



COMPLIANCE IMPERATIVE FOR DURABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Durability is of paramount importance for Australian infrastructure if it is to withstand the country's unique environmental challenges, enhance safety and resilience, support economic growth, and promote sustainable development for the benefit of its citizens and future generations.

It follows that using quality and compliant products in infrastructure construction is crucial for ensuring durability... as well as safety, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

But with the volume of infrastructure projects at an all-time high, the resultant demand for products inherently means higher-than-usual lead times and it can be easy to take shortcuts when products are in limited supply.

The consequences, however, can have significant consequences in the long run. When

Master Precasters like MJB Industries are constantly investing in new plant, to ensure supply of compliant precast products

inferior, untested products are unknowingly used, there can be a drastic negative impact on the lifespan and structural integrity of the project.

REPORTS OF INFERIOR SUBSTITUTIONS

According to National Precast CEO Sarah Bachmann, this is on occasion happening in the civil space, where inferior products like raw cast liners are on occasion being substituted for their superior alternative, spun reinforced precast concrete liners.

"Perhaps without realising the consequences, we have been informed that some authorities are installing the inferior alternative, unaware of their actual performance," Bachmann comments.

"Our members – and in particular our Master Precasters – pride themselves in manufacturing high quality, durable precast elements, whether that be in the civil or buildings space. It is really concerning when that is being compromised," she says.

THE PROBLEM WITH RAW CAST LINERS

Unlike spun liners, raw cast liners do not comply with AS/NZS 4058 Precast concrete pipes (pressure and non-pressure), a typical requirement of roads' authority specifications.

Raw (or dry) cast liners are not spun. They use very little reinforcement (or fibre reinforcement) and they are typically untested and not manufactured to ISO 9001 accreditation.

"Using them is false economy," Bachmann comments.

ADDRESSING SUPPLY SHORTAGES – A WA SOLUTION

National Precast Master Precast member MJB Industries has made the manufacture and supply of Class 2 spun liners a priority in its new pipe plant. Located in Australind, Western Australia, its original bidirectional pipe plant is currently operating at full capacity, with a production schedule booked months in advance.

MJB Director Kim Hovey says that manufacturing spun liners will be the first cab off the rank in the new plant, so they can be stockpiled for current and future orders.

"Our second pipe plant will be operational in the third quarter of this year and will greatly increase production output and reduce lead times," says Hovey.

"The spun liners we manufacture meet Main Roads Western Australia's Specification 405, which requires precast liner segments to be manufactured to AS/NZS 4058."

Bachmann says that there are a limited number of Master Precaster manufacturers able to produce these spun liner products in the West.

"Other manufacturers of raw cast liners - that do not conform to AS/NZS 4058 - are not an equivalent alternative and do not meet Main Roads Western Australia specifications," she comments. "It should be a case of buyer beware."

BETTER UNDERSTANDING NEEDED

According to Bachmann, this is an industry-wide issue that requires better understanding by everyone involved in roads and infrastructure projects.

"The longevity of our infrastructure depends on quality products that are compliant with Australian Standards and specifications. I'm pleased to say that our Master Precasters, like MJB, ensure they do just that."

"Only by using high quality products can we ensure that infrastructure will meet the needs of society and stand the test of time," says Bachmann.

