

FAIRWEATHER WINS ROBERT LAW AWARD

This year marked the 20th occasion that the Master Builders Association has presented the Robert Law Award to an individual or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the building industry in WA. Master Builders director Michael McLean reports on this year's recipient.

WILLIAM Fairweather was born and educated in Scotland, and entered the building industry at age 18, in his hometown of Dollar. At age 23 he emigrated to Queensland, spending 12 years in that state working as a builder.

Attracted by the Western Australian gold rush, he travelled to Coolgardie in 1895 and established W. Fairweather, Builder and Contractor. One of his largest projects was the Premier Hotel in Kunanalling.

When Master Builders was formed in 1898, William Fairweather was a founding member.

In 1901, W. Fairweather, Builder and Contractor relocated to Subiaco. One of the builder's first projects was to build the Monastery Church for the Redemptorist community, which was located in North Perth.

From 1907 the business worked out of 137 Hamersley Road in Subiaco, and constructed premises for the Morning Herald in James Street, additions to the Maylands School and the Shenton Park Hotel in 1906.

William's son, also named William, joined the business in 1916. Among many jobs undertaken over the next years were the Bishop's Palace in Victoria Square, St Columba's Roman Catholic Church in South Perth, the Victoria Insurance Building in St Georges Terrace, Windsor Court Flats in Adelaide Terrace, Beacon Theatre in Beaconsfield and the Union Bank premises on the corner of Murray and Milligan Streets.

William Fairweather was elected MBA's 10th president from 1919-1920 when MBA had 62 members. At the time he became president, Fairweather was building the St. John of God Hospital in Subiaco.

The ownership of W. Fairweather, Builder and Contractor was restructured in 1926 and the name changed to W. Fairweather & Son. The business won the contract for the Muresk Agricultural College in 1926.

William Fairweather Junior was elected the 18th president of Master Builders WA in 1938-40. Fairweather was respected as a good builder, who during the Second World War undertook a large number of Defence Department projects, including the airfield at Learmonth. After the war, the firm built the Princess Margaret Hospital nurses quarters, the South Fremantle Power Station, the East Perth Football Club grandstand and the Rivervale Hotel.

The Builders Registration Act commenced in 1940 and William Fairweather Senior

received Registration Certificate No.1.

William Brownlie Fairweather, grandson of the founder, joined the firm in 1956. (Builders Registration No.1881).

Bill Fairweather Junior, Registered Builder No.23, was elected national president of Master Builders Federation in 1957-58.

In 1961, W. Fairweather & Son became an incorporated company and moved to its present premises at 245 Churchill Avenue, Subiaco. Projects of note during this period were the Dalkeith Picture Theatre, United Insurance Co, Corunna Apartments Claremont, Broadway Fair Shopping Centre and Catholic Education Centre.

Peter Fairweather, the great grandson of the founder, joined the firm in 1990. He is the holder of Builders Registration No. 10198. Peter became the managing director in 2004, and under his leadership, Fairweather's principal areas of activity have been in the refurbishment, upgrading and alteration to institutional buildings, offices, retail stores and supermarkets, with the emphasis on projects of a specialised or difficult nature or of heritage significance.

Projects of note have included:

- UWA Student Services Precinct.
- The Weld Club Master Plan Refurbishment.
- Curtin University Accessibility Inclusion Plan.
- University of Notre Dame School of Medicine, St Teresa Library and Tannock Hall.
- Presbyterian Ladies College Library.
- Scotch College Early Learning Centre.
- Archdiocese of Perth – St Patrick's Basilica.
- Niana Homestead.
- Patricia Kailis Centre.
- Peter Moyes Anglican School.
- International School of WA.

W. Fairweather & Son has a remarkable history surviving world wars, a depression, booms and busts, numerous regulatory changes and different governments. It is a credit to its directors and management team that W. Fairweather & Son has evolved over time to still be shaping the future of WA's built environment 122 years after it was formed.

W. Fairweather & Son is an inspiration to all builders and a testimony to hard work and dedication. The Robert Law Award has once again gone to a deserving recipient.