



# THE LINK

Showcasing the successes, innovation and developments in the Fencing, Gate and Wire Industries



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In January this year I attended Fencetech in Nashville Tennessee USA. Fencetech is the annual convention & trade show of the American Fence Association. It is the premier annual trade event for manufacturers and suppliers to the fence, gate, perimeter security and metal working industries and typically draws over 4,000 people.

Typical in January the weather was meant to be snowing as six inches was dumped seven days before I arrived. Thankfully the sun came out and it was around 12 degrees for the five day event.



This was the seventh Fencetech that I have attended and by no way was I disappointed. There was a very large assembly of exhibitors with booth numbers starting at 400 and going all the way to booth 2,557. There were many booths similar in their products, but each had an individual standout, so it was worthwhile strolling along and visiting all of them and having a conversation about what they do and how things are going in their business.

Automation and access controls has made a larger impact in the United States than conferences I have attended before, and many exhibitors were promoting USA-made equipment rather than imported products on their stands. This was a good indication that their local economy for home grown technology has risen.



In saying that, the largest stand on the floor was D&D technologies, a former Sydney-based company that has taken North America and Canada by storm. It was a good feeling to see that Australian innovation has made it abroad in a competitive market and to come out as America's leading fence hardware supplier – well, good on them I say.

Graham Braithwaite



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As we roll into 2024, it's worth considering the two main pressure points for manufacturers in Australasia, those being sharply increasing power prices and a shortfall of reliable skilled and unskilled workers.

Investment in machinery and technology becomes even more critical to minimise the effect of these limitations, and it was encouraging to see so many member companies taking the opportunity to attend or exhibit at wire & tube 2024 in Dusseldorf during April. This trade show is always

the premium event on the wire calendar and is highly recommended to members. It is held only every second year, and the next show is scheduled for April 2026. The AWIA is here to assist in your forward planning for the event, and we recommend that you start that planning now as accommodation is always limited, and significantly more expensive, closer to the event.

Labour resources continue to be tight and more costly, and my anecdotal research shows that demands for work at home options and other flexibilities post-covid is putting significant pressures on the ability of companies to adequately manage their processes, especially in manufacturing.

Added to these issues the Federal Government has introduced significant labour market reforms with their Closing the Loopholes legislation and right-to-disconnect laws. Human resource management has become more difficult, but significantly more important and retention of good staff even more critical.

Our May conference in Melbourne will address some of these issues, and I hope to see as many members as possible attend the event. Details can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and via the AWIA website.

Our HR advisors, FCB Group, have recently rebranded to Citation Group and a review of the changes there can also be found in the newsletter. Citation Group has kindly offered a 10% discount to all financial members of the AWIA on their HR solutions. Details can be found in their article below.

Observant members may have noticed a change to my email signature recently with the addition of a Cyber Wardens badge. Profit-motivated cyber crime continues to rise with more than 76,000 reports made to ReportCyber in 2021-22, a 13% increase over the previous year. The Cyber Wardens program is designed to provide businesses with some simple tools to reduce the risk of being a cyber crime victim. Further details are available elsewhere in this newsletter.

In these days of regular job transition, and reduced job security, it is rare for anyone to even reach 'gold watch' status with just one company. Which makes Ray Otter's achievement of 60 years working with the same company even more remarkable. Without wishing to age Ray too much, he has been working for Otter Fencing since before most of our readers were born, (I wish I was one of them). We congratulate Ray on this significant achievement and will hold a lunch in his honour at our May conference. Another good reason for all those who know Ray to come along and celebrate the occasion. Non-members are also welcome to attend either just for lunch or for the full day. Just send me an email at richard@wireassociation.org.au and I shall add your name to the list. Ray has been good enough to reflect on his time in the fencing industry in this issue of the newsletter, and his extensive work in improving fencing standards is well known by those within the industry. I personally continue to draw on his extensive knowledge and experience to assist with queries from members and the general public alike and hope I can count on him for many years to come.

Richard Newbiggin  
(Tel: +61 411 725 795 Email: richard@wireassociation.org.au)

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## STANDARDS AUSTRALIA

Standards Australia now offers a Curated Subscription solution which brings together commonly referenced publications from its Australian Standards catalogue, creating specialised content sets across different industries. Available for Small Business Access (< 20 employees).

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### AS 2423 Coated Steel Wire fencing products for terrestrial, aquatic and general use

Any members wishing to suggest amendments to this Standard are requested to contact Richard Newbigin Tel: 1300 942 500 or email [richard@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:richard@wireassociation.org.au).

### AS 5394 High Security Anti-Intruder Fences in Welded Wire Mesh and Open Steel Panels

The CE-008 technical committee met again in March 2024 to review the progress of the main working group and to approve sections of the new Standard. Significant work has now been completed and the Standard is beginning to take shape. The committee agreed that gates were a necessary inclusion to the Standard so a further working group has been formed to advise the committee on this part of the Standard. The technical committee meets again in June.

Any readers who believe they have input for the technical committee or working groups advising the technical committee should contact Richard Newbigin ([richard@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:richard@wireassociation.org.au) or 1300 942 500).

### AS 1926.1 Safety Barriers for Swimming Pools

The public comment phase for the revised AS 1926.1 ended late December 2023. 970 comments were received, each of which was dealt with by the relevant technical committee; a process of three months hard work. The draft AS 1926.1 and its associated Public Impact Assessment has been passed to the Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) for review prior to publication in May/June 2024. Incorporation into the National Construction Code will follow in 2025.

Importantly, AS 4687.4:2022 Temporary Pool Fencing has been referenced in AS 1926.1 to highlight the differences and uses of temporary fences during construction of new pools or renovation of existing pools. Collaboration between the AWIA and SPASA, the Swimming Pool and Spa Association, has been instrumental in this inclusion of AS 4687 into AS 1926.1 and will provide better guidance to local councils and registered pool inspectors on best practice methods to prevent access to children under 5 years of age during pool and spa construction and renovation.

### New CEO at Standards Australia

After 18 years with Standards Australia, and five years as CEO, Adrian O'Connell has passed the baton to incoming CEO, Emma Harrington.

