PROFESSIONAL

Pest Manager

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INCORPORATING PESTALK

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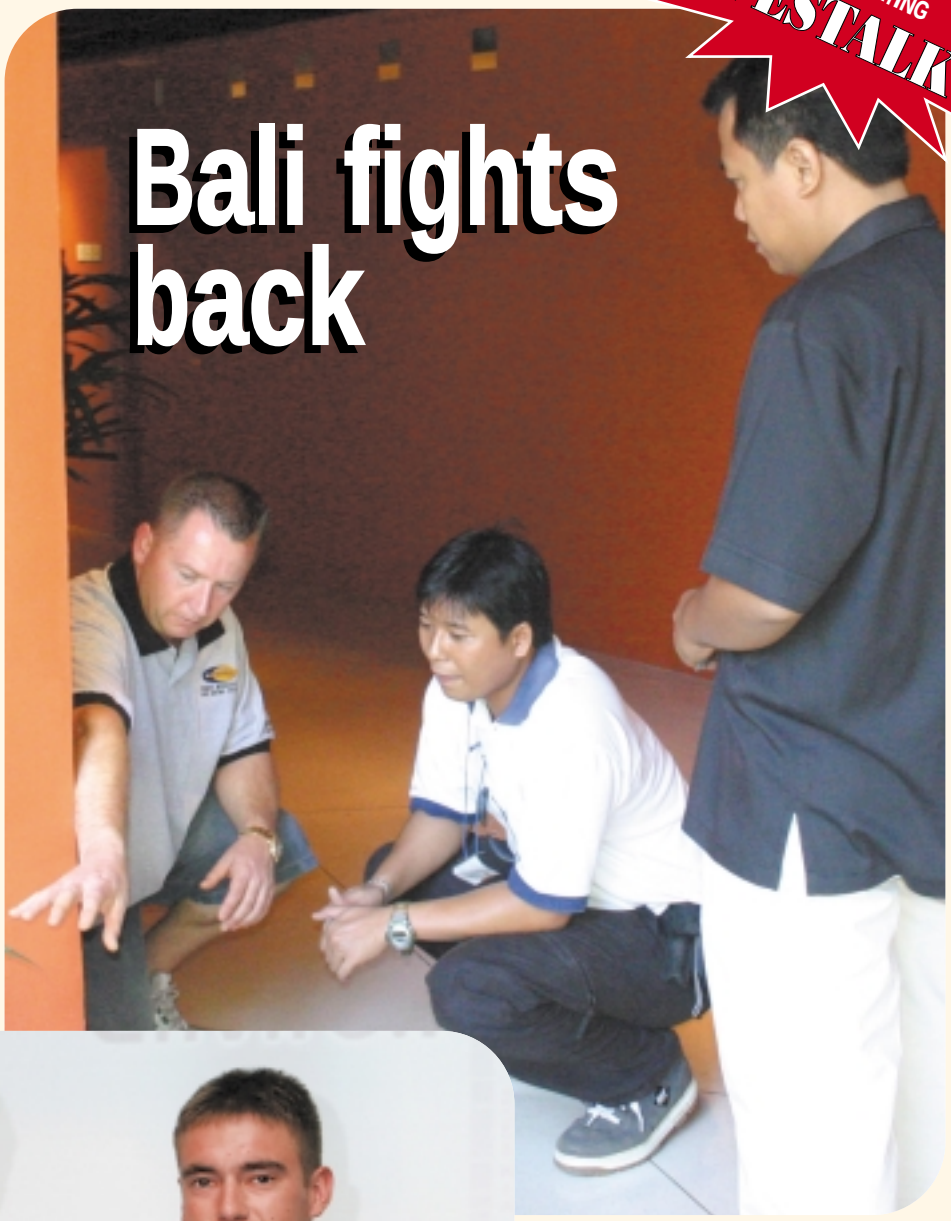

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BCITF Area Co-Ordinator, Kev Carroll, (left) presents Tom Prest with his award.

Excellence brings its rewards

Townsville pest management technician, Tom Prest, has taken out the Queensland Housing Industry Association/Building and Construction Industry Training Fund – Qld (BCITF) Best Trainee/Apprentice Award for 2005.

