



**Delivering Solutions, Saving Property... Restoring Lives!**

# Restore & More

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## A word from the top ...

### The Steamatic team from around Australia gathered on the Gold Coast in October for our biennial conference.

The focus for franchisees and corporate office employees was on practice not theory. In particular, we heard the voice of reason on mould. Insurance claims for mould contamination have become a major problem and Steamatic is committed to working with customers to offer fair and equitable solutions based on fact not fiction.

"Mould is gold" has become the mantra as mould restoration trainers and companies sprout like mushrooms in dark, damp dungeons. The number of claims for mould damage has increased in Australia on the back of this slogan.

At Steamatic, we don't embrace the mantra. We ensure compliance and consistency across all claims. Often mould is pre-existing or unrelated to the proximate cause.

We manage claims in a reasonable manner – everything must be justifiable and event driven.

### Storm clouds gather

As the storm season approaches, we're geared up ready for any major bad weather events.

Sky News Weather has released its Severe Weather Outlook 2016/2017, which forecasts another hotter-than-average weather season with an increased risk of

severe thunderstorms, rain and cyclones.

Higgins Storm Chasing predicts 13 tropical cyclones in Australia this summer.

We have learnt from our vast experience managing 4,500 claims during last year's East Coast lows to be even better prepared for storms.

Our Steamatic proprietary software, National Inquiry System, enables instant, real-time, in-the-field reporting so we can successfully manage the anticipated large volumes of claims.

We're also working with insurers to enhance and refine our system to streamline B2B capabilities.

### Footprint grows

This year Steamatic has expanded, particularly in Tasmania, where we opened a factory in the island state's capital, Hobart, adding to our existing north-west coast capabilities.

The Adelaide office, after more than 15 years as a franchise, is now company owned and David Macklin will progressively hand back the reins after years of dedication to our customers and the Steamatic brand.

The move is in line with Steamatic's corporate philosophy and strategic model of owning the capital-intensive, key sites in major cities, thereby enabling franchisees in regional centres to access equipment when required.

As the business continues to grow, a key focus is on the more intensive specialist skills of our personnel. They are available

to move around the country, so we are better resourced for major cleanups like the regional NSW creek contamination that followed a warehouse fire (see page 2).

The project management skills we gleaned in successfully rehabilitating the creek and cleaning the drains have been refined and further honed for use on other hazchem projects as this division further expands Steamatic's capabilities.

Training is a vital and iterative component of the way we conduct business at Steamatic. The better skilled we are, the more we can assist our clients in their times of need.

### Season's greetings

The storm season also heralds the festive season, so best wishes to all for safe and happy holidays. ■

**Oliver Threlfall**  
CEO



## Overnight clean for cash

### When a bank in Melbourne's south-east was badly damaged in a fire, the key priority was injured staff and customers.

The bank's next commitment was to restore ATM access for residents.

Its four ATMs that front the busy road outside the branch were badly damaged and the bank called in Steamatic, in association with technical consultant Tim

Cousins & Associates, to clean them.

Amrish Patel, Steamatic's lead technology supervisor who project managed the cleanup, relates what happened. "The bank's project manager asked me when we could clean the ATMs and I asked him 'when do you want them done by?' He said by 7am the next day and I said 'yes we will deliver that'. All the stakeholders looked at me in surprise, but I told them 'this is the way Steamatic works in emergencies'."

And Amrish was right. He organised a

night shift of eight expert technicians who worked from 6pm to 6am to do structural cleaning of the ATMs and associated communications rack. He arranged traffic management on the road and organised the required equipment onsite, including night lights, safety bollards and scissor lifts.

While the bank branch remains closed, at least its customers can still access ATMs.

The fire was allegedly an arson attack and the perpetrator was under police guard in hospital after the incident. ■



## Creek clean saves wildlife

**When fire destroyed a regional NSW retail warehouse in July, firefighting foam and chemicals leached into a creek via the drainage system.**

Fish, eels, platypuses and birdlife were at risk from contaminated water, and oil and other substances coating the creek banks.

When the warehouse owner called Steamatic, there was only five days of a regional council imposed deadline to clean the drainage system and the creek.

Steamatic dispatched Assessment Manager Steve Kilby from the Sydney office to get to the town quickly and inspect the damage.

In the first three days, Steve travelled 1,500km as he went onsite to inspect the damage, returned to Sydney to assemble the equipment required for the job and returned to the site.

A stormwater drain at the fire scene flowed 1.5km straight to the creek, taking with it oils and other products stored in the destroyed retail warehouse, coupled with potentially toxic firefighting foam.

