

**May 07**  
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## Message from the Director

### Benchmark helps clients produce winning estimates



Exciting times are emerging at Benchmark Estimating Software in early 2007. Recently our UK contingent relocated to a larger office, reflecting our growing presence in this market. It certainly gives me great pride to see the company expand and, in parallel to this, see the software continue to impress our clients.

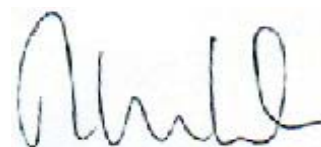
The beauty of Benchmark lies in basing the estimating process on a central Library. This allows organisations, particularly those with a team of estimators, to produce profitable and successful quotes.

The Success Stories in this newsletter reveal that our clients are winning work and benefiting from centralising their data in the Benchmark system. It is great to hear feedback such as this because our aim has always been to help our clients achieve these goals. JMAC Constructions are winning work by getting their estimates 'as close to perfect as possible', thanks to Benchmark's incredible flexibility and unique features like Allocate. And Midwest Civil is experiencing great benefit from the Item Library and the centralisation of their data, which gives them instant access to their rates.

The New Client section also highlights that we continue to attract customers from wide-ranging and diverse industries including civil, landscaping, asphalt, cleaning and signs. This reflects Benchmark's flexibility and further highlights that any professional organisation requiring fast, profitable and winning estimates can get great benefit from Benchmark.

In this May 07 Benews, I would also like to guide your attention to a new section of our Newsletter – Behind Benchmark, on Page 4. Behind Benchmark will give you a profile of one of our staff members, and will appear in every few editions of Benews to give you a feel for who is working for you, behind the scenes at Benchmark.

Yours, in the interest of better estimating,



**Rob MacDonald**  
Director

# product development news

## What's in the upcoming Version 6 upgrade

As always, Benchmark is continuing the pace of our software development, to ensure we provide exceptional value to our clients and keep them at the edge of estimating excellence.

Several new features are currently in the planning, design or testing stage of our development process. We have listened to your requests and will include some very exciting new features in our upcoming upgrade to Version 6 that will provide estimators with unparalleled power and the ability to use Benchmark with even greater flexibility.

The calculator functionality will be greatly expanded, allowing the addition of a wide range of variables. Changes you make to these variables will flow through every instance that they are used in your project, delivering incredible speed, flexibility and accuracy. One example of how variables can be used is shown in the screen shot below.

Routines also have additional functions that will make creating Routines much faster and easier.

You can add variables to the Resource level of a Project. These variables can now be used in your Resource calculations...

...as shown above. You can see that this Resource contains your Item variables - iv(WIDTH) and iv(DEPTH).

When you update variables in your project, Benchmark updates your Resource calculations automatically.

Variables can be created to apply to an individual Item (shown here), to a whole Section, or to your entire Project.

You can even use standard variables for your Item Quantity and Production Rates, in your calculations. When you add or edit these parameters, your calculations will be automatically updated for you.

## new clients

Welcome to the following leading organisations who have recently selected Benchmark as their new estimating system.

These companies represent a diverse range of industries including asphalt, civil, cleaning, landscaping and signs, which highlights Benchmark's excellent flexibility.

Clearwater Asset Services

De Neefe Signs

Druce DP

Mark Webb Landscapes

Ridge Consolidated

Select Civil

## Client Success Story Update

### JMAC Constructions

JMAC Constructions get 'as close to perfect as possible' with Benchmark

Since August of 2005 Brisbane-based Landscape Construction Company, JMAC Constructions, have been using Benchmark Estimating Software to get their estimates as close to perfect as possible through the accuracy, consistency and ease of use provided by Benchmark.

#### Winning jobs by estimating in Benchmark

JMAC recently were the successful tender for the redevelopment projects at Moora Park in Shorncliffe, and Bayside Park at Manly, both in the Brisbane area. These jobs involved redeveloping the existing parks with a mix of landscaping and civil works, including the construction of amenities, walkways, walls and a fresh new atmosphere.

Estimator Tony Sharrock explains how JMAC used Benchmark to win these jobs, saying, "Brisbane City Council provided us with the Bill of Quantities in Excel, which we imported into Benchmark using the Load Spreadsheet feature. We used Allocate to price some of the Items, and we simply built from scratch the one-off Items that were required. Benchmark makes it so easy and extremely accurate to build Items from scratch because you have quick and easy access to all of your Resources and prices within the one system."

**"Benchmark makes it so easy and extremely accurate to build Items from scratch"**

#### Expanding the business and the workforce

Benchmark's ability to help JMAC expand into new regions by allowing them to produce accurate tenders in each regional location was a key focus of the previous success story. Over one year later this continues to be the case. Tony says, "Benchmark makes estimating for work in other regions much more efficient, so we save time, and it makes us very clinical in what we do."



