

CONCRETE PIPES FOSTERING CREATIVE PLAY

It is well understood that a stimulating and imaginative play environment for children encourages physical activity, social interaction and creativity. When Nixon Street Primary School in Devonport, Tasmania redeveloped its playground, the design intent was to provide an enriched play experience for children.

A precast concrete pipe was chosen as the focus for a new section of the playground for its versatility, durability and cost-effectiveness. What was a bare space has been transformed into a series of versatile play elements, where children can crawl, hide, shelter, slide and climb.

While typically used underground, the simplicity of a precast concrete pipe can serve a multitude of purposes. In this playground there is only one pipe. While its main purpose is to serve as a tunnel, its robustness and cylindrical shape encourages physical skills of coordination, balance and motor skills, plus the development of an active imagination. At the same time, this concrete pipe is fostering adaption to environment amid the surrounding structures and awareness of the contrasting natural environment.

As a locally owned family company, Launceston based National Precaster Hudson Civil is invested in its community. With a goal of excellence in service and product, the company has been supplying precast and civil products throughout Tasmania for many years.

With the pipe already in stock – and not something that could be poured on site – the company was able to supply the product to meet Benson's Landscaping's tight schedule.

With a 1200 millimetre diameter and 2.5 metre length, the pipe is one of the many products manufactured off-site in the company's factory. The precaster's



Hudson Civil's works on the Nixon Street Primary School in Devonport, Tasmania.

PROJECT: Nixon Street Primary School
LOCATION: Devonport, Tasmania
CLIENT: Bensons Landscaping
END USER: Nixon Street Primary
ARCHITECT: Design Intent Architecture
MASTER PRECASTER: Hudson Civil

other precast elements include culverts, pits, manholes, lids, retaining walls and bridge beams. Building elements are also able to be manufactured. It's a protected environment where worker safety is paramount and quality is tightly controlled, ensuring a durable and robust quality result.

With its more than 100-year design life, and being manufactured to Australian Standard 4058, this pipe will serve generations of children. It adds a dimensioned blank canvas for the children, which is only constrained by their imagination. It also encourages

outdoor activity, something especially important in today's digital world.

National Precast's CEO Sarah Bachmann says the works exemplify the impact that local infrastructure can have on local communities.

"This project is a great example of how construction materials are able to be repurposed to enrich community spaces and enhance recreational opportunities for young individuals. In this case, it demonstrates the versatility and adaptability of precast pipes in creating an exciting and inclusive play environment for children," she says. ■