Steve's first project was to seek an extension of time for the cleanup, which the council granted, giving the Steamatic crew two weeks.

He developed a traffic management plan and put booms and soaking pads in the creek and a sediment fence and 60 hay bales around the warehouse to minimise further contamination and prevent additional runoff. The stormwater outflow was sandbagged.

Steamatic had a team of eight on site for a week — four technicians plus contractors, including environmental consultants to test the drain and the creek water before and after the cleanup process.

The team used a combination unit — a vacuum loader with a drain cleaning

nozzle — plus a tanker to house contaminated water.

The cleanup included skimming the creek and removing 50mm of contaminated dirt from the embankments. Despite a “nightmare day” of major rain — through which the team “just kept going” — the job was completed well within the two-week extension the council had granted.

For Steve, it was long days — 10 hours onsite followed by up to three hours at night writing reports for the property owner's insurer.

One challenge was the fact that the fire site and the stormwater outflow were 1.5km apart. It was quicker to jog between the sites than drive, which Steve admits has improved his fitness levels.

The property owner and the council were pleased with the final test results and the positive outcomes for what could have been a devastating incident for the creek and the flora and fauna that call it home. ■

## Gordon's a go-to petrol head

**Gordon Schwarz might seem pretty laid back when you meet him in the office, but don't be fooled by that demeanour.**

Steamatic's Sydney-based Technical Assessment Manager/Major Projects Manager is a self-confessed “petrol head”. He drives a gleaming turbocharged, high-performance Ford F6, participates in advanced driving schools, and likes to drive fast on the racetrack.

Negotiating skid pans and obstacle courses teaches a driver to handle a vehicle in all situations and, on the racetrack, “you can get rid of your frustrations, which you can't do on the road”, Gordon told *Restore & More*.

While fellow F6 owners might be in the younger generation, Gordon is 75 and not planning to retire any time soon.

“I'll keep going while the body holds out,” he said. “The brain seems to be going all right.”

Gordon is “not one to sit around and see what the day brings. I need to be doing things; keeping active”.

He aims to walk at least 5,000 steps a day and keeps track electronically. He prefers stairs to elevators. Dietary changes saw him shed 15kg several years ago and he's proud he has successfully kept the extra weight off.

Gordon is Steamatic's go-to man. He's first on the scene at major losses, preparing the job to hand over to an Assessment Manager and then acts as a mentor. He has been with the company 19 years and is part of the “corporate conscience” — “a repository for all the information others don't know where to find”, he told *Restore & More*.

He often conducts technical training sessions to help the Steamatic team know how to clean and remediate a wide variety of equipment and he frequently shares technical advice by phone with colleagues around the nation.

Gordon's skills are very valuable in assisting Steamatic to conduct highly



Gordon and his beloved F6.

specialised technical restorations.

In January, Gordon and his wife, Gillian, will celebrate 49 years of married life. They have three sons and nine grandchildren. ■

## Myer tackles fire, flood

The Myer building in Hobart, Tasmania, has had a chequered history.

The store has two street frontages, on Murray Street and Liverpool Street.

In 2007 the main Liverpool Street store burnt down and its historic façade had to be demolished.

The department store reopened in the Murray Street section of the store on 16 November 2007 — only 44 days after the fire.

Myer then began building a new store on Liverpool Street, which opened in November 2015.

The Murray Street site was a construction zone and being redeveloped when, in July, a brick wall between the worksite and the Hobart Rivulet collapsed, flooding the site to 3m high with dirty brown water. Two excavators were almost buried as the collapsed wall created a dam, forcing water back into the construction site.

The flood soon spread to the entire basement floor of the Liverpool Street store, inundating retail areas and a substation.

Hobart's daily newspaper, *The Mercury*, reported Myer Hobart general manager Peter Monachetti saying the flood

was “soul destroying” for staff and the community when the store had reopened only eight months earlier.

Steamatic's Tasmanian Manager Tim Wolstenholme assessed the damage initially and realised a large team was needed to get the store's basement cleaned out as quickly as possible.

Assessment Manager Daniel Threlfall and a team from Melbourne head office headed to Hobart and mobilised dessicant dehumidifiers to dry out the basement. The majority of stock was discarded as it was unsalvageable.

“A secondary concern was to isolate the upper levels of the store so there was no cross-contamination,” Daniel told *Restore & More*.

In a “very intense week”, a team of 12, working around the clock, stripped out sodden plasterboard, carpets and shelving and dried out the building.

Once the heavy equipment was demobilised, Steamatic went back onsite to sanitise the basement.

Daniel said key challenges were the scale of the project and the media attention such a high-profile job attracted. The Myer building and its woes were front page news — again.

