



01 The Custom Aluminium Windows team out front of their factory in St Marys, New South Wales.
02 Directors (left to right) Jose Sierra Moreno, Judi Murtough-Coombes, Jacob Beatty. (and Kristin?)
03 Project name?

GLAZING'S POWER TRIO

Newly minted Australian Window Association (AWA) members, Custom Aluminium Windows, are already reaping the rewards. The owners, Judi Murtough-Coombes and her brothers-in-law, Jacob Beatty and Jose Sierra Moreno, discuss what their vibrant and future-focused company has to offer – and why joining the AWA was essential.

Custom Aluminium Windows was founded in 1984 by Judi's father, Charlie Borg, when he discovered the difficulty in sourcing made-to-measure windows for his cladding factory. So he started making them himself. Over the years, his four brothers, Tony, John, Bill and Joe, became partners in the business. A little over three years ago, as the Borg brothers retired, the current family members bought the business.

Having restructured the company, the entire team is committed to maintaining the highest quality in manufacturing standards and extending a level of personal attention they believe only a family owned and operated business can provide.

The three current owners took very different routes to arrive at where they are now, with Jacob serving a long apprenticeship at the company. "I was stationed in the workshop for eight years, before being retrained to do estimating and general administration work," he says.

Jose, with a background in chemical engineering, joined in 2013. "I take care of all the manufacturing and machining aspects," he explains. "My role is to ensure smooth operations of our manufacturing facility and that the quality of every system we supply is second to none."

Judi studied and worked as a primary school teacher in her former career, joining the Custom Aluminium team in 2014. "I retired from teaching when we purchased the business," she says. "The organisational and multitasking skills gained in my 16 years of teaching has definitely been put to good use here in my role as Office Manager. This is a family business, and we're all equally focussed and committed. My sister Kristin, Jacob's wife, is also our

Co-Director and Accounts Manager. Together, we make a great team."

The trio rapidly restructured the company after purchase. "We became more tech-oriented, whereas before everything was more manual and hands-on," says Jose. "Improving our efficiencies, introducing new technologies and modifying our procedures – both in the office and the workshop – enabled us to be more responsive and better deliver on our customers' vision. The company's previous standards and reputation were already very high, we've just pushed ourselves to deliver the same level of excellence within a changing industry."

For this ambitiously driven business, joining the AWA was essential. "This was something we'd been considering for a long time, so we just decided to do it," Jacob recalls. "The AWA has already given us new and fresh ideas, allowing us to stay competitive and most importantly be fully compliant."

"The additional resources provided by the AWA have also been useful, as we can access a wealth of information with a phone call or a quick email," adds Judi. "It also gives our customers the peace of mind to know we're active in our pursuit to supply a premium quality and fully compliant product."

Custom Aluminium Windows has eagerly taken up a range of training opportunities offered by the AWA. "We're training our staff by enrolling them in AFTI courses, including bushfire and acoustics," says Judi. "Several of our team recently attended the AWA Standards, Regulations and Energy training course in Sydney, where there were around 25 attendees from a range of companies. Three of us are also planning to complete our Fenestration Diploma in the coming months."

By ensuring their employees are across all current design trends, Custom Aluminium Windows believe they are better able to deliver on client's needs. "We pride ourselves on following Australian Standards while meeting every customer's expectation," says Jose. "Every architect and builder has a clear vision

of what they'd like their house or project to look like; we find each job is unique, bringing with it unique challenges. This quite often means building a 'one-off' window or door, which creates its own challenges in maintaining the desired aesthetics while remaining compliant."

Customisation is our selling proposition. "Our ability to respond to customers' individual demands is central to our success," says Jacob. "If a client wants double-glazed, double-hung windows, for example, we can do that. If the job calls for a high-performance glazing solution, we can do that too. Our customers respect our knowledge, and appreciate the extra efforts we go to."

The individual touch is always important. "We do a lot of face-to-face work with customers, giving them the advantage of dealing with the business owners directly," Jacob notes. "Instead of having to make ten phone calls, we can recommend something right away. When they share their vision, we'll find them a workable solution. They get the look they're after, while we ensure it's functional and fully compliant."

Custom Aluminium Windows' clientele respects and demands this expertise. "We're dealing with many owner-builders requiring extensive guidance on realising their plans, which is where we come in," says Judi. "Certain architects routinely refer their clients to us, because they know we thrive on operating outside the box."

Reputation remains crucial. "We haven't needed to advertise, because of our reputation and we're known for doing the tough jobs," says Jose. "We're not a massive company, but we're not afraid of taking on the big jobs or doing whatever's necessary to keep customers happy. For example, we can do windows with irregular angles, or steeply raked, or with unconventional welding. Our combined backgrounds allow us to engage in-depth with customers and execute their ideas to the letter."

Many of their window systems are manufactured to withstand the most challenging physical



environments and conditions. "As we're situated near the Blue Mountains, we're often contracted to supply bushfire-resistant glazing systems and IGUs," says Judi. "Our BAL 40 window systems deliver on both the aesthetics and protection in bushfire-prone areas, and with the airport at Badgery's Creek opening in the near future, acoustics are also becoming increasingly important."

Rapid and widespread changes to the glazing market have brought many challenges to Custom Aluminium Windows, which they have met decisively. "People are much more aware of energy costs, and seeking more efficient cooling or heating solutions," Judi points out. "Everyone was happy with single glazing five or six years ago, but things have definitely changed. There's no longer the option to simply work with standard glass, the market is definitely moving towards performance glazing solutions."

The business will remain a family affair. "We're family owned and operated, which really gives our work the personal touch," Judi continues. "We have a great team of people working for us, trained in multiple aspects of the manufacturing and administrative processes, and with a good balance of skills, abilities and aspirations. Our team members have a clear understanding of each individual's role in achieving overall objectives."

It's a hugely successful recipe that makes Custom Aluminium Windows stand out.

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