Emma has a history of transforming companies, engaging with employees, customers and stakeholders to deliver meaningful outcomes. Prior to joining Standards Australia, Emma was CEO of the iconic NRMA Motoring and Membership business for three years, leading its strategic response to the global shifts to decarbonise transport. She was previously NRMA's Chief Customer Officer.

Emma commenced her role with Standards Australia on 3 April 2024.

## RAY OTTER REACHES 60 YEARS AT OTTER FENCING



*Having reached 60 Years employment with Otter Fencing in February 2024, we asked Ray Otter to reflect on his time at the company as well as the chain link fencing industry. The following are Ray's words.*

After leaving Tech School in 1957 I became an apprentice plumber serving my 5-year apprenticeship then eventually becoming a Licensed Plumber.

My Father, Jack Otter was a sole trader in the fencing industry, all through the 1950's. Eventually forming the Company of Otter Fencing in February 1959.

Then in 1964 it became an eventful year. In January my father Jack suffered the first of several coronaries and, with continued health issues, eventually passed away in 1982. So, it was then in February 1964 I decided to assist my father in the Fencing Business – and happily, in May of 1964, I got married to my lovely wife Nola. This means, in 2024 I have a Double 60th Anniversary!

Over the years Otter Fencing was a significant fencing contractor for the Housing Commission. Then as the Housing Commission estates began to wind down, Otter Fencing diversified into the chain link fencing industry. We have invested in a number of Wafios Chain Link Machines which gives us significant capacity and we can produce chain link from 500mm up to 5000mm in height with a pitch range of 32mm, 40mm, 45mm & 50mm. We are also pleased to say that all of these products are manufactured with Australian wire from Infrabuild.

It was quite apparent from the early 1970's the industry standards for chain link fencing were wide and varied. Also all the different Government Departments had varied chain link fencing standards. As a result, there was a collective agreement with six leading chain link fencing companies - all of whom were members of the Australian Chamber of Manufacturers.

This began the first stage of developing an agreed industry standard for security fencing. We then moved to the next phase in 1975 which was to make it an official Australian Standard. AS1725-1975 was then Part 1 only, and remained in place for chain link security fencing for the next 25 years.

Then in about the year 2000 we were prompted by Australin Standards to review and update this Fencing Standard. So, over the next 3 years I was heavily involved with exhaustive committee meetings, in part, to help develop parts 2 to 5, to cover most aspects of Chain Link Fencing Applications. This included tennis court fencing, domestic and commercial, cricket net enclosures and low sports ground fencing. Then the second edition of the Fencing Standards was issued in 2003.

This same committee remained active over the following years to provide a revised standard AS1725-2010 which still remains in place today. I give many thanks to Barry Loudon and Brian Mullarvey who gave tremendous support through our Fencing Association to implement these standards. We are conscious that the Australian Standards will prompt us soon for a further review in the near future.

This no doubt will require the need to consider implementing Engineering Standards for some fencing applications often required by councils.

We are forever mindful that we need to be aware of changes within the industry.

Chain link in the very early years was basically all galvanized pipe and galvanised chain link. Then as PVC coated was introduced, it has gradually become the predominate requirement for customers.

With this increased demand for PVC coated wire and powder coated pipe Otter Fencing has invested into forming an associate company SUPACOTE which has a fully integrated pre-treatment system to ensure excellent bonding of the powder coating is achieved to the galvanized pipe.

In the late 1980's I was told by an "IT" person that companies who don't invest in IT will be left behind. So we were encouraged to develop our own in-house costing system which worked exceedingly well. As with all "IT" there is no end to continuous improvement so the investment and development still continues.

I am pleased to say my son Glenn Otter has successfully been managing the business for the past 20 years. As with any business if you don't put in the time, you won't get a result. So even after 60 years, I still enjoy 12-hour days, 5 days a week and I will continue so long as my health allows.

I look forward to weekends when I play golf with my two grandsons who are both going through University and working part time with Otter Fencing. So, there is the possibility of a fourth generation to continue the Otter Fencing Business into the future - hopefully to achieve a 100 year history.

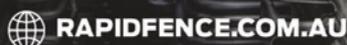


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# NEW MEMBER PROFILES

## IDEAL FENCING & GATES

Ideal Fencing & Gates has built a national reputation for excellence in Fencing and Gates, with a focus on commercial and security fencing, as well as complex automatic gates, specifically large scale and cantilever gates. They have experience in countless kilometres of Commercials and Security Fencing, as well as over 2500 automatic gate installations, each of which they believe is an additional building block in their knowledge bank.

Some of their accolades include:

- Back to Back to Back - Triple Winners - Australian Fencing Awards - Commercial Gate of the Year. 2021, 2022 and 2023.
- Australian Made - Crash Rated and Certified Cantilever Gates
- Record Setting - Longest Single Sloped Automatic Sliding Gate
- Industry Leaders - Australia's FIRST Gate safe aware accredited installers.

Ideal are automatic gate specialists and have the capacity to produce:

- Crash rated and certified cantilever gates up to 7m wide openings.
- Swinging gates up to 20m wide openings.
- Sliding gates up to 70m wide openings.
- Cantilever gates up to 30m wide openings.
- Bi-folding gates up to 16m wide openings.
- Double and triple leaf telescopic gates up to 30m wide openings.

They aren't all gates however. They pride themselves on:

- Providing turn key solutions in house for all fencing projects.
- Providing solutions to unique architectural, high security fencing, and large-scale commercial fencing works.
- Maintaining a skillset across all fence types to ensure we can best serve our customers.

Ideal Fencing & Gates are a passionate group of fabrication engineers, designers, security technicians and fencers. Combined, they can confidently produce almost any fencing and automatic gates that can be dreamed up!

**Adrian Pretsel**  
 0408 354 901  
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# INTERNATIONAL NEWS



# SOUTH EAST ASIA REPORT

Demand has been very sluggish across the region with many wire companies recording record low sales. Bekaert has decided to close their wire facility in Indonesia which is very sad news for the writer, the former employees and many Australasian customers!

An interesting article in the Singapore Straits times (19/3/2024) contends that Australia still struggles to understand SEAsia. One main issue is the ambivalent attitude Australia still has with China, whereas it seems SEAsia is happy to embrace their big Northern neighbour and readily accepts huge infrastructural projects such as the recently completed Jakarta to Bandung railway line. Laos, as the new head of ASEAN for a 6 month period, is desperate for Chinese investment, though some countries (mainly the Philippines) continue to fall out with China on the continuing South China Sea crisis.

