

LESSONS FROM A MASTER PRECASTER

CIVILSMART CEO DREW SPIDEN TALKS TO *ROADS & INFRASTRUCTURE* ABOUT THE COMPANY'S JOURNEY IN THE PRECASTING INDUSTRY.

How long have you been a precaster and how did the journey begin for your company?

Civilsmart is 100 per cent Australian owned company and has a long history of manufacturing in Australia for more than 100 years. The most notable is with Rocla, manufacturing precast concrete products since 1920. Civilsmart since its establishment in the last decade has acquired over nine recognised precast concrete brands, with a combined precasting experience of 694 years to become a market-leading precast supplier in Australia.

Can you briefly describe your company's current workforce and technical capabilities?

Civilsmart has over 700 employees nationally with expertise in casting, product design, materials technology, quality assurance, safety, procurement and logistics.

What has been your biggest or most interesting precasting project to date?

Large and interesting projects are Civilsmart's



Civilsmart helped to create a precast alternative to conventional rock walls, as part of Adelaide's seawall.

hallmark, which is why it's difficult to single one out. A showcase project with links to the current topic of climate change was the Adelaide seawall. Civilsmart supplied a cost-effective and efficient solution with timely delivery for the creation of a precast alternative to a rock wall to withstand storm events and projected sea level rise.

Another was the supply of the innovative geopolymer precast pedestrian bridges to Geelong City Council in 2021, in conjunction with Austeng, which was a significant milestone for our business. This was also the first precast geopolymer bridge supplied in Australia. Research and development of cement replacement materials for geopolymer precast is important to us. Rocla is one of the world leaders in large-scale commercial quantity precast geopolymer product supply, which underpins our continued growth to carbon neutral supply.



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How long have you been a National Precast member and why did you decide to become one?

Civilsmart joined the NPCAA (National Precast Concrete Association Australia) in 2021 through its acquisition of Rocla, a long-standing member of the association. The NPCAA brings value to our business in the form of industry collaboration, specification harmonisation focus, advocacy to major specifiers and government bodies, insights into OH&S and industry trends.

What do you like most about the precast industry?

The characters and their commitment to the industry is a great strength. Innovation is at the heart of the industry, with continued opportunity to provide unique, material efficient, energy-efficient, cost-effective and value-added solutions to our broad customer base.

Where do you see the precast industry heading in the next few years?

Growth! Core to precast in 2022 and beyond is innovation, sustainability and minimisation of the use of valuable resources that precasting affords the industry, compared to *in-situ* concrete and alternative materials. Adoption of automation will continue to escalate, combined with more efficient use of materials, reduced cartage distance and cost, to increase the use of precast. ■