

ISSUE

**14**

SPRING 11

HIGGINS GROUP NEWSLETTER



# GREEN CREDENTIALS – ISO 14001

Higgins Contracting is currently working towards certification to the internationally recognised environment standard ISO 14001.

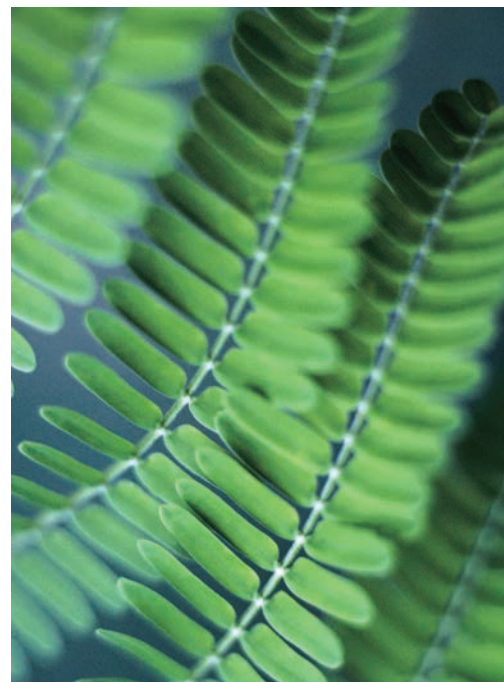
Customers today are increasingly seeking proof that contractors can deliver high standards of environmental control and procedures. Our current environmental systems are strong, however certification to a recognisable standard gives our systems greater credibility and shows our commitment towards protecting our environment and keeping New Zealand clean and green. Accreditation to 14001 also supports our commitment to our Higgins company values of 'Clean & Green' and 'Respect & Integrity'.

At this stage we are seeking certification only in our Contracting workplaces. Expansion into other operating environments such as Concrete and Aggregates will be evaluated into the future.

Over the past few months a Higgins team has been working on an

Environmental Management Plan for Higgins Contracting operations which will form a foundation to implement the systems required. During October and November our operations in Wellington, Levin, Masterton, Waikato, Auckland and Group will undergo certification audits. Once completed, certification will be issued. The remaining contracting operations will be audited early 2012.

How can you assist? During the external audits, the auditor will be visiting worksites and may ask you questions about various environmental controls that are sometimes part of your daily activities – spill control, protection of waterways, keeping site entrances clean, noise control, etc... If you are unsure about these please ask your Manager/Supervisor for information.



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## From the Top

It has been an exciting, but in some cases frustrating past few weeks. We've had the hype of the Rugby World Cup and the 'Stadium of four million' excitement, but in some cases the tournament has impacted on work flows and deferred some contracts.

Higgins have been successful with the purchase of the Baldwin Quarry business and assets from the Receiver of the Quarry. This is an exciting opportunity for Higgins. We look forward to working with the staff who have joined us from Baldwins; but we feel the frustration of the previous owner through the hardship they have endured.

The earthquake disasters in Canterbury continue to impact on the people closely affected by these events and now also impacts us all in terms of the economic impact and insurance related costs. The environmental disaster caused by the grounding of 'Rena' off the coast of Tauranga, will surely have a significant impact on many in the Bay of Plenty area, as well as the wider New Zealand.

In adversity, as in good times, it is always better when we pull together, support each other, and focus on achieving agreed outcomes for the good of all. The last few weeks have been a bit like this, and I sense that we are supporting each other and pulling together in an effort to do what we can to help achieve a shared vision.

As I write this we are about to play the French in the RWC final - "Go the All Blacks".



Bernard Higgins

## TRUCKLOADS OF EXPERIENCE

Five people have a total of 129 years combined service in the Levin operation. Manager Owen Bonis reflects that it's a huge amount of experience in a team of just twenty.

