



THE LINK

Showcasing the successes, innovation and developments in the Fencing, Gate and Wire Industries



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Well, this calendar year is just about done and dusted, and where did it go?! What did we achieve? and where is our business and economy heading?

Steel and most building products are fluctuating up and down, with some form of strange midrange stability like the AUS dollar, how do you pick where it will go? Interest rates are up again with little reason why, considering the inflation spike is driven by government and the top end ASX giants, not mums and dads trying to pay off a mortgage.

Where will our economy be this time next year you ask? GOOD QUESTION! As I am at a loss on what will happen and why we are in the position we are in now. How is it that we have massive labour shortages, material shortages, land shortages, rental shortages, when our economy GDP has been running in the 2-3% for many years? (currently at 2.2%). Why has the government dropped the ball preparing the future with land releases, immigration, universities, and Tafe training? And most of all creating more incentive for agriculture and manufacturing in the lucky country we call Australia, with tariffs on imports and subsidises on home grown agriculture and manufacturing?

Here is a small case study that I personally can share with you, 22 years ago I started a small herd of Angus cattle with intention of being an Angus stud in the future (the stud never eventuated but the small herd did grow to 60 breeders). At that time, in 2001, the sale of progeny was fetching around \$500 for a weaner calf of around 270KG. Sales in October 2023 for the same calf are between \$250 and \$600, say \$2/KG tops. How is this possible when mince (one of the cheapest cuts, unlike scotch fillet at \$45/KG) is selling for \$18/KG in most butcher shops? Even adding \$1 to the sale price of \$2 for the live animal to allow for the 40% lost in slaughter the number is not stacking up.

The Labour government have been bussing around the world, in particular Asia, with little results other than some band-aid patches on exports to China masked with massive import incentives for them. Australia's economy is, to a large degree, self-sustainable with internal growth and infrastructure planning. Why are we not the fruit and meat bowl of Asia?



We have the land to do exactly this. With the introduction of water irrigation projects, it is achievable to have Australia living off the land again (old terms sheep's back). This then creates the need for local manufacturing to support the industry.

Well, I have had my say and apologise if I have offended anyone for my statements; but as a proud Australian farmer and manufacturer, I am not prepared to just sit back and let our government spend 450 million dollars on a referendum that was never going to fly without full exposure to the consequences. Nor am I prepared to watch them allow the sale of Australian land to foreign owners, donate billions to foreign countries when this country and its people are crying out for help.

(Vote 1, Graham Braithwaite, for the 'Proud to be an Australian Party')

Sincerely,

Graham Braithwaite



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Another year has flashed past, and I hope it was a good one for you all despite interest rate rises and material supply interruptions.

Due to some key member travel plans and yours truly undergoing an operation for an increasingly arthritic ankle (total ankle replacement would you believe?), our AGM was held in late November this year and was combined with our annual Christmas Party. It was great to see so many new faces at both events, and all members are encouraged to attend these important networking

opportunities. Advance notice of these events is usually given in our 'Dates to Remember' column on page 16 of this newsletter so members can put them into their calendars nice and early. A recap of both events can be found elsewhere in the newsletter.

A couple of our members have achieved significant recognition of their talents over the past few months. Long time member, Protective Group, won Product of the Year at the 2023 Australian Security Industry Awards in October for its 3m wide 358 anti-climb mesh fencing system. Protective Group is also leading the push for new Australian Standard AS 5394 High Security Anti-Intruder Fences in Welded Wire Mesh and Open Steel Panels.

New member, MAKOMESH, was a finalist in the Manufacturing Monthly's Endeavour Awards in the category of Most Innovative Manufacturing Company for their work in combining seamless data transfer with online manufacturing processes to provide improved leadtimes and lower prices for their customers.

It's really encouraging to see our members being recognised for their innovations in manufacturing, and details of both these achievements can be found on page 8 and page 9 of this edition. Competition yet again proves to be a significant driver for innovation, and our members are up for the challenge.

Two new member benefits have been introduced this year. Through your Association, member companies now have access to credit reports from commercial credit reporting bureau, CreditorWatch. This service assist members to assess new customers, identify high risk debtors and review competitor credit ratings. The AWIA has subscribed to this service to provide ad hoc access for all members on a low cost per report basis.

The Association has also subscribed to IBISWorld this year, specifically to gain access to its C2291 Spring and Wire Product Manufacturing in Australia Industry Report. The critical parts of this report have already been distributed to members, however the subscription allows access to a more than 20 other IBISWorld reports, and members are encouraged to check if any other reports are of interest to them (<https://www.ibisworld.com/au/list-of-industries/>) and let me know.

I will continue to look for additional member benefits to add value to Association membership, but any suggestions from members are always welcome. If there is a service of product that you think would be beneficial to all members, and that would be best made available through an aggregated purchase, please let me know.

In the coming year, our focus will continue to be on regulation and Australian Standards, and ensuring that our various sub-associations are regarded as the peak bodies for the industries they are associated with. Continued improvements to this newsletter and a range of interesting and, hopefully, enjoyable member gatherings will round out the year.

Meantime, I would like to wish all readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and thank you for your support during 2023.

Richard Newbigin

(Tel: +61 411 725 795 Email: richard@wireassociation.org.au)

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Platinum: Vater

Gold: InfraBuild

Silver: Marsh Alliance

Bronze: Bekaert, Downee,

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STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Standards Australia now offers a Curated Subscription solution which brings together commonly referenced publications from its Australian Standards catalogue, creating specialised content sets across different industries. Available for Small Business Access (<20 employees).

Features include:

- (NEW) Free additional licence - Enjoy an additional licence to share within your business.
- Spread the cost - Annual payments over a multi-year subscription term spreads the cost over the life of the subscription.
- Easy access - Our easy-to-use Web Reader means you can access documents through your registered account using a smartphone, tablet or laptop, wherever you are.
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- Always up to date - Documents you have subscribed to are automatically updated in your account, so you'll always have access to the latest version.

AS 2423 Coated Steel Wire fencing products for terrestrial, aquatic and general use

Any members wishing to suggest amendments to this Standard are requested to contact Richard Newbiggin Tel: 1300 942 500 or email richard@wireassociation.org.au.