Tom, who has just been promoted to the position of senior technician with Environ Enterprises, was a last minute entry in the awards. However, his credentials were nothing short of outstanding.

Over two years of study with the Queensland Open Learning Institute, Tom completed Certificate II & III Pest Management Asset Maintenance Technical and two practical assessments in Pest Management and Termite Inspection and Detection/Treatment.

In his citation accompanying the award entry, Environ Enterprises owner and general manager, Gill Christiansen, said Tom Prest "has shown exemplary dedication, service and commitment to the pest management industry, Environ Enterprises and his clients".

"Tom is in the high end of his chosen field, and we know he will commit and strive for even higher levels of achievement," Gill said.

"He has met some very tough guidelines. As well as performing his daily tasks, Tom has also included studies and training in his time frame.

"Sadly during his two years of study, training and work commitments, he suffered a tragic loss when his young son passed away.

"This certainly would take the wind out of anyone's sails. However, Tom has shown courage, vision and maturity beyond his years, by completing his studies: a huge accolade for a 22 year old.

"Tom now has a bright future ahead of him and I can say that we have every belief in him to succeed!

"Our client feedback surveys say it all: 'We love Tom. He is a very professional and well-presented young man'"

As well as having been promoted, Tom Prest has also taken on management of part of the Environ business.

His goals for the next two years include achieving:

- Certificate III Asset Maintenance Pest Management: Business;
- successful completion of Work Place Health & Safety Officers Course; Construction;
- Certificate IV Work Place Trainer & Assessor;
- Certificate IV Asset Maintenance Pest Management; and
- Certificate IV Business Management.

He is also considering undertaking a university degree. ■

PestCert membership taking off

Left:
Senator Macdonald presents Environ Service's Gill Christiansen with his certificate of accreditation.

Below:
Ron DeGroot and Senator Ian Macdonald at the northern launch of PestCert.

The Australian pest management industry's professional accreditation program, PestCert, has signed up its first accredited members and numbers are already starting to swell.

The first pest managers to gain PestCert accreditation are already reaping the benefits from their newfound, enhanced, public profile. And the now independent program has also received significant support from the Federal government.

By now most pest mangers would be aware that to become PestCert accredited they must prove they have successfully undergone demanding training and passed independently conducted tests of knowledge, skills and experience.

They must also prove their commitment to regularly updating and upgrading their professional skills and technical knowledge.

As PPM goes to press, 20 businesses have gained PestCert accreditation and over 100 accreditation applications are being assessed and processed.

"At this stage, we are concentrating on getting pilot group participants accredited as they're the ones who committed to the program and helped in its formation from day one," said Ron DeGroot, PestCert's general manager.

The first professional pest management business to become PestCert accredited is from South Australia: Murray's Pest Control Barossa branch.

Murray's Pest Control Barossa wasted no time in making sure local consumers and businesses got to hear about the coup by arranging a burst of publicity and advertising in local newspapers.

According to general manager, Kevin Rayner, "The response we've had to date has been nothing short of amazing."

"It is obvious people have been looking for a clear indication about what pest management business are trained and equipped to deliver a thoroughly professional service. They also want to know who is committed to delivering true professionalism as well.

"By becoming PestCert accredited we have been able to demonstrate that we are committed to meeting exacting, nationally agreed standards of excellence, professionalism, quality, security and safety," he said.

For Kevin Rayner and his team of seven technicians and support staff, deciding to become PestCert accredited was easy.

"Murray Pest Control's Barossa branch was initiated in the late 1980s to provide a professional quality pest management service to local home owners and businesses," Kevin said.

"From day one we have taken a great pride in the quality of our service and professionalism and we have all worked hard to win and keep the trust of our customers.

"To maintain those standards, Murrays has made a huge commitment to professional staff training and invested heavily in keeping up with latest technological advances."

With rigorous quality and risk management systems in place it is little wonder that Murray Pest Control has picked up along the way, numerous "badges of excellence"' including ISO 9002 (quality assurance) and HACCP accreditation and AQIS endorsement.

"For us PestCert is about helping people feel more comfortable and certain about who they choose to keep their homes and businesses safe and secure," he said.

"The establishment of PestCert – which both mirrors and promotes the same values, standards and ethics that rule our business – means we can proudly wear another badge, that of 'industry best practice'."

