

Australia's Newest Icon

The Melbourne Star Observation Wheel

As the capital of the state of Victoria and second most populous city in Australia, the vibrant and colorful city of Melbourne is attracting locals and tourists alike to its newest tourism and entertainment attraction; the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel. Standing at a towering 120 meters (394 feet) tall - equivalent to a 40 storey building - the Melbourne Star is the only giant observation wheel in the Southern Hemisphere, with its seven jutting spokes representing the seven-pointed star of the Australian flag.



One complete rotation of the Star takes approximately 30 minutes, giving guests an uninterrupted 360-degree view of up to 40 km (25 miles) that includes such landmarks as the Docklands Precinct, Melbourne's city business district, Port Phillip Bay, Mount Macedon and the Dandenong Ranges.

The Melbourne Star Observation Wheel was commissioned by Sanoyas Rides Corporation, to engineering house Arup, Alfasi Steel Construction in Melbourne and Haywards Steel Fabrication and Construction of Tasmania. AkzoNobel's International® brand was selected as the sole supplier of protective coatings for the massive steel structure. The Melbourne Star Observation Wheel officially opened on December 23, 2013, and has already received a string of prestigious accolades. The Melbourne Star was awarded a Steel Excellence Award in Engineering Projects at the 2014 Australian Steel Institute (VIC) Awards, as well as a High Commendation award at both the Buildings and Structures category at the 2014 Victorian Engineering Excellence Awards; and 2014 National Steel Institute Awards.

The Melbourne Star is constructed from approximately 1,200 tons of steel, (this is the whole of the superstructure including the columns and hub) which was fabricated and transported to the site in giant steel sections by Alfasi and Haywards. AkzoNobel's position as sole coatings supplier was initially attributed to the strength of a long-standing relationship with Alfasi; having worked together on a number of other successful large scale projects using International® coatings products. However, the technology of its International® products, technical expertise and supply capabilities were the driving factors that helped AkzoNobel secure the contract for the Melbourne Star.

AkzoNobel's Project Manager in Victoria, recommended a two coat Interzinc® 52 primer and Interfine® 979 polysiloxane topcoat system, instead of a traditional three coat system. Together, the coatings' excellent adhesion and fast curing properties helped fast track the construction schedule, without compromising the corrosion standard for the job. The polysiloxane topcoat color was appropriately named Melbourne Star Observation Wheel White, after the original color specification. AkzoNobel received high praises for the accuracy of the color match and for the long term color and gloss retention its International® topcoat will provide.

Painting Contractors, Action Alliance of Melbourne and McElligott Partners of Tasmania, were contracted to spray apply the coatings to the complex steel sections after fabrication, and later provided touch ups at the job site – both on the ground and after the sections were erected, which was no easy feat.



The high durability of the two coat system will ensure an extended maintenance lifecycle of the tourism attraction for up to 10 years.

"Action Alliance was very pleased with the uninterrupted process of application due to the fast curing performance of Interfine® 979 polysiloxane. Not only did this assist with the off-site application, once Action Alliance proceeded with on-site touch up and rectification works it really enhanced its abilities of recoating with minimal effort. This will be a positive product for the future maintenance programs", according to a spokesperson from Action Alliance.

Mutimer commented, "The success of this project was a true team effort across the business. Through strategic collaboration on detailed specifications, warranties, maintenance plans, site visits and meetings, random inspections, problem solving and uninterrupted product supply, project owners experienced a seamless, first class outcome; and that's something we're very proud of."

Today the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel is one of only four giant observation wheels in the world (the London Eye and Singapore Flyer having also been coated with protective coatings from AkzoNobel's International® range), it offers breathtaking flights in 21 spacious air conditioned cabins. AkzoNobel's advanced International® two coat system will help keep the Melbourne Star looking its best for years to come.



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