JMAC also discovered, when they recently added a new estimator to the team, that Benchmark simplifies the expansion of their

**"Benchmark makes our estimating more clinical, much easier to control and more accurate"**

workforce because it is "very easy to use and understand, and our new estimator picked it up in no time."

Tony sums up, "The main benefits we get from using Benchmark are that it stores everything in one system; it makes our estimating more clinical, much easier to control and more accurate. It gets ours estimates as close to perfect as possible." Benchmark has undoubtedly helped JMAC streamline their estimating and expand their business, and will continue to do so as JMAC grows into the future.

Visit JMAC online:

[www.jmacconstructions.com.au](http://www.jmacconstructions.com.au)

To view the client list online, go to:  
[www.benchmarkestimating.com/clientlist.php](http://www.benchmarkestimating.com/clientlist.php)

# look who's setting the benchmark

## Client Success Story

### Midwest Civil

Midwest Civil says Benchmark is better than the rest

#### The Software

Estimator Paul Sheridan, of Midwest Civil, says, "Benchmark is better than any other estimating system I have used at any other company."

Midwest Civil has owned Benchmark Estimating Software since April 2003 and receives great benefit from Benchmark's Item Library, and the fact Benchmark captures and controls the company's costing data. Paul says, "Benchmark's Item Library and Project Browser store all of our data and estimates in one central location so we can get instant access to the rates we used in past tenders."

**"Benchmark's overall support is excellent"**

#### The Training

Benchmark's comprehensive training services have ensured Midwest Civil know how to maximise the benefits of Benchmark features. After completing the New User Course, Paul attended an Advanced User Course and commented, "The Advanced User Course gave me many great hints and tips allowing me to utilise many more of Benchmark's features."



#### The Support

Benchmark provides impressive support to ensure clients maximise the business benefits of the software. A consistent theme running through Benchmark's feedback is great after sales service, and Paul agrees, saying, "Benchmark is responsive to our requests and their overall support is excellent."

#### Midwest Civil

As their name implies, Midwest Civil mainly work around Central and Western Victoria, and also work interstate. Employing over 70 people, Midwest Civil is involved in a wide range of civil works comprising road and bridge construction, residential and industrial developments, retaining walls, water and sewerage works, pipeline construction and mine site developments. Midwest describes their business as 'a competent civil construction company operating in many areas of the Construction Industry' and have 'established an impressive reputation for delivering contracts in a timely and cost effective manner.'

To find out what Midwest Civil can do for you, visit their website: [www.midwestcivil.com.au](http://www.midwestcivil.com.au)



## Client Success Stories:

[www.benchmarkestimating.com/clientcasestudies.php](http://www.benchmarkestimating.com/clientcasestudies.php)

## training news

### Get up to Speed!

Visit our website to enrol in one of the following courses.

#### New User Courses

21-22 June Sydney

31 July-1 Aug Perth

22-23 Aug Sydney

25-26 Sept Melbourne

16-17 Oct Brisbane

#### Advanced User Courses

12-13 July Sydney

7-8 Aug Brisbane

19-20 Sept Melbourne

#### Routine Writing Courses

26-27 July Sydney

21-22 Aug Brisbane

3-4 Oct Melbourne

The above dates are subject to change without notice; please consult our website for the latest dates.

# feature focus: resource-based export to Microsoft Project®

## What is the Resource-based Export to Microsoft Project®?

The Resource-based Export to Microsoft Project® exports your key project information out of your Benchmark estimate and into Microsoft Project®. As well as your Items and their associated Resources, the Export transfers your project work breakdown structure, Item durations (which are calculated automatically if you wish), Resource costs, and Summary Cost data such as total Plant, Labour, Materials and Subcontract costs for each Item.

## Why would you use it?

You can quickly and easily use the power of Microsoft Project® for your job. The Resource-based Export to Microsoft Project® will help you manage your project scheduling, resource allocation and cash flows to ensure you effectively share knowledge across your organisation, giving your projects the best chance of running on time and on budget. The benefits of using the Export are outlined below:

Details	<b>Benefits of using the Resource-based Export to Microsoft Project®:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>Save time and money</b> by preparing schedules directly from Benchmark</li> <li>&gt; <b>Get very accurate construction schedules</b> based on your estimate</li> <li>&gt; <b>Determine project cash flows</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Improve operational efficiencies</b> thanks to fast and accurate resource planning</li> <li>&gt; The ability to include your schedule with your estimate for <b>increased marketing effectiveness</b></li> <li>&gt; <b>Fast and accurate reporting on the progress of your project</b></li> </ul>
Project Review	
Summary	
Direct Costs ▶	
Overheads ▶	
Project Total ▶	
Scheduling ▶	
Job Costing ▶	
Export to MPX File	
Resource Based Export (XML)	

## How to use the Resource based Export to Microsoft Project®

Go to the Report menu from the Project Details Maintenance screen, select Scheduling and click on the Resource Based Export (XML) option. Benchmark will create an XML file and open this automatically in Microsoft Project®.

