



Jackson Yin

Co-founder/CEO, *iBuild*, Vic
“The new-age builder”

Since its launch in 2014, iBuild has been designing and constructing affordable prefabricated structures, including kit homes, granny flats and modular buildings. The company headquarters are in the Eastern Innovation Business Centre in Mulgrave, south-east of Melbourne, and its manufacturing plant in Campbellfield, to the city's north. iBuild has 10 employees.

COVID-19 hit the company hard. “So much of our business had been carried out in person. We ran open-for-inspection events where potential buyers would view our display home and make purchases,” CEO Jackson Yin recalls. “As this was no longer a possibility under Melbourne's lockdowns, we saw our sales plummet by more than 70 per cent, threatening the very survival of our business.” As a countermeasure, Jackson initiated a strategy review that resulted in a digital shift and the development of virtual 3D showrooms. “In times of uncertainty, a business leader plays a particularly important role in setting directions and strategies,” Jackson avers.

Realising there was a shift away from offices to working from home – where distractions are plenty, separation of space is difficult, and a healthy work-life balance is diminished – Jackson mentored and led a group of

engineering, IT and marketing interns from Melbourne, Monash and Swinburne universities to design and successfully launch a home office pod that provides a dedicated space for people working at home. The pods were conceived with careful consideration of aesthetics, ergonomics, built environment, COVID safety and network connectivity.

That initiative led to a massive spike in Google search traffic to iBuild's website. And

“
 In times of uncertainty, a business leader plays a particularly important role in setting directions and strategies.”

one of those searchers was an organisation working on a German foreign aid project in Senegal. That group placed a \$2 million order for 11 prefabricated homes to be shipped to West Africa. This contract was one of the biggest contributing factors to iBuild winning at the 2021 Australian Export Awards, as well as the 2021 Governor of Victoria Export Awards.

Alongside innovation, iBuild is also a leader when it comes to sustainability in the construction industry. In partnership with John Holland, the team designed, manufactured, delivered and installed over 700sqm of modular buildings for the new Reservoir Railway Station, which has become the first train station

in Australia to be awarded a 5-Star Green Star As Built rating by the Green Building Council of Australia, and a ‘Leading’ rating, the highest level awarded by the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia.

Furthermore, in a bid to achieve net-zero emissions targets by 2050, Jackson championed a project to use innovation and cutting-edge sustainability technologies to develop circular building modules with optimal

performance, durability, reusability and recyclability. “In conjunction with Monash University and Western Sydney University, we have been developing building modules manufactured largely from construction and demolition waste that are designed for straightforward disassembly and reassembly, using advanced structural joints. They can be recycled and re-produced as new modules when approaching their end-of-life,” Jackson explains proudly.

“When I arrived in Australia in 1996 from Guilin in South China as a 24-year-old postgraduate engineering student, all I had was \$700 and a suitcase and I struggled to find affordable accommodation,” Jackson recalls. “I'm proud to have built a business from absolute zero that now competes – and wins – on the global stage, generating employment opportunities for the community and helping improve housing affordability.”