



Q&A Bill McDonald, McDonald Jones Homes



The Bordeaux Executive (top), Miami and Edenvale (below) continue the McDonald Jones tradition of providing affordable and well-designed homes.



Co-founder of McDonald Jones Homes Bill McDonald received the Sir Phillip Lynch for Excellence award last month, the Housing Industry Association's highest award.

Bill began his career as a carpenter in 1965, starting his business with Phil Jones in 1987.

Since then McDonald Jones has grown to become the largest volume builder in NSW. The company has continued to expand with the arrival of sister company, Mojo Homes last year, which began building its very first home in May.

What does winning this award mean to you?

It's easily the most prestigious award you can get from the HIA. I was stunned when they told me because I don't think I've done anything special but it means a hell of a lot to me. I've really enjoyed being congratulated by my peers in the industry. Even the Master Builders Association wrote to me.

What was the industry like when you started McDonald Jones in 1987?

Phil Jones and I started the business to create jobs for ourselves – we thought the person we were working for was about to go broke. Phil left the business in 2000. I still like creating things, although I don't get the opportunity to do that as much as I used to. I love handing over the keys to young people moving in to their new home. That's such a fantastic feeling and a sensational moment to be a part of.

How has home construction changed since you started?

There were a lot less regulations then, and that's good and bad. Some of the regulations and taxes now are way out of kilter. And I don't understand why the government didn't make the first home buyers' grant a permanent thing.

What changes have you seen in the way builders work now?

You have to be competitive and offer people good customer service, which was not as prominent as it is now. People expect good customer service throughout the process and that's what we try to base ourselves on. We all use the same materials to build houses, so it's how we put those things together. Customer service is what makes us stand out.

What's the best way to find a good builder?

The best advertisement is word of mouth. People do a lot more research on the internet than they used to. I have the best people in the building industry working for me and we try to do quality work. If I think someone had a legitimate complaint about my company, I'll see them personally to sort it out. As we get bigger, that is more difficult but we want our customers to be happy. You might have a problem but judge us on how we fix that problem.

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Bill's company has a long history of charity work, including building this home for Build For A Cure last year. It was auctioned to raise money.