Kevin, who is also a Certificate IV registered trainer and assessor, said he never stops being amazed by pest managers who have no idea what is required to become a fully trained professional.

"People keep ringing me up and ask me to get them a certificate without comprehending what kind of study, training and input they need to make. They seem to think that just because they have been spraying chemicals around the place for the past few years, they know all there is to know," he said.

"They have no idea about what

'duty of care' means. However, when they get hit with a massive claim from a consumer who thought, quite rightly, that as a registered pest manager they should have known about, seen, reported and fixed a problem, they are going to be hung out to dry.

"There is no way their insurer will stand by them if they have not done the right thing simply because they haven't been trained to look out for problems or issues.

"That's why insurers are looking for their clients to train up, qualify for and gain PestCert accreditation. It's not just the public who want to know who is competent, insurers want it too," he said.

The second cab off the rank, but first to become PestCert accredited in his home State, operates in Victoria's central north.

John Haby, who owns and operates Midstate Pest Control, set up his business specifically to provide local home owners and businesses with the highest possible quality of professional pest management service.

"We have always been proud of the quality of our service and value the trust placed in us by our customers," John said.

"PestCert accreditation makes it just that much easier for people to maintain that trust and surety about the value and quality of our service."

Again, like Kevin, John has used materials and assistance provided by PestCert to gain serious, widespread publicity to promote the new status of his business to existing and potential new customers.

Midstate Pest Control's John Haby with another happy and informed customer.

Minister launches PestCert up north

The first Queenslanders to get their PestCert 'gong' operate in the Sunshine State's north.

At a special regional launch function, held in conjunction with AEPMA's Northern Exposure seminar in Townsville, the Federal Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, Senator Ian Macdonald, presented six pest management businesses and four technicians with certificates of accreditation.

Companies which were officially accredited were: Tactic Pest Control (Townsville), represented by general manager, George Bell; Marz Attack Pest Control (Kelso), John Maher; George's Pest Control (Mount Pleasant), George Dodsworth; Environ Enterprises (Garbutt), Gill Christiansen; Elite Pest Control (Thuringowa Central), Rodney Greer; and Absolute Aussie Pest Management (Yungaburra), Eddie Pearce.

Individual pest managers who gained their certificates of accreditation were: Edward Slater, Amalgamated Pest Control, Ingham; Greg Hunt, Amalgamated Pest Control, Garbutt; Tom Busby, Amalga-mated Pest Control, Garbutt; and Michael Blacklock, Direct Pest Control, Townsville.

In his speech, Senator Macdonald urged pest managers across Australia to take advantage of the PestCert professional accreditation program.

Senator Macdonald said the Australian Government recognised that with the introduction of PestCert the high profile pest management industry was being responsible and taking control of its future.

He said the pest management industry has a poor reputation in many sectors and any initiative to improve professionalism is to be applauded and promoted.

"Continually evolving real and perceived community and consumer expectations are making increased demands on the industry," he said.

"They focus especially on the safe use of chemicals in households and workplaces, and their potential impact on humans and the environment.

"If the industry takes the lead, government can support stewardship initiatives. However, if industry waits to respond, community expectations may leave government with no other reasonable option than to regulate.

"This is why I was pleased to learn of the new PestCert professional accreditation program. I am confident PestCert will benefit its member pest managers. But it will go further than this and, ultimately, enhance the industry's contribution to protecting the public health, food and property of Australians.

"PestCert's accreditation program will ensure pest managers do the right thing by being highly trained and complying with a demanding code of conduct and codes of practice.

"Accreditation will ensure consistent levels of training and assessment, and reinforce the existing legal obligations of pest managers."

Senator Macdonald said PestCert will set requirements for competency above those required for State based licensing and ongoing training, establish a code of professional conduct and ensure compliance with these standards.

"It will also develop strong brand awareness among the community and government, and seek to deliver coregulation with government," he said.

Senator Macdonald said industry stewardship programs like PestCert had a proven track record of delivering cost-effective outcomes for businesses and the community.

"PestCert accreditation will enable pest managers to demonstrate publicly that they are equipped and committed to safely and effectively providing pest management services," he said.

"The more professional you are, the more the public will have confidence in your industry." ■