

# Australia's Newest Tourism Attraction – The Melbourne Star Observation Wheel

As the capital of the State of Victoria and second most populous city in Australia, the vibrant and colorful city of Melbourne is attracting locals and tourists alike to its newest tourism and entertainment attraction; the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel.

Standing at a towering 120 meters tall—equivalent to a 40 storey building—the Melbourne Star is the only giant observation wheel in the Southern Hemisphere, with its seven jutting spokes representing the seven-pointed Federation star on the Australian flag.

One complete rotation of the Star takes approximately 30 minutes, giving guests' an uninterrupted 360-degree view of up to 40 km that includes such landmarks as the Docklands Precinct, Melbourne's city business district, Port Phillip Bay, Mount Macedon and the Dandenong Ranges.

The Melbourne Star Observation wheel was commissioned by Sanoyas Rides Corporation and the project involved the engineering team from Arup, Alfasi Steel Construction in Melbourne and Haywards Steel Fabrication and Construction of Tasmania. AkzoNobel's International® brand was selected as the sole supplier of protective coatings for the massive steel structure. The Melbourne Star Observation Wheel officially opened on December 23, 2013, and has already received a string of prestigious accolades. The Melbourne Star was awarded a Steel Excellence Award in Engineering

Projects at the 2014 Australian Steel Institute (VIC) Awards, and a High Commendation award at both the Buildings and Structures category at the 2014 Victorian Engineering Excellence Awards; and 2014 National Steel Institute Awards.

The Melbourne Star is constructed from approximately 1,200 tons of steel that incorporates the whole of the superstructure, including the columns and hub, which was fabricated and transported to the site in giant sections by Alfasi and Haywards. The technology of its International® products, combined with the technical expertise and supply capabilities were the driving factors that helped AkzoNobel secure the contract for the Melbourne Star. This giant project was another accolade in the long term relationship between AkzoNobel's with Alfasi.

AkzoNobel's Brendan Mutimer, Project Manager Victoria, recommended a two coat *Interzinc*® 52 primer and *Interfine*® 979 polysiloxane topcoat system, instead of a traditional three coat system. Together, the coatings' excellent adhesion and fast curing properties helped fast track the construction schedule, without



Steel section featuring *Interfine 979* high gloss finish.



Construction of the outer rim section of the wheel.

compromising the corrosion protection standards for the job. The polysiloxane topcoat color was appropriately named Melbourne Star Observation Wheel White, after the original color specification. AkzoNobel received praise for the accuracy of the color match and for the long term color and gloss retention its topcoat will provide.

Painting Contractors, Action Alliance of Melbourne and McElligott Partners of Tasmania, were contracted to spray-apply the coatings to the complex steel sections after fabrication, and later provided touch ups at the job site—both on the ground and after the sections were erected, which was no easy feat. The high durability of the two coat system will ensure an extended lifecycle of the tourism attraction for decades to come.

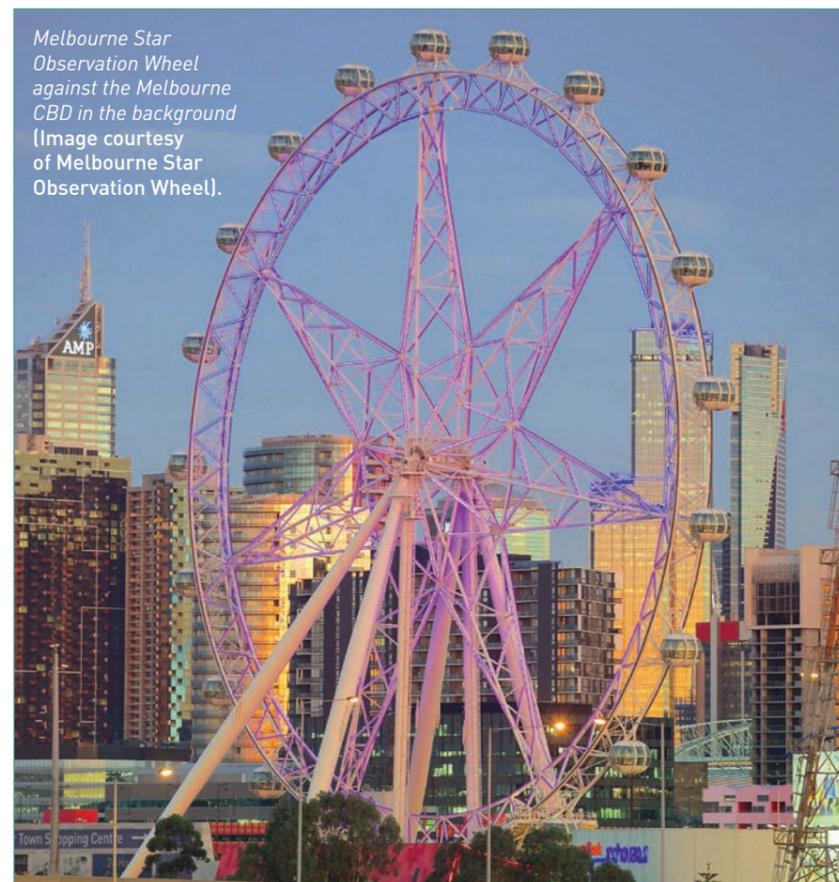
"Action Alliance was very pleased with the uninterrupted process of application due to the fast curing performance of *Interfine 979* polysiloxane. Not only did this assist with the off-site application, once the company proceeded with on-site touch up and rectification works it really enhanced its abilities of recoating with minimal effort. This will be a positive product for the future maintenance programs", according to a spokesperson from Action Alliance.

Mutimer commented, "The success of this project was a true team effort across the business. It was a combination of strategic collaboration on detailed specifications, warranties, maintenance plans, site visits and meetings, random inspections, problem solving and uninterrupted product supply that made it possible. The project owners

experienced a seamless, first class outcome; and that's something we're very proud of."

Today the Melbourne Star Observation Wheel is one of only four giant observation wheels in the world, offering breathtaking flights in 21 spacious air conditioned cabins. AkzoNobel's advanced International® two coat system will help keep the Melbourne Star looking its best for years to come.

**Project Team:**  
**Owners:** Sanoyas Rides Australia Pty Ltd  
**Engineers:** Arup  
**Contractor:** Sanoyas Rides Corporation, Osaka Japan  
**Steel Contractors for Wheel:** Alfasi and Haywards  
**Applicators:** Action Alliance and McElligott Partners



Melbourne Star Observation Wheel against the Melbourne CBD in the background (Image courtesy of Melbourne Star Observation Wheel).



Construction of the 7 outer spokes.



Completed Melbourne Star at the new Docklands home (Image courtesy of Melbourne Star Observation Wheel).