



BlueScope  
Distribution



# Australian steel stories

---

Rheem Australia

Steel. Aluminium.  
**Knowhow.**<sup>TM</sup>

# Bluescope and Rheem - manufacturing long-term for Australia

**“The reputation for quality - particularly with the iconic hot water service - has its foundation in the high grade Australian steel used in production.. ”**



Rheem Premier Loline® Solar Water Heater

From its humble beginnings manufacturing steel drums in 1936, Rheem Australia is an enduring manufacturing success story BlueScope Distribution has been proud to be a part of.

If you are looking for an example of a current Australian company with a long history of manufacturing for Australians, you need look no further than the household name, Rheem.

The original 44-gallon drums it churned out were made of hefty 18-gauge steel. During World War II, the company came to the aid of the war effort with the production of smaller drums to store food, clothing, petrol and chemicals.

Wartime also saw the production of ship and aircraft parts, bombs, shells, and ammunition boxes. Where there was a need, Rheem was ready to improvise the production line – even producing more than 300,000 steel water canteens for the diggers.

BlueScope (as the offspring of BHP Billiton) has for a long time had a leading role in the Rheem story. In 1939, BHP purchased a 50% stake in Rheem, ensuring Australian steel was used in all Rheem manufacturing. The involvement of BHP was the beginning of an Australian association that has endured for many years and which has been a contributing factor in Rheem's ongoing success.

## Gas hot water arrives

The war years saw Rheem embark on a new trajectory of expansion and innovation. The biggest and most popular innovation to roll off the Rheem production floor was the gas hot water system in 1939 followed by locally made electric water heaters in 1945. Rheem soon became the leader in delivering 'steady, hot and strong' running water to Australian homes.

The company has long been renowned for the quality and reliability of its products. The advertising jingle of the era resonated with consumers. 'For the hottest of hot, hot water

you've ever seen' the population heeded the call to 'install a Rheem'.

Rheem later became a leader in heat exchange technology, and it pioneered rooftop solar hot water in Australia. It is also known for its cost-efficient production techniques and its commitment to research and development.

The reputation for quality – particularly with the iconic hot water service – has its foundation in the high grade Australian steel used in production. The early investment by BHP is said to have been a big factor in the growth of Rheem.

Greg Walker from BlueScope Distribution in Sydney manages the Rheem account at the Rydalmere, NSW, plant. He says, "Rheem has very tight product tolerances and we manage a large amount of stock for them. We purchase coil from the BlueScope mill and either slit or shear to Rheem's end sizes."

One of Greg's many contacts at Rheem is Glenn Szecsodi, Rheem's Procurement Manager, who has 40 years' experience in the metals industry.

## Productive and dependable as partners

"BlueScope supplies us with Pre-Painted, GALVABOND®, ZINCALUME®, Hot Rolled and Cold Rolled Steels – all in semifinished form and fit for our purpose," says Glenn. "We have an array of presses and punches and processing lines that we use to finish into the final product."

The relationship between BlueScope Distribution is productive and dependable. "We have a seamless supply because of the stock buffers BlueScope holds," explains Glenn. "We expect them to deliver on time and live up to their promises, and that's what we get" he says. "And if there's going to be a delay, we have good communication and can make contingency plans."

“It’s a constant theme with us to purchase Australian products where we can. We work with BlueScope and other suppliers who have world class products at a competitive price,” says Glenn. “Plus there’s the historical foundation of BlueScope being owned by BHP. It’s good to see Australian companies supporting Australian manufacturers. Especially as we’re one of the last large local manufacturers of large appliances that continues to employ Australians.

“And even though we’re a big business, we work hard to operate like a smaller business so that we’re very flexible and nimble. As an Australian business, we’re also proactively involved in our local community and keen to support the efforts of charitable organisations,” says Glenn.

“Our people raise a lot of money for the charities. There wouldn’t be a month that goes by at Rheem where there’s not some form of charitable event taking place,” he says.

“We also support BlueScope with its representations to Australian Federal and State Governments, and joined BlueScope as a founding member of Manufacturing Australia. It’s a very good relationship with BlueScope at all levels.”

Rheem plans to continue being the largest hot water service manufacturer in Australia. “We’re a complex business with lots of moving parts, but we’re focused on growth and building our brand in Australia,” says Glenn.



Rheem 4 & 5 Star Gas Water Heaters

## Environmental improvements happening now

KermSustainability is an important focus in the Rheem operating philosophy. The company has an environmental improvement program which aims to reduce its carbon footprint as well as its energy and water consumption and limit its waste.

“Making everything smarter is the key. We want to reduce the impact of our products on the energy grid. We aim to design them cleverly, so they are an asset to the grid in terms of soaking up excess solar or renewable energy, and reducing the community’s use of energy sourced from fossil fuels” explains Glenn.

“The business has a green focus internally with a target of zero waste going to landfill. We’re already at the point where more than 80% of our waste streams are recycled and not sent to landfill. Our aim is to be a good corporate and community citizen. It’s a good culture at Rheem and a great place to work,” says Glenn. “We’re proud of our history and we’re a proud Australian company.”



Rheem Premier Loline® Solar Water Heater



**BlueScope  
Distribution**



Click to access our  
other resources



**Contact our team today**

**13 72 82**

**bluescopedistribution.com.au**

The information in this brochure is provided by the way of general information only and should not be relied upon by any person. You must seek specific advice as to the suitability of the products featured in this brochure for the purpose for which, and the manner in which, you propose to use them. This may involve further independent analysis and testing. BlueScope Steel Limited, and its related bodies corporate take no responsibility for any adverse consequences of any nature which arise as a result of reliance on this brochure. Information on safe storage and safety datasheets for BlueScope's products can be found at [www.bluescopesteel.com.au/SDS-Storage](http://www.bluescopesteel.com.au/SDS-Storage). BlueScope Distribution, GALVABOND, ZINCALUME, COLORBOND and TRUSPEC are registered trademarks of BlueScope Steel Limited. © 2024 BlueScope Steel Limited (ABN 16 000 011 058).