

Paint your school toxin free – ROCKCOTE

Many surfaces in a building will have been painted, but what's concerning is that a lot of paint contains some very nasty stuff like volatile organic compounds (VOC), formaldehyde or propylene glycols that can have serious consequences for human health.

There are so many things to consider when building or refurbishing a new school facility that the ingredients in paint can easily be forgotten. But using the right paint along with non-toxic carpet and furnishings is one of the easiest ways you can eliminate toxic substances from the school environment.

Two schools have recently chosen ROCKCOTE's non-toxic EcoStyle paint for major projects: Lourdes Hill College in Brisbane (painted by D & L Taylor); and Taylor School, Canberra (Besselink Master Painters).

The new facilities at Lourdes Hill College including the state of the art Bernadette Centre, chapel and sports centre opened on 12th September to great fanfare, being the biggest construction project in the school's 98-year history.

The five-storey Bernadette Centre houses a 470-seat auditorium, science precinct and performing arts centre plus seven science labs, eight classrooms, three dedicated drama and three dedicated music rooms.

The building also comprises general learning classrooms specifically for students in Years 7 to 8, drama, extensive facilities for music tuition, roof-top play area with spectacular city views area and administration facilities.

Lourdes Hill College worked closely with Bertoldi Architects to ensure a focus on sustainability, including massive water tanks in the basement, natural gas for heating, LED lighting throughout, eco-glazed windows, blinds and lighting controlled by an electronic building management system to optimise energy savings, and plans for solar panels down the track.

ROCKCOTE EcoStyle Paint has been used for all interior painted walls, quietly contributing to the beauty of the new facilities as well as the healthiness of the environments within.

Jafrul Khandker from Bertoldi Architects said that zero VOC paints and finishes were an important consideration in a school environment.

"There is a perception that new buildings will always be accompanied by a new building smell, which is often due to toxins in the paint. We don't like that smell. With the EcoStyle Paint, the building can be occupied immediately after the paint is dry and there is no smell and no lingering fumes," he said.

Taylor School went with EcoStyle after undergoing an exhaustive process driven by the project architects and the school. It's not a



process that happens in every school build given time and budget pressures but perhaps it should.

EcoStyle is a zero VOC, GECA Certified product. It also has the advantage of being Australian researched, developed and manufactured on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

Speaking about the Taylor School project, ROCKCOTE National Sales and Marketing Manager David Ogle says, "the architects Small Quinton Coleman drove the approval process, they obtained detailed scrub and abrasion resistance testing results of the paint and compared them with other leading brands. The data results and technical data sheets held up very well.

"The school had been terribly flood damaged and there was a risk of asbestos insulation being disturbed as a result.

"After the approval process EcoStyle was colour matched to the school's design and the

\$12 million refurbishment was progressed. The entire process took around 24 months.

"We had always intended for EcoStyle to be used in schools and hospitals where high wear resistance and low toxicity is really important," Mr Ogle says.

"Our product has been used extensively in schools throughout South East Queensland and now throughout Australia mostly through trade referrals and word of mouth. We receive inquiries about the product from overseas all the time which is great but we have a strong focus on the domestic market," Mr Ogle says.

ROCKCOTE made a commitment to toxin free paint in 2000, and has been a small but feisty innovator in the paint industry, which is dominated by huge international brands.

"We are really a research and development company that produces paint. When we started developing EcoStyle a lot of people in the industry said that we couldn't make a high performance paint if we took out the toxic ingredients that many other paints still contain, EcoStyle is the proof it's possible.

"EcoStyle has always been well under GECA's criteria for toxicity in paint products," Mr Ogle says. **ET**