



## Forging ahead

- Alan Wood, 2/04/2011

Can the street-smarts of manufacturers who battle difficult trading conditions at the best of times forge the early phase of a recovery in the Christchurch job sector? Deputy business editor ALAN WOOD looks at what is happening at floor level in fractured workplaces.

Manufacturers affected by the recent earthquakes have shown a willingness and resolve to ramp up from a standing start.

They have needed to be nimble to keep employees in work to satisfy awaiting orders. Essentially they need to allay the concerns of faraway customers that they can deliver, rain, hail or quake.

The February 22 quake sent shockwaves not only through Christchurch, its residents and workplaces, but also around the globe where customers have needed reassurance that their supply lines have not been severed...

...Carlton Taylor Industries general manager and part owner David Hawes says the factories surrounding his sheet metal fabrication and high pressure aluminium die casting operations fared relatively well in the earthquake. However, there was some plant damage including to laser equipment.

"Our biggest damage was in molten aluminium spill . . . out of the holding furnaces, but fortunately there was no-one close to it. [But] that's got in and burnt a lot of our electrical cables, and of course there were flames up to the roof - I think there were 35 fire extinguishers used to put the fire out."

Carlton Taylor's Addington-based sheet metal production went mainly into electronics and furniture manufacturing industries. The company's Bromley-based aluminium die casting products went into agricultural applications as well as the transport industry. The products were used in Canterbury, the rest of New Zealand and exported.

With the restoration of power supply over the weekend after the quake, workers returned on Monday morning with production "pretty well back to normal".

Hawes credits some of the quick return to normal business to a recent move to lean manufacturing, a production methodology that looks to remove resources that do provide value for the customer.

"Part of that was doing 5S which is clean the place up, get rid of all the rubbish. That's made a huge difference . . . because there's nothing lying around there was nothing to fall. That's been a huge bonus."