AS 5394 High Security Anti-Intruder Fences in Welded Wire Mesh and Open Steel Panels

The working group has made good progress with development of this new standard and their work will be reviewed by the CE-008 technical committee during December.

Any readers who wish to participate on the technical committee or a working group advising the technical committee should advise Richard Newbiggin as soon as possible (richard@wireassociation.org.au or 1300 942 500).

AS 1926.1 Safety Barriers for Swimming Pools

The draft for this revised Standard is available for public comment until 22 December 2023.

The *Draft AS 1926.1:2023 Swimming pool safety, Part 1: Safety barriers for swimming pools* has been prepared by the Standards Australia Committee CS-034 *Swimming and Spa Pools*, to supersede the 2012 edition. The objective of this document is to specify the requirements for barriers that are intended to restrict the access of young children to swimming pools. Major changes include location of plants, marking of gate latches, combined structures forming a barrier, and security of closure of gate latches.

For the first time, AS 4687 Temporary Fencing and Hoardings has been referenced in AS 1926.1.

The inclusion of AS 4687 will be important to ensure that certifiers and inspectors are aware of the different barrier requirements for completed pools over those either under construction or undergoing repair or maintenance. The latter cases constitute building sites and their dynamic nature precludes the use of the permanent barriers which are the subject of AS 1926.1.

Members are encouraged to take a few minutes to make a public comment supporting the inclusion of AS 4687.4 in the revised AS 1926.1.

A free account can be created when you login to Standards Australia Connect and browse in Drafts open for public comment **Draft AS 1926.1:2023 Swimming pool safety, Part 1: Safety barriers for swimming pools**, open for Public Comment until **22 December 2023**. Find out more in the SA Public Comment Guide.

NEXTgen Program

Standards Australia's NEXTgen Program selects emerging industry and technical experts and provides them with an exciting opportunity to become involved in the national and international standardisation processes supporting Australian industry and government.

The goal of the program is to support the future of standards development through investing in the next generation of standards leaders and experts. Any members wishing to participate in this program should contact Richard Newbigin at richard@wireassociation.org.au.

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NEW MEMBER PROFILES

TFB HIRE

In the ever-evolving world of construction projects and events, having access to the right equipment is paramount. From commencing operations in 2007, under its former name of “The Fence Bloke”, TFB Hire has emerged as a trusted partner for businesses seeking reliable and high-quality temporary fence hire services in South East Queensland. The current owners acquired the business in 2017 and have been steadily growing the business since then. With a commitment to excellence and a dedication to customer satisfaction, TFB Hire has established a loyal customer base.

What sets TFB Hire apart is their unwavering dedication to customer service. They understand the unique requirements of each project and work closely with clients to provide tailored solutions. Whether you’re an individual or a large construction firm, TFB Hire can accommodate your needs. Their knowledgeable and responsive staff are always on hand to provide expert guidance and support.

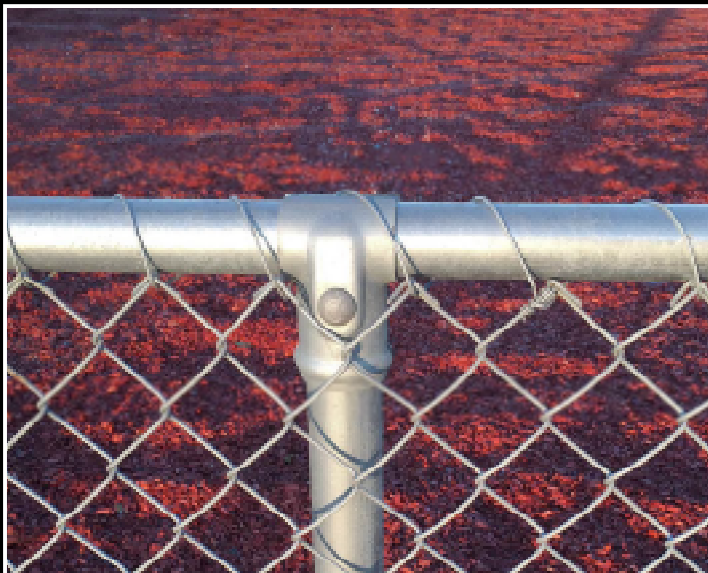
TFB Hire boasts an extensive inventory of temporary fence, temporary hoarding, crowd control barriers and temporary pool fence. The temporary fence is installed by TFB Hire’s team of experienced installers. With over 15,000 completed jobs, TFB Hire has certainly experienced a lot of different installation requirements.

For businesses in need of top-tier fence hire services, TFB Hire is the name that consistently delivers quality, reliability, and exceptional customer service. Whether you’re breaking ground on a construction project, need to secure a site or are holding an event, TFB Hire stands ready to be your trusted partner in success.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS



USA REPORT

August saw the inaugural Fence Show held in Las Vegas, with attendees travelling from all over the world to talk fences and take in the Las Vegas attractions.

AWIA's American correspondent Matt Sivewright, founder and CEO of EverFence was in attendance this year.

While at the event, Matt spoke to Fence Workers Association (FWA) President Brian Frederiksen who was thrilled with the attendance, and is looking forward to 2024 being an even bigger event.

The Fence Show and Security Expo was founded by Brian to connect businesses of all sizes, from large corporations to small businesses.

It is a premier event in the fence industry. Its primary focus is on fostering inclusivity within the industry. Event organisers FWA are committed to creating an atmosphere where all attendees feel welcomed, valued, and respected. In the ever-evolving world of security, fencing, and related industries, The Fence Show & Security Expo isn't just an event but a testament to inclusivity. With hundreds of exhibitors and thousands of attendees, it's a must-attend trade show for those interested in various fence products, tools, access control systems, security surveillance, and business solutions.



Sasha Stojanov, Cesar Cruz and Tom Leahy from Lion Fence with the winner of a trip to Cabo, Mexico given away at the show by Lion Fence.

TECHNICAL NEWS

REVISIONS TO AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS RELATING TO CORROSION PROTECTION

Standards Australia is currently working on the revision of two powder coating Standards, as noted below.