Long service Levin staff members include Corran Taylor who recently celebrated 40 years with Higgins. He's been driving trucks for Higgins since 1971. Mike (Snuff) Morgan has been with the team since February 1975. Mike has always been in drainage work and Owen says "he's the ideal person to get right into it – or up to it!" Paul Armstrong has been the work shop foreman for 27 years starting in June 1984. His son Dean also works for Higgins as well as his grandson Shaun. His granddaughter Gemma also works at Group Office in Palmerston North. Arne Jansson is Levin's aggregate crusher operator who started with the business in August 1971. Owen said he went off and did some farming, came back for another

few years, went off again to do something he wanted to do and came back again Jan 2001. Wayne Morley (missing from the photo) now works for Higgins Taupo. Wayne started with Higgins Levin in June 1973.

Owen says the total experience would be even higher if recently retired truck driver Murray MacFarlane was included in the total. Murray started with the business in the late sixties (when owned by Collier Contracting). It's hard to put his finger on exactly why staff enjoy working at Higgins Owen says, but he believes it's probably a reflection of the tight knit nature of the Levin team and the positive traditional values of the company.



LEFT TO RIGHT: MURRAY MACFARLANE, ARNE JANSSON, CORRAN TAYLOR, MIKE MORGAN, PAUL ARMSTRONG.

## Out and about

Feilding maintenance crew member Joe Patelesio in the recent snow.

Love the skis!



## QUARRY JOINS HIGGINS GROUP

A new quarry operation joins the Higgins family of companies from 10 October 2011.

Baldwins Quarry is located about 10 kilometres east of Meremere and 10 kilometres west of Maramarua in northern Waikato. The quarry supplies a wide range of product including quality aggregates with a high polished stone value. A new company has

been formed to operate the quarry, Baldwins Aggregates Limited, which is fully owned by Higgins Group Holdings Limited. The business will continue to be managed by current staff and we welcome them to the Green Team.

## MHX TAKES ROADING NEW ZEALAND AWARD

At the recent annual Roothing New Zealand Awards, representatives of the MHX Alliance (of which Higgins Contractors are a member) received the Z Energy Excellence Award: Major Road Project. Congratulations!

The Major Road Project category is for projects over 25 million dollars. The award is in recognition of outstanding delivery of a project demonstrating leadership, excellence and best practice within the industry.

Competition head judge Dr Robin Dunlop said the standard of entries

continues to impress each year. "As the industry evolves and the economic climate changes, it is reassuring to see those involved in roading remain committed to achieving excellence and to embracing innovative ideas and demonstrating real leadership."



LEFT TO RIGHT: MATT STURGE (BECA), ALEX PARFITT (FLETCHER), STUART TUCKER (BECA), DAVE JEWELL (FLETCHER), MIKE BENNETTS (Z ENERGY), ANDREW ROSE, MARCUS LIN, HELEN COOK (FLETCHER), GRANT HIGGINS AND TRANSPORT MINISTER THE HONOURABLE STEVEN JOYCE.

## Long Service congratulations

On the 24th July 2011 **Bob Morris** completed 50 years of service with Belspray Asphalts Limited, a business which was purchased by Higgins in 1972. Located in Napier, the business is now called Higgins Bitumen – Manufacturing.



Bob knows bitumen – Bob's whole 50 years have been spent with bitumen and bitumen products and nothing else. For many years now, Bob has managed the manufacturing operation of Higgins Bitumen Emulsions. 'He's made an outstanding contribution to the suite of reliable products Higgins make' says Group Bitumen Manager Allan Tuck. "This role is tailor made for Bob as he brings to the role an enormous amount of experience not only in bitumen technology but also his many years involved in sealing".

Bob says he's enjoyed working with all staff and clients both past and present. A few were hard doers, but he has enjoyed them too.

**Corran Taylor** recently celebrated 40 years with the business. Based out of Higgins Contractors Levin, he's been driving trucks since 1971.