Overall, I feel the lack of demand regionally is mainly due to a combination of the legacy of Covid and the high inflation/interest rates that were triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Hopefully, the successfully organised recent Presidential election in Indonesia will lead to more investment and will hopefully enable ASEAN's biggest economy to kick-start a regional recovery.

*Article courtesy of Andrew Marshall, Reuters*

# DUSSELDORF CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

## COMMENTS FROM EXHIBITOR, MEMBER COMPANY ALLOY WIRE INTERNATIONAL

There's nothing quite like Wire Dusseldorf. Over 1300 exhibitors crammed across 15 halls, showcasing the latest advancements and technology to nearly 40,000 visitors from across the world.

After a myriad of global challenges, it was refreshing to see a show brimming with optimism and renewed confidence for the year ahead.

Our Alloy Wire International (AWI) stand – the largest we've taken at the event – hosted hundreds of visitors during the exhibition and that included a mix of long-standing customers and visitors keen to discover our capabilities and our 60-strong range of Exotic Alloys.

Discussions were wide and varied and there were some exciting enquiries taken for potential projects in aerospace, automotive, nuclear and oil and gas.

Inconel grades were top of the wish list and that came as no surprise to our 10-strong team in Germany. It's a versatile material family that serves many industries and end-use applications.

## NOTES FROM MEMBER DELEGATE, ADAM FORRESTER, MARSH ALLIANCE

This year was the first time I have attended the Dusseldorf Wire Exhibit, and it was a real eye-opener. It was vast, covering a wide range of industries and technologies. Among the highlights was the impressive advancements in spring manufacturing machinery. Witnessing the precision and efficiency of these machines was truly inspiring.

A standout feature of the exhibition was the exceptional support provided by the team from WAFIOS, their knowledge and willingness to help made a lasting impression.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Stefan, Martin & Jared for being so helpful and accommodating.

Regrettably, I did not get to explore the numerous wire, mesh, fencing and tube suppliers present, but would have been of great interest to the AWIA Members.

For those considering attending future exhibitions, don't miss out. The insights and connections you'll gain are invaluable.



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# TECHNICAL NEWS

## WELD AUSTRALIA LAUNCHES FREE ONLINE WELDER SAFETY TRAINING COURSES



Weld Australia is excited to announce the launch of two free online welder safety training courses – one for welders, and the second for welding engineers and supervisors.

According to Geoff Crittenden (CEO, Weld Australia), “Welding is a potentially dangerous process, with many hazards and risks to people’s health. These risks are compounded by the fact that welding is undertaken across a wide range of locations and situations, from workshops and field work, through to confined spaces, underground mine sites, and more.”

“Hazards in each of these situations will be different, and require different controls to keep welders and others in close proximity safe. It is critical to manage these risks and hazards so that people working in the welding industry are kept safe and return home at the end of each day without injury.”

“To this end, Weld Australia is pleased to announce the launch of two free online welder safety training courses. Our objective with these courses is to improve safety awareness, knowledge and outcomes right throughout Australia’s welding industry,” said Crittenden.

The courses cover a broad range of subject material across welding processes. They provide details of hazards that may be encountered and how to manage them in the workplace. The hierarchy of controls is discussed, with a particular focus on engineering controls and the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

The courses also reinforce procedures that should be used, such as correct set up and use of equipment and the correct handling of gas cylinders and welding machines. Assessment and certification for course participants is also available.

“The courses can be used by companies to enhance their staff induction program to ensure all employees start with a solid foundation in safety practices. Or, the courses can be used as part of ongoing training to keep employees up-to-date with the latest safety techniques. Regular refreshers help maintain safety awareness, reducing risk of accidents, leading to lower workers’ compensation claims and insurance costs,” said Crittenden.

“For welders, undertaking these courses gives you essential knowledge on how to protect yourself from hazards like burns and harmful fumes. Learning about PPE and emergency procedures can be life-saving. By educating yourself, you can contribute to a culture of safety within the welding community. Sharing knowledge with peers, and practicing safe welding can influence others to

prioritise safety, reducing welding-related accidents.”

“If you’re a hobbyist welder (or know someone who is), safety education is just as important. Our free courses can provide you with the knowledge to safely enjoy welding at home, protecting yourself, your family, and your property,” said Crittenden.

### How to Access the Courses

The courses can be accessed via: <https://weldtraining.online>.

To start the courses, all you need is an account for Weld Australia’s online training platform. If you don’t already have an account, you can quickly and easily create one via the link in the top right-hand corner of the platform’s homepage.

## INSTITUTE OF SPRING TECHNOLOGY HAS A NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL!

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## GROUNDBREAKING NEW CORROSION MAP OF AUSTRALIA TO BE LAUNCHED

An engineer tasked with designing a building or piece of infrastructure will soon have access to a new tool that will estimate the corrosion rate for the site with an unprecedented degree of accuracy.

It will also assist in determining whether or not their plans comply with standards set out in the National Construction Code, potentially resulting in significant cost savings and shorter project schedules.

The Interactive Corrosion Map of Australia app has been developed by the Galvanizers Association of Australia (GAA) in conjunction with CSIRO and RMIT University. It follows pressure from the construction industry for more detailed and reliable data on corrosion rates, which are key factors in building design and choice of materials.

Currently, structural engineers have to rely on tools like the Durability of Galvanizing Estimator on GAA's website to help them work out the appropriate type and thickness of coating they'll need to apply. The Estimator's more rudimentary estimates are based largely on the type of, and distance to, the nearest coast.

"It is a real game changer for engineers designing residential buildings, highways, bridges or industrial plants as it will provide real-location assessments of climate that include a 27-fold increase in data points from the current system's salinity map," GAA CEO Peter Golding said.

The app's sophistication means there will be a greater likelihood that the readings will be a more accurate reflection of local conditions than those obtained via the estimator. It uses 10 years of weather data to calculate the surface time of wetness and surface salt concentration at three-hourly intervals over a typical year.

This then allows calculation of an annual corrosion rate that can be updated in the future as new climate data becomes available.

