



Delivering Solutions, Saving Property... Restoring Lives!

Restore & More

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Season's greetings

Steamatic has been dedicated over the past 12 months to ongoing development of consistency across the brand.

We know it is vital our clients receive the same level of operational efficiency, regardless of where they are across the country and which Steamatic branch is providing the service.

We're making excellent progress towards achieving our goals and many have commented that "we're on the right track".

During 2016, we'll continue implementing enhanced software that will improve contract management and compliance, while additionally providing a faster claim service rivalled by none.

The year will also see substantial geographical growth. Steamatic is well on the way to being Australia's first truly national restoration company.

Best wishes for the festive season to all our valued clients. We've enjoyed working with you in 2015 and look forward to partnering with you again in 2016. ■

Oliver Threlfall
CEO

Fire-damaged machine back in action

Steamatic has helped a Melbourne company avoid significant business interruption costs by cleaning and restoring a fire-damaged plastic extrusion machine.

An electrical fault sparked a fire in one of three machines operated by Hollowcore Plastics Extrusion Pty Ltd at its Campbellfield, Victoria, factory in September.

Its insurer was initially going to write off the machine, which meant the manufacturer would need to wait for an expensive replacement to be imported to Australia.

John Graham, CEO of Sydney-based electrical engineering consultancy Phase8, was called in. He told *Restore & More* there would be a four-to-six month delay for a replacement machine, but the damaged equipment was "definitely repairable".

The electrics were repaired and the motor rewired, then Steamatic was asked to restore, repaint and clean the machine. The solution was achieved for way less than the replacement cost and Hollowcore's potential business interruption loss was significantly reduced.

Mr Graham said the job was "a win-win for everyone". "It's a fantastic solution for the insurer, and the client is happy because the machine is much better than it was," he said.

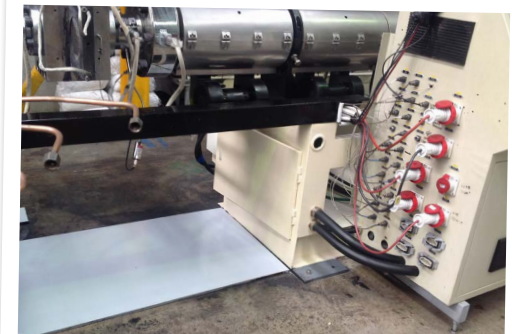
"It's a first-class restoration; really good."

Mr Graham selected Steamatic for the role because of the company's track record with him. "I know Steamatic can deliver," he said. "Some other companies will deliver what they think you want, not what you really want.

"I am very fussy and hard to please, but Steamatic work well with me."

Hollowcore manager Silvester Odoi said he was "100% happy with what Steamatic has done".

The damaged extrusion machine was one of three Hollowcore operates, but the third is predominantly recycling offcuts



and rejects so, with one machine out of action, the company's capacity was cut by almost 50%.

Hollowcore is a major supplier to the print industry of twin-wall, flat-sheet polypropylene substrate. The lightweight sheets are printed for retail promotional material and similar products.

Steamatic Assessment Manager Daniel Threlfall said the extrusion machine was now fully recommissioned. As *Restore & More* went to press, the machine's final testing was in progress. ■



Valuables unearthed

Most Steamatic crews are used to cleaning up homes occupied by hoarders.

But a job Tasmanian manager Tim Wolstenholme has worked on was something out of the ordinary.

The home, on a two-hectare rural block in north-west Tasmania, had been owned by a well-known arts identity who died last February in a house fire at another property.

He was aged 86 and had spent his lifetime collecting.

The man was an anthropologist and former museum director who had lived alone in the large, two-storey home. His collection was a testament to his varied interests and Tim estimates it is worth about \$1 million.

There were 5,000 individual items to catalogue, including 3,000 books. Artefacts included spears and masks from Papua New Guinea, a Peruvian jug containing ashes, and even a human skull. There were even hand-written letters from former Governor Sir George Arthur, who ruled the island state when it was still Van Diemen's Land.

"We had to sift through everything, because there were so many important documents," Tim said.

Steamatic's first task on site was to clear the overgrown bushes surrounding the home. Tim said that was the easy part.