Corran started out with Collier Contractors before Higgins bought into the business in 1977. He said he's always been keen to drive anywhere and over the years he's worked extensively all over the North Island. He says "Shane (Higgins) just rings me up and tells me where he wants me to be". He also says "I was Napier's third truck for 20 years". Now he spends 95% of his time working for Higgins Palmerston North.

Corran says he started out driving Bedford trucks and graduated to Commer trucks then D800 and D1000, Isuzu, Ford, Mack, Hino and then Isuzu's again. He says his favourite truck would be the Isuzu due to its quietness.

To Corran, when you're working at Higgins, it's like being a part of a family – "there's a lot of people that have been here a long time".

## EXTENDED GORGE CLOSURE

The Manawatu Gorge is a dramatic looking, winding stretch of state highway which snakes through the Tararua ranges. Whilst it is the quickest route east/west through the Tararuas, it is known for slips.

Higgins Contractors Palmerston North is responsible for the maintenance of the Manawatu Gorge on behalf of NZTA. After wet weather, on the 18 August 2011 a major slip occurred. Since then on-going landslides at this slip have meant the road continues to be closed.

Higgins crews worked long hours to clear the initial slip which included clearing and transporting out of the Gorge more than 12,000 cubic metres of rock and debris. The whole team who have worked extremely hard on the initial slip and ongoing landslides. Well done to the guys who scaled the hillside at dizzy heights to remove debris.

Mr McGonigal NZTA regional state highways manager talking about our team is quoted as saying "It's frustrating for them, to slog all day clearing the road only to have more dirt come down overnight, and they deserve a big pat on the back for working so hard in difficult conditions."

To date the slip has been the longest closure of the road since 2004 where the road was closed for 70 days. Alternative

routes of the Pahiatua Track and the Saddle Road are open for motorists but unfortunately these are longer routes. Mr McGonigal said the safety of motorists is paramount, and the highway would remain

closed until the debris was removed, a geological assessment was complete, and hillside is stabilised.

BELOW: THE 28TH AUGUST 2011 SLIP



### 'Spot the Digger?'

The 18th August slip covered the road and a Higgins digger which had been working at the site at the time. The operator saw the slip coming and moved away from the machine - taking action to ensure traffic was stopped.

Underneath a pile of debris, the digger engine continued to run. In this photo you can just see a plume of exhaust smoke rising from the debris.

## TARAWERA AREA WIDE ROAD TREATMENT

Higgins Contractors Napier has been working on a project to cut a cliff face in a section of road at Tarawera. The road is being retreated into the hillside to avoid a road drop out which has occurred on the opposite side of the road.

To date the project has had its share of interesting challenges. Extended periods of extreme cold, resulted in snow blocking the SH5 Tarawera road between Taupo and Napier three times and made for some very chilly days for traffic controllers. A steep cliff face meant the Excavator couldn't get to the cliff top by going up the cliff face. Instead access was achieved by cutting a track through bush around the back of the hill. Fuel for the vehicle had to be carried up the track by hand in 20L containers.

The job itself involved a 40 metre high cut down of the cliff face to road level, with a steep face angle of 4 to 1. To date a total 13000m<sup>3</sup> of pumice, 5500m<sup>3</sup> of rotten rock

and 1500m<sup>3</sup> of solid rock has been removed from the site. The project is not complete as there has been reoccurring slips at the batter face. Opus is now considering further cut backs from the top to reduce the angle of the cut face.



## Congratulations

Every day Green team members across the country are representing Higgins with great professionalism. It's not often we get feedback though, so when we got this letter, we thought we'd share it with you.

*"I would like to take the time to thank your employees Bill, Russell and I'm sorry I do not know the name of the other gentleman for a professional job on tar sealing my driveway at the above address.*

*I think here in New Zealand we are very critical of people in the service industry, but slow to praise people for excellent service. Your staff have a good sense of humour, provide sound advice and solutions to potential problems i.e. water flooding and ways to mitigate it. These guys go beyond what is expected from them as employees and are a credit to the company they represent.*

*I hope you take the time to formally thank your staff for their professionalism, punctuality and their high standard of work.*

*Regards  
Michael Gutry"*

Congratulations to Higgins Contractors Palmerston North team members Bill Candish, Sean Anderson and Russell Harris.

