

Heard of Roothing New Zealand? Herd of Contractors

I'd like to start the first of my regular columns by thanking Construction News for the opportunity to provide this regular column. I also thought that because not a lot of people have heard about Roothing New Zealand I had better first say a few words about "Who we Are and What we Do".

Roothing New Zealand is the industry association that represents contractors who build and maintain this country's land transport infrastructure. Our members carry out by far by the majority of this country's road maintenance and construction and have a collective turnover of around \$3 billion pa. Our members range from large national contractors such as Fulton Hogan and DownerEdiWorks to small family businesses like J & J Walters in Marton.

Roothing New Zealand was formed some years ago to help move the contracting industry into this century by becoming more professional and progressive. To become a member of Roothing New Zealand contractors must show that they operate according to Roothing New Zealand values on a daily basis. These values are to be professional and progressive, positive and constructive, environmentally and socially aware and to be committed to sustainability.

Using that as a basis Roothing New Zealand has been successful over the last five years in

- developing a strategy with Government to successfully grow the contracting industry by 40% to meet road construction demands
- introducing collaborative procurement into the rooting sector to improve value for money for clients and to speed up the delivery of construction projects
- introducing Industry Self Governance into the contracting industry such that contractors collectively take responsibility for their performance. This has resulted in improved health and safety through Operate Safe and improved asphalt production quality through APAS (the Asphalt Plant Accreditation Scheme)
- establishing the Excellence in Rooting Awards that celebrate leadership and excellence and recognizes all parties involved in a project. The Awards also recognize those who take best practice to a new higher level
- establishing an Annual Conference that profiles the latest national and international best practice across the rooting sector.

While all this is a good stuff, Roothing New Zealand's initiatives did not begin just five years ago. Over the previous fifteen years Roothing New Zealand's predecessor the New Zealand Pavement & Bitumen Contractors' Association successfully helped to facilitate

- the introduction of mandatory quality assurance systems for contractors working in the rooting sector
- the move away from prescriptive method and materials based contracts for rooting work to performance based contracts
- the introduction of ten year Performance Specified Maintenance Contracts that required significant contractor expertise in asset management

- improvements in health and safety best practice and training across the roading industry.

Roading New Zealand works collaboratively and professionally with all stakeholders and provides expert commentary on proposed legislation, regulation, policy and technical issues that affect the sector. We generally make one or two submissions a week on sector issues and key submissions are posted on our website www.roadingnz.org.nz

Our latest submissions are on the Infrastructure Facts and Issues document for a National Infrastructure Plan, the proposed Road Safety Strategy as it affects contractors, and proposed changes to TEC funding for industry training. Why don't you check them out to see if you agree with what we are saying!

As well as making numerous submissions on legislation, policy and regulation Roothing New Zealand drives a lot of improvements in technical best practice across the roading sector. We have around 24 committees working on over 40 separate initiatives involving around 70 of Roothing New Zealand members' employees. These people are considered leaders in their areas with some holding Engineering Doctorates. We work closely with our key clients in the sector to collectively implement these improvements in technical best practice through new and revised specifications

You can check out the work of these committees also on our website www.roadingnz.org.nz by clicking on "Committees". We receive no Government funding for this work which costs Roothing New Zealand and its members around \$500,000 pa.

Looking to the future Roothing New Zealand will continue to work with its stakeholders to improve procurement processes, best practice, industry self governance and industry skills and capacity to lift the productivity of the sector thereby increasing New Zealand's economic growth.

I look forward to stimulating debate and change through this column.