"Corrosion is affected by much more than just distance from the sea," Golding said. "To make better informed judgements, you have to factor in the building's orientation and any landscape or design features which may impact its exposure to rain, prevailing winds or sunlight."

The user-friendly app, which will be accessible via GAA's website later this year, will also consider the local generation, transport and deposition of salt aerosols, the effect of rain washing and the extent to which the site is shielded by nearby buildings, all of which affect corrosion levels.

"If it's in the CBD of a capital city, there will generally be more protection from airborne salt from the ocean than there would be in a rural location so that has to be taken into account as well," he said.

Another of the app's key advantages will come into play over time as weather patterns become disrupted by climate change.

"When new data is available we'll be able to reconfigure its analyses and predictions based on actual weather events," Golding said. "So, if temperatures rise and there's a resulting knock-on effect on rainfall and wind, that will be reflected in the reported corrosion rates. That's simply not possible with the current static database."

This will be crucial as rainfall, temperatures and the severity of storms change over time.

"If a region becomes more prone to flooding or rain dries up completely, those changes will inform the advice on corrosion rates," Golding said. "If stronger winds carry more salt, it'll generally cause an increase in the corrosion rate so a thicker galvanized coating may be appropriate."

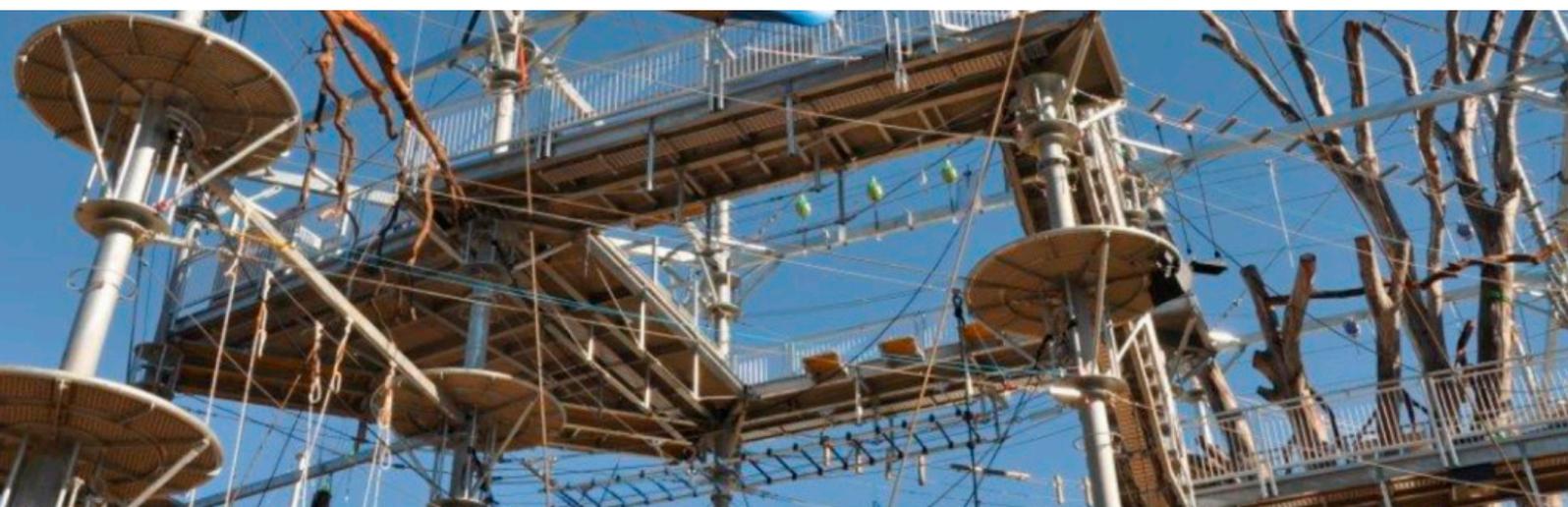
The amount of moisture in the air also affects the dew point, so if the relative humidity is low, surface salts will be dry and there will be less of an impact. Conversely, high humidity levels can also limit airborne salt aerosol transport inland. This highlights the fact that the effect of climate change on corrosion is complex, will vary across Australia and can't be generalised.

"All of these considerations will combine to produce a highly localised estimate of corrosion rate that engineers can be more confident of using," he said. "And it's not just for the construction itself. It'll also be invaluable in working out how regularly a structure needs to be washed to remove a build-up of salt, particularly those spaces not exposed to rainwater such as verandahs and balconies."

*Article courtesy of Peter Golding at the Galvanizers Association of Australia*

For full article, including information on the new National Construction Code, visit:

<https://createdigital.org.au/corrosion-map-of-australia/>



## MEMBER UPDATES

### BLONDIES

Have you ever looked at something and thought, 'that could use a bit of colour?' Founded with a vision to provide top-notch coating solutions while fostering strong customer relationships, Blondies Powder Coating has emerged as a new industry presence. Brisbane, Ipswich, and Logan AWIA members are encouraged to support Blondies Powder Coating.

The owners of Custom Auto Gate & Fencing and proud AWIA members encountered numerous issues when using powder coat. With lots of delays and mistakes hindering their production (sound familiar?), they knew they needed to open their own powder coating business. Thus, they created Blondies to meet their own standards as customers themselves.



Blondies Powder Coating is not limited to just gates and fencing. With a team of skilled professionals dedicated to delivering superior results, they cater to a broad spectrum of industries, ensuring precision, durability, and aesthetic appeal in every coating application. Big or small, they do it all!

At Blondies, they understand the importance of convenience and flexibility for their customers. That's why they offer a convenient pick-up and delivery service, ensuring a seamless experience from start to finish. Whether you're a busy contractor or a homeowner with limited time, their team is dedicated to making the powder coating process as hassle-free as possible.

Additionally, they value their client business relationships and offer 30-day trade accounts to facilitate smooth transactions and long-term partnerships. With Blondies, you can trust that they not only deliver exceptional results but also prioritize your convenience and satisfaction every step of the way.