1. AS 4506:2005, Metal finishing—Thermoset powder coatings
2. AS 3715:2002, Metal finishing - Thermoset powder coatings for architectural applications of aluminium and aluminium alloys

Both Standards are very old and, in many cases, do not represent current best practice in the powder coating of products widely used in the fencing industry. The drafts of both Standards are nearing completion, and we expect them to be open for public comment in 2024.

When ready for public comment, the proposed new Standards will incorporate current knowledge of corrosion protection requirements, provide recommended suitable powder coating systems for atmospheric protection, and show how suppliers can demonstrate conformance with the Standard.

Importantly, in the case of aluminium, there will be two routes to supply, architectural applications (AS 3715) and all other applications (AS 4506). This will mean that, for fencing applications, you will need to decide whether your product is 'architectural'. For all batch galvanized, continuously galvanized and electroplated steel items, and all castings (both steel and aluminium), AS 4506 will be reference Standard.

Work has also begun on the Steel Structures Standard (AS 4100). This is the primary design Standard for structural steel. It is likely that the process of revision will take several years to complete.

Article courtesy of Galvanisers Association of Australia

SHOULD STANDARD GALVANISED WIRE REALLY BE CALLED LIGHT GALVANISED?

The terminology of galvanised coatings on wire has considerable history starting from the original AS1650 where just two coating classes were specified – these being Heavily Galvanised & Standard Galvanised.

In 2006 when AS1650 was replaced by AS/NZS 4534 to allow the inclusion of Zinc/Aluminium coatings, it was broadened to provide a number of additional coating classes (coating weights) beyond the two original Heavy & Standard Galvanised coatings that most industries typically work with.

The limited number of end-uses for the broadened range of coating classes has resulted in industries not really picking up and running with the changed descriptions, and now, 14 years down the track, advertising, quoting, orders and even verbal descriptions still typically remain with the two original classes – Standard (W02) or Heavily Galvanised (W10).

Meanwhile niche markets have emerged requiring coating masses lower than the lowest specified in AS/NZS 4534 (Class W02 – Standard Galv). These markets are serviced by both electro-galvanised and hot-dipped galvanised coatings. Wire in these applications are already marketed as "Light Galvanised" to avoid confusion with "Standard Galvanised" (W02). As mentioned, these are niche markets, predominantly decorative and of little value being included in AS/NZS4534.

Perhaps if we as an Association campaign to drive the industries we operate in toward correctly specifying the coating classes detailed in AS4534 then we would likely deliver a better outcome than renaming a long standing and industry recognised designation.

Article courtesy of Rohan Russell, Technical Sales Manager, InfraBuild

ARE YOU AT RISK OF BEING HACKED?

Today we are inundated with threats to our personal security. We need to stay vigilant with our computer systems, email and our logins/passwords to online services. Keeping your passwords secure is important.

The difficulty in managing passwords is remembering them. However, having an easy to remember password and using it for everything is an enormously risky approach to take.

To test how quickly your password could be hacked, use this website and paste your password in here: <https://howsecureismypassword.net>. This password tester will show how long it could take for just one computer to hack your password. But in the real world, it is often not just a single computer that will be used to hack your machine. An attacker will often coordinate many computers working together. This means that your password, which might take 1000 years to crack with one computer, could easily be done within 5 minutes for a coordinated attack from many computers.

It is recommended that different passwords are used for different services, that they have a minimum of 12 characters (but even 15 plus is recommended), have a mix of uppercase, lowercase, symbols and numbers, and do not use repeat sequences.

Managing long secure passwords is daunting, however, services such as Dashlane <https://www.dashlane.com/> can make it secure and easy. Remembering passwords will no longer be required with Dashlane protecting them in a format that prevents hackers from gaining access.

Article courtesy of Mark Parsons at Digital Catalyst Group Pty Ltd



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BEKAERT PVC FUSIONBONDED

For the ultimate in vinyl coated chain-link fencing, look no further than 'Bekaert PVC fusion-bonded wire'. Using a polyolefin coating, the galvanized wire is first coated with adhesive material, and then heated; causing the wire and the plastic to bond together, creating a better protective coating to prevent moisture from penetrating to the steel core of the wire.

'Bekaert PVC fusion-bonded wire' is a commercially produced colour coated wire for the residential, commercial and industrial chain-link fencing industry. The galvanized steel core is coated with polyolefin elastomer to create this colour coated wire product and the most popular colour is black (although other colour options are available). This formulation is also designed to handle any out-gassing from the zinc coating, because heating of the wire during the coating process effectively eliminates any resultant adhesion problems. 'Bekaert PVC fusion-bonded wire' is more flexible, more chip resistant, offers outstanding adhesion, greater UV stability, greater abrasion resistance and is not permeable to moisture. The resultant fence not only has a decorative coating, but also more importantly provides an impervious protective coating. Moreover, it does not require an overly thick extruded coating and as such provides greater "see thru" visibility for security applications, plus the added benefit of less wind resistance. Some manufacturers lay claim to having some of these features and benefits, although with Bekaert PVC Fusebond, you can be assured that you are buying the genuine article!



IST TRAINING

The Institute of Spring Technology (IST) now offers a self-paced e-learning module that provides the basic understanding and knowledge required to design a compression spring. The course can be taken at anytime, anywhere that fits in with your busy schedule. It is ideal for spring manufacturers, design engineers and spring end users.

- The course covers the following areas:
- Spring end types
- Number of coils
- Solid length
- Rate and stress calculations
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- Spring performance in service

On average the course can take up to 2 hours to complete, and you will receive a certificate upon completion.

The learning can be accessed from mobile, tablet, laptop or PC.

On demand – anytime, anywhere.