## REFRESHED HIGGINS WEBSITE

Check out the new look and features contained within the Higgins website at [www.higgins.co.nz](http://www.higgins.co.nz)





## WAIRARAPA MITRE10 MEGA

After years of speculation, Mitre 10 Mega was given the green light to build a new Mega store in Masterton. Oldfields Wairarapa commenced a contract in April this year to a tight works programme associated with a mid-October ‘opening’.

Six months sounds like enough time, reports Wayne Pocock, but the quantity of work was huge with 16,600m<sup>2</sup> of bulk excavations; 6,500m<sup>2</sup> of foundation work / floor preparation ; preparation and construction of a 10,130m<sup>2</sup> outdoor yard/car park area. Hardfill carted in from Oldfields’ aggregates operations located close by included 5,400m<sup>3</sup> of subbase metal and 2,100m<sup>3</sup> of crushed basecourse.

Drainage construction consisted of four large ground soak pits each 90m<sup>3</sup> and 3.6 meters deep. The four soak pits connect to a large overflow soak pit 360m<sup>3</sup> in size. In total 620 meters of PVC piping was trenched, installed and connected. Oldfields was also contracted to carry out just under 500 meters of trenching for all services.

After spraying a running coat over the whole car park, the Oldfields surfacing crew called in additional experience from our Wellington branch. The asphalt plant steamed away for three days producing 500 tonne of mix, in amongst servicing our other customers. The surfacing crew laid 6,500m<sup>2</sup> of paving and undertook some finishing work up against the concrete structures by hand. A laser, adapted by Peter Brunton from our Engineering Workshop, fitted to the paver, ensured the right thickness of mix was laid and pooling prevented.

But never a dull moment, once this contract is complete, Oldfields Wairarapa start works on a new all-weather athletics track and the construction of an international drag racing track.

## Blast from the Past

Bob Morris has just celebrated 50 years with the business and he tells us a bit about his work in those early days.

Bob Morris’s first experiences on the job 50 years ago included decanting bitumen drums (reseals) and No 1 British tar (1st coat) which arrived by rail and road. Each shipment was approximately 4000 drums. Each drum was slit at the top, turned over and heated above a kettle to supply the bulk tanks at the factory ready for transfer to road sprayers or tankers.

Before the 1980’s when contract sealing became popular amongst local bodies, the county and city local bodies managed reseal sites themselves. Belspray Bitumen supplied and sprayed only. Local bodies did the chipping and rolling.

Bob has always enjoyed producing and setting targets and even in the “good old days” they pushed the boundaries to achieve 40,000 litres in a typical day in Dannevirke county. He says they had to be self- reliant and unless a major breakdown occurred, they fixed any problem on site and got on with the job.

A day’s schedule for Bob would be:

- 3am start travel and load at Belspray Bulk at the Port of Napier
- Be on site and Spraying Waipawa or Dannevirke county by 7.30am
- Back in Napier 5.00pm to pump any residue into “slops tank”

In the early days when bitumen tanker units didn’t have heaters, any residue bitumen at the end of the day had to be pumped back into “slops tanks” before it went hard in the unit. Bob says “Each day you started with a completely fresh supply of bitumen from the bulk supply at the Port”. He says you started early and finished late to achieve the targets you were aiming for.

## WALL WINS PRAISE

Oldfields Nelson recently constructed a gabion basket retaining wall to underpin a major slip site for NZTA on SH6, 70 kms south of Nelson. The completed structure is 32 metres long and 5 metres high.

A total of 1200m<sup>3</sup> of earth was excavated from the site. The job also involved the excavation of the southbound lane to a depth of 5 metres, reducing the state highway to one lane. Over five weeks they constructed the vertical gabion basket wall in 0.5m basket lifts in which 800m<sup>3</sup> of reinforced earth backfill was required.

