



GEOFABRICS

Gold Coast manufacturer uses innovation to develop new product

Gold Coast geosynthetic manufacturer, Geofabrics Australasia Pty Ltd (Geofabrics) is using the assistance of the Made in Queensland funding grants program to automate their existing technologies and prevent environmental contamination through the creation of their new SORBSEAL product.

FAST FACTS

Business	Geofabrics
Headquarters	Ormeau, Gold Coast—South East Queensland
Employees	Currently 80 FTEs in Queensland (over 200 across Australia)
Grant funding	\$494,203.30 from the Made In Queensland program (2019)
Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modify the existing GCL manufacturing line • Train staff in use of new technology.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to accommodate larger projects and international projects leading to increased contracts won • Digital connectivity achieved with the ability to monitor, log and analyse data and to exercise preventive maintenance • Bottlenecks removed and continuous runs introduced • Ability to produce 100m continuous length rolls (one of the few manufacturers in the world to do so, satisfying customer requirements) • 1 new FTE created.
Future growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased productivity, growth in exports, protection against imports.

Geofabrics is Australia's largest manufacturer and supplier of geosynthetic products to the global engineering and resources sector. For over 35 years Geofabrics has manufactured and marketed a range of advanced geosynthetic products for use in road and railway construction, mining and resource projects, landfill and coastal engineering applications.

With the assistance of the Made in Queensland program, Geofabrics has implemented a range of new world-class automated technologies, secured an export market competitiveness, and reduced the reliance on importing similar products into Australia.

WHY THE MADE IN QUEENSLAND PROGRAM?

Geofabrics received \$494,203.30 from Round 1 of the Made in Queensland program. Geofabrics used the grant towards a total investment of \$1,582,183 to increase productivity, become internationally competitive, adopt innovative processes and technologies, create new high skill manufacturing jobs, and encourage other businesses to embrace advanced manufacturing.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT INVOLVE?

Geofabrics undertook a project entitled Export Accelerator to deliver new advanced technologies to fully automate both geosynthetic fabric cutting and key functions on the geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) line. GCLs are used to provide a barrier against liquids and are manufactured in rolls in a similar manner to carpet.

Geofabrics CEO and Managing Director, Dennis Grech said the new technologies have increased productivity and enabled Geofabrics to be internationally competitive.

"Since launching the Export Accelerator project we have eliminated a bottleneck that existed in the fabrication of bag and container products and delivered major

improvements in site productivity, capacity, quality and safety." Mr Grech said.

"The project has also removed the existing capacity constraints of the GCL line, which has been a key barrier to export market competitiveness and growth, and we are now expanding our exports into the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, and the United Arab Emirates.

"Since the project started, we have seen our productivity double with increased line speed and reduced site wastage, and this has led to us being able to accommodate larger projects and boost our sales numbers."

Since increasing their advanced manufacturing capability and enhancing the GCL production line, Geofabrics have had great success with their products and in 2020 were recognised in the top 10 Most Innovative Companies in Australia.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Mr Grech said the advanced manufacturing grant has assisted with development of a new product called SORBSEAL.

"The assistance from the Queensland Government has allowed Geofabrics to modify the production line with new technology and enable the production of a blend of powered materials which was critical in the development of our new SORBSEAL product." Mr Grech said.

"We see SORBSEAL as a game-changer that is contributing to solving the major World problem of contamination of soil structures by PFAS chemicals which cause significant health and environmental issues."

With the launch of SORBSEAL, Geofabrics predict that the demand for their product will increase and this in turn will create more positions, develop more high-skilled workers and deliver opportunities for further investment in new manufacturing technologies.



GET INVOLVED

We're invested in the future of manufacturing in Queensland. To find out how the Queensland Government can support your manufacturing business to grow, visit

www.rdmw.qld.gov.au/manufacturing