

Up close with Advanced Precast



Joining the National Precast Concrete Association Australia (National Precast) in 2015, Advanced Precast has seen consistent growth over its almost 40 years in business. This month, Advanced Precast's Operations Manager Brett Foster gave *Inside Construction* insight into the company's success.

Precast concrete is an important contributor to Design for Manufacturing and Assembly (DFMA) methodology, offering ever important productivity benefits to construction. As an effort to showcase the important work being undertaken by the precast concrete industry around Australia, *Inside Construction* interviewed Brett Foster, Operations Manager, Advanced Precast.

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

Brett: Advanced Precast was established in Melbourne in 1985. Since those early years, the company has grown to become one

of Australia's market leaders in the field of precast concrete within the building sector. In 1999 Advanced Precast expanded its base of operations into NSW, ACT and then in 2005 into the QLD market. We now service Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, Gold Coast and the surrounding areas.

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

Brett: Advanced Precast currently employs 160 people across all three states comprising construction workers, engineers, detailers and administrative staff. Our in-house engineering, detailing, manufacturing, and construction expertise has enabled the company to promote and lead by example in the delivery of innovative and cost-effective precast solutions for building structures.

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

Brett: With almost 40 years in the game our list of interesting and exciting projects is a very long one. To name a few of the standouts amongst this list:

- Lakeside Stadium, Albert Park VIC (Besix Watpac)
- Epica Apartments, Chatswood NSW (Mirvac)
- Coburg Station VIC (John Holland)
- Swinburne University – Advanced Technologies Centre, Hawthorn VIC (Kane Constructions)
- The Arthouse, South Brisbane QLD (Mirvac)



Coburg Station VIC (John Holland).



Lakeside Stadium, Albert Park VIC (Besix Watpac).



How long have you been a National Precast Concrete Association Australia member and why?

Brett: We joined 7 years ago. We saw the advantages of being around a network of likeminded people. It was apparent that other organisations like ours were also experiencing similar issues or challenges; and that it is an opportunity to work through some of the industry wide issues. The education aspect is extremely rewarding, very relevant and current.

What do you like most about the precast industry?

Brett: Everything that precast stands for and all the numerous advantages that precast offers – to name but a few:

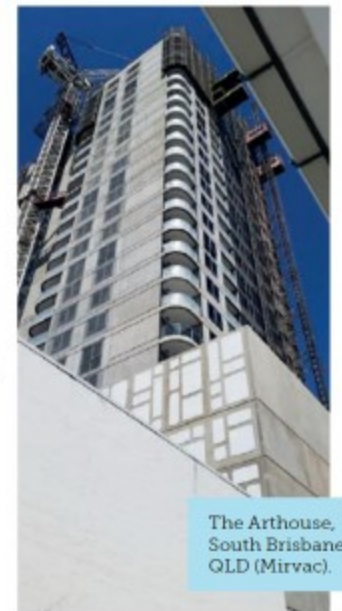
- Speed of construction which in turn leads to major cost savings: Approximately 1 – 2 days and more per floor saving which in turn results in reduced overall construction times.
- Faster return on investment (including any interest outlaid) due to early settlements.
- Manufacture is carried out in controlled conditions without weather and other factors that affect other disciplines.
- Labour efficiencies and optimal workmanship.
- Site labour, amenities and builder prelims are all massively reduced, and the flow on possibilities from this is endless.

We are a combination of the construction team and the documentation team. Everything we build is built on paper first. Potential issues are sorted out up front and collaboration is optimised ahead of time where the pressure of instantaneous decision making is significantly reduced or eliminated completely.

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

Brett: With skilled labour shortages at an all-time high level, the reduction of on-site labour that precast offers is hugely advantageous.

This issue is only increasing as skilled migration levels are low. 'The great resignation' continues to play havoc in the industry across the board. Technological advances in the factory are moving exponentially versus the on-site construction advances. With a widening gap comes greater supply demands for alternatives and hence a pickup in the use of precast. The Technology Age will enhance the opportunities for automated factories and factory machinery more than in past eras. There is also a need for a rethink and rationalisation on some of the standards that are currently impeding the whole concrete industry, as well as shortages/excessive lead times in certain materials. **IM**



The Arthouse, South Brisbane QLD (Mirvac).