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**DOES AUSTRALIA WANT SAFE
OR DANGEROUS WATERPROOFING?**

Despite seeing an industry swing over the years toward greener technologies, there still remains conjecture on the perceived advantages of traditional, solvent based membrane systems over water borne systems.

For the traditionalists, solvent technology is still the preferred option. For the more health and environmentally conscientious, water-based systems are favoured.

Originally, waterproofing compounds were based almost exclusively on solvent technology. They were inexpensive, effective and durable. But while effective they still had their shortcomings.

Gripset Industries first foray into manufacturing was the release of Gripset 51, with the product going on to achieve immediate success, and remain a stalwart of the Gripset range.

A revolutionary product at the time, Gripset 51 provided all the benefits of bitumen, including high adhesion properties with water and chemical resistance but

without the associated noxious odour and carcinogenic properties of solvent bitumen compounds available.

The rationale behind the development of the product was in direct response to industry demands for a safer alternative and this has continued to be the focus of the company's development program.

That is why Gripset's safe, water-based technology continues to close the gap on solvent's perceived advantages of faster drying and curing properties, resistance to re-emulsification and durability.



Conversely, the advantages of water-based waterproof coatings are considerable and worth noting.

These include;

Non-toxic: No requirement for specialised breathing apparatus, particularly in confined spaces. Water-based coatings have very minimal odour and there's no need for special ventilation. Contact with exposed skin is not typically harmful and can be easily removed.

Easy Clean-up: Water based coatings are water soluble and there is no need for harmful, solvent based cleaners for equipment. Overspray and spills can be cleaned up with water while the product is still wet.

Versatility: Water-based membranes can be applied to substrates, solvent based products cannot. These include high density foam, which is becoming a more popular building substrate.

Damp surfaces: Many water based coatings can be applied to damp surfaces. This provides major time saving advantages and prevents the need for pre-treatments.

Overlaying of toppings and finishes: A major limitation with many solvent based membranes has been the ability to directly adhere screed beds and tile adhesives.

Green Building conformability: Water based membranes easily conform to stricter green building regulations and low VOC requirements for green building sites.

During the infancy of water borne technology, there may have been a legitimate argument for the advantages of solvent based systems in certain applications. However in recent years significant advancements in polymer technology have been made where in most cases, new generation water based systems match and often exceed performance criteria set by solvent alternatives.



Globally, construction is seeing a similar movement toward safer, non-solvent construction chemicals including waterproofing, with a US article Global Construction Market Overview 2016 published earlier this year stating,

'Existing trends in the construction market indicate an increased use... and wider demand for non-hazardous and sustainable construction chemicals.'

Adversely however, despite the best of eco-friendly intentions, budgets are forcing construction company hands.

An example being, the tendering process for a major metropolitan hospital project demanded non-toxic waterproofing technology as part of a 100% 'green' construction worksite.

Unfortunately, when it came to the waterproofing phase of construction, budget over runs meant compromises had to be made. Leading to the (previously approved, but) more expensive, non-hazardous system made way for a less costly but toxic system.

Making matters worse, the unsafe, air-borne waterproofing was applied, without personnell safety notices or signage, just metres from unprotected workers, onsite.

Finally, given the fact that water-borne degradation issues are the second biggest challenge facing the construction industry, situations like this suggest that worksite operational safety Standard's, particularly in waterproofing, need to be nationally reviewed. And urgently.

Solvent-free, water-based building products like Gripset's offer immediate solutions to both safer worksites plus quality, high performance adhesives and protection.





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