

RMP Panels bring benefits on the M5 West Widening

Following their success interstate, Rotational Moulded Polyethylene (RMP) noisewall panels have been approved for use on the M5 West Widening.



Installed panels at Noisewall 2W03

Noisewall construction is a significant part of the M5 West Widening project with over 51,000m² of panels to be installed. Last year, the noisewall team introduced a great innovation following the design phase of the project and changed the design from Hebel panels (light weight concrete) to Rotational Moulded Polyethylene (RMP) panels.

RMP panels have been used on a number of road projects in Melbourne and Adelaide, including our Peninsula Link project, but this is the first time they are being used in NSW.

The RMP Panels are an Australian-made product, being supplied by Ausgroup Alliance and made at Viscount Rotational Moulding's factory in Melbourne.

Construction Benefits

There are many benefits that RMP panels provide which is why they are being used:

- They are lightweight (6m x 0.6m panel weighs approx. 60kg) compared with a Hebel panel (200kg) and can be lifted by three people or a small crane, making them safe and easy to both handle and install
- They are hard to damage during installation – no chipping, unlike concrete products
- They are easy to clean and maintain – no anti-graffiti coating required
- They can be made in various designs, colours and patterns – the M5 ones have a simple textured look to blend with the existing Hebel panels.

Obtaining Approval for a New Product

Introducing a new product in NSW has meant going through a rigorous approvals process to meet RMS R271 specification requirements.

It took months of work and planning with our panel supplier to achieve a final proposal approved by RMS. Ausgroup then developed the final design, which was reviewed by SKM (Project Designers) and HBO+EMTB (Project Urban

Designers) to ensure the new noisewalls complied and fitted with the intent of the original design.

Following approval, the design and manufacturing hold points for factors such as material conformity, impact and acoustic testing, fire resistance and prototypes had to be negotiated – a process that is not required when using standard products such as Hebel and precast reinforced concrete.

Working with the Client

The M5 West Widening is somewhat unique as both our client (Interlink) and RMS are involved in oversight of the project.

There have been numerous inspections, hold points and RFIs to progress to this point.

Gaining approval for the use of the RMP panels would not have happened without a significant effort from the Lend Lease team as well as co-operation from Interlink, RMS and our Independent Verifier, who have been supportive of this innovative product being used on site.

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