

THE PRECAST INDUSTRY... **A SUPPLIER'S TAKE**

NATIONAL PRECAST'S CEO SARAH BACHMANN GETS UP CLOSE WITH ONE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S MORE RECENT INDUSTRY PARTNERS, PSA. HERE, SHE CHATS WITH PSA'S MANAGING DIRECTOR, MICHAEL SMITH.

SB (Sarah Bachmann) – From your perspective, what are some innovations happening within the precast industry and how is your company contributing to those?

MS (Michael Smith) – The precast concrete industry has been witnessing numerous innovations over the last decade that are aimed at enhancing efficiency, sustainability and design flexibility. PSA has made significant contributions in all these areas through innovation and product development. Using recycled material to manufacture a range of plastic products that are used in precast is certainly a step towards sustainable practices to reduce environmental impact. We are also working on several other new innovative products that could revolutionise the precast industry in the coming years.

SB – What triggered your decision to become a National Precast Industry Partner?

MS – PSA became an Industry Partner in July 2023 after holding an Industry Supplier Membership for several months. As PSA's market share has grown significantly in recent

years, we decided to contribute more to the precast concrete industry and we felt the best way to do that was as an Industry Partner. We believe PSA has much to offer the industry, with our diverse expertise in various aspects of supply and we will continue to contribute in every way we can.

SB – What do you consider to be the major challenges confronting the precast industry, and how do you propose to address them?

MS – While there are many challenges currently confronting the precast industry, supply chain disruptions would be at the top of my list. Global conflicts, natural disasters, and events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have impacted the availability of raw materials, equipment and skilled labour for the precast industry. Interruptions in supply chains can lead to project delays, cost overruns, and uncertainty in the construction industry. PSA has been successful so far with overcoming these challenges by strategically planning to hold more stock of high demand items.

The effects of inflation on the industry has also been a significant issue during the past year. Rising costs of raw material, energy and utilities, labour, equipment maintenance and transportation have posed challenges for the industry by increasing manufacturing costs, reducing profit margins and affecting pricing dynamics.

SB – What is your outlook on the future of precast?

MS – Australia has one of the highest paid labour forces in the world. As such PSA believes the future of precast will remain strong and continue to grow. On top of this there is still a huge housing shortage. Precast offers one of the fastest and most efficient ways to deliver a solution to the housing crisis that is gripping Australia. We also believe that sustainability will be a major consideration in the future and that industry and stakeholders

PSA Managing Director, Michael Smith.



Image: PSA

will tend more towards sustainable innovative products. With the rising impact of the technological boom in the construction industry, efficiency gains can be expected via automation, digitised quality control and other initiatives.

We believe that the future of precast construction will continue to expand, as it addresses the challenges of climate change, reduces construction time and site wastage, as well as addressing quality issues before they get to site. It is a recognised and trusted building product that has evolved to meet the challenges of today's construction industry. Gone are the days of plain, heavy, and unappealing grey building blocks. Precast concrete can be light weight yet structurally sound, with an enviable range of architectural finishes and shapes.

PSA through our subsidiary AFA is proud to assist in the architectural space, with polyurethane liners for multiple use or economical, thermoform liners for single use applications on site. The custom patterns span as far as the imagination will allow.

PSA – in association with National Precast – is confident that we will both see mutual growth in this ever-evolving industry. ■



Formliners create an enviable pattern in retaining wall panels for the Melton highway project.

Image: National Precast

WHO IS PSA?

Since 1996 PSA has proudly supported Australia's precast concrete industry with a range of quality consumables and lifting products, technologies and specialty services. With substantial product development and growth in recent years, the company's capacity has grown to offer a diverse range of value-added products and services into precast construction.

A highly seasoned team of technical specialists, engineers and product developers work closely with precasters and other customers, developers, architects and structural engineers to deliver even smarter end-to-end products and services, ensuring they meet and exceed the needs of today's construction industry.