The cost of the course is £45 per person

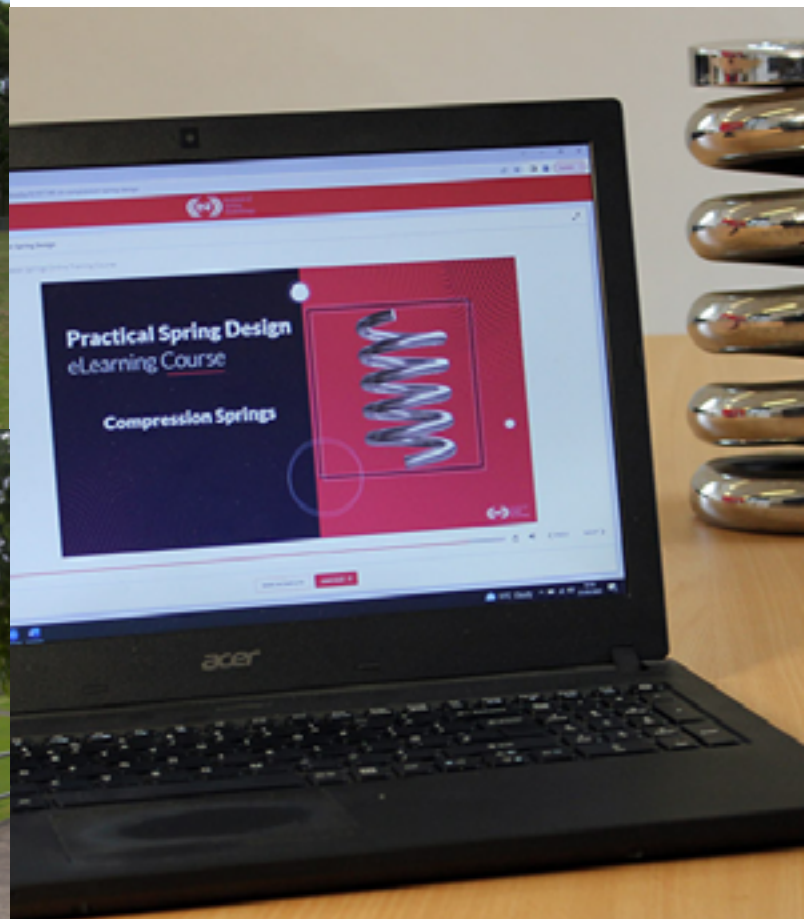
<https://ist.org.uk/training/e-learning/>

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MEMBER UPDATES

MAKOMESH RECOGNISED AS ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S MOST INNOVATIVE MANUFACTURERS

Wire mesh panel manufacturer MAKOMESH are worthy finalists for Australia's Most Innovative Manufacturing Company Award at the 2023 Endeavour Awards.

The Manufacturers' Monthly Endeavour Awards are recognised as the premier Awards program that promotes, recognises and rewards excellence within the Australian manufacturing industry. The event held on November 30, 2023, in Melbourne was filled with inspiring journeys and achievements throughout the past year and was a fantastic reminder of the ongoing passion and great work from Australia's leading manufacturers.

Proudly representing the more traditional steel manufacturing industry, MAKOMESH were nominated alongside high-tech aviation and aerospace innovators, sophisticated engineering and robotic automation integrators as Australia's most innovative manufacturers.

MAKOMESH are online manufacturing pioneers producing high quality pre-galvanised mesh panels including the market leading MAKOMESH® 358 security mesh panels at their Milperra production facility in NSW. But what does it mean to be a high-tech 'online manufacturer'?

Innovation is a natural consequence of the three key factors of advanced processes, an advanced business model and advanced knowledge. Since its inception in 2019 these factors

have positioned MAKOMESH as a beacon for disruption through their concerted effort to achieve cost leadership and sustainability as an SME in a highly competitive commodity market.

Through fostering an organisation-wide strategic intent that is intrinsically linked to the goals of the company and the engagement of its people, the MAKOMESH team has an unrelenting desire to build a better manufacturing system. This is achievable through a specified and agile work structure that facilitates the development of staff while also establishing ambitious targets. MAKOMESH is absolute on achieving the best lead time and pricing to ensure their customers remain competitive in a hotly contested B2B environment.

Secondly, adopting a cloud-based business model that can facilitate seamless data transfers between customers and smart machines through a .NET platform has eliminated the need for human intervention in all business processes. The development of an on-demand online manufacturing system possesses the capability of producing customised and personalised items efficient to lot Size of 1 at industry leading prices and lead times.

Most importantly they have built a motivated and talented team that is empowered to challenge and improve everything they do. Incorporating agile ways of working with cross functional teams collaborating on finding ways to improve every component of their online manufacturing system has allowed MAKOMESH to develop an advanced business model in servicing their customers needs instantly through a fully automated online system.

The results of their innovative and disruptive online business model speak for themselves with a 261% increase in customer activity and 73% increase in production volumes while energy consumption per kilogram produced has reduced by 32%.

To register or find out more visit www.makomesh.com.au



(ABOVE) Skilled MAKOMESH Machine Operators.
(BELOW) MAKOMESH Machine Specialists collaborating



(ABOVE) CEO Stephen Eddowes and members of the MAKOMESH team at the 2023 Endeavour Awards.



MARSH CELEBRATES 70 YEARS OF MANUFACTURING IN AUSTRALIA AS IT ADDS MASTERCUT TO THE ALLIANCE

Founder Thomas Marsh commenced spring making from humble beginnings in Brisbane’s southern suburb of Macgregor in 1953. Since that time Thomas Marsh & Co (now trading as Marsh Alliance) has grown to become one of Australia’s most trusted names in spring and wire product manufacturing.

In recent years under the directorship of Thomas’ son Greg and the leadership of CEO Adam Forrester, the humble beginnings in Macgregor have evolved into a large, modern production facility in Carole Park, Queensland, that proudly features a carbon neutralising 300kW solar farm powering its factory. A series of business acquisitions over the last 13 years have enabled Marsh to increase weekly production capacity to over 120Ts of finished products and build significant inhouse capability in cold coiling, CNC wire forming, pressed parts and speciality coatings.

Marsh Alliance is the major supplier of garage door springs in Australia today, and thousands of other Marsh products are made for: door and security solutions, building fixtures, electrical distribution networks, automotive and agricultural components, heavy transport and infrastructure, medical aids, defence applications... the list goes on!