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### BARKERS FENCING & AUSTRALIAN SECURITY FENCING ANNOUNCE LANDMARK MANUFACTURING AGREEMENT

Barkers Fencing, a leading physical perimeter security product designer and manufacturer based in the UK, announce a landmark manufacturing under license agreement with Australian Security Fencing (ASF), a renowned Australian manufacturer of welded wire mesh security fences and gates. This strategic partnership will enhance availability of Barker's innovative hostile and accidental vehicle mitigation products, SecureGuard RCS and StronGuard RCS, in the Australian market.

SecureGuard RCS is an entirely unique mesh fencing system which is rated to stop up to a 7500kg vehicle from crashing through at 30mph(48kph). The PAS68 rating is achieved using Barkers' innovative, patented RCS design which has been supplied globally in palisade form since 2011, and without the need for secondary wire rope fences, barriers or bollards.

Under the terms of the agreement, the crash-rated mesh fence, SecureGuard RCS, will be exclusively manufactured and sold in Australia by ASF. This exclusivity underscores the strong partnership between our companies and our shared commitment to delivering high-quality products to our customers.

Both SecureGuard RCS and the original palisade version, StronGuard RCS, are unique offerings in the market. They are designed to be easier to install than alternative wire rope or bollard solutions as the foundations are conventionally sized and require no steel reinforcement cages. The result is that the client's program is achieved more easily and costs are minimised.

This collaboration marks a significant milestone in Barkers' ongoing efforts to expand our global footprint and bring our broad range of perimeter security products to a wider audience. This partnership will not only benefit our companies but also create value for our customers in Australia.

Adam Savage, Marketing & Sales Director of Barkers Fencing, said "The last year has seen Barkers' class leading perimeter security products shipped from the UK to nearly 20 countries globally, so finding partners in countries such as Australia is key to our next phase of growth. SecureGuard RCS is our latest flagship crash-rated product, and to fully service the Australian market we wanted a key partner. ASF are ideal. With their own mesh manufacturing machine, and a respected position as the leading mesh solution supplier in Australia we always felt they would represent Barkers' products and brand perfectly. We're already seeing multiple applications for SecureGuard RCS in Australia from Data Centers to Critical National Infrastructure, and this is just the beginning

We look forward to a fruitful and enduring partnership with ASF and are excited about the opportunities this agreement presents for the broader security market".

Jace Rosier, ASF General Manager, added "ASF is excited to formalise the relationship with Barkers and the agreement will benefit local markets through shorter lead times, lower project delivery risk, local representation and same time zone communications. We are strong believers in Barkers' products and the benefits they provide the end user. It's a good result for Barkers, ASF and our customers."

#### About Barkers Fencing

Barkers Fencing is a UK-based physical perimeter security product designer and manufacturer known for its innovative and high-quality products. With a focus on safety and security, Barkers have extensive knowledge and industrial experience globally, including 15 years of supporting projects in Australia, PNG and New Zealand, and is committed to delivering solutions that meet the needs of its customers.

#### About Australian Security Fencing (ASF)

ASF is a leading mesh fencing manufacturer in Australia, recognised for its excellence in production and commitment to quality. The market leader in the Australian market, ASF is dedicated to bringing the best products to its customers across a broad range of markets and industries.

# THE FEMININE LINK

## Meet Lauren & Leonie, Australian Security Fencing

*The brainchild of AWIA platinum sponsor Vater Hardware Australia, The Feminine Link is a regular feature of The Link newsletter showcasing the talented and diverse skills of the female members of our industry, as well as a way to get to know the personal sides of our colleagues and friends. In this edition we get to know Lauren and Leonie from Australian Security Fencing.*

Australian Security Fencing (ASF) has a long history in the Fencing industry in Australia, proudly being in operation for over 35 years.

ASF prides itself on employing and retaining high-quality staff. Long-standing employees Lauren Rice and Leonie Scott are prime examples, being employed for 17 and 18 years respectively at ASF

Lauren has been with ASF for 18 years (as at November 2023) in an Administration & Payroll position at various capacities. Leonie has been with ASF for 17 years (as at February 2024) in Project Administration and has been an integral part of the growth ASF has seen throughout this period, providing project administration and support for over 600 projects, including 250+ substations for Country Energy.

### Lauren

- NICKNAME:** Loz, Lozza
- SPORT:** Rugby League (Go Parra!)
- PETS:** None anymore...lost my dear dog last year
- FAVOURITE COLOUR:** Green
- FAVOURITE FOOD:** Chocolate
- FAVOURITE DRINK:** Pink moscato
- FAVOURITE TV SERIES:** Game of Thrones, Firefly Lane
- MANTRA TO LIVE BY:** Don't be afraid to give up the good and go for the great

### Leonie

- NICKNAME:** Lones
- SPORT:** to watch – NRL, to play- netball
- PETS:** Strawberry (4 year old Kelpie x Staffy), 6 x chickens
- FAVOURITE COLOUR:** Blue
- FAVOURITE FOOD:** Pad Thai
- FAVOURITE DRINK:** Pepsi Max
- FAVOURITE TV SERIES:** Australian series such as Mystery Road and Black Snow
- MANTRA TO LIVE BY:** "Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end" John Lennon



Lauren (Left) and Leonie (Right), Australian Security Fencing

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# AUSTRALIAN ECONOMIC UPDATE

Growth in the Australian economy is forecast to remain below trend over the year ahead as cost of living pressures and higher interest rates continue to weigh on demand. Inflation is expected to stay high for longer, which suggests further tightening is possible.

- National GDP in the December 2023 quarter rose by 0.2% q/q in seasonally adjusted terms. This small growth rate has been driven by an increase in government spending and private business investment during the quarter. Growth in GDP and household spending over 2023 has slowed due to sustained high cost of living and higher interest rates.
- Annual inflation in the December 2023 quarter fell to 4.1%, the fourth consecutive quarter of lower annual inflation. Insurance premiums rose by 16.2% y/y, the largest annual increase since March 2001 quarter. New dwelling purchase costs by owner occupiers rose by 5.1% y/y as builders continue to pass on higher labour and building material costs.
- The Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment has decreased in March 2024. The Index is at 84.4 which is still very low compared to the long-term average of 100.7.
- Business conditions in February 2024 have increased and is above historical average levels. Business confidence is at 0 and remains below long-run average.
- Unemployment rate in February 2024 dropped from 4.1% to 3.7%. Larger than usual number of people waiting to start work in Dec-23 & Jan-24 resulting in a large rise in employment in Feb-24. Employment rose by 26,700 with full-time employment increasing by 13,000 and part-time employment rising by 13,700.
- Residential commencements in the September 2023 quarter fell by 10% q/q to 37,116. The last time the number of commencements was at this level was September 2011. Residential commencements for the 12 months to September 2023 fell by 15% y/y to 165,602 i.e. 17% y/y lower for detached houses and 12% y/y lower for multi-dwellings commencements.
- Non-residential construction work done for the 12 months to September 2023 rose by 12% y/y with strong activity in publicly funded transport, commercial and education buildings.

