



On your marks

Gold Coast AFL fans have enjoyed a season of home game luxury with the 25,000-seat Metricon Stadium at Carrara open for business.

The much-loved local sporting ground, which has played host to a colourful array of codes, events and identities since it began life as the Laver Oval, has moved into premier status after an extensive \$144 million redevelopment that has totally transformed the site.

Having a stadium of this calibre will help position the Gold Coast as a world class sporting destination, put its resident AFL team, the new Gold Coast SUNS, on the map and give local residents and visiting sports fans enjoyment of sporting events in A-grade conditions. The venue will also play host to cricket fixtures and is central to the Gold Coast's 2018 Commonwealth Games bid.

While the site has undergone various facelifts over the years, none compare to this one. The old stadium has been completely demolished, leaving only its six original light towers.

The new stadium is state-of-the art and a far cry from the original makeshift stands. Its 8.5-metre-high, 23-metre-wide high-definition LED scoreboard is one of the largest in Australia and its 450 square metres of solar panelling will generate around 20% of the stadium's total electricity needs.

Commissioned in 2009, with a completion date of May 2011, speed of construction was a high priority for the developer - and extensive use of precast throughout played a major role, not only in the successful delivery of the project but also in overcoming some of the design challenges associated with building a stadium to follow the curves of an oval for AFL – rather than a rectangular one.

Precast manufacturer

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Architect

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In total, more than 8,000 square metres of hollowcore flooring and a staggering 15 kilometres of seating were supplied by Precast Concrete Products.

"While we had never made seating plats before, we had a strong 25-year track record with the client and worked very closely with the architect from the outset to be sure we got the geometry and the complex moulding right," says Ian Coulter, Managing Director of Precast Concrete Products.

He goes on to explain that the project called for special pre-stressed beds, and that the hard work in the planning stages more than paid off in savings in time, costs and the need for handling.

"Speed was of the essence with this job and budget was always a consideration. We had seven months from start to finish to get our components manufactured and in place. And there was no question of compromising on quality - a very high quality finish, in terms of both aesthetics and durability - was called for."

To meet these demands, Ian and his team developed a clever, 'three-rows-in-one' precast seating plat in a mix of prestressed and conventional reinforced precast. In total, nearly 2000 of these plats were produced.

The end result is, to use Ian's words, "beautiful" and something he and his team were invited to view for themselves when a "delighted" client invited them all along to the stadium's grand opening - on-time, and on-budget.