

# From the desk of the CEO

While Covid continues to run rampant, the construction industry is busier than ever. In the main, National Precast members are manufacturing to fulfil orders booked well into the future.

As the peak body for the precast industry, National Precast addresses a number of industry matters with government and Standards Australia, offers new initiatives and its members themselves bring new offerings to the table.

### Secondary lifters declared an unsafe practice

National Precast has had an ongoing dialogue with the Queensland's Office of Industrial Relations (OIR). It started some years ago after discovering that the requirement for secondary – or backup – lifters, had snuck its way into the State's Code of Practice (a requirement which only exists in Queensland, let alone the rest of Australia or throughout the world).

Together with industry professionals – including the major suppliers of lifting componentry Reid Construction Systems and Levia – and other peak bodies such as Master Builders and the Crane Industry Council, National Precast has declared secondary lifters unsafe and encouraged the OIR to remove the requirement. Letters have been sent to relevant ministers and the opposition.

### Understanding grouting – available as a guide and as online learning

Tight construction programmes can result in grouting becoming a secondary consideration and that can have serious consequences. Consequently, imparting engineers, builders and precast installers with a better understanding of their requirements when it comes to grouting precast elements, is imperative. We have now produced guidance in the form of both a Guide and an online learning module. Both are available via [nationalprecastonline.com.au](http://nationalprecastonline.com.au).

### Master Precaster to save builders time and mitigate risk

Master Precaster grew out of discussions with tier one quality managers. Evidently, a precaster having ISO certification wasn't enough to warrant that systems and procedures were actually being practiced on a daily basis.

Master Precaster membership requires the precaster to pass an audit where they are assessed on their QSE practices as well as a range of other benchmarks like track record, technical expertise, factory capability, industry engagement, and other parameters.



By Sarah Bachmann, CEO, National Precast Association Australia



The biggest difference between the Master Precaster audit and ISO audits is that our auditors are extremely familiar with precast manufacturing processes and Master Precasters are spot checked that systems are actually being implemented.

There is too much that can go wrong if price is the key determinant when awarding a tender. Quality can lack and there can be delays to programmes which can be very costly once a job has started. Master Precaster is designed to take the load off builders, who don't always have the resources to properly do their due diligence on a precast manufacturer before awarding a tender. Using a Master Precaster does the checking for the builder and mitigates their risk.

### New member initiatives

Meanwhile some new member initiatives have hit the market. Master Precaster Austral Precast has introduced both the Panel Brick system and Double Wall, while REZICAST offers a system whereby precast homes can reach lockup in just 10 days.

### Panel Brick and Double Wall update traditional offerings

Panel Brick is a brilliant solution that capitalises on two of Austral Precast's core

products... the company's longstanding range of bricks, and its precast panel business.

As with standard precast panels, the brick precast panels are manufactured onsite in Austral's factory with brick facings that are installed in the panels during the manufacturing process.

Double Wall on the other hand, is a unique product involving the prefabrication and connection of two precast concrete panels to form a services cavity, which eliminates the need for metal or timber studwork.

Panel Brick is on show in St Paul's Terrace Apartments in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, while Double Wall has recently been used in Astina Suites at Penrith, NSW.

### Lockup in 10 days

Precast housing has been given a boost with a new system that capitalises on the reliability and high quality of precast, to dramatically speed house building.

Started in the ACT by founder Mick Johnson, REZICAST is licensed to builders and offers a unique way to connect panels and deliver housing that is fire and flood resistant, as well as acoustically and thermally efficient. ■■

### Master Precaster initiative

The Master Precaster initiative removes risk as it assists a builder doing their due diligence on a precaster.