Task Name	Total Cost	Qty	Unit	Rate	Est. Cost	Est. Revenue	Est. Labour	Est. Plant	Est. Materials	Est. Subcontract
1 <input type="checkbox"/> Site Overheads	\$2,190.00	0		\$0.00	\$2,190.00	\$0.00	\$640.00	\$1,550.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
2     Site camp - caravan	\$1,320.00	20	DAY	\$0.00	\$1,320.00	\$0.00	\$320.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
3     Site camp - toilet	\$870.00	20	DAY	\$0.00	\$870.00	\$0.00	\$320.00	\$550.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
4 <input type="checkbox"/> Road and Drainage	\$450,234.22	0		\$0.00	\$450,234.51	\$513,753.00	\$81,484.00	\$46,018.00	\$134,491.00	\$188,243.00
5     Cut to fill within 1 km	\$137,417.78	7086	M3	\$19.39	\$137,417.79	\$177,575.16	\$41,631.00	\$31,128.00	\$0.00	\$64,661.00
6     Strip topsoil to stockpile (allow 150mm lift)	\$9,751.94	4876	M2	\$2.00	\$9,752.00	\$12,580.08	\$4,875.00	\$2,731.00	\$0.00	\$2,145.00
7     Import (purchased fill) place & compact fill to subgrade	\$75,647.45	4234	M3	\$17.87	\$75,647.47	\$97,763.06	\$10,020.00	\$7,057.00	\$44,457.00	\$14,114.00
8     25mm depth of 10mm nom. size Type N asphalt	\$30,863.70	3266	M2	\$9.45	\$30,863.70	\$39,877.86	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$30,864.00
9     20mm depth of 12mm nom. size Type N asphalt	\$40,000.00	3266	M2	\$12.25	\$40,000.00	\$51,074.50	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$40,000.00

Task Name	Work	Duration	Start	Finish
1 <input type="checkbox"/> RENEWAL OF SEWER MAIN	139 hrs	5.88 days	Thu 2/06/05	Fri 10/06/05
2 <input type="checkbox"/> SUPPLY & LAY 150MM SEWER PIPE <1.5m	62 hrs	2.94 days	Thu 2/06/05	Thu 9/06/05
EXCAVATOR 7T - HIRED WITH OPERATOR	12 hrs		Thu 2/06/05	Fri 3/06/05
BACKHOE AND OPERATOR	12 hrs		Thu 2/06/05	Fri 3/06/05
CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR	1 hr		Thu 2/06/05	Thu 2/06/05
TEAM LEADER	12 hrs		Thu 2/06/05	Fri 3/06/05
TEAM MEMBER	25 hrs		Thu 2/06/05	Tue 7/06/05
PIPE 150MM DIAM DWV uPVC S/N4 R/RJ	84 METRE		Thu 2/06/05	Thu 9/06/05
MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS	600 \$		Thu 2/06/05	Thu 9/06/05
3 <input type="checkbox"/> INSTALLATION OF 2 RECEIVING MAINTENANCE HOLES	30 hrs	1.88 days	Thu 2/06/05	Fri 3/06/05
BACKHOE AND OPERATOR	6 hrs		Thu 2/06/05	Thu 2/06/05

- NOTES:**
1. The Resource-based Export to Microsoft Project® operates on Microsoft Project® 2003 and above.
  2. The Resource-based Export to Microsoft Project® is an additional module to the Benchmark Estimating Software FULL and LITE variations and sells for \$AU\$990 which includes GST and 12 months of support and upgrades.
  3. Both Benchmark LITE and FULL come with a standard Export to Microsoft Project®, which exports your Section and Item descriptions and durations as calculated using Benchmark's Duration Calculator.

## behind benchmark

Nigel Watts  
Marketing Manager

Benchmark Estimating Software's Marketing Manager, Nigel Watts, has been with Benchmark since 2001. Nigel's diverse range of roles with Benchmark include leading the Sales and Marketing team, guiding product development and providing long-term satisfaction to clients by finding the best solution for their needs.

*"Working with the Benchmark team, with our clients and with such a great piece of software is a fantastic experience. It is very rewarding and satisfying to see clients improve their estimating practises with Benchmark and to hear the great feedback when we introduce new features. I have dealt with hundreds of businesses in my time at Benchmark; from many different industries and in different countries and it never ceases to amaze me how the ease of use and flexibility of Benchmark continues to meet client's needs."*

Outside of Benchmark, Nigel is a keen windsurfer who loves nothing more than shredding up the ocean at Seven Mile Beach, Gerroa in a strong north-easterly sea breeze.

*"I grew up on and have always loved the water. Lately I have taken up triathlons to diversify and further test my personal limitations; and have drawn much needed inspiration on the cycling leg from a range of Lance Armstrong books and DVD's."*



## trade shows

The Benchmark team invites you to join them at:

**Landscape Australia Expo  
Sydney  
25 - 27 July**

**Landscape Australia Expo  
Melbourne  
29 - 31 August**



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