



GFC INDUSTRIES CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF STEEL EXCELLENCE

GFC INDUSTRIES IS ONE OF THE LEADING STRUCTURAL STEEL FABRICATORS IN VICTORIA. ESTABLISHED IN 1959, 2020 MARKED THE COMPANY'S 60TH YEAR OF OPERATION. HAVING BUILT THEIR NAME ON THE KEY VALUES OF QUALITY, REPUTATION AND RELIABILITY, GFC INDUSTRIES IS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF JUST HOW SUCCESSFUL AN AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING BUSINESS CAN BE.

The story of GFC Industries stretches back 60 years to October 1959 when the three original owners—Greg, Fred and Colin—founded a fabrication company in the northern Melbourne suburb of Campbellfield.

According to Ron Kandell (Managing Director, GFC Industries), "The company was named after the three

original owners; they used the first initials of each of their names. And so, GFC was born."

The company started out manufacturing small fire doors, before progressing to other doors types for projects such as power stations and automotive clients like Ford and Holden, among many others.

Then the business went through a phase where it couldn't sustain three owners. So Fred Fritz bought out Greg and Colin, and then expanded GFC's offering to include specialist formwork fabrication.

"In 1968, Fred partnered with John King, who was a formwork guru. Soon, GFC Industries was working solely for John King. So, Fred invited John to become a partner in the business," said Ron.

Over the years, GFC has completed a range of high-profile specialised formwork projects right across Australia. Just some of their formwork projects include the Loy Yang Power Station, the South-Eastern and Western Trunk Sewers, the Upper Yarra Reservoir,

Parramatta Square in Sydney's CBD comprises three towers with mixed residential and commercial space.



Melbourne's underground rail loop, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, the Western Link Elevated Road, the Bolte Bridge, and hundreds of others.

Formwork continued to be the company's core business until 1988 when the company diversified into structural steel, which quickly became their main focus. With this diversification into structural steel, GFC Industries worked across sectors such as buildings, shopping centres, bridges, ports, hospitals and many others.

The company's project roster also expanded to include major shopping centres like Chadstone, Werribee Plaza, and The Glen; as well as the Austin, Berwick and Bendigo Hospitals and the Monash Medical Centre. GFC was also involved in the construction of ship loading facilities for Globex and Portland and mail facilities in Dandenong and Ardeer.

"GFC Industries really grew from that point on. Eventually, Fred and John

reached the point where they wanted to step back a bit and semi-retire. That's when they engaged existing employees, like myself, the production manager and general manager to take on the business. That was about 25 years ago—I've been at GFC Industries ever since," said Ron.

GFC INDUSTRIES TODAY

Today, GFC is a proudly home grown Australian company with a strong reputation as a leading fabricator of multi-storey steel buildings.

GFC operates from a 7.5 acre site in Melbourne, with 4,500m² under roof and good hard standing areas. With a team of over 40 highly experienced employees, and a strong network of suppliers and subcontractors, GFC has the capacity and capability to deliver very large and complex projects.

"Today, GFC Industries specialises in multi-level buildings where we can assist in value management. With a capacity of up to 10,000 tonnes per

year, we can take on high tonnages and high volume production. We work on all types of projects, from infrastructure projects for bridges, rail, road and pedestrian, through to shopping centres, hospitals, warehouses and even marine facilities—anything that involves structural steel," said Ron.

"We're extremely adaptable. Whether it's complex steel formwork systems, or infrastructure such as bridges, our specialty is complicated steel structures," said Ron.

GFC takes a unique approach to early engagement with their clients. They then use the information gained during the early planning phases of a project to improve the design, overcome engineering challenges, standardise sections, reduce on-site works, and ultimately deliver the quickest construction solution.

"GFC maintain a commitment to early engagement with clients," Ron said. "Working closely together with clients, architects, engineers and designers, benefits in efficiencies, safety, risk and costs can be achieved for the project—it's really a win for all. We see a real opportunity to progress this much further and set ourselves apart from others."

Ron also highlighted the company's innate ability for accurate, precisely planned work. "I think our business has always had very good attention to detail. We are able to pinpoint where potential risks lie and apply the special care and attention to detail needed to de-risk a project or situation. We implement very well planned out processes to maintain and achieve project and client goals and outcomes," said Ron.

This focus on eliminating risk was clear in a recent GFC Industries project: the supertall residential skyscraper Australia 108 in Melbourne's Southbank precinct. Having topped out in November 2019, Australia 108 became the tallest building in the country by roof height.

