



**PROJECT:** NIXON STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL  
**LOCATION:** DEVONPORT, TASMANIA  
**ARCHITECT:** DESIGN INTENT ARCHITECTURE  
**CLIENT:** BENSONS LANDSCAPING  
**MASTER PRECASTER:** HUDSON CIVIL

## CONNECTING AND CREATING IN CONCRETE

The youngsters in Devonport can thank National Precast Master Precaster Hudson Civil for a new addition to the playground at their local primary school, Nixon Street Primary.

As a locally owned family company, the precaster is proud of its heritage and heavily invested in its community. With a goal of excellence in service and product, the company has proudly been supplying precast and civil products all over Tasmania for many years.

But this project is different to most others. A precast pipe – typically used underground in civil applications – features in Nixon Street’s new playground and serves to reinforce the school’s core values of ‘Respect, Connect, Create and Learn’.

Just over 400 students attend the school. For them, a stimulating and imaginative play environment that encourages physical activity, social interaction and creativity, is vital. So when Nixon Street set about to redevelop the 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.

Once a bare space, it now features a series of versatile play elements – including one pipe that is 1200 high and 2.5 metres long – where children can crawl, hide, shelter, slide and climb.

The simplicity of the precast concrete pipe serves a multitude of purposes. While it is primarily a tunnel for children to run through, its robustness and cylindrical shape encourage

physical skills of coordination, balance and motor skills, plus the development of an active imagination.

More than that, this concrete pipe is fostering adaption to environment amid the surrounding structures and awareness of the contrasting natural environment.

Hudson Civil was able to supply the pipe to meet Benson’s Landscaping tight schedule with the pipe already in stock. Clearly, it wasn’t something that could be poured on site. Being manufactured by a reputable precaster in their factory-controlled environment was essential to ensure a high quality and durable outcome.

Pipes are just one of the many products manufactured in the company’s Launceston factory. Many other precast elements including culverts, pits, manholes, lids, retaining walls and bridge beams, are manufactured and supplied daily to the Tasmanian community. 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 a more than 100-year design life, and being manufactured to Australian Standard 4058, this particular pipe will serve generations of children – functioning as a perfectly dimensioned blank canvas for the children, that is only constrained by their imagination. And in today’s digital world where it is difficult to pry young people away from screens, this pipe helps encourage outdoor activity.

According to National Precast’s CEO Sarah Bachmann, “Nixon Street Primary, its architects and landscapers, have clearly thought outside the box on this project. Going back to basics, this is a wonderful example of the versatility of a concrete pipe and how it can be transformed to enrich the play environment of the Nixon Street students.”



# PRECAST INDUSTRY GATHERS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

National Precast Concrete Association Australia's Sydney National Conference has emerged as a crucial event for the sector as around 150 of the country's leading precasters joined with suppliers and allied professionals to learn and network.

Led by National Precast CEO Sarah Bachmann and President Jeff Stratford, the three-day conference ran from 30th October to 1st November in Coogee, New South Wales. Leviat was the Conference Partner for the Event.

While National Precast holds a similar event earlier in the year – in 2023 in the gorgeous Barossa Valley – this annual event began with a Welcome Reception and Trade Exhibition, sponsored by Reid Construction Systems.

Notable industry participants such as Leviat, Reid Construction Systems, CONQA, PSA, ConXedge, BOSFA, ECOTONE, PROGRESS GROUP, Barrason's Engineers, Actech, Peikko, Hagane Systems, APTUS, and Bennett Equipment showcased their latest technology to the industry. On offer was information about quality assurance software for new structural precast connections – essential information for the precast industry to stay ahead of its game and offer smart, sustainable solutions to the construction industry.

National Precast's CEO Sarah Bachmann says the Conference attendance was unprecedented. While the exhibition continued on day two – Conference Day – keynote speakers as well as industry leaders stepped onto the stage to share their insights.

Fair Work Commission Deputy President Peter Hampton provided an update on the

implementation of multi-employer bargaining options as well as a guide to what the Commission considers when hearing unfair dismissal matters.

Meanwhile, James Webster, Senior Construction Advisor at WorkSafe Victoria, discussed WorkSafe's 'Pre-cast Panel Project'. This initiative entailed a thorough examination of six primary hazards across the industry as it took a deep dive into twenty precast businesses in Melbourne. Common hazards including respirable crystalline silica (RCS), cranes and lifting equipment, panel storage, hazardous manual handling, vehicles and traffic management, and panel design and quality assurance were all explored.

