

Australian steel stories

Keppel Prince

**Steel. Aluminium.
Knowhow.™**

Wind towers for Australians – by top Australian players

“ We’ve always believed in using Australian-made BlueScope product. I’m all about building our wind towers here using local steel ”



XLERPLATE® steel used for the tower sections being inspected by our little friend an Aussie Koala

Keppel Prince Engineering specialises in the construction, fabrication and maintenance of industrial structures and equipment. With its head office in Portland, Victoria it has a strong history in Australia going back to 1968.

Keppel Prince Engineering has successfully delivered some of Australia’s largest projects including many of the Victorian windfarms installed in recent years. Their extensive experience in fabrication, welding and machining of stainless steel, aluminium, copper and carbon steels has also seen them deliver bridge pylons and large steel structures, telecommunications towers as well as gas, oil, water piping and aluminium smelter maintenance. Current clients include Alcoa, Vestas, Goldwind, Siemens Gamesa, Nordex Oceania, Telstra, Downer and Lendlease to name a few.

In 2001 Keppel Prince was among the first large steel fabricators to fully embrace renewable energy by taking on a major wind farm project. This was soon followed by more wind, solar, wave and hydro energy projects which have all been successfully delivered by over 350 engineers, project managers, technicians, tradespeople, apprentices and support staff working from the 206,400m² Portland site.

BlueScope Distribution has long been a proud supply partner of Keppel Prince.

BlueScope Distribution Portland Branch Manager Travis Park, explains, “supporting Australian manufacturing is very rewarding but providing quality, Australian made steel products, processing and solutions to Keppel who are largely focused on the clean energy and sustainability sector is something else.

It’s one thing to partner with your customers to ensure projects are delivered on time and to specification but playing a part in bettering our communities for the future is something we’re so pleased we can be a part of”.

Local and all Australian

BlueScope Distribution has partnered with Keppel Prince Engineering for many years. Being located in Portland, Victoria some 350km from Melbourne means supply chain solutions need to be both efficient and reliable. “We like to keep everything local. Keppel is very close to our Portland branch which enables us to stay in regular contact with one another. Any supply chain or logistical solutions we provide is streamlined and simple.”

As a proud Australian manufacturer, Keppel Prince believes strongly in supporting fellow Australian manufacturers and has for more than 40 years turned to BlueScope manufactured quality steel products and technical support for its operations. It has been a long and unique relationship, Executive Director, Steve Garner, explains “We’ve always believed in using Australian-made BlueScope product. I’m all about building our wind towers here using local steel.”

“Sometimes technical challenges come up in relation to thicknesses or quality or standards – sometimes there may be a difference between a EU standard and an Australian one and that’s where BlueScope Distribution and the broader local BlueScope technical team provide the advice we need.” explains Steve.

“We really are in business together – we need BlueScope Distribution as much as they need us” Steve says. “BlueScope Distribution provide us with high quality products at the right price, with assured supply, on-time delivery and expert technical backup; the relationship we have with them suits our organisation and they have always been very supportive, which is vital to the nature of our business.”

Building wind towers

Jeff Wanliss is the Engineering and Estimating Manager at Keppel Prince. He’s been with the company for some six years and is responsible for sourcing local product. He says that Keppel Prince tries to include BlueScope manufactured products wherever possible.

The specific BlueScope products Jeff sources through BlueScope Distribution include XLERPLATE® steel, a custom Special Grade 350 of XLERPLATE® steel, a variety of structural plate grades, boiler and pressure vessel products, and weathering steels. These products are used for applications as diverse as structural fabrication, laser profiling, bridges and infrastructure, storage tanks and transport.

“When we are building wind towers, we have our production service running 24/7 in order to meet the delivery time frames of our projects,” says Jeff. “We can absorb significant tonnes of steel plate each week and we need a reliable supply partner like BlueScope Distribution to work with us to help meet our customers production schedules.”

“Our customers have onsite inspectors checking that we meet their standards and that’s where we depend on BlueScope Distribution to always provide product that meets and exceeds Australian standards. That’s critically important for us because we are competing in a global market. Knowing that BlueScope quality material will meet customer and global requirements provides us the peace of mind we need.”

“Not only does BlueScope Distribution manage the end-to-end supply chain, they also process our steel plates which includes cutting the plate to shape and on occasion they have done bevelling for an innovative solution we required. This processing is a real value-add for our business and we appreciate their commitment to helping us with that.”

Whilst at full capacity Keppel Price will employ a team of over 150 people to deliver its wind tower projects, skilled labour and employee safety has always been an area of focus. To ensure longevity and the continued support of skilled labour in this niche application, Keppel Prince has partnered with the Federation University in Ballarat to offer the first wind tower manufacture training of its kind in Australia.

“It is not a huge project, but one which will help set people up to work in the wind tower manufacture industry for years to come, they’re transferable skills they can also use in other manufacturing environments” explains Jeff.

As a critical player with significant influence in the renewable energy market, Keppel Prince has non-negotiable expectations of its suppliers like BlueScope Distribution.

“Mostly we expect BlueScope Distribution to offer us solutions – when customers give us design challenges, we ask for these solutions and that’s one way they really add value. Of course, we also need prompt quoting, good customer service and a reliable long-term partnership because so many of our projects span for many years.”

At BlueScope Distribution, we are proud of the service we offer, the partnerships we create and the value we can provide to each and every one of our customers.



XLERPLATE® steel rolled for tower base plates - Nordex Mortlake Wind Farm



XLERPLATE® steel fabricated at Keppel Prince in Portland, Victoria



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Distribution**



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