"From level 69 to 72 of Australia 108, the building juts out on all sides. This meant that we had to build temporary decks to undertake fabrication work on these levels. The removal of those temporary decks was extremely challenging from a design point of view. To solve the problem, we had to design backwards for the removal of the temporary decks," said Ron.

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GFC PROJECT SUCCESS

80 COLLINS STREET

Situated on a narrow site in central Melbourne, the 80 Collins Street development comprises a 41 storey office tower constructed by Multiplex. The building incorporates a unique cantilevering design with part of the floor area above the sixth floor projecting over a row of adjacent heritage buildings. "This was a very unique project for us," said Ron. "During early engagement and collaboration, many improvements were implemented which resulted in de-risking, improved structural efficiency and bettered the outcomes for the project. We also focused on accelerating the works. In the end we got down to a six day cycle time per floor which enabled us to gain back between one to two months on the program."

PARRAMATTA SQUARE

The CBD of Parramatta in Sydney is currently in the midst of a major

transformation. One of the anchor projects driving this transformation is Parramatta Square which comprises three towers with mixed residential and commercial space. The towers are primarily reinforced concrete buildings, however to deliver one 34 level tower with multiple basement carpark levels in only two years from commencement to building handover, early engagement and planning was essential.

"A triple level jump start occurred. GFC produced three pre-fabricated jump sections utilising large tubes, welded beams and hot rolled sections of structural steel with composite decking slabs. Sloping 26m high columns, just to add to the complexity," said Ron. "The jumps allowed the project to be treated like multiple building sites at once. They are part of the permanent works on the project and enable construction works to start in four different areas at the same time," said Ron.

ABOVE

Left
80 Collins Street

Top Left
271 Spring Street

Top Right
Parramatta Square

Bottom Right
Chadstone Shopping Centre
gridshell roof structure

CHADSTONE SHOPPING CENTRE

A major project highlight for GFC was the assembly and installation of the gridshell roof structure for the redevelopment of Melbourne's iconic Chadstone Shopping Centre.

The work included the construction of an exceptional steel-and-glass roof with a total area of 7,080m². Two key features of the design are its open style, with a gallery-type second floor, and the high, dome-like glass roof that allows plenty of daylight to reach both floors. The glass roof follows the line of the shopping malls below, resulting in a complex free-form gridshell with spans of up to 44m.

GFC was appointed by an international Austrian constructor for the project. The roof components were delivered to GFC's factory where they maximised offsite pre assembly and using specialised transport and logistics, delivered and site installed the structure with 183 individual panels.

"It was the first large major project for this company to perform in Australia and putting trust within another subcontractor you have never dealt with would not have been an easy decision," said Ron. "Following completion of the project.

GFC received a major subcontractor assessment from their organisation and I am proud to say we received a 100% perfect score for which we were all very appreciative."

405 BOURKE STREET

Located in the heart of Melbourne's CBD, 405 Bourke Street is scheduled for completion in 2021. The 39 level building will reach approximately 167 meters high and offer 30 office floors (66,000m²) of Grade A office space. GFC was appointed as the fabricator for the project, and collaborated closely with the builder and the engineers to identify improvements, opportunities and de-risk the project.

The tower incorporates a 14.5m cantilever over an existing 9 storey apartment building, with 25 storeys above the cantilever. GFC fabricated the steel to make this ambitious structure possible. They engaged closely with the builder and the engineers on the project to identify structural improvement opportunities and de-risk the project.

Through workshops and ongoing discussions, GFC Industries has been able to bring their expertise in steel fabrication and connections to overcome the challenges inherent in this complex project.

271 SPRING STREET

271 Spring Street sits within Melbourne's Lonsdale precinct - a historic piece of the CBD with a colourful past and a unique history.

Littered with heritage listed buildings, each with their own story, the site at 271 Spring Street lay undeveloped for several decades. Due to the site's multitude of constraints and complexity (including double stacked City Loop rail tunnels directly beneath the site), previous schemes proposed for the site were not feasible from a cost perspective. The newly constructed 16 storey boutique commercial office building exemplifies the intricate balancing of the needs associated with developing a high-quality office tower, the tenant, and heritage conservation principles.

The off-site fabrication of steelwork, particularly complex members and connections for raking elements resulted in significant time savings on-site. The floor to floor cycles were approximately two to four days depending on the floor complexity. The speed of installation of the steelwork on-site was made possible due to stringent staging and construction plans, together with a simplified and repetitive slab design, which further increased efficiency.



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