

Welcome

Great to be back with you again for another edition of e-bulletin. This quarter we feature another update on Formaldehyde issues as well as news of further consolidation of the resins business in Australia. We also bring news of an exciting project.

Cheers Glenn

NICNAS Appeal

The appeal by the AWPA and the EWPA against the NICNAS Priority Existing Chemical (PEC) report has reached its conclusion. There has been a limited amount of information that we could bring to you in the last 12 months because the issue was before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). The final result we believe is a more balanced scientific assessment of the effects of formaldehyde and the impact on humans and the environment coupled with a more balanced commentary on the sources and issues associated with formaldehyde exposure.

Of particular concern to industry was the issue of estimating concentrations of formaldehyde at factory boundaries. Further modelling by industry revealed that the original estimates made by CSIRO were grossly inflated. NICNAS has now supplemented the data with revised data from further modelling and removed any comments on concerns that they may have.

The major ongoing issue is the Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) recommendations. The report has maintained a TWA of 0.3ppm and a STEL of 0.6ppm. This is primarily based on uncertainties in the human exposure study data. Sensory Irritation has been used as the health effect indicated for setting the OEL. The Director of NICNAS has taken the view that she has to be conservative in her estimates and has taken the lower limits of the error estimates of the dose response curve as the point at which the LOEL occurs. This is despite the fact that numerous studies indicate that there is no statistical difference between the controls subjects who report no effects and those that report some irritation until the Formaldehyde concentration exceeds 1ppm. It should be noted that the EU group reviewing Occupational Exposure Limits (SCOEL) in the EU are likely to make recommendations for a TWA of 0.2ppm and a STEL of 0.4ppm this month.

Once the PEC report is published the various regulatory bodies in

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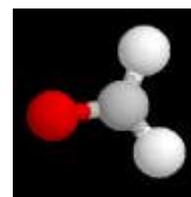
NICNAS

Consolidation

Grants

And Finally.

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Australia will take up the recommendations. The Office of the Australian Safety and Compensation Commission (OASCC) will deal with the OEL. At this stage industry will have another opportunity to make comment and challenge the new recommendations before they are made into law. It is hoped that a new study by Prof Triebig will provide new information to support industry's position on the current recommendations for the OEL.

No doubt there are further instalments to come on this issue.[top](#)

Further Consolidation

There have been further changes in the Australian panel industry in the last few months.

Firstly CHH have closed their mill at Bell Bay in Northern Tasmania. The decision to close the plant followed a fairly substantial fire in the press area. It is understood that the plant will be decommissioned with some parts going to other CHH facilities. It is not clear what will happen to the site and any remaining equipment.



The other major change is the purchase of Orica's (formerly IC) resins business by Hexion. The purchase follows Orica's purchase recently of Huntsman's Industrial Phenolic resin business and hot on the heels of Dynea's plans to build a resin plant in Gympie Queensland.[top](#)

Grant Success

TPA is proud to be associated with a new research project with CSIRO and Orica. Recent work has yielded a project to improve the environmental performance of surface coatings in the automotive industry.

The project has attracted a \$440,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund and will focus on powder coating of plastic automotive components. Established from landfill levies, the Fund is administered by Sustainability Victoria, and provides grants for projects and initiatives that foster sustainable resources, illustrate best practice in waste management and have economic and social benefits for the broader community.



The funding has allowed a research consortium to be formed between Orica's powder-coating business and CSIRO's Manufacturing and Infrastructure Technology group. Through the project new technology will be developed to allow the powder-coating of plastic components that rely on wet coating systems. The development of this new process will significantly reduce the amount of solvents used in the coating of automotive components, which in Australia amount to 4 million litres.[top](#)

and finally.....

While cruising at 36,000 feet, the airplane shuddered, and a passenger looked out the window.

"Oh no!" he screamed, "One of the engines just blew up!"

Other passengers left their seats and came running over; suddenly the aircraft was rocked by a second blast as yet another engine exploded on the other side.

The passengers were in a panic now, and even the stewardesses couldn't maintain order. Just then, standing tall and smiling confidently, the pilot strode from the cockpit and assured everyone that there was nothing to worry about. His words and his demeanour seemed made most of the passengers feel better, and they sat down as the pilot calmly walked to the door of the aircraft. There, he grabbed several packages from under the seats and began handing them to the flight attendants.

Each crew- member attached the package to their backs.

"Say," spoke up an alert passenger, "Aren't those parachutes?"

The pilot confirmed that they were.

The passenger went on, "But I thought you said there was nothing to worry about?"

"There isn't," replied the pilot as a third engine exploded. "We're going to get help."

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About Us.

Tech Partners Australia is an independent Technical Service provider to the composite wood panels industry. Glenn Ryan who has 25 years experience in industry runs the organization. His experience covers Quality Management, Technical Service and R&D Management.
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