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Media Statement

WA CONSTRUCTION COMPANY WEATHERS THE STORM

Despite the testing circumstances of the past twelve months, one of the WA's leading property and construction companies has weathered the economic storm to emerge with more staff, new divisions and a healthy outlook heading into 2010.

During 2009, staff numbers at Belmont-based Pindan grew by 10 per cent and the group announced the launch of two new spin-off companies – new home builder Switch Homes for Living and transportable accommodation business Formas Australia.

Pindan director of business development Scott Davison said the group's ability to expand even during the economic downturn was aided by a philosophy of respecting staff and client partnerships.

"When we foresaw the hard financial times ahead, our executive team sat down and agreed we needed to look after our staff, because we knew that we would work through the tough times to a strong recovery," he said.

"In a bid to retain our workforce and grow our group, we realised we needed to change our strategy so we could embrace new opportunities that were breaking in the new homes and transportable housing market.

"We also looked at how we could work with our existing clients to help meet their goals as they also refocused to weather the downturn, and worked out how we could make the most of the Government Stimulus Package – we spent a lot of time and effort on tenders for the Building the Education Revolution contracts and new public housing projects which has paid off."

The year ahead will see Pindan continue to be based at many school sites across the state after securing over \$89 million of new construction at 62 primary schools, as well as \$14m of school maintenance work at over 90 schools, through the Federal Government's Building the Education Revolution (BER) program.

The company's also expecting a further rise in demand in it new homes division on the back of the June 2009 launch of Switch Homes for Living, marking a return to the residential market by Pindan which began as a housing company when it formed over 30 years ago.

"We've got off to a flying start with Switch Homes for Living, opening four display homes in the space of four months, and our Ellenbrook home has already taken out the WA Housing Industry Association's Best Display Home award," Mr Davison said.

"There are plans for six more display homes in the New Year and construction has begun on many new homes with the team already securing more than 50 new homes sales.

"We saw that demand in the new homes market for the second and third homes owners on the back of demand from the first homeowners would help propel Switch in its initial phases, so we took advantage of that and acted on our plans to venture into the market during what many would have thought was a difficult time."

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The second half of 2009 also saw the establishment of Formas Australia Pty Ltd, which gives Formas the national license and patent rights for the New Zealand-designed fold-out homes and various accommodation solutions.

“We have already been distributing and installing these units across WA for about 18-months now, so we know the product well and have been able to improve the designs and refine the manufacturing and installation to better suit our unique climate,” Mr Davison said.

“At a time when affordable and efficient housing solutions are in great demand across Australia, these will no doubt keep us busy as the state’s resources industry powers on.”

An internal restructure has also paved the way for the group to expand its workload in 2010.

“To cater for the ongoing expected growth of work in the grouped dwellings and small to medium commercial works sectors, Pindan Projects has been created to oversee the management of these contracts,” Mr Davison said.

“There’s also been a dedicated effort and big expansion within our contracting division which has done a fantastic job in sourcing new projects in a very competitive and challenging climate in remote and regional locations around Western Australia.

“The contracting team has made a number of new appointments to help carry out the new work coming in, including at schools in regional WA and other government projects including the Fitzroy Crossing Pool and Derby Prison.”

Mr Davison said as the economic sentiment began turning nationally, Pindan was well positioned to capitalise on the recovery.

“We’re continuing to see the WA economy continuing to improve and, even though it’s likely to take a little while longer for private sector construction to return to normal levels, we’re confident we can continue moving forward, and be in strong position to make the most of the next boom,” he said.

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