

An Overview of the Rotational Moulding in Australia and New Zealand

The Australian rotational moulding industry has long been dominated by the manufacture of water storage tanks. Over 75% of all rotomoulded products produced are related to tanks and many are very large compared to what is seen elsewhere in the world. A common size of tank is 22,000 litres and some are as big as 48,000 litres.

Demand for water storage tanks has changed rapidly over the last decade and has developed from a rural customer base to a market which has experienced high growth rates in urban areas. Polyethylene tanks have largely replaced steel and concrete because they are cheaper to produce, easier to transport and can be economically produced in a wide range of shapes and sizes.

In recent years demand for water tanks in Australia rose dramatically following the introduction of government rebates which offered incentives to home owners to purchase and install rainwater tanks. The water tank rebate schemes in all states increased demand significantly and this led to an unprecedented increase in the number of tanks sold and created a boom effect which peaked in 2007. The subsequent withdrawal by federal and local authorities of many of these schemes had a severe impact on the industry and led to a significant fall in demand for water tanks. Since then the industry has experienced some consolidation and levels of demand have stabilised and are now more in line with those preceding the 'boom time'.

While not in the same league as water tanks, demand for certain custom moulded and proprietary products have experienced some growing demand in recent times. Typical products include kayaks, boats, diesel tanks, road barriers, furniture, automotive products and products for 'in-ground' applications such communication boxes.

New Zealand also has a relatively large tank market but this sector is less dominant with custom moulded products relating to the agricultural and leisure industries accounting for a much larger market share.

The applications for rotational moulding in the region are not as widespread as in Europe due to smaller populations, a more limited supply of different materials and less knowledge in the design community of what the process can offer. There is significant scope and opportunity for Matrix to add value to the new Vanglobe Matrix by using its' knowledge gained over the years to help provide more technical support and process know-how and by offering customers and designers a much wider choice of new materials.