Leviat Australia's National Technical Manager, Brett King, and Engineering Team Leader for Precast, Ali Asgari, delved into discussions on new durable and resilient connection solutions. These solutions are specifically crafted to overcome existing challenges associated with precast connections, simultaneously aiming to speed construction and decrease the cost and complexity of precast construction.

Of great interest to the audience was Daniel Nassar's presentation. As Managing Director at Alpha Precast, Daniel shared his insights into his company's rigorous approach to contracting. Having been initially faced with resistance, he outlined the strategies he has implemented to sustain his position and illustrated the positive impact these measures have had on his business.

Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from Fleur Heazlewood, Director at The Blueberry Institute, who discussed

psychological safety. Sarah Hammond, Partner at Moray & Agnew, addressed the termination of project contracts, while Matt Press, Executive Director of Compliance & Dispute Resolution at SafeWork and Fair Trading NSW, shared progress with the work of the NSW Building Commissioner and associated roadblocks and modernisation opportunities.

Concluding the conference, Jeff Stratford, Euro Precast's General Manager in Queensland, shared insights into the company's adept management of challenges associated with manufacturing and installing precast elements for the prominent Mondrian Gold Coast project. He revealed the implications of reinforcement congestion and discussed mould manufacturing, drafting considerations, the use of form liners, the company's in-factory and onsite quality assurance procedures, offsite payment processes, audits, inspections and approvals, as well as delivery and installation. Additionally, Stratford emphasised the pivotal role of support from National Precast partnerships in navigating and overcoming challenges as they arose.

To conclude day two, participants indulged in a Networking Dinner sponsored by PSA and PROGRESS GROUP. The following day included an interactive factory tour of the Metro West Tunnel.

During the dinner, National Precast recognised several members for achieving membership milestones of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years.

Particularly noteworthy, Rod Mackay-Sim was awarded Life Membership in recognition of his outstanding dedication to the precast industry over the past 40 years.

"Rod's dedication to the precast industry, especially his fervour for enhancing safety, has been truly exceptional," said Stratford.

"We are proud to have Rod as part of our National Precast community and immensely grateful for his contributions to the industry."

In addition, Sarah Bachmann was recognised for her 20 years of service as the CEO of National Precast.

"Sarah's passion, dedication, sleepless nights and laughter have helped all of us grow and be successful in our respective businesses," said Stratford.

"On behalf of the Association and our members, I was so pleased to recognise Sarah's amazing tenure with a 20-year service award and gift."

Bachmann says the next conference is planned for Brisbane in late March, with the next big event being held later in the year in Melbourne.

"We promise the programme will make the March event one that the industry will want to attend," she said.





# NATIONAL PRECAST ANNOUNCES NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There is one new face on National Precast Concrete Association Australia's Board of Directors, with Jeff Stratford from Euro Precast continuing in his second year of a two-year term, as President.

National Precast's CEO Sarah Bachmann has confirmed that Stratford will resume his role as President.

"Jeff Stratford has had a profound impact on the Association in his first year as President, and membership has grown considerably over the last twelve months," Bachmann comments.

"He's inspired a new energy into the Board, with active working groups considering a variety of initiatives," she adds.

Among the initiatives being considered

by the working groups are precast factory worker training, the audited Master Precaster programme and industry reporting.

"But first up, we will be conducting market research with our members and beyond. We want to ensure we remain and become more relevant to the precast industry."

Stratford will be joined on the Board by reappointed existing Board members, including Brett Foster from Advanced Precast, Joe Healy from Hollow Core Concrete, Michael Hudson from Hudson Civil, Riccardo Musella from Reinforced Earth, Chris Kouris from Reid Construction Systems, and Professional Associate Members Bob Connell and Simon Hughes. The organisation also welcomes a new Board member, David Cullen-Ward, Managing Director of Precast Elements, who brings with him a wealth of experience in the precast industry.

"We express our gratitude to departing Board members Michael Waeger from Waeger Constructions for his extensive years of service on the Board and for serving as President for three years, and to Alberto Ferraro from PERMAcast, another long-serving Board member," Bachmann adds.

According to Bachman, Waeger made a significant contribution during his time as



David Cullen-Ward from Precast Elements joins the National Precast Board of Directors

President and while on the Board, guiding the organisation through challenging years amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and having led substantial structural changes during his term.

"Throughout this time, the Board strategically worked to position National Precast to deliver enhanced value to our members and the wider precast industry. That involved the introduction of new services and a reduction in precaster fees," Bachmann says.

Stratford, alongside the rest of the Board, is eager to continue to implement additional changes and is enthusiastic about actively promoting the organisation's efforts.

"This will contribute to achieving our planned growth in membership and further strengthening the voice of National Precast," Bachmann says.

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