

DATA

**News about construction and property in Australia and the World**

Issue Number 2/2010

1> Greek Wealth

The Greek Government may be losing up to \$30 billion every year as a result of tax evasion. As Greece struggles to recover from its debt crisis, investigators are targeting blatant tax evaders – such as those in the wealthy northern suburbs of Athens. Here officials found that only 324 residents had admitted to owning a pool in their tax return, even though satellite photos revealed a total of 16,974 pools in the neighbourhood.

www.nytimes.com, 1 May 2010

2> Australia Leads Recovery

A global survey of major institutional and private investors by Colliers International found Australia was expected to outperform other regions in terms of an office market revival. Of the Pacific investors, 38% think Australian offices will offer the best return in three to five years.

Australian Financial Review, 15 April 2010

3> Arts Price Pressures

Fewer transactions in the UK housing market has reduced supply to the Arts & Antiques market as people are less likely to part with their collections when not moving house. A recent survey of Arts & Antiques prices by RICS has shown that more surveyors were reporting rising rather than falling prices, and that generally the lower end of the market was outperforming the higher end.

www.rics.org, 7 April 2010

4> UK Commercial Property Shrinks

Commercial property owners in the UK have been forced to take the wrecking ball to buildings rather than leave them empty. For the first time since records began more than 10 years ago, the amount of floorspace has shrunk, as owners could not afford to keep paying empty property rates and very little new floorspace has been added through development.

www.ft.com, 5 April 2010

5> OECD House Prices

A broad view of house prices compiled by the OECD shows that in many countries prices rose for more than a decade from the mid-1990s – creating boom periods much longer than the typical six years. In Australia, Canada and Germany house prices remained relatively unscathed by the economic downturn. A very steep climb in Australian house prices from 2005 through 2007 was followed by a minor dip during the GFC, which has since recovered losses.

www.community.oecd.org, 26 April 2010

6> Floating Hotel

Imagine floating through the clouds in a 30-metre tall airship, complete with penthouse, four duplex apartments, five smaller ones and glass viewing floors – while leaving no carbon footprint. The Aircruise is the vision of UK-based designer Nick Talbot, and will be unveiled at a tourism conference in Brisbane in July.

www.smh.com.au, 29 April 2010

7> New GBCA Steel Credit

The Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) have introduced a new Green Star 'Steel' credit into all of its Green Star rating tools. The new credit will remove the focus on high percentages of recycled steel content in new steel products, and instead encourage dematerialised efficiencies in the production of steel as a construction material.

www.gbca.org.au, 28 April 2010

8> Vertical Farming

Voted one of the top 50 breakthrough ideas of 2009 by Time magazine, vertical farming is hailed by some as the answer to making the most of limited farming land. A former fishing village in Devon, UK is now home to one of the world's first vertical crop growing systems. The hydroponic system uses recycled water and is monitored by computer to create the optimum growing environment.

www.ricsbusiness.com, April 2010

9> Cost Pressures Emerge

Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates the possible emergence of construction cost pressures during 2010. Dr Andrew Wilson, Senior Economist and National Research and Development Manager for Davis Langdon commented: "Skilled labour and material shortages and a less competitive tender market for contractors will mean building cost pressures will emerge over the shorter-term. A lower dollar will also increase the cost of fuel and other imported goods and building components."

www.davislangdon.com, May 2010

10> Building Information Modelling (BIM) Findings

In Davis Langdon's recent survey on the take-up of BIM, there was an overwhelming sense that this new way of working would greatly benefit the industry. Respondents felt that maximum benefit for a project could be achieved if BIM was incorporated in the early stages of a project. More particular advantages were also highlighted, such as reduced cost risks, more consistent documentation, early tendering and more accurate Life Cycle Cost Analysis.

Obstacles included changes to the way we work – in terms of timing, ownership and coordination of documentation, resistance to change from different parts of the industry, legal considerations and the need to gauge the different types of skill sets when starting new projects. The industry itself is slowly awakening to the possibilities of BIM, with some having made the leap and others adopting a wait and see approach. Davis Langdon is committed to the adoption of BIM and is actively investigating how we might best utilise BIM across our service lines.

[To discuss further please contact Alan Jenkins, Davis Langdon Principal, on \(02\) 9956 8822.](#)

11> Davis Langdon Leading Indicators

Davis Langdon's Leading Indicators (published in Property Australia) captures market sentiment and the movement in construction prices across Australian cities. This edition focuses on the Industrial market.

www.davislangdon.com, June 2010

12> Appointment of New Senior Economist and National Research and Development Manager

Davis Langdon has appointed Dr Andrew Wilson as Senior Economist and National Research and Development Manager.

Davis Langdon's Managing Director, Mark Beattie, said Dr Wilson's appointment would add significantly to Davis Langdon's extensive research and reporting activities in the Australian property and construction sector.

Prior to taking up his role with Davis Langdon, Dr Wilson was Senior Economist and Research Manager for Rider Levett Bucknall. Dr Wilson was also a career academic and researcher at RMIT University and the CRC for Construction Innovation. Dr Wilson has widely published in academic journals and the national media and has been engaged as participant and manager in a broad spectrum of research projects covering economics and the built environment.

Located in the Melbourne office, Dr Wilson is a regular construction market commentator for the Australian Financial Review, the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, the Adelaide Advertiser, the Brisbane Courier Mail and the West Australian, and has authored numerous articles for industry-based publications covering a wide range of property and construction issues.

"We are delighted to have Dr Wilson join the Davis Langdon team," said Mr Beattie.

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www.davislangdon.com

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