Oldfields Nelson Manager Andrew Murphy says "We managed to develop a process to complete the gabion basket wall based on a modified jig wall seen in a Higgins Palmerston North project. The jig and process hadn't been seen in the South Island and was of interest to NZTA and Opus. Upon completion Andrew says the wall exceeded the expectations of NZTA and Opus. They consider the new wall to be of a very high standard especially with relation to its vertical



## A PART OF OUR TEAM

Ian Stuart - a man who has played an important part in the development of Higgins for over 25 years, passed away on the 29th July after a period of illness. Ian was associated with the Higgins Board for 25 years in the capacity of Board advisor and in recent years as a Higgins Directors.

"He was a respected member of our Board team" says Sir Patrick Higgins. "Ian provided unerring support over the years. He is missed both as a Board member and as a friend".

As well as assisting the Higgins Board, Ian ran his own very successful Chartered Accountancy and Business Advisory company in Palmerston North. He was an active member of the NZ Institute of Chartered Accounts including periods as

NZICA Councillor and Executive Board Member, becoming a fellow in 1999.

Ian lived life to the full. His was a husband, father and grandfather, a passionate traveller and man who loved the outdoors. His outdoor interests included blowkarting, tramping and skiing. He was an inspiration to many. At 65, he passed too early – but he left an indelible mark on those who knew him.



IAN AT THE HIGGINS CELEBRATION OF 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS IN PALMERTON NORTH.



IAN WITH WIFE SANDRA. ON THIS DAY IAN WAS ALL GEARED UP TO TAKE A SPECIAL FLIGHT IN AN OLD HARVARD AIRCRAFT AT OHAKEA.

# CONTACTS

## HIGGINS GROUP HOLDINGS

Palmerston North  
420 Church Street  
Private Bag 11411  
Palmerston North 4442  
T: 06 357 1025 F: 06 357 8547

## HIGGINS CONTRACTORS

**Palmerston North**  
22 Roxburgh Crescent  
PO Box 5164  
Palmerston North 4441  
T: 06 357 1026 F: 06 350 0175

### Levin

48 Tararua Road  
PO Box 1020, Levin 5540  
T: 06 368 5528 F: 06 367 9155

### Hawkes Bay

Waitangi Road, Awatoto  
PO Box 421, Napier 4140  
T: 06 835 7288 F: 06 834 1599

### Wellington

40 Glover Street  
PO Box 13434, Johnsonville  
Wellington 6440  
T: 04 472 8460 F: 04 499 1176

### Taupo

780 Rakaunui Road  
PO Box 1488, Taupo 3351  
T: 07 376 9410 F: 07 376 9408

### Bay of Plenty

92 Hewletts Road  
PO Box 4473, Mt Maunganui South  
Bay of Plenty 3149  
T: 07 574 4100 F: 07 574 4101

### Waikato

50 Gallagher Drive  
Melville, Hamilton 3026  
PO Box 5357, Frankton  
Hamilton 3242  
T: 07 843 1790 F: 07 843 1792

### Auckland

Offenhauser Drive  
East Tamaki, PO Box 51-118  
Pakuranga, Auckland 2140  
T: 09 273 7300 F: 09 271 1245

### Projects Division

420 Church Street  
Private Bag 11411  
Palmerston North 4442  
T: 06 357 1025 F: 06 357 8547

## HIGGINS CONCRETE

420 Church Street  
Private Bag 11411  
Palmerston North 4442

### Plants:

**Palmerston North**  
Tip Road Awapuni  
Palmerston North  
T: 06 354 8044 F: 06 356 7806

### Feilding

Turners Road, Feilding  
T: 06 323 5855 F: 06 323 5879

### Porirua

5 Kinleith Grove, Porirua  
PO Box 50230  
Johnsonville, Wellington 6440

### Wellington

40 Glover Street, Wellington  
PO Box 50230  
Johnsonville, Wellington 6440  
T: 04 499 6622 F: 04 499 6628

### Masterton

State Highway 2  
Waingawa, Masterton  
PO Box 193, Masterton 5840  
T: 06 370 0566 F: 06 370 0570