“We are entirely grateful to our loyal and growing customer base for their support over the last 70 years”, said Adam Forester. To ensure we’re around for another 70 years the company has defined its purpose. “Marsh Alliance exists to make essential products for our customers that improve everyday life, growing Australian manufacturing”. “We want to be world class in our metal fabrication capabilities and service offering and we will achieve this through continual investment in technology and automation and through the acquisition of specialist capability”, explains Forrester.

At the beginning of October this year and in its latest example of acquiring specialist capability, Thomas Marsh & Co was delighted to welcome Mastercut Technologies and its existing customers to the Marsh Alliance. Mastercut is a highly skilled laser cutting business at its core - producing a wide range of signage and labels, shims, metal parts and solder paste stencils. The operation has national and international credentials and is based on the Gold Coast at Burleigh Heads.

“With its thin metal and high precision cutting capabilities, Mastercut represents aligned and complementary metal fabrication services within the Marsh Alliance,” further explains Forrester. “We are proud to be the new owner of Mastercut. It will continue to operate as normal for its customers, some of whom we already share within the Marsh business.” Indeed, this acquisition represents broader service opportunities and added value for both Mastercut and Marsh clients.

As the 70-year celebrations continue the future certainly looks promising for the Marsh Alliance and its customers.

If you’re looking for a local, Australian owned manufacturing partner or contract manufacturing provider to secure your supply chain of essential metal components and would like more information on Marsh’s capabilities please visit: marshalliance.com.au or mastercut.com.au. If you’d like to speak to someone about how we can support your business please call 07 3271 3500

“NO BUSINESS CAN AFFORD TO STAND STILL” - SSWM AT PACRIM 2023

The team at Stainless Steel Wire and Mesh (SSWM) - Amanda Greer, Tory Greer, Angel Ruiperez & Rod O’Loan – recently attended an industry conference called PacRim Stainless on the Gold Coast. To read more about PacRim visit the conference website at www.pacrimstainless.com

While some of the speakers are less relevant to the Wire Industry, the following speakers caught the eyes and ears of the SSWM team.

Craig Rispin – Futurist and Innovation expert

Peter Munckton - Bank of Queensland Chief Economist

Jim Lennon – Commodities Trader (China’s role in the world demand and supply)

Des Watkins - MD of Watkins Steel

Visit <https://www.pacrimstainless.com/speakers> to read more about these, and other speakers at the conference. The common theme for all speakers? Essentially, they are all saying that no business can stand still!

Des Watkins is a fabricator that has jumped on Site works scanning and steel fabrication and merged them together into “Augmented Reality” that helps his team of engineers work smarter. Visit <https://watkinssteel.com.au/> to learn more about Des and his business. The message from Des was to employ “gamers” who can easily use the technology and turn it into something useful for the business.

For the wire industry, which one could argue, is made up of an ageing workforce still operating in the second industrial revolution, the message is either adapt, change or die. For the team at SSWM the takeaway is that you need to spend time “looking up” from your day job and keep an eye on the environment. As a result of attending the conference, SSWM is now considering the following actions to keep evolving:

- 3D metal printing
- Chat GPT to support our Marketing Team
- Working with our suppliers to understand their emissions footprint
- Working more with our Industry Association to understand industries emerging issues.

PROTECTIVE FENCING WINS 2023 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR

INNOVATIVE 3M WIDE 358 ANTI-CLIMB MESH TAKES TOP HONORS

Protective Fencing has achieved a significant milestone by winning the “Product of the Year” award at the 2023 Australian Security Industry Awards for Excellence. This prestigious recognition highlights the exceptional qualities of Protective Fencing’s revolutionary product, the 3m Wide 358 Anti-Climb Mesh, solidifying their position as an industry leader.

Protective Fencing, renowned for providing innovative and reliable security solutions, is no stranger to excellence. The 3m Wide 358 Anti-Climb Mesh is a prime example of their commitment to innovation and technical excellence, addressing the challenge of rising steel prices and reducing material requirements, resulting in substantial cost savings for customers.

What sets this product apart is its unique ability to provide cost-effective security without compromising quality or effectiveness. By using wider 3-metre panels, it reduces installation costs, streamlining construction making it a preferred choice for businesses and organisations.

The 3m Wide 358 Anti-Climb Mesh’s practical applications have been met with success, delivering increased security and peace of mind to clients. Furthermore, it contributes to sustainability efforts by minimising environmental impact. Protective Fencing’s win signifies their dedication to excellence, innovation, and providing unparalleled value to clients, solidifying their position as industry leaders in security solutions.



Samantha Swain, Director, Protective Fencing receiving the Product of the Year Award

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TECHVANCE OPENS THEIR NEW GALVANISED WIRE MILL IN MALAYSIA

Techvance Industries, a leading player in the wire manufacturing industry, celebrated the grand opening of Malaysia's state-of-the-art hot dip galvanised wire mill in a prestigious ceremony attended by dignitaries, esteemed customers, and valued suppliers. The event marked a significant milestone for the company as they continue to strive for excellence in wire production.

The new wire mill, equipped with cutting-edge technology, is a testament to Techvance's commitment to providing top-quality products and unmatched customer experiences. The company acquired equipment from a well-established wire mill renowned for its high-quality output and incorporated the latest processing controls available in the industry. This amalgamation of expertise and modern technology ensures that Techvance is now capable of delivering superior galvanised wire to meet the dynamic demands of the market.

To enhance efficiency and productivity, Techvance meticulously designed the product flow at the greenfield site, minimizing bottlenecks and optimizing the overall production process. By doing so, they aim to maintain a seamless supply chain and deliver high-quality galvanised wire on time, every time.

Following extensive trials conducted earlier this year, Techvance has successfully met the necessary standards to supply premium galvanised wire to the Australian and New Zealand markets. The company's adherence to strict quality control measures ensures that customers in these regions will have access to reliable and top-notch products.

Additionally, Techvance is delighted to announce the appointment of Central National Australia Pty Ltd as their mill agents for the Australian and New Zealand areas. This strategic collaboration aims to strengthen Techvance's presence in these markets and facilitate the distribution of their hot dip galvanised wire to a wider customer base.

"We are excited to inaugurate our newest hot dip galvanised wire mill, and we remain committed to serving our customers with the highest quality products," said T.S Toh, CEO of Techvance Industries. "With the support of our esteemed partners, Central National Australia, we look forward to meeting the growing demand for galvanised wire in the Australian and New Zealand markets."

