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On night of April 19 2008, in the middle of a wedding, a major fire broke out in one of the top floor rooms. There were strong winds that night and the fire brigade units worked hard to extinguish the blaze. As it turned out there was more damage from the Fire Brigade than the actual fire. The next day when I walked into the lobby the floor was covered in a mixture of fire water and cinders. Because of the vertical and horizontal distance between the fire damaged bedrooms and the lobby I knew I was in trouble. We had literally just completed our final extension to the Hotel and it was shocking to see the damage.

My facilities manager John Mc Keown introduced me to Neal Herr of Property Claims Direct Ltd on the following day, Sunday. I advised him that Ciaran Nash from Thornton's was coming out that day to view the damage. Neal immediately got on his phone and I overheard him demanding that one of the directors of Thornton's show up in lieu of a foot soldier. I knew I had the right guy. Another stroke of luck was that I had underestimated the amount of damage that had been caused and felt that Neal gave me great support in order to prevent me giving an underestimate to Thornton's that might have been difficult at a later date to overcome.

Neal's team acted quickly in assembling all the consultants and my foremen and Thornton's together in weekly meetings where we were quickly able to get emergency issues dealt with (e.g. the roof drains were clogged with cinders and had to be jet hosed out quickly). Within one week of the fire Neal's team had all the damage assessed and along with my consultants reports handed Thornton's the entire claim. PCD negotiated with Thornton's and after several interim payments the claim was settled in October 08. I was very happy with the settlement and had the added bonus of achieving our 1st September reopening date. Neal and his team worked very hard in both negotiating the claim and project managing the consultants and contractors into achieving our deadlines. I would have no hesitation recommending him to anyone in similar circumstances.


Luke Moriarty