



Finishes - Graphic Concrete

In October 2011, National Precast Member Reid Construction Systems introduced a new technology for decorative concrete into the Australian precast industry. graphic concrete™ is a patented precast concrete technology which allows for textures, raster patterns, repeated patterns, written text, or even sharp images to be “etched” into the face of precast concrete elements. The technology is also compatible for a variety of concrete mixes utilising cement pigments/oxides, as well as coloured aggregates.

How does graphic concrete™ work?

Concrete elements cast with graphic concrete™ are manufactured in a precast yard using the special graphic concrete™ membrane. A pattern or image is “printed” on this membrane using a special surface retarder “ink”. The pattern is produced by utilising the contrast between the smooth textures and the fine exposed aggregate surface.

Design flexibility:

The graphic concrete™ membrane has a maximum printable area that is 3200mm

wide, and is supplied to precast yards in roll form. Therefore, the membrane can be used in the production of 3.2 metre wide/high elements without requiring membrane joints. Higher/wider elements can also be manufactured by joining membranes sections together.

Wide range of possibilities:

Choose from a standard pattern, or design your own. A designer or architect can select from over 90 standard repeating patterns designed by Graphic Concrete Ltd (called GCCollection™), or design their own repeating pattern (called GCPro™). GC Art&Design™ utilises raster images to produce photos or unique (non-repeating) works-of-art on concrete. The pattern or image can also be further enhanced by nominating a cement pigment and/or aggregate colour. Likewise, the technology also works very well with conventional grey concrete.

Ease of use in a precast yard:

graphic concrete™ elements are

manufactured in a precast yard. Use of the membrane in the precast factory environment is relatively simple.

There are, however, some conditions that must be met, and special work methods that need to be applied to ensure productivity and a high quality finish. Casting of graphic concrete™ test samples is crucial to the process. Reid Construction Systems can provide Graphic Concrete Ltd endorsed training and support in the use of graphic concrete™ technology to precasters whom have not previously used this system. graphic concrete™ technology is cost effective and quick to install which reduces both labour and in-place capital costs associated with architectural panels featuring an exposed aggregate finish achieved by using conventional liquid-based retarders.

Safe to use: Safe for the environment:

A further advantage of graphic concrete™ technology is that the solvents used in the retarder are evaporated. There is no safety, nor OH&S concerns which could limit the usage of the technology in a precast yard. When a graphic concrete™ membrane is peeled or stripped from a panel and rinsed, the membrane can be placed in a recycling bin.