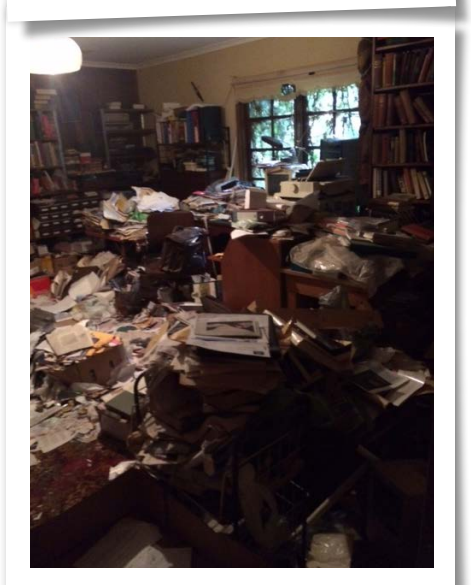
The team then began sorting through everything in the 11-room house. Some rooms were knee-deep in books and assorted artefacts.

Unfortunately, rats and mice had invaded the home, even chewing through books. An old fridge had died, but still contained rotten food.

It took four weeks to strip the contents, catalogue every item, and remove everything to storage in Devonport. The next step was decontaminating the home, stripping it out and repairing the interior.

"It was time consuming because we had to go through everything individually to determine if it was valuable," Tim said.

The former owner had no phone connection, but his collection included about 1,000 hand-written letters from his two children and the OBE he had been awarded for services to the arts. ■



Meth labs build business

Clean ups in homes that have been used as meth labs are becoming increasingly common for Steamatic crews.

National Marketing Manager Mark Silveira was quoted in an article in *The Australian* in October that outlined the hazard.

He said business was booming for cleaning companies across the nation after a rise in the number of meth labs unearthed in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

The costs of decontaminating properties sometimes reached \$100,000 and insurers often did not cover the cost.

"The big issue is that people don't understand the impact chemicals have when they walk into these places," he told *The Australian*. He cited instances where domestic cleaners had been engaged with devastating consequences as the invisible chemical residue still existed and poisoned the new residents.

Most methamphetamine labs were found in rental properties, but others had been discovered in hotels, caravans, and even motor vehicles, he said.

Clean-up crews may encounter booby-trapped properties, attack dogs and aggressive drug users looking for a hit, Mark said.

Under government guidelines, police must report properties to local councils after raiding meth labs. In the worst cases, houses had to be knocked down

Mark said in many cases reports were not followed through with appropriate action from councils and/or property managers as they were unsure what actions were needed. ■



The year as it was - Around the branches

Restore & More profiles activities for 2015 across New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania.

New South Wales

The East Coast lows during April gave the NSW branch 3½ years of work in only four weeks.

Branch Manager Steve Whelan said Steamatic dealt with about 4,500 insurance claims. The franchise network was also heavily involved in helping to get the work completed.

The branch had a major drying job at a retail showroom in Maitland, plus another three Sydney stores that sustained damage.

When a major hailstorm struck Sydney in August, many commercial premises in hardest-hit areas were flattened by the weight of hail caving in their roofs.

In the suburb of Huntingwood, a 10,000sq m DVD manufacturing facility was affected. The Steamatic team was confronted with a large loss inventory and a lot of structural drying to prevent mould damage. Steve said the work was still in progress and Steamatic had teamed up with a builder to get the facility back into operation.

Another Sydney project involved wrapping large parts of an international freight company's warehouse in plastic to dry affected contents. The project focused on reducing overall costs of restoring the damaged goods without interrupting activities in the main facility. The two areas wrapped were each 75m x 4m and 10m high.

Repair work following a fire in a key food outlet at Sydney's Central Station in September is still in progress. Click here for the *Sydney Morning Herald's* report. Steve said Steamatic had priced cleaning the kitchen exhaust fan before the fire and had warned the work required was urgent. He said the structural cleaning would take some time because the building was heritage listed. The Steamatic team is likely to be onsite with builders for six months.

Another Sydney fire clean up was at an Irish pub in Newtown. The large two-storey building has now re-opened after an electrical fire in a switchboard.

Steve said the NSW branch had been growing steadily over the past two years and was recruiting key people in its sales and operational teams. More loss adjusters, insurers and other clients were using the branch's services.

Victoria

Apart from preserving the world's largest sheep fleece (all will be revealed in the next issue of *Restore & More*), the Victorian branch has been busy completing more every day projects.

Victorian Manager Grant Griffin said Steamatic was now included on more insurer panels, which generated a steady stream of work, and there was growth in work with insurance builders conducting restoration projects.