Central National Australia encourages interested parties to get in touch for any inquiries or requirements regarding soft or medium tensile hot dip galvanised wire. The company's dedicated team is ready to provide top-notch solutions tailored to specific needs.



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THE FEMININE LINK

Meet Karen Schieb, Director, Larsen Wire Engineering

The brainchild of AWIA platinum sponsor Vater Hardware Australia, The Feminine Link is a new feature of The Link newsletter showcasing the talented and diverse skills of the female members of our industry, as well as a way to get to know the personal sides of our colleagues and friends. In this edition we get to know Karen Schieb, Director at Larsen Wire Engineering.

NICKNAME: Kazza, Boss Lady

SPORT: Snow skiing

PETS: Snowy, 16yrs old Jack Rusell (plus all my Pygmy Goats on the farm)

FAVOURITE COLOUR: Pink

FAVOURITE FOOD: Japanese

FAVOURITE DRINK: Green Tea

FAVOURITE TV SERIES: Don't watch much TV, I would say Black Snow

MANTRA TO LIVE BY: It's not what you cannot do, but what you can do.

Karen spoke recently to the AWIA about how what makes her tick and a little bit about the business:

“Operating the business and working at school (part time at Somerset College) is a balancing act but won't have it any other way. I have Scott my husband and capable staff looking after production, and still giving me time to work the business behind the scenes and touch base with my valued customers.”

“Relocated the business recently to The Lockyer Valley (Laidley) which has been a blessing. On this move we have also acquired Ronnie's Cage Fronts (which was my dad's little business)

We are increasing the volume of work and still sticking strong to only manufacture our products from Infra Build Wire. We pride ourself on being Australian Owned and Made.”

“Living on 100+ acres gives me the ability to balance work and life.”



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AUSTRALIAN ECONOMIC UPDATE

Growth in the Australian economy is forecast to remain below trend over the year ahead as cost-of-living pressures and higher interest rates continue to weigh on demand. Inflation is expected to stay high for longer, which suggests further tightening is possible

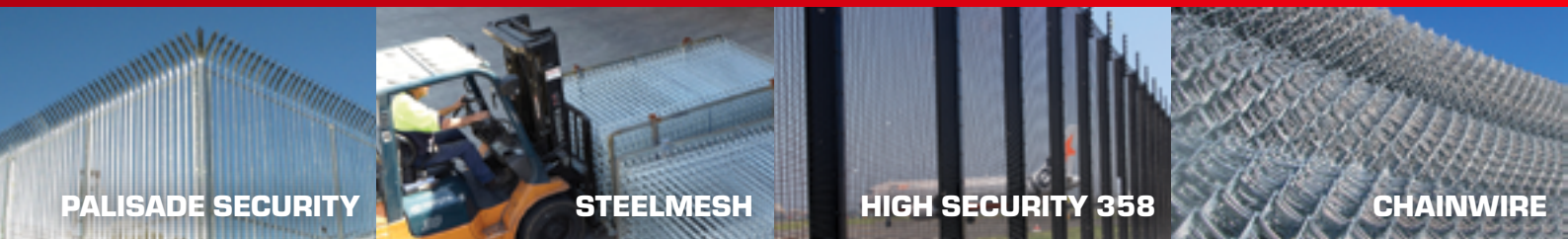
- National GDP in June 2023 rose by 0.4% q/q in seasonally adjusted terms. The current pace of growth is soft. GDP per capita over the year is 0.3% lower. It is apparent the impact of high inflation, interest rates and fiscal drag are having on the household sector
- The Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment has increased in Oct-23 after declines in the past 2 months. The Index is at 82.0 which is still very low compared to the long-term average of 100.9
- Business conditions in Sep-23 have eased but remain above historical average levels. Conditions remain strong across all states in trend terms. Business confidence has been steady for the past few months
- Unemployment rate in Sep-23 dropped from 3.7% to 3.6% due to lower participation rate.
- Employment rose by 6,700 with full-time employment decreasing by 39,900 whereas part-time employment rose by 36,500
- Residential commencements in the Jun-23 quarter fell by 12% q/q driven by a 20% drop in multi-dwellings commencements and a 6.6% q/q drop in detached houses commencements. Residential commencements for FY23 fell by 17% y/y to 172,321. 17% y/y lower for detached houses (109,772) and 18% y/y lower for multi-dwellings commencements (61,392). Multi-dwellings commencements fell in all states except for Queensland which rose by 6% y/y to 13,299
- Non-residential construction work done in FY23 rose by 1% y/y to \$50.5 billion with strong activity in hospital and data centre projects

- Engineering value of work done in the Jun-23 quarter rose by 17.8% y/y to \$28 billion compared to June last year. This strong activity was driven by strong growth in electricity, road and rail construction work done.
- The RBA forecasts GDP to increase by 1.75% for FY24 (previous forecast was 1.0%)

Future expectations for Australia would include:

- GDP growth in 2023 and 2024 is expected to remain below trend but the growth over 2023 has been revised higher due to lingering demand pressures in the economy driven by strong population growth
- Inflation is forecast to decline more gradually than previously forecast, to around 3.5% by the end of 2024 and a little below 3% at the end of 2025
- Employment growth has slowed with hours worked easing but employment rate remains low by historical standards
- Capacity constraints in the construction sector have continued to limit the pace at which builders can work through the large pipeline of residential construction to be done. Acute labour shortages are expected to continue
- There is a large pipeline of non-residential construction over the coming years, but the timing of the work is uncertain due to ongoing labour constraints
- The result of the Federal Government infrastructure pipeline review is expected to be announced soon. The government has said that some of the 250 projects that have not begun construction will need to be cancelled or delayed due to cost overruns of at least \$33bn

Article courtesy of Mei Leong at InfraBuild



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HR UPDATES

RULES AND ENTITLEMENTS DURING THE END-OF-YEAR HOLIDAY SEASON

Employers and employees need to start planning how their businesses will operate during the end-of-year holiday season.