- Publicly funded engineering value of work done in 2023 rose by 18% y/y whereas privately funded construction increased by 15% y/y.
- The RBA forecasts GDP to increase by 1.3% for FY24 and 2.1% for FY25.

### Future expectations for Australia include:

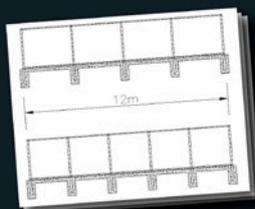
- Economic growth in the near term is expected to remain subdued as households cut back on discretionary spending due to sustained high cost of living and higher interest rates.
- Goods price inflation is expected to decline further with the recent decline in fuel prices. However, services inflation is expected to decline gradually due to the still-strong level of demand as well as strong growth in domestic costs.
- Employment is expected to rise but at a slower pace than last year and to be below the growth in the working-age population. Average working hours is also forecast to decline due to subdued growth in economic activity.
- Home building is expected to slow over 2024 due to slower land and building contract sales in 2023. Builders and civil contractors continue to compete against non-residential construction projects in sourcing materials and labour and hence put upwards pressure on costs.
- The commercial environment for new high-density developments remains unfavourable due to elevated costs for land, financing, and construction as well as constrained purchasing capacity by prospective owners.
- There is elevated drop-out rate between approvals and commencement for non-residential projects and this is expected to persist in the near-term. There is also a growing number of projects that are undergoing re-tendering.
- The capacity to deliver the large amount of current and new infrastructure projects remains stretched. There is also uncertainty in some infrastructure construction due to delays and reductions in government spending.

Article courtesy of Mei Leong from InfraBuild



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# HR UPDATES

## NEW FAIR WORK ACT CHANGES - CLOSING THE GAPS LEGISLATION

The Federal Government has passed new workplace laws known as the Closing Loopholes Bill. There are a range of changes impacting every business and worker including:

- Big changes to casual workers
- New 'employee-like' category of employment impacting independent contractors who use digital platforms
- A new definition of employment
- A new 'right to disconnect' provision
- More rights for unions and changes to entry powers
- New fines and penalties for employers
- Same job, same pay provisions for people who use labour hire or subcontractors
- Criminalisation of wage theft

Overall, the business community is disappointed with these new laws which ultimately hurts productivity, increases uncertainty and legal risk, and drives up costs for businesses and consumers.

But there has been a win for some independent contractors thanks to this campaign.

These changes grant independent contractors, who meet a specific income threshold, the option to opt out of transitioning to employee status. This development is a significant win, as it ensures that independent contractors can continue to operate without undue constraints, particularly amidst the current housing crisis.

On behalf of the team, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the thousands of Australians who signed a petition, emailed/called/visited their local member of parliament, participated in media interviews, or spread the word with their networks.

Together, we have demonstrated the power of collective action in safeguarding the rights and interests of independent contractors.

Article used with permission from Master Builders Australia <https://defendyourrights.com.au/>

## MAKE THEM AN OFFER THEY CAN'T REFUSE: RETAINING STAFF WITH A GREAT EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

The Employee Value Proposition (EVP) basically means what a business owner gives to their employee, in return for what the employee gives to the business. It is the unique set of benefits that an employee receives in return for the skills, capability, and experience they bring to a workplace. Better EVP ultimately results in higher staff retention, with 65 per cent of job candidates reporting that they pulled out of a recruitment process due to their current workplace having high EVP.

High EVP also assists in attracting external talent. A survey conducted by Glassdoor demonstrated that 75 per cent of active job seekers were likely to apply to a job if the employer actively manages its employer brand.

Many employers 'get it wrong' with their EVP by centering it around tangible things such as bonuses, gifts, or paying for gym memberships.

Instead, EVP should be based on the intangible 'human' aspect of work – essentially, it is the promise a business makes to employees about how they will feel at work. EVP is ultimately the message that a business sends establishing why it is the right place for its employees and prospective candidates, not the tangible benefits it provides. It's more than just bonuses and health perks – it also includes things like providing continuous learning and development opportunities, flexibility and autonomy, positive culture and diversity, being forward thinking, providing opportunities for feedback and implementing employee recommendations.

### How to create an EVP that lets you stand out from competitors

When looking to refine or build your EVP, the first place to look is within the business:

- Why are potential employees attracted to the company?
- Why do existing employees think the company is unique?
- What do existing employees value most about working there?
- Why do employees stay?
- Why do employees leave?

Employee surveys, focus groups and exit interviews are a great way to gather this information.

Some of the most common factors sought after by employees include:

- Flexibility: providing flexibility for all aspects of work, not just where and when employees work.
- Facilitating personal growth: this extends beyond professional opportunities (e.g., helping employees pursue hobbies or interests).
- Holistic well-being: this covers both physical and mental well-being including actively encouraging uptake in well-being programs.
- Better connections: helping employees foster deep connections in and outside of work.
- Shared purpose: taking a stand on issues that matter to employees.

If your business continually adapts to employee requirements, you're setting yourself up for success!

Article courtesy of FCB Group [www.fcbgroup.com.au](http://www.fcbgroup.com.au)

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Address: Bergandi Machinery Company 1689 S. Parco Ave. Ontario, California USA 91761

## TRUSTED HR PROVIDER, HR ASSURED ANNOUNCES A NEW ERA OF WORKPLACE COMPLIANCE

If you're familiar with HR Assured, then you might already know that the HR provider recently announced some exciting news: they've rebranded to Citation HR which is now a sub-brand of Citation Group!

