentice who displays the most admirable characteristics that typify the company values.

This year 10 apprentices were nominated for the award from across the A.G. Coombs Group of Companies in trade areas including plumbing and gas fitting, refrigeration and air conditioning, drafting, and sprinkler fitting.

This year's winner is Gavin Mitchell, a second year apprentice Refrigeration Mechanic with A.G. Coombs Servicing. The judges commented that Gavin showed an outstanding level of commitment to his training, the development of trade and career skills and an ongoing contribution to various community and charity causes.



21 YEAR PRESENTATIONS

When A.G. Coombs' first apprentice, Jim Barr, achieved 21 years of service in 1968, company founder Allan Coombs presented Jim with a gold watch. Three years later Allan presented watches to Bill Moseley and Gerald Carter for their 21 years of service and the tradition was born.

Joining the '21 Year Group' this year is: Bernie Kolber, Tom Norton, Paul Oakes, Janet Tillig and John Van Dieman.

The statistics speak for themselves: since 1968 there have been 109 recipients, 39 of these are still with the company, and 42 of the recipients commenced as apprentices, of which 24 are still with the company, demonstrating the strong company commitment to apprentices, training and staff development.

A.G. Coombs – the place to work'.



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