With an increase in high-density accommodation in Melbourne, there has been a corresponding increase in work with owners' corporations, including cleanups following water and sewage spills.

Grant said Steamatic was also working with building contractors to get new sites up to scratch before handovers occurred.

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"We're getting more work from utility companies, particularly for sewage overflows and burst pipes," he said.

A heavy storm in November generated a lot of work for the team, particularly as damage occurred in Melbourne's high-end suburbs, like Toorak and South Yarra.

The Victorian branch has been engaged in more consulting work, including assisting with developing disaster management plans for companies and public sector entities.

For example, the team is helping the National Herbarium of Victoria at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria to prepare a disaster management plan.

The herbarium houses a valuable collection of about 1.5 million dried plant, algae and fungi specimens from all around the world. The majority of the collection is Australian, with a particular emphasis on the flora of Victoria.

Queensland

The November 2014 hailstorm that hit south-east Queensland was still generating work in 2015, as were further storms that occurred throughout the year.

At a high school, in Brisbane, Queensland Branch Manager Dan Clifton and his team had more than 100 boxes of paperwork to dry out after a May flood.

Dan and his team attended about 30 properties in Fernvale, west of Brisbane, after a storm ripped through the rural hamlet in October. Click here for the ABC news report.

Hail created considerable damage – windows were broken, leaving carpets sodden, and box gutters overflowing. Despite the huge workload, Dan and his team took only two days visit every premises.

Only days after the Fernvale storm, another storm hit Chinchilla on the Darling Downs. Click here for the ABC news report.

Again, Dan and his team were quickly on site to mop up on behalf of insurers and their insureds. Three vehicles and a team of four spent a week on the job there. Dan said every property in the town was affected to some degree.

A March outbreak of mould at a university library saw the Queensland team clean about 200,000 books across 5km of shelving. The job required 20 personnel for almost four weeks.

A vacant Brisbane CBD building was damaged by fire in June.

Although the building was unoccupied, office contents were damaged. The Steamatic team had to completely clean a 400sq m level where the fire occurred, including cleaning beneath a raised floor in a server room. The remaining seven floors also required stripping out and cleaning.

When floods affected a major retail outlet at Mt Isa, in far north Queensland, the Steamatic team drove for 30 hours from Brisbane to take a large dessicant dehumidifier to the site.

The 6,500 cubic feet per minute capacity equipment was able to get the store back in action 10 days after the flood. Water was one metre high in the 1,000sq m store at the height of the flood.

South Australia

Weather events contributed to a "flat to the boards" year for Steamatic in South Australia.

SA Managing Director David Macklin said 2015 kicked off with the Sampson Flat bushfires in the Adelaide Hills and the outer Adelaide metropolitan area. The fires began on January 2 during a day of extreme heat and lasted until January 9.

Steamatic was asked by insurers to validate contents where properties were destroyed; pack out properties ready for restoration; collate inventories; and conduct onsite cleaning and deodorising.

A September 1 fire in Adelaide's CBD severely damaged the Polites building and surrounding premises were affected by smoke and water contamination. Steamatic was called on to clean up many of the buildings.

While hailstorms are rare in Adelaide, September 16 was an exception. Many residential and commercial properties were damaged when a short but sharp downpour saw gutters blocked by torrential rain and hailstorms with subsequent floods. See the ABC report here.

"The entire industry was very busy over that time," David said.

His team was also busy with growing commercial cleaning work. "Our insurance industry expertise in cleaning, restoring and appraisals has won us a lot of commercial work," he said.

Steamatic SA has contracts with many aged care facilities and a large catering company and has been successful in winning several major carpet cleaning contracts.

David's proud to acknowledge that his team won the work on reputation and service.

Other projects during the year have included specialised services, like a hospital decontamination and remediation after a salmonella outbreak, and restoring a marble fireplace in an Adelaide historic home.

The fireplace was black with soot, but David and his team used Steamatic's latex adhesive product to get "amazing results".

Crime scene cleanups for the SA Police have been another growing area of work for the SA franchise.

Tasmania

In Tasmania, manager Tim Wolstenholme has seen an increase in insurance work and is seeking to expand his team's government work, including Housing Commission clean ups.

Major projects during the year included a Buddhist temple in Hobart that required a major mould restoration, water damage at homes and other premises, and clean ups at restaurants and other commercial premises after fires. ■



Before



After