

Bray CONSTRUCTIONS BEAT

Autumn 2009



Excellence in Customer Service

If you're receiving this newsletter, it'll come as no surprise to you that Bray Constructions has won the 2009 Australian Achiever Award for Excellence in Customer Service. This annual award is judged by an independent panel who contact businesses' customers to measure each business' customer service performance. Although we've entered a number of times before and scored "Highly Recommended" each time, this is our first time winning the award. After careful scrutiny and research the judges awarded Bray Constructions a score of 100%. Many thanks to those who took calls from the Award panel.



Extend Up or Out?

Often we are speaking with people who need to extend their home, but aren't sure whether to go upstairs or extend into the back yard. There is certainly not one correct response to this situation and it will inevitably come down to a matter of personal choice. Height restrictions, planning restrictions, budget, required accommodation, short or long term plan, age of occupants and value of and availability of land will all play a part, but ultimately a choice has to be made about what direction to go in. There are a few things to consider in this situation.



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Reg. Commercial CBL-502

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Extend Up or Out? cont.

Often it's worthwhile to have some sketch (or preliminary) drawings done of both options. This will give you some ideas about how the extension will work with your existing home and also what parts of the existing building you'll be able to retain and make use of in the proposals. It will also give you a better understanding of exactly how much of your back yard would be required in a ground floor addition.

Price is always a factor of course. Although there is no formula for it, the "rule of thumb" says that extending upstairs will generally cost more than a ground floor addition. The reasons for this are that more structural support will be required for an upper floor and it takes more time and materials to extend services (power, plumbing, heating and cooling) to the upper floor. Again, there is no formula for this and the difference could be anywhere between negligible and significant depending on the specific circumstances and design.

The photos you see here are before and after photos of a house in Elsternwick where we added a first floor in 2008. We designed and built a new bedroom suite, including walk-in robe and ensuite bathroom along with a kitchenette and lounge area, essentially giving a second self-contained part to the house.



Foundations For a Future



Kenny



Lukas



Brendan



Liam



Phil



Damian

At Bray Constructions, we have a proud tradition of training apprentices and it's a tradition that has lived in our company for many years now. Nev himself was an apprentice carpenter on the Mornington peninsula a long, long time ago. Kenny and Lukas each did their carpentry apprenticeships within Bray Constructions and each has now trained numerous apprentices themselves.

Training an apprentice can be challenging. More often than not, the apprentice is a young person and just as often it is their first full-time job. Invariably they will test different boundaries - punctuality and proper attention to their work are regular features - and they sometimes need to be pulled back into line. But the rewards of successfully guiding a young person through a 4 year apprenticeship generally outweigh the struggle to get there - satisfaction of having a freshly trained workforce available and providing a future for the industry (as well as for the apprentice), but also tapping into and networking with a younger generation and discovering their new ideas.

Recently in Bray Constructions' history we have seen Brendan, Liam (both in 2008) and Phil (2009) complete their apprenticeships and stay on as full-time carpenters, which is very satisfying as an employer and trainer. Of course a carpenter's training does not stop at the completion of an apprenticeship, so we will continue to provide guidance and training for so long as they choose to be a part of the Bray Constructions team. No doubt we will learn a thing or two from them too.

At the time of writing, Damian stands as our sole apprentice, however we expect to take on a new apprentice shortly to not only support our current team, but to ensure that we have access to skilled tradespeople well into the future.

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