

# Timber Talk

## Tunncliffe's

### December 2012

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## Another Tough Year

It has been another tough year for the New Zealand building industry. Despite the optimistic forecasts last year we have not seen an improvement of any significance.

At Tunncliffe's we experienced a very slow start to the year, slower than in 2011 and we had to cut back in hours worked for 3 months. Fortunately enough we saw it come right again half way through the year, which overall brings us a result very similar to last year.



According to Statistics New Zealand building activity rose by 0.8% in the second quarter of this year telling us that the overall trend continues to rise from the 10-year low point in the September 2011 quarter. Data forwarded with regard to the building activity in New Zealand overall seems to be somewhat distorted by the number of building consents

issued in post-earthquake Canterbury. It is interesting to note that according to a Statistics New Zealand report that came out in August this year, the total value of building consents approved for the Canterbury region in the first half of 2012 was almost the same as all consents issued last year. A sobering question you could ask is where would the building industry have been at this point in time if we would not have had the earthquake?

It's always good to keep things in perspective. At least we are seeing some growth and we all know that the surge in building activity in Canterbury will start at some point soon with a lot of positive spin-off for the NZ economy. We still like to say that if we compare our situation in New Zealand with other parts of the world things could be a lot worse.

On a further positive note we have seen a steady increase on acceptance of our ThermoWood®230 products with the most popular products being the mullion and the large sections of clears for window sills on which more in an article below.

Managing Director Daan Olthuis gave a presentation on the Innovatek Wood Preservation Conference in Rotorua and Melbourne about our ThermoWood® developments since 2008. We have made the PowerPoint presentation available for download on our web page:

<http://www.tunncliffes.co.nz/thermowood/thermowood.htm>

Progress within CTS Ltd on designing and testing exterior timber joinery to include double glazing and meeting performance standard NZS 4211 has been slow again this year. Like in the previous two years the market situation has

## Christmas Break



At Tunncliffe's we finish the year on Thursday 20 December 2012, back in full swing on Monday 14 January 2013.

been such that the participating companies had to focus on their day to day business. It seems that we have to conclude that for real progress you need a buoyant market.

Our beehive box business is going strong as ever since 2003. This industry has been in a lift since and helped us with the downturn in other traditional markets. Sales have been record breaking despite two bad seasons in a row with poor honey production, mainly caused by bad weather in spring and early summer. We started off making the beehive box only but in the meantime we have been able to expand, offering other timber components such as bottom boards, feeders etc.

We would like to thank our customers for their support in 2012 and wish you all a safe and happy Christmas.

## 2013 Product Development

Tunncliffe's business model is to supply timber components to manufacturers offering solutions to reduce cost and increase efficiency on the work floor.

As the business landscape is ever changing, product development is ongoing and based on customer feedback.

Next in line for the joiners making exterior timber windows and doors Tunncliffe's will be focused on a new range of profiles to accommodate larger sash sizes with the increased demand for larger double glazing units. This development goes hand in hand with the increase of wall sizes with joiners often having to come up with wider jamb sizes.

# ThermoWood® 230 Window Sills

Along with the ThermoWood® mullion the large sections of solid ThermoWood® clears have been a real success as to a new product for the joiners producing exterior windows and doors. The ex 75mm clears available in widths 125 – 150 – 200 – 250 – 300mm, are mainly used for the large section sills as we know them in the traditional bungalows and villas. When these houses were built there was an abundance of large sections native timber from which the sills were made. Once these timbers became scares we generally had to fall back on chemically treated Radiata pine.



Large sections of H3.2 CCA or TanE treated Radiata pine, over 50mm thickness, are very hard to re-dry to make it a suitable product for joinery. You run the risk of using timber with “wet-core”, a phenomenon where the outside of the timber seems dry but internally it is not. Radiata not being a very stable timber this will cause movement of the sill over time, which can in turn cause major problems in the joinery. Alternatively we have been using finger-jointed and laminated sections to achieve a more stable product yet laminated timber over time, especially when not adequately painted and maintained, is often



seen as a compromise. Stability of the timber is a key factor for a sill product. ThermoWood®230 is twice as stable as traditional unmodified Radiata pine and therefore makes a good alternative.

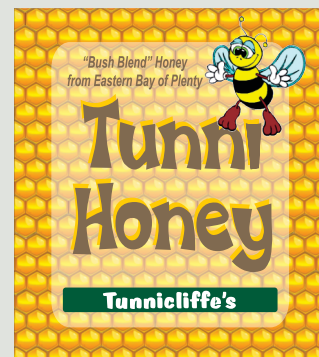
The durability has been researched and confirmed to be slightly better than H3.1 LOSP treated sapwood and Cypress Macrocarpa heartwood.



The finishing of the joinery, painting is a very important part of the durability the joinery. Therefore the “paint-ability” of the timber becomes a significant factor as well. During the thermal modification process all resin has been taken out by burning off. Resin is a conflicting compound with paint. Since all resin has been removed ThermoWood®230

## FREE Tunni Honey

We have run a free honey promotion once before and thought it was time to do so again. Give us a 'buzz' on 0800 657 934 from the start of next year and we will send a maximum of 2 pots per customer as long as our stock lasts.



## Our Pricing

We have seen the timber prices for radiata pine go up and down this year. Overall there has been less pressure when compared with the previous two years, which is helping in a weak market. However other costs such as labour, treatment, freight and energy keep increasing and are slowly catching up. We have chosen to maintain our pricing again this year, since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2010, considering the weak market but expect having to make some adjustment in the first half of 2013.

proves to have superior paint adhesion properties which make a firm contribution to the longevity of the joinery product.

# ThermoWood®

## Thermal Modification Technology

NZ grown Radiata pine is modified in a special chamber where it is exposed to temperatures up to 230 degrees Celsius in a computer controlled process. Steam is added to prevent the timber from combusting but also has an effect on the permanent chemical changes taking place in the timber.

The technology permanently changes the properties of the Radiata pine effectively turning it into a naturally durable timber species which can be compared with Western Red Cedar, Redwood and Cypress Macrocarpa.

**Durability** – In principle the durability is increased due to the fact that the edibles (sugar compounds), on which fungi live, have been taken out by burning off. Durability is scientifically tested by Scion (Forest Research)

and described to be slightly more durable than H3.1 LOSP treated Radiata pine sapwood and Cypress Macrocarpa heartwood.

**Stability** – The equilibrium moisture content (EMC) is reduced, which increases the dimensional stability of the timber as there is less swelling and shrinkage caused by moisture uptake / release.

Over a change of 65-90% Relative Humidity, ThermoWood®230 is twice as stable as unmodified kiln dried Pinus radiata.

**Appearance** – The process affects the timber uniformly, right through and darkens it towards an attractive chocolate brown colour.