While Citation HR might have a new look and new name, the same great people and same HR services remain at the core of what they do: complete, compliant, cost-effective people management solutions that help businesses get on with it. The company truly understands the complexities of workplace compliance, and one of the reasons why they're trusted by thousands of Aussie and Kiwi brands, is their expert knowledge across a range of industries, including the particular hurdles that the manufacturing sector face.

Interpreting modern awards, enterprise agreements and bargaining, redundancy and restructures – these are just some of the areas

Citation HR's experts can assist with. In addition, Citation Safety, a sub-brand within Citation Group, can support businesses with all aspects of workplace health and safety.

### How Citation HR can support your business

From their 24/7 HR Advice Line and their Compliance Training Centre to the HR software and Advice Promise, Citation HR has a suite of people management solutions to streamline, automate and protect your business.

Whether your business has an existing HR function and requires additional support, or you need a complete HR solution, the team at Citation HR can partner with you.

Ready to discuss your HR needs? If you'd like 10% off an HR solution, get in touch with Citation HR simply by emailing [hello@citationgroup.com.au](mailto:hello@citationgroup.com.au) and quote 10OFFWIRE and a friendly team member will be in touch.

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## PRACTICAL SPRING DESIGN ONLINE: 5TH - 6TH JUNE 2024

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IST have a great opportunity to join its Practical Spring Design course online. Adapted from its high impact classroom taught content, this 2 day course provides the knowledge and tools to implement in your day to day working life.

Ideal for manufacturers, design engineers, end users, or anyone who is in the spring supply chain, you will learn:

- Basic and advanced compression spring design
- Extension and torsion spring design
- Design a spring using Spring Calculator Professional software
- Application specific material selection
- Spring failure and prevention techniques

### Cost

Members £650.00 per person

Non-members £900.00 per person

If you are interested please contact Richard Newbigin on 1300 942 500 or [richard@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:richard@wireassociation.org.au).

IST has also launched a brand-new YouTube channel!

Watch its bite sized videos covering various areas of springs.

Please subscribe to the channel and be kept up to date with new releases and much more information. Access via the QR code:



## MAY 2024 CONFERENCE

Don't miss out on our upcoming conference at the Assa Abloy manufacturing facility in Oakleigh, Melbourne. As the new home of D & D Technologies, this facility has been generously made available to us by Assa Abloy for this special occasion.

In addition to celebrating Ray Otter's 60th year with Otter Fencing, we have a broad range of speakers lined up including:

- Bruce Cannon – Principal Welding Engineer, Weld Australia – Welding Fumes: Changes to legislation and methods for compliance
- Shaun Schmitke – Deputy CEO, Master Builders Australia – Closing the Loopholes legislation and its effect on the construction industry
- Mei Leong – Head of Market Analytics, Infrabuild Wire – Local and International Economic Trends and their effect on steel pricing
- Olivia Perry – Senior Workplace Relations Consultant, Citation Group – HR news and views

**A plant tour of the Assa Abloy facility has been arranged, so please bring your steel caps and hi-vis along.**

The speaker program continues to be developed and further advice will be emailed out as available.

AS 4687 Temporary Fencing and Hoardings is now almost two years old and, if time permits, we will have a Q & A session about its impact on the hire and sales of temp fencing and hoardings.

Lunch will include a tribute to Ray and his immense impact on the security fencing industry and all who know him are encouraged to come along to celebrate his illustrious, and continuing, career.

The conference will conclude with a dinner in the Melbourne CBD for those who wish to party on.

The delegate fee for the conference is \$100 for members and \$175 for non-members. This cost includes all conference materials, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

Looking forward to seeing you all on 21 May in Melbourne.

Please contact Richard Newbigin to register at [richard@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:richard@wireassociation.org.au).

## CYBER WARDENS PROGRAM



Have you heard about the Cyber Wardens Program? It is a simple education tool designed to build a cyber-smart small business workforce. Educating your team about cyber threats will help to protect your business. It is an initiative of the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia and supported by the Australian Government.

Signing up for this training is easily done online. The training takes around 45 minutes to complete. It is free of charge and can be completed on a laptop, desktop or mobile device and ideally should be undertaken by all teams using company technology. Included in the training are some good tips on what to look for in malicious emails.

43% of cybercrime attacks are on small businesses, and there is an average of a 30% decline in customers following an attack so it pays to put a few simple measures in place to reduce the risk to your companies.

For any further advice or to access an educational pack please contact Richard Newbigin on 0411 725 795 or email [richard@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:richard@wireassociation.org.au).

## TRAINING AWARD 2024 – CALL FOR NOMINEES

Applications are open for the 2024 Training Award.

Do you have an employee you think would benefit from some professional development? The AWIA Training Award may be just what you are looking for. The award is a cash grant of A\$2500, and is open to any employee of a member company.

Award criteria can be found on our website under the News tab (Training Award Criteria). All members are encouraged to get their applications in as soon as possible.

If you need any assistance, please contact Richard Newbigin (*email: richard@wireassociation.org.au or 1300 942 500*). Let's keep good people within our industry through assisting with their professional development.



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## WIRE & TUBE 2024

Wire & Tube 2024 was well organised as ever but really rotten weather - cold, windy with nasty drizzly rain! The last time this event was held was in June 2022, the timing having been pushed back to try to get more international companies involved as the effects of covid started to diminish. Most attendees and exhibitors complained then because of the heat of an early summer so, getting the timing right can be difficult.

It was very busy from Tuesday to Thursday) and most people said it was worth enduring the rain for it! There were 1500 exhibitors from 60 countries, and trade visitors from 135 countries, with noticeably more visitors from Central and North America, Turkey and Asia.

One machinery supplier said that they had 2 very good days (Tues & Wed) but quiet the rest of the time.

There were a lot of Turkish and Indian companies and a whole Hall (14) of Chinese exhibitors, unlike 2022 when the Chinese contingent was low.

One of the innovations presented by WAFIOS at this year's show was the "theme of 'assisted machinery' which was well received in the context of skilled labour shortages. This machinery assists new staff in setting up and performing individual process steps independently. With four levels WAFIOS has laid the foundation to incorporate machines with their assistive functions long term", says Dr.-Ing Uwe-Peter Weigmann, board spokesman at WAFIOS AG.