Many businesses get busier and may need their employees to work more hours and on public holidays. Other businesses may shut down (also known as a ‘close down’) or reduce their staff numbers.

Find out about the rules and entitlements during the end-of-year holiday season that may affect you.

Requiring an employee to take annual leave during a shutdown

An employer can direct their employees to take annual leave while the business has shut down if their award or registered agreement allows it.

Most awards have rules about how and when an employer can direct their employees to take annual leave.

In most cases, the direction to take annual leave during a shutdown must be:

- reasonable
- in writing
- given to affected employees within the required notice period

Some awards allow employers and a majority of affected employees to agree on a shorter notice period for a shutdown direction.

An award may also provide that a business can only close during certain periods, such as the end-of-year period.

Many awards have updated clauses about annual leave during shutdowns. Each award and agreement is different, so employers should check theirs to make sure before they give employees any directions to use annual leave.

If no award or agreement applies, employers can only direct the employee to take annual leave if the direction is reasonable.

Working overtime or on a public holiday

Employers can ask their employees to work overtime or work on public holidays if the request is reasonable. An employee can refuse a request to work if they have reasonable grounds.

When requesting that an employee work on a public holiday, employers need to consider all relevant circumstances. Whether a request is reasonable depends on several things, including:

- the needs of the business
- the role and responsibility of the employee
- the employee’s personal commitments, like family or caring arrangements

- how much notice the employee gets about the extra hours
- what the employee’s contract says

If an employee works overtime or on a public holiday, their award or registered agreement may give them additional entitlements such as:

- penalty rates
- a different day off
- extra annual leave

Paying employees who don’t work on a public holiday

When a public holiday falls on a full-time or part-time employee’s usual work day, employers need to pay them their base pay rate for the ordinary hours they would have normally worked. This applies even when an employee is on paid annual leave during a shutdown.

The minimum pay rate doesn’t include any loadings, overtime or penalty rates that they usually get for working that day. An employee’s roster can’t be changed to deliberately avoid this payment.

Article courtesy of the Fairwork Ombudsman. For more information visit www.fairwork.gov.au

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: WHAT ARE THEY AND DO I NEED ONE?

What is an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)?

An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free work-based support program aimed at enhancing the emotional, mental, and psychological well-being of all employees. An EAP service allows employees to access external professional mental health support that can assist with personal or work-related problems, which can adversely impact performance and employee well-being.

This means that whether an employee is experiencing ordinary work stress, relationship concerns, issues with a particular colleague, burnout or some other health condition, to name a few examples, counselling services via EAP can help.

EAP services are also available to employees and their immediate families and may be accessible in person, via telephone, or through video conferencing. Some EAP providers may even offer live chat messaging as an alternative.

Importantly, these services are designed to be 100 per cent anonymous and confidential so those who access them can do so without fear of judgement or repercussion.

Why should I offer this program to my employees?

After a tough couple of years managing financial difficulties, staff shortages, increased workloads, and heightened general risk as a product of the COVID-19 pandemic, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that employees are suffering from burnout at a higher rate than ever before. A report from 2022 revealed that 46 per cent of Australian workers have admitted to suffering from burnout – an 8 per cent increase from 2021.

Prevention is the end goal, but the journey towards that involves working to reduce the impacts of burnout on employees. This should be a key focus for business owners, including spotting any early warning signs and ensuring that your people know where they can access support. Implementing an EAP in your business is an essential step in this process.

Increased job satisfaction, improved staff retention, staff engagement, and productivity, and decreased absenteeism are just some of the many benefits of promoting mental health and investing in employee well-being.

What can my business do to create and maintain a safe and inclusive workplace?

Whether it’s working to reduce the stigma or encouraging employees to effectively unwind and switch off, employers must ensure they create and maintain a safe and inclusive workplace for all staff. This involves removing or otherwise managing the risk of discrimination in the workplace, including against any employee who may be experiencing health, including mental health, conditions (also recognised as disability). The failure to do so may otherwise result in a claim of disability discrimination or general protections (discrimination).

Article courtesy of FCB Workplace Law. For more information visit www.fcbgroup.com.au

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eINVOICING – THE FUTURE IS OPEN

Electronic invoicing (or eInvoicing) is the automated digital exchange of invoice information between suppliers' and buyers' software through a secure network.

With eInvoicing:

- Suppliers won't need to print, post or email paper-based or PDF invoices
- Buyers won't need to manually enter or scan invoices into their software
- Businesses can connect once and immediately transact with everyone on the same network.

Australia has adopted the Peppol (Pan-European Public Procurement Online) framework as the common standard for eInvoicing. Peppol eInvoicing is a new channel that is a more efficient, accurate and secure way to transact with your suppliers and buyers than PDF and email.

Last year the Australian Taxation Office approximated the cost of processing an invoice in three ways, comparing the cost of processing a paper, PDF and einvoice. The differences are clear:

- Paper invoices - approximately \$A30 per invoice
- PDF Invoices - approximately \$A27 per invoice
- eInvoice - less than \$A10 per invoice

Multiplying these figures by the number of invoices you send and receive on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis (i.e. your invoice volume over a given period) gives you an idea of the total cost for each type of system and the savings you could be making by adopting Peppol eInvoicing.

A product register has been established to help business and government identify eInvoicing-ready software products, which can be found at <https://softwaredevelopers.at.gov.au/eInvoicing-Ready-productregister>

Several of these suppliers offer low or no-cost options for businesses of all sizes to send and receive invoices.

TRAINING AWARD 2024

Applications are open now for the 2024 Training Award.

Do you have an employee you think would benefit from some professional development? The AWIA Training Award may be just what you are looking for. The award is a cash grant of A\$2500, and is open to any employee of a member company. Award criteria can be found on our website under the News tab (Training Award Criteria).

All members are encouraged to get their applications in as soon as possible. If you need any assistance, please contact Richard Newbigin (email: richard@wireassociation.org.au or 1300 942 500).

Let's keep good people within our industry through assisting with their professional development.



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AWIA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & CHRISTMAS DINNER

The Parliament Room at the Imperial Hotel in Melbourne's CBD was the venue for this year's AGM and Christmas dinner. Thirty attendees from 17 member companies attended on the night, and it was really pleasing to see some of our newer members taking the opportunity to catch up with their peers during the meeting and over dinner.

