

In the last issue of *Professional Pest Manager* (PPM), we talked with western Sydney based pest manager, Greg Morrison, about his use of the Green Eye Termite Monitoring and Baiting Station.

For this issue, we tracked down Greg, who operates Antibug Pest Control and his senior technician, Robert Guiffre, checking out a job which both men reckoned had become a major headache.

The good news was that Greg had recently taken possession of a new piece of termite detection technology courtesy of his long time mate, Raja Mahendran.

Along a cement block wall bounding the eastern side of the sub floor of a massive, local government owned, sports and aquatic complex, Greg had discovered the perfect spot to demonstrate his new toy: a highly sensitive CO₂ sensing device which picks up and analyses gas produced (in copious quantities, as a by-product of cellulose digestion) by subterranean termites lurking behind walls, under floors, in roof voids, under stairwells, or even in tree stumps.

Raja, for those who may have missed the last issue of PPM, now operates his own pest management marketing and product development consultancy from his base in Basel, Switzerland.

It was one of Raja's clients, US-based Termite Detection Systems, which had developed ... well ... the Termite Detection System' (TDS), which Greg Morrison was so keen to discuss and show off.

But first ... the headache!

The large community complex underneath which PPM met Greg and Robert, was built four years ago over a "mass of eucalypt stumps and timber scraps", and next to "*Coptotermes*-infested" gum trees. The sub floor and surrounding exterior had been filled in with clay and much of the timber formwork for ramp ways and stairs had been left in situ.

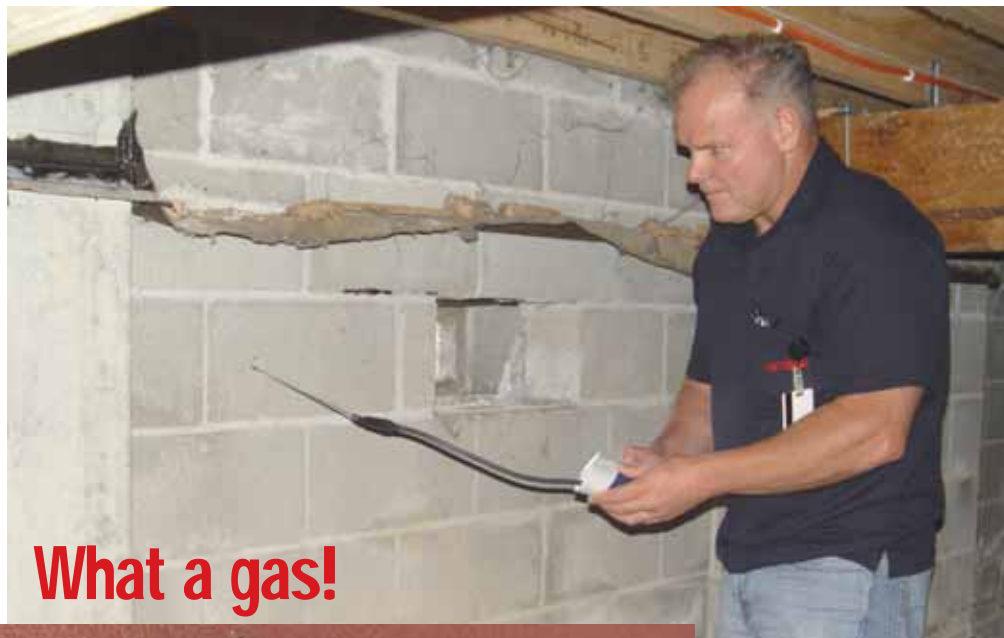
"It was, simply, termite city," Greg Morrison said.

Problem was the job had been effectively abandoned by both the builder and architect, and the council had been left in the lurch with a facility which was rapidly being eaten out by termites.

Over the past two years Greg, Robert and the Antibug team have not only destroyed the infesting colonies but also installed a post-construction termiticide reticulation system, over 40 inground baiting/monitoring stations, and applied chemically impregnated non-soil matrix barriers around piers and walls to prevent further undetected incursions.

The termite baiting/monitoring stations will be progressively replaced with Greg's newly discovered Green Eye units. But the main problem now seems under control.

"We had access to a variety of sophisticated termite detection technologies, and also, of course, relied heavily on our knowledge and experience. But locating and confirming the presence of nests and bivouacs would have been easier and quicker if we also had the CO₂ sensing TDS when we started this job," Greg said.



What a gas!



Above:
Greg Morrison:
making money
from a 'hole in
the wall'.

Left:
The CO₂-TDS
in all its glory.

The new the CO₂ TDS uses an innovative infra-red absorption sensing cell which is highly sensitive and can, according to its manufacturer, provide an “instant indication of termites”.

Instant it was. PPM only had to breath briefly on the probe tip to send off all the flashing LEDs and set off the high pitched alarm.

Each TDS unit consists of a CO₂ detector, battery powered air pump and a filtered probe and comes in an impact resistant carrying case.

“Most times you are going to find sufficiently large cracks or holes, like the one in this brickwork to insert the needle-like probe and get a reading,” Greg said.

“But if there’s no opening around where you reckon there may be activity, you only need to drill a very small hole through which to stick the probe,” he said.

Greg reckons the TDS will become an integral part of Antibug’s detection armoury, along with its Termatracs, infrared thermal cameras and probes, moisture metres.

“What I really like about it is, once you calibrate it for ambient or background CO₂ levels, it is really sensitive. And, it is really very simple and such an easy tool to deploy and use,” he said.

So, how and where would Greg Morrison use the TDS?

“With any inspection, the first thing we do is ask questions ... about the history of the building and the history of buildings nearby, to see if there have been any previous infestations, and, if so, when and where?” Greg said.

“Then we look around outside for telltale signs such as trees and signs of moisture near, in or under the premises.

“If they have moisture problems, say, in the bathroom, we normally recommend getting them fixed before we go further,” he said.

Greg said Antibug tends to use all its tools in an inspection, both to seek out and discover termites and to help confirm suspicions about activity.

“Not all tools are good for every situation. But when you have a good combination your chances of discovering and then confirming termites quickly and efficiently are improved,” he said.

According to Greg Morrison, good management is not just about understanding termites but understanding thoroughly the attributes and limitations of the tools at your disposal.

“The TDS gives us a very powerful diagnostic tool to pick up active termite infestations, which give off CO₂, in quite large volumes,” he said.

“If CO₂ levels behind a wall or structure are significantly higher than ambient levels something has to be doing some serious carbohydrate digestion in there.

“That’s when we’d do our tapping, looking for bowing in the walls or supports, checking for elevated moisture levels, heat emissions, and signs of termite movement.”

Greg said Antibug is heavily into new technologies, not for their own sake but for the sake of doing a better job, more efficiently.

“It is and will be how, where, when and why we use breakthroughs such as the TDS which makes us different and adds value to our brand and business,” he said. ■



Greg Morrison and senior technician, Robert Guiffre, lock up access to the sub floor. The line along the wall clearly shows the level of soil, both inside and out, before they started clearing the premises of termites.