Of the 21 regional and member companies attending, 12 were members of the AWIA and 23 of the 43 regional attendees were associated with member companies. Two of our member companies, South Fence NZ and Alloy Wire International, each had their own stands, while Bliss & Reels, M & F Group, Protube Engineering and APAC Wire Technologies attended to fly the flag for their principals.

In 2022 and again this year, many Dusseldorf restaurants refused to accept credit card payments – strictly cash only. This trend seems to be on the rise throughout Europe and is worth keeping in mind if you are planning to go to the 2026 show. Certainly in Australia, the trend is the opposite so it is easy to be caught out, and



AWIA Member, Andrew Marshall from AM Wire Singapore at wire 2024

put into an embarrassing situation (as happened with at least one member this year I understand).

The dates for the next show are 13th to 17th April 2026.

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Messe Düsseldorf /  
ctillmann

## AWIA MEMBERSHIP – GROW YOURSELF AND YOUR BUSINESS

AWIA membership has many benefits for your business.

- **One voice for many** – When government decisions threaten to reduce your ability to do business then we speak for you. This includes input to the maintenance and revision of Australian, and joint Australian and New Zealand, Standards.
- **Education** – Regular newsletters, free technical data and standards access.
- **Support** – Got a technical problem? Call the AWIA and we will put you in touch with the people that can help.
- **Opportunities to meet new customers** - Up to two Conference(s) each year with key business enhancement seminars and selected technical presentations, national and regional meetings with industry peers (subject to travel restrictions).
- **Promote your professionalism** – Membership entitles you to use of the AWIA and other applicable association logos for your signage and stationery.

In addition to these very tangible benefits, the new and updated AWIA website contains member contacts, products and services information plus hyperlinks to member websites.

AWIA membership also means access to our affiliated Associations including American Fencing Association (AFA), Australian Certification Authority for Reinforcing Steel Ltd (ACRS), Institute of Spring Technology (IST), Spring Manufacturers Institute (SMI) and Wire Association International (WAI). As well as membership to our other Associations as applicable - AFIA, RSMA, TFAA at no extra cost.

Above all else, AWIA membership is really about growth—growth for yourself and growth for your business.

Contact AWIA Director Richard Newbiggin for a one-on-one conversation on 1300 942 500 or email: [richard@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:richard@wireassociation.org.au)

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- Concept Wire Industries
- Doogood Australia
- Gilbert Metal
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- ILL Australia
- InfraBuild Wire
- Kingspan Insulation
- Larsen Wire Engineering
- M&F Group
- MAKOMESH
- Marsh Alliance
- Mesh Industries Group
- Mesh Products
- Mesh Works
- National Springs & Wire Products NZ
- NZ Spring Works Ltd
- Protective Wire Mesh Industries
- ProTube Asia
- R.E. Walters
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- South Fence Machinery
- Spring Specialists Ltd
- Stainless Bar and Wire Company
- Stainless Steel Wire and Mesh
- Superior Industries NZ
- Ullrich Machinery Company
- Wiredex Wire Products
- Wire Displays NZ
- Wiretainers Pty Ltd



**2024**

**21 May**  
**AWIA Mid year conference**  
 Assa Abloy Meeting Rooms, Melbourne, Vic

**22 - 23 May**  
**Workplace Health & Safety Show**  
 Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre  
 Melbourne, VIC  
[www.whsshow.com.au](http://www.whsshow.com.au)

**4 - 6 June**  
**Hire24**  
 Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre  
 Brisbane, Australia  
[www.hriaconvention.com.au](http://www.hriaconvention.com.au)

**11 - 12 June**  
**WAI Operations Summit & Wire Expo**  
 Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT, USA  
[wireworld.com/event/wai-operations-summit-wire-expo-2024.html](http://wireworld.com/event/wai-operations-summit-wire-expo-2024.html)

**23 - 25 July 2024**  
**CeMAT**  
 Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre  
 Melbourne, Vic  
[www.cemat.com.au](http://www.cemat.com.au)

**21 - 23 August**  
**ASIAL Security Exhibition & Conference**  
 International Convention Centre  
 Sydney, NSW  
[www.asial.com.au/Web/Web/Events/Security-Conference-and-Exhibition.aspx](http://www.asial.com.au/Web/Web/Events/Security-Conference-and-Exhibition.aspx)

**4 - 5 September**  
**Workplace Health & Safety Show**  
 Sydney Showground, Sydney NSW  
[www.whsshow.com.au](http://www.whsshow.com.au)

**11 - 12 September**  
**The Fence Show & Security Expo**  
 South Point Hotel, Casino & Spa Expo Center  
 Las Vegas, NV, USA  
<https://fenceshow.com/event-info>

**17 September**  
**AWIA Annual General Meeting**  
 TBA

**25 - 28 September**  
**wire China 2024**  
 Shanghai New International Expo Center  
 Shanghai, China  
[www.wireworld.com/event/wire-china-2024](http://www.wireworld.com/event/wire-china-2024)

**2 - 4 October**  
**CASMI / SMI Metal Engineering eXpo 2024**  
 Donald E. Stephens Convention Center  
 Rosemont IL USA  
[www.casmi-springworld.org](http://www.casmi-springworld.org)

**26 November**  
**AWIA Fencing Meeting and Christmas Party**  
 TBA

**27 - 29 November**  
**Wire & Cable India 2024**  
 Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai, India  
[www.wireworld.com/event/wire-cable-india.html](http://www.wireworld.com/event/wire-cable-india.html)

**2025**

**25 - 28 February**  
**Fencetech**  
 Salt Lake City UT USA  
<https://www.americanfenceassociation.com/events/fencetech/86/>

**13 - 15 May**  
**Interwire 2025**  
 Georgia World Congress Centre  
 Atlanta GA USA  
[www.interwire25.com](http://www.interwire25.com)

**17 - 19 September 2025**  
**wire Southeast Asia 2025**  
 Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre, Bangkok, Thailand  
[www.wire-southeastasia.com](http://www.wire-southeastasia.com)

**Letters to the Editor**

If you have suggestions for future articles or want to voice your opinion on important issues facing the sector, please feel free to drop the AWIA a line. Email [editor@wireassociation.org.au](mailto:editor@wireassociation.org.au)

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