CALDER STEWART STEEL TO DOUBLE FABRICATION CAPACITY

Calder Stewart Steel is set to double its output on the South Island after investing $14 million in an innovative new workshop which follows the principles of lean manufacturing.

The new facility, which has created 12 new jobs, has been purpose-built to satisfy increasing market demand by streamlining Calder Stewart’s supply of fabricated and painted steel.

Calder Stewart has an entrepreneurial approach to industrial and commercial construction and its Steel Division is recognised as a premium custom fabricator, capable of fulfilling a wide range of orders, varying in size, application and finish. As such, the company has increasingly sought ways to streamline steel detailing, pricing and final fabrication through the use of state-of-the-art methods & practises, resulting in less site welding, more accurate structures and the ability to undertake large scale projects.

The company’s new ultra-efficient fabrication workshop has been heavily influenced by the Toyota Production System, whose approach to lean manufacturing is renowned for its focus on improving workflow eliminating variance and consequently reducing waste.

Sean Lloyd, Calder Stewart Steel General Manager, comments: “We are constantly striving to exceed client expectations by improving our operations and finding better and more efficient ways to complete projects. To complement our use of modern detailing software, we wanted to create a workshop that would significantly increase throughput, help ensure we can deliver the flexibility that our customers require, and also improve quality assurance.

“In order to understand the principles of lean manufacturing, we went to Japan and spent time with the masters of efficiency at Toyota plants. It was truly inspiring and we have sought to apply what we learnt in Japan to create a workshop that is at the forefront of our industry in terms of innovation and efficiency.

Over 200 metres in length, with a customised paint booth at one end, the workshop features a beam drilling machine, which lay out and drill any steel profile in a fraction of the time it takes to do the work manually, and rotator trolleys which eliminate the need for overhead cranes and slings to position or turn the steel during the welding process. The major advantages of using rotator trolleys are the time savings associated with turning the steel by just pressing a button while the welders work and the increased safety of employees. A robotic coper ensures precision cutting and an automatic shot blaster reduces the need for manual cleaning.

Sean continues: “We are confident that we will successfully significantly increase the output of the local and indeed national, steel fabrication sector once the workshop is fully operational by the second half of 2015.”

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