The speed with which the job needed to



be completed was a logistical challenge for the staff.

Steamatic's technicians worked with the builder doing the reinstatement to ensure potential mould issues were eliminated.

Steamatic got the basement area ready to be restocked and, as Christmas approaches, Hobart's anchor CBD department store is again filled with shoppers. ■

## Archive collection saved

A major Australian company, born in the 1800s, has amassed a magnificent collection of archives from around the nation.

The company had consolidated its important archival resources — including timber desks, leatherbound books, photos and ancient ledgers — into an underground storage facility.

But problems with the airconditioning system saw the historical artefacts start to grow mould.

Steamatic Assessment Manager Daniel Threlfall inspected the site and recommended the environmental conditions be stabilised first.

He said some artefacts probably already contained mould spores, which started to propagate when the humidity increased.

Once the humidity and temperature levels were corrected, a team of Steamatic technicians came onsite to start the laborious work of restoring each item individually and ensuring the storage facility itself was decontaminated so no mould spores remained in the walls, ceiling or carpets.

The team took about two weeks to complete the work and the customer was very happy.

“I would like to thank all involved with the mould remediation work in the Archives. I have just come back from leave and the place looks and smells clean. I would especially like to thank the crew — Ritu, Ashlen, Loreta, Jessica, Amber, Sonia and

Gary — for doing such great work. No task was too difficult and it was a pleasure working with them,” a senior company representative said.

Daniel told *Restore & More* the team appreciated the historic significance of the archives and was pleased to help ensure their restoration for future generations. ■



The Steamatic team on the job, from left (behind), Ritu, Loreta, Gary, Amber and Jess; in front, Sonia and Ashlen.



## Water bottler back in action

When Severe Tropical Cyclone Winston hit Fiji last February it ripped part of the roof off Fiji Water's bottling plant.

The water — one of Fiji's key exports — is bottled at source, in remote northern Fiji, two hours' drive from Nadi.

The roof was repaired but water had damaged the plant's preform machine that manufactures the first stage of the PET bottles that are blow-moulded into the traditional Fiji Water bottles with their familiar hibiscus design ready to be filled and exported around the globe.

Sydney-based electrical engineering consultant John Graham, CEO of Phase8, called Steamatic in to repair the equipment so Major Projects Manager Gordon Schwarz and Special Technologies Senior Supervisor Mohammed Hanif headed to Fiji's main island, Viti Levu, in April.

The pair spent 10 days in Fiji, during which another cyclone — category three Tropical Cyclone Zena — hit, preventing them from working for several days because the bottling plant at Raki Raki was inaccessible.

"At one stage we had to drive through metre-deep water for four or five kilometres," Gordon recalled.

With the preform plant working at only two-thirds of its capacity because of the damage, speedy repairs were needed. Gordon and Hanif climbed into the machine to clean out the rust and partially stripped it back to repair it.

They had to be inventive because the usual resources were unavailable. "We couldn't take the chemicals we needed on a plane, so we had to find what was available on the island to do the job," Gordon said.

Fiji Water is now back in action, marketing product to high-end restaurants and retail outlets worldwide. It is the number one imported bottled water in the United States.

When Gordon and Hanif were holed up in their hotel on Denarau Island when Cyclone Zena hit, they were certainly not idle.



Besides catching up on and overseeing on-going projects in Sydney by phone and email, they identified that the resort's standby electricity generator was struggling to cope when they saw first black, then white smoke billowing from it.

John, Gordon and Hanif offered their skills to repair it and the grateful resort manager shouted them dinner before they left to say thanks. ■

## Bird family rescued

Brisbane technician Angela Rouse encountered an odd sight on Nudgee Road as she was driving back to the Steamatic warehouse very early one morning to pick up equipment needed for a flood emergency.

A kookaburra was lying in the middle of the road with another hopping about next to it, obviously distressed and agitated.

Angela's a big-hearted softie, so she stopped, picked up both birds, and brought them to the warehouse to be cared for while she grabbed the equipment she needed and headed back to a cleanup caused by a broken fridge hose.

Fortunately customer service officer Jade Wilfred was on duty and, as an experienced

wildlife carer, identified that the baby bird was dazed but its wings were unbroken. Its mother was obviously unable to abandon the youngster, despite the obvious dangers to both of being in the middle of a busy Brisbane road.

The RSPCA was alerted and its officers came to pick up the birds to nurse them back to good health.

Animal angel Angela was the day's hero, but played down her role. "I just wanted to get them to safety," she told *Restore & More*. ■



Mother and baby kookaburra en route to the RSPCA.