

Australian steel stories

Progress Switchboards

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A powerful partnership with BlueScope Distribution

“ Dealing with suppliers like BlueScope Distribution has bred a more efficient, productive switchboard manufacturing process. ”



Progress Switchboards: Leading the industry

A proud family company founded in Launceston, TAS, Progress Switchboards manufactures and delivers high-quality Australian-designed and manufactured switchboards for major projects. With almost 20 years' experience, they have celebrated over 1,500 successful customer projects across commercial building, renewable energy, mining, defence, infrastructure and transport industries.

Progress Switchboards have their own turret punch, bending and folding machines, as well as in-house laser and powder-coating capabilities. With a team of 50, Progress Switchboards is committed to embracing innovative technology, in-house design expertise and reliable supply chains. Their state-of-the-art facilities in Western Australia and Tasmania are instrumental to their success. Owner and founder Austin Fagan is still a big part of the business, embedding and leading a family culture while providing mentorship and on-the-ground support.

A vital formula: Trusted partnerships and products

“With responsibility for major government, civil and infrastructure projects, Progress Switchboards relies on quality partnerships. Switchboards are a critical part of any electrical distribution system. Reliable suppliers and products are non-negotiable,” says Austin Fagan, Managing Director, Progress Switchboards.

For almost three years, Progress Switchboards has trusted BlueScope Distribution to supply fit-for-purpose sheet metal and aluminium products that stand the test of time. Progress Switchboards have used these products for several major projects including the Perth Airport Project, WA's Yanchep Railway Extension and PTA Control Centres.

These projects utilised electrogalvanised sheet products – perfect for corrosion protection, durability under harsh conditions, long product lifespan, versatility and sustainability.

The reduced galvanised coating helps Progress Switchboards to weld and assemble their components.

BlueScope Distribution also supply ZINCANNEAL® steel sheeting, which is processed to meet the customer's specifications, has outstanding qualities for bending, roll forming, welding and painting. This product can be easily formed, shaped and fabricated, and its flexibility and precision enable complex shapes and designs to optimise the production process.

Progress Switchboards also source Aluminium 5005 grade sheet from BlueScope Distribution which they use to manufacture switchboard components, due to its strength and durability. This grade of aluminium also offers low density, excellent thermal conductivity and increased corrosion resistance.

Additionally, Progress Switchboards utilise tubular products, such as Rectangular Hollow Section (RHS) and Square Hollow Section (SHS), for switchboard structure assembly.

Robust supply chains

Reliable and timely local supply chains are imperative for Progress Switchboards. “We work closely with suppliers to deliver high-quality materials on time to minimise production schedule delays,” explains David Howells, Production Manager, Progress Switchboards.

“BlueScope Distribution's warehouse is around 200 metres from our WA site and deliver bi-weekly. It's a win for on-time and urgent delivery, reliability and fluctuating demand – all helping to deliver on the customer promise,” he claims.

“Supporting Progress Switchboards' journey has seen our relationship go from strength to strength. We facilitate material supply, forecasting and forward orders – our service is appreciated, and reliable steel and aluminium stock supply makes it easy,” says Jamie Buchanan, Account Manager, BlueScope Distribution.

Innovation and sustainability

Progress Switchboards embraces innovation and product design, taking a customer-led approach to each specification.

“Our solutions are also developed in line with our environmental sustainability commitment,” says Marcel Schutte, Quality and Admin Manager, Progress Switchboards.

To deliver turnkey projects, Progress Switchboards prioritises improving manufacturing efficiency, reducing production time, streamlining costs, ensuring quality standards and satisfying customers’ expectations – all while complying with national standards and regulations.

“We begin by thoroughly analysing manufacturing processes and workflows to identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies. In turn, we improve material handling procedures and implement lean manufacturing principles,” adds Marcel.

Quality first

“Quality assurance is enhanced throughout the production line so each switchboard meets rigorous industry and customer standards, backed by real-time monitoring and inspection systems,” says Marcel.

“Our WA facility provides CNC in-house fabrication of our verified, compliant system to AS/NZS 61439. Our quality certifications include ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems); ISO 45001 (OH&S Management Systems) and ISO 14001 (Environmental Management Systems) – crucial for securing new business and providing quality, safe and sustainable customer solutions,” explains Marcel.

Progress Switchboards’ industry memberships – including the National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) and National Electrical Switchboard Manufacturers Association (NESMA) - add clout to its workmanship and compliance to industry-wide standards.

People power

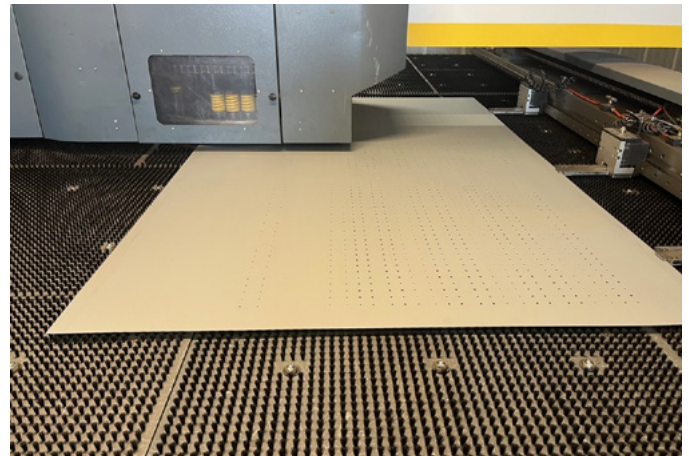
Progress Switchboards recognise the importance of training and development, appointing and nurturing skilled staff who value manufacturing. “Specialised training is key, and we work hard to upskill our team - it aids better efficiency in new processes and technologies,” explains Marcel.

Overall, this holistic project approach with suppliers like BlueScope Distribution has bred a more efficient, productive switchboard manufacturing process. Production cycles have been shortened, costs reduced, and product quality enhanced as a result.

Expanding for growth

Following its successful expansion in WA, Progress Switchboards is looking to establish its presence in other Australian states to pursue customer-focused growth. Its proven model will keep delivering more innovative and efficient solutions – on time and within budget.

“As we grow our offering, our family-based, collaborative and curious culture will support us and our customers to prosper,” says Austin.



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