

# Rotary Club of Chatswood



12 August 2015

Absolutely fascinating! Most of us are familiar with the fact that plastics are recycled to make drink bottles, shampoo bottles, trays in fast food outlets and cafés and even fresh plastic bags, but how many of us realise that they can be used to make much, much more?

Last week we found out and it was an eye-opener. Our guest speaker was **Bert Meyer** from Replas, (<http://www.replas.com.au/>) an Australian company that has developed world leading technology to reprocess Australia's plastic waste into a range of recycled-plastic products suitable for outdoor use. Replas' unique ability to mix different plastic polymers together to create complex three dimensional shapes has resulted in a range of over 200 colourful products.

Probably the greatest revelation was the vast range of applications for outdoor use, exposed to climatic extremes. Bollards, signage, outdoor furniture and decking were just some of the examples. Bert brought several samples including that of a well-known style of bollard (the one originally made from cast iron but now normally made from steel); only one seventh of the cost of the metal item and keeping 2500 plastic bags off the streets and out of the bush.

The use of recycled plastics for walkways and treadways in beach areas was notable, especially considering that salt and high UV environments are not regarded as particularly benign, and the sample treadway "plank" was keenly studied. Such usage obviates the use of treated pine with its dubious chemicals and furthermore permits a greater variety of non-slip surface textures than timber.

Bert showed a huge variety of the (outdoor) applications of these products, one of the most extensive being the entire seating in the "amphitheatre" at Taronga Zoo. Other materials may be blended with the plastic to modify the material's characteristics for specific applications, and Bert provided some more thought-provoking samples.

The biggest problem with the use of recycled plastics is simply persuading people to consider using "plastic" for non-structural or semi-structural items and applications which have been the preserve of more traditional materials such as timber and metal ("But we've always used treated pine/cast iron/etc ..."). In the supply and demand equation, supply is not a problem - there is no shortage of recycled plastic.

We thank Bert for this most illuminating presentation and it certainly got us thinking hard. Furthermore, after the meeting, our tame structural engineer Richard Binns, was most keen to grab the brochures, and no doubt many of our members were thinking - "If we ever extend the boardwalk near the Rotary Athletic Field ... "

Introduction by IPP Tony Basten and VoT by David Williams



The Rotary Club of Chatswood Inc.

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Rotary meets for dinner from 6:30 to 8pm Wednesdays at  
The Roseville Memorial Club 64 Pacific Hwy, Roseville  
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