

ASSOCIATIONS

National Precast Concrete Association Australia

When concrete becomes the finish

At Skye by Pikos in Brisbane, exposed concrete is both structure and finish, placing pressure on construction quality and long-term durability.

Located at 8 River Terrace in Kangaroo Point, Skye by Pikos is a 69-residence development overlooking the Brisbane River and CBD. Designed by Conrad Gargett and constructed by Tomkins Commercial & Industrial Builders, the project uses concrete as the primary architectural expression across soffits, structural walls and precast façade elements.

Construction challenge

Using concrete as a finished surface introduces a high level of complexity. Unlike concealed structural elements, architectural concrete must achieve its final appearance during construction.

Surface quality is influenced by formwork, concrete mix, placement and curing conditions. Even minor inconsistencies in joint alignment, release agents or curing can result in visible variations across large façade areas.

These challenges are amplified in Brisbane's subtropical climate, where UV exposure, humidity and seasonal rainfall place additional demands on durability and long-term appearance.

Managing finish quality

Because the architectural design relies on visible concrete, maintaining a consistent finish across both precast and in situ elements was critical.

National Precast member ECOTONE was engaged across a broad scope of external concrete elements, including precast panels, planters, soffits and feature columns. About 25,000 square metres of concrete was treated across the project.

Multiple precast suppliers were involved at different stages of construction, requiring careful coordination to maintain consistency across precast and in situ elements. Changes in supply during the program introduced additional risk to finish quality, reinforcing the importance of a controlled and consistent surface treatment approach.

As Wayne Duncan, managing director of ECOTONE Coatings Queensland, explains: 'One of the big challenges is educating the industry that when using mineral silicates as the finish appearance, the class finish of the concrete is important. Traditional surface products and finishes can mask or hide the



Maintaining a consistent finish was critical to achieving the project's architectural design.

concrete arrises, profile and sharp lines, whereas ECOTONE Minsil enhances these elements.'

A mineral silicate treatment system was applied across the façade, designed to chemically bond with the concrete substrate rather than forming a surface film. This allows the concrete to remain vapour permeable while improving resistance to environmental exposure.

A dedicated project manager remained on site throughout the application process, working alongside the construction team and specialist applicators to ensure consistency across all treated surfaces.

Outcome

Precast concrete elements form an important part of the building's external composition, complementing the in situ structure. Planter elements were supplied by National Precast member Advanced Precast (QLD), contributing to the façade's depth and rhythm while supporting consistent finish quality across repeated elements.

Producing precast components in a controlled factory environment supports surface quality while improving installation efficiency on site.

The completed Skye development demonstrates how concrete can deliver both structural performance and architectural expression when carefully coordinated. Through the integration of precast and in situ elements, supported by consistent surface treatment, the façade performs in Brisbane's demanding environment while maintaining the intended architectural finish. ■



By Cadell Taye, CEO of National Precast.