### Nelson

86 Beach Road  
Richmond, Nelson  
PO Box 3166, Nelson 7020  
T: 03 544 0036 F: 03 544 0037

## HIGGINS AGGREGATES

420 Church Street  
Private Bag 11411  
Palmerston North 4442

### Plants:

Te Matai Road, Palmerston North  
T: 06 354 1081 F: 06 354 1083

Raukawa Road, Palmerston North  
T: 06 326 8333

Tip Road, Awapuni  
Palmerston North  
T: 06 357 9270 F: 06 357 9241

Tangimoana Road, Bulls  
T: 06 329 3868 F: 06 329 3869

Wilson Road, Sanson  
T: 06 329 3845 F: 06 329 3840

Roys Hill SH50, Hastings  
T: 06 874 9665 F: 06 874 9669

Ruahine Street, Paraparaumu  
T: 04 298 7046 F: 04 298 7046

## HIGGINS LABORATORIES

**Palmerston North**  
22 Roxburgh Crescent  
PO Box 5164, Terrace End  
Palmerston North 4441  
T: 06 351 6419 F: 06 350 0145

### Hawkes Bay

Waitangi Road, Awatoto  
PO Box 421, Napier 4140  
T: 06 834 1597 F: 06 834 1593

### Auckland

Offenhauser Drive  
East Tamaki, PO Box 51-118  
Pakuranga, Auckland 2140  
T: 09 273 7885 F: 09 273 9456

## OLDFIELD CONTRACTORS

**Wairarapa**  
State Highway 2  
Waingawa, Masterton  
PO Box 193, Masterton 5840  
T: 06 370 0444 F: 06 370 0570

### Wellington

191 Gracefield Road  
Seaview, Lower Hutt  
PO Box 38784, Lower Hutt 5045  
T: 04 568 2148 F: 04 568 7814

### Nelson

86-88 Beach Road  
Richmond, Nelson  
PO Box 3166, Nelson 7050  
T: 03 544 6111 F: 03 544 6117

## REX BISMAN CONTRACTORS

477 Kimbolton Road  
PO Box 373, Feilding 4740  
T: 06 323 8157 F: 06 323 8054

## BALDWINS AGGREGATES

Cnr Falls Rd & Island Block Rd,  
Meremere  
841 Coalfields Road,  
RD1 Pokeno 2471  
T: 09 232 5556 F: 09 232 5558

## ROAD MILLING

**Pavement Technology**  
Offenhauser Drive  
East Tamaki, PO Box 51-118  
Pakuranga, Auckland 2140  
T: 09 273 7880 F: 09 271 1245

## ROAD SIGNAGE

**Approach Signs**  
Ruahine Street, Paraparaumu 5032  
PO Box 207, Paraparaumu 5254  
T: 04 298 2981 F: 04 298 6635

## HIGGINS BITUMEN MANUFACTURING

**Hawkes Bay**  
26 Waitangi Road  
Awatoto, Napier 4110  
PO Box 421, Napier 4140  
T: 06 834 1589 F: 06 834 1594

## HIGGINS BITUMEN BULK

**Hawkes Bay**  
Napier Port, Breakwater Road,  
Napier 4140  
PO Box 421, Napier 4140  
T: 06 833 4510 F: 06 833 4531

## BITUMEN SPRAYERS & TANKERS

**Penny Engineering**  
109 Keith Street  
PO Box 752,  
Palmerston North 4440  
T: 06 358 0573 F: 06 358 0573

## PAVEMENTS ASPHALT

Horokiki Road, Petone  
PO Box 38037, Wellington 5045  
T: 04 568 7475 F: 04 566 8822