Situated at the top end of Bourke Street and opposite the Parliament Buildings, the Imperial Hotel and The Cricketer's Bar of the Hotel Windsor mark the eastern gateway to the city, and it's probably appropriate that two pubs welcome visitors to Melbourne given its history as a gold rush capital. Tales of a secret tunnel between the Parliament and The Imperial to facilitate the drinking and sexual proclivities of Victoria's lawmakers are apparently unfounded, and the tunnel beneath Parliament serves a far more mundane and practical use we've been informed.

Following the Finance Report from treasurer Glenn Otter, and the annual report provided by Director/Secretary Richard Newbigin, AWIA president, Graham Braithwaite, gave a powerful and interactive address about what it means to belong to an industry association which was well received by those present. Networking with industry peers remains front and centre for most members as a way of keeping up to date and getting support.

Membership levels continue to slowly increase and benchmark quite well against other not for profit (NFP) bodies with net change in membership levels for 2022 up by 5.8% compared with an industry average of plus 1.5%.

Sponsorship and member subscription continue to be the main sources of revenue with interest income now important to annual revenue as well. The Australian Tax Office is continuing on its path towards a self-assessment model of tax exempt status for NFP's by 30 June 2024, however advice from third parties indicates that this model may not be completed until May 2024. The loss of its tax exempt status would certainly curtail some of the work that the Association is currently involved with, which would not only be unfortunate, but also quite unfair to the industry association sector as a whole given its substantial net benefit to the economy.

Our committee for the new year has now been formed and will be conveyed to members separately. Graham Braithwaite,

Charles Johnstone and Glenn Otter were all elected unopposed as President, Vice-President and Treasurer respectively and are thanked for their support and hard work for the AWIA and the wire industry in general over the past year.

AWIA MEMBERSHIP – GROW YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS

AWIA membership has many benefits or your business:

- **One voice for many** – When government decisions threaten to reduce your ability to do business then we speak for you. This includes input to the maintenance and revision of Australian, and joint Australian and New Zealand, Standards.
- **Education** – Regular newsletters, free technical data and standards access.
- **Support** – Got a technical problem? Call the AWIA and we will put you in touch with the people that can help.
- **Opportunities to meet new customers** - Up to two Conference(s) each year with key business enhancement seminars and selected technical presentations, national and regional meetings with industry peers (subject to travel restrictions).
- **Promote your professionalism** – Membership entitles you to use of the AWIA and other applicable association logos for your signage and stationery.

In addition to these very tangible benefits, the new and updated AWIA website contains member contacts, products and services information plus hyperlinks to member websites.

AWIA membership also means access to our affiliated Associations including American Fencing Association (AFA), Australian Certification Authority for Reinforcing Steel Ltd (ACRS), Institute of Spring Technology (IST), Spring Manufacturers Institute (SMI) and Wire Association International (WAI). As well as membership to our other Associations as applicable - AFIA, RSMA, TFAA at no extra cost.

Above all else, AWIA membership is really about growth—growth for yourself and growth for your business.

Contact AWIA Director Richard Newbigin for a one-on-one conversation on 1300 942 500 or email: richard@wireassociation.org.au



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- Bekaert International Singapore
- Bliss & Reels
- Boynes Springs
- Builders Direct Hardware
- Castle International
- Central National Australia
- Chembuild Pty Ltd
- Concept Wire Industries
- Doogood Australia
- Gilbert Metal
- Idee Parfait
- IIL Australia
- InfraBuild Wire
- Kingspan Insulation
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- Wiredex Wire Products
- Wire Displays NZ
- Wiretainers Pty Ltd



2024

8 - 11 January

Steelfab
Expo Centre Sharjah
Sharjah, UAE
www.steelfabme.com

18 - 23 January

Imtex Forming
Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), Bengaluru, India
www.imtex.in

23 - 26 January

Fencetech
Music City Centre, Nashville, TN, USA
www.americanfenceassociation.com/fencetech/attend/#show_info

30 January - 1 February
wire Mexico 2024

Cintermex, Monterrey, Mexico
www.mdna.com

15 - 19 April

wire 2024
Dusseldorf Exhibition Halls
Duseldorf, Germany
<https://mdna.com/show/wire>

17 - 19 April

Australian Manufacturing Week
International Convention Centre
Sydney, NSW
www.australianmanufacturingweek.com.au

11 - 13 May

China International Spring Industry Exhibition 2024
China Import and Export Fair Complex
Guangzhou, China
www.julang.com.cn

21 May

AWIA Mid year conference
TBA

22 - 23 May

Workplace Health & Safety Show
Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre
Melbourne, VIC
www.whsshow.com.au

4 - 6 June

Hire24
Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre
Brisbane, Australia
<https://mdna.com/show/wire>

11 - 12 June

WAI Operations Summit & Wire Expo
Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT, USA
wireworld.com/event/wai-operations-summit-wire-expo-2024.html

21 - 23 August

ASIAL Security Exhibition & Conference
International Convention Centre
Sydney, NSW
www.asial.com.au/Web/Web/Events/Security-Conference-and-Exhibition.aspx

4 - 5 September

Workplace Health & Safety Show
Sydney Showground, Sydney NSW
www.whsshow.com.au

11 - 12 September

The Fence Show & Security Expo
South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa Expo Center
Las Vegas, NV, USA
<https://fenceshow.com/event-info>

17 September

AWIA Annual General Meeting
TBA

25 - 28 September

wire China 2024
Shanghai New International Expo Center
Shanghai, China
www.wireworld.com/event/wire-china-2024

2 - 4 October

CASMI / SMI Metal Engineering eXpo 2024
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center
Rosemont IL USA
www.casmi-springworld.org

26 November

AWIA Fencing Meeting and Christmas Party
TBA

27 - 29 November

Wire & Cable India 2024
Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai, India
www.wireworld.com/event/wire-cable-india.html

Letters to the Editor

If you have suggestions for future articles or want to voice your opinion on important issues facing the sector, please feel free to drop the AWIA a line. Email editor@wireassociation.org.au

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