



Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre (above) and Challenge Stadium (below)

# Myrtha Magic

From World Championship to remote communities, Greg Clarke outlines the flexibility of commercial modular swimming pool builder Myrtha Pools



**W**hen it opens next year South Australia's new State Aquatic Centre will be one of the most technically advanced competition and training venues in the southern hemisphere.

That's not my opinion, but the view of South Australia's Sports Minister Michael Wright who, at the start of the construction of the \$100 million facility last October, also stated that "this facility will see Adelaide recognised as Australian swimming's latest destination and also puts us on the world map where aquatic sports are concerned - it's a hugely exciting project."

Located in the Adelaide suburb of Marion, the facility's key aquatic components will feature the latest Myrtha Pools technology in the 52 metre x 10 lane x three metres deep FINA standard competition pool with movable boom; along with a 55 metre x 25 metre (with a three to five metre depth) combination diving pool, water polo pool and 'warm up' pool. The project also includes four more Myrtha pools; a waterslide landing pool, a program/spa pool, a learn-to-swim pool and a leisure pool with interactive toys and water features.

The basic elements of Myrtha Pools system is a series of 'virgin' stainless steel wall and gutter sections that are laminated with a hard PVC. These sections are bolted together to form a pool shell, interfaced with a floor membrane and then, through a series of sealing interfaces, the PVC membrane which coats

the stainless steel walls and gutters, are fused together with the floor membrane to form a watertight shell.

The advantage of Myrtha Pools is that they have a virtually unlimited life and, thanks to their pre-engineered design, they can be built in a very short time.

Evolving and adapting to the needs of the aquatic industry over its forty-six year history Myrtha Pools have manufactured thousands of commercial pools which are installed in over 60 countries.

Myrtha Pools' history in Australia began in 1997 with the construction of the water polo pool at Perth's Challenge Stadium. Undertaken by Myrtha Pools distributor AVP Commercial Pools, who are also undertaking the work at the South Australian State Aquatic Centre, Myrtha Pools' involvement with Challenge Stadium has since included the installation of a Myrtha RenovAction® 50 metre x 10 lane competition pool with a moveable boom and a 50 metre x eight lane warm-up pool - completed in 2008.

Another of Myrtha Pools' major projects has been the 52 metre x 10 lane competition pool at Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, installed for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, that incorporates a 50 x two metre movable floor and a movable boom.

Yet while we are proud of Myrtha Pools' installations at major state



Myrtha pool technology was used at the Burringurrah Swimming Pool



Myrtha pool technology at a European Spa Resort (above) and in waterparks (below)

aquatic centres we also like to highlight the versatility of our product.

At the start of the Millennium, along with AVP Commercial Pools, we undertook three ground breaking projects in remote indigenous communities in Western Australia.

As part of the Western Australian Government's environmental health package that sought to improve the health outcomes of Aboriginal communities, we were engaged to provide 25 x 12 metre swimming pools in the settlements of Burringurrah, Jigalong and Yandeyarra in the Pilbara region 1,300 kilometres north of Perth.

At each site, AVP Commercial Pools built each pool and installed the filtration and plant room equipment within a four-week period.

As AVP's Mark Harper recalls, "the ease of construction and simpler, cheaper transportation of materials of the Myrtha Pools technology was ideal for these locations."



In 2004, a similar project at Wadeye in the Northern Territory provided an even greater logistical challenge.

Wadeye's remoteness, on the coast close to the border with Western Australia and with restricted road access in the wet season, meant that the Myrtha Pool that we installed had to be transported by barge from Darwin!

Developed in Europe, Myrtha Pools technology has undergone continuous research and development, to the point where it has evolved into the most technically advanced and commonly specified modular pool system used in the world. It is adaptable to fit every type of aquatic project and it is suitable for both precise competitive situations as well as the most elaborate freeform pool design.

Globally, the bulk of Myrtha Pools installed are high level competition pools, hydro and physiotherapy pools, 'free form' leisure pools and waterpark pools. In waterpark and aquatic play environments, Myrtha Pools also supply water toys,



Burringurrah Swimming Pool



interactive playgrounds and other unique fittings and fixtures. In addition, the company also have significant experience with movable floors and movable booms.

A long way from remote Aboriginal communities, Myrtha Pool technology has become integral in the development of 'health and wellness' centres and spa resorts in Europe, particularly in Austria and France. With associated saunas, gyms, restaurants, and accommodation, these operations can incorporate up to five separate water bodies including spas, thermal pools, wave pools, mini water parks, 25 metre lap pools and pools that combine an indoor/outdoor aspect.

Geoff Leaver of Swimplex Aquatics has noticed that "following European trends, there is a marked upswing in interest in wellness and thermal pools here in Australia. Moree Thermal Baths in north western NSW are looking at a major upgrade of their historic artesian baths to reflect this trend while major fitness groups are also looking at wellness pools to boost their market share."



Myrtha Pool technology is not just for new developments but also offers solutions to extend the useful life of outdated pool designs or failed and leaking concrete pools. This has been done at Perth's Challenge Stadium and over a dozen other facilities.

The RenovAction® PVC on stainless steel 'drop in' system can transform tired old pools into modern bodies of water. With a 15-year guarantee, RenovAction® also enables old pools with failed water stop joints, tiles or render to be reconfigured to incorporate disabled ramps, modern day wet decks, movable bulkheads and leisure water.

The system is also environmentally friendly (the carbon footprint of RenovAction® can be less than 40% of that of a concrete pool renovation using tiles) and the system is fast -

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a full RenovAction® upgrade can be carried out in a five to six month period, generally the April through to October 'off-season' for many facilities.

A current example of RenovAction® technology is underway at the Coffs Harbour War Memorial Olympic Pool. In a \$5.4 million refurbishment being undertaken by our distributor Swimplex Aquatics, the Coffs Harbour City Council facility is having its 50 metre pool renovated to FINA length standards with wet deck collection gutters, new soiled water and filtered water reticulation and a new compliant sand filtration plant. The facility is also gaining a new multi-function indoor heated 25 metre pool and plant along with a range of other play features, modernised changing rooms, management and kiosk facilities; and grand stand seating.

As Mark McLaughlin of Swimplex Aquatics explains, "this project follows on from our success in renovating municipal pool sites at Orange, Forbes, Cobar, Birrong, Young and Port Pirie."

In 2009, Myrtha Pools in Australia arrived at a major milestone

when we reached our 50th project. However, as I write, a quick tally reveals that among Myrtha Pools' thousands of installations around the world, in Australia and New Zealand combined we have now achieved over one hundred installations.

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Cobar Memorial Swimming Pool before RenovAction® upgrade



Cobar Memorial Swimming Pool after RenovAction® upgrade