

## **QUICKSTEP ACCELERATES COMMERCIALISATION WITH ESTABLISHMENT OF TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY BOARD AND GERMAN FACILITY**

- **Quickstep establishes Technology Advisory Board to coordinate global Research & Development and promote Quickstep's advanced 'out-of-autoclave' composites manufacturing process.**
- **Advisory Board to be chaired by Professor Andrew Walker, from the University of Manchester, a recognised global expert in aircraft design and manufacture and a leading international advocate of composite technology.**
- **Quickstep to also establish a new testing and manufacturing facility in Germany through a new subsidiary, Quickstep GmbH i.G.**
- **Discussions are proceeding well towards a Cooperation and Development Agreement with a leading European based aircraft manufacturer, expected to be announced in May 2007.**
- **First large-scale application of the Quickstep Process to aerospace parts manufacture targeted for mid-2008.**

International advanced composites group, Quickstep Holdings Limited (ASX: QHL – “Quickstep”) has further progressed towards commercialisation of its patented ‘Quickstep Process’, today announcing it has established a Technology Advisory Board comprising a number of high-profile industry experts to oversee the Company’s global Research & Development programme and promote the Quickstep Process to key decision-makers as the preferred out-of-autoclave curing process for composite manufacturing.

The Advisory Board will be chaired by Professor Andrew Walker, a leading consultant to global aerospace companies and a long-term advocate of composites technology. It will be responsible for co-ordinating the considerable global research and development currently being conducted on the Quickstep Process at corporations and universities within the Company’s network of showcase sites, including Manchester, UK; Dayton, USA; Geelong, Australia; and a new site to be established in Munich, Germany.

The Advisory Board will also promote the Quickstep Process as an alternative to autoclave parts manufacture by targeting leading corporate and university R&D teams and advocating the benefits the Quickstep Process can provide.

Based at the University of Manchester in the UK, Professor Walker is the Director of a UK Research Initiative to develop future civil aircraft and works to bring key academics together with industrial partners and aviation authorities. He previously worked for Airbus as Chief Manufacturing Engineer on the A380 and designed the \$1bn A380 wing factory at Broughton, UK.

Professor Walker is a world expert on composites – having developed “Saffil” reinforced engine pistons in the 1980s – and has been involved in materials processing for over 25 years. He has three international visiting/honorary Professorships in Engineering, as well as a PhD (Process Metallurgy) and a BSc (Metallurgy), both from Imperial College, London. Professor Walker is also engaged on the airline side of the industry, sitting on the Board of Virgin Atlantic and consulting to other leading airlines.

Quickstep’s Managing Director, Mr Nick Noble, said he was honoured to have Professor Walker leading the Advisory Board. “Professor Walker has been a strong advocate for Quickstep since its inception and has offered invaluable support to help us establish the credibility of the Quickstep Process within the strategic planning groups of leading aerospace companies,” he said.

“With the Quickstep Process now in the process of achieving aerospace certification, and advanced discussions with aerospace manufacturers underway, we both believe the timing is now right to formally establish the Technology Advisory Board.”

In accepting the position as Chairman, Professor Walker commented: “I have been a keen and active supporter of Quickstep for many years. Fundamentally, their patented liquid-based composite curing process is superior to traditional autoclave curing for a range of manufacturing opportunities. My focus will be to assist Quickstep in convincing global aerospace manufacturers that, based on a considerable body of test data, the Quickstep Process can achieve a superior result at a demonstrably lower capital and operating cost.”

“Based on research conducted by my teams and presented to groups such as Airbus and Boeing, the projected increase in aircraft production simply requires them to adopt alternatives to the traditional autoclave composite curing process. In my opinion, the Quickstep Process is a leading contender for this role,” he added.

Joining Professor Walker on the Technology Advisory Board will be Dr Bronwyn Fox and Mr Louis Luedtke.

Dr Fox is a Senior Lecturer at Deakin University, Geelong, and a researcher at the Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing (VCAMM). Dr Fox has been involved in the research behind the Quickstep Process for over four years and now leads a team of eight PhD students and two post-doctoral research fellows at Deakin University undertaking specific R&D projects utilising the Quickstep Process for a variety of composite manufacturing applications. VCAMM, through its CEO, Brad Dunstan, has facilitated access to a number of funding schemes that have enabled the research effort to expand and add value to Quickstep's core business activities.

Dr Fox commented: “We never cease to be impressed by the versatility of the Quickstep Process and its ability to manufacture parts with complex geometries. It provides an enabling platform for the design of novel composite products.”

Mr Louis (Lou) Luedtke, President and CEO of the National Composite Center in Dayton, USA, brings more than 30 years of engineering, technical sales and business leadership experience to the Technology Advisory Board. He has served the power and environmental markets and has held leadership positions in US Fortune 500 companies and foreign-owned global companies. Mr Luedtke was hand-selected to take the National Composite Center to a new level of performance in 1999 and under his leadership the NCC has launched several new businesses and helped customers across the US get their products to market quicker. His strategies have also helped the Center develop a supportive incubation environment for composites companies and industrial manufacturers.

Mr. Luedtke led the effort to establish the North American Quickstep Center of Excellence at the National Composite Center. A QS20 machine was installed in 2006 and the Center was opened in October of the same year. The Center serves as the focal point for North American companies interested in exploring the Quickstep process prior to production commitment. Work is already underway for several aerospace and industrial entities.

The first role of the Technology Advisory Board will be to represent Quickstep at the prestigious JEC Composites Show in Paris from April 3 - 5, 2007. JEC is the world's most influential composites event, and this year is expected to attract over 900 exhibiting brand names and over 25,500 attendees, many of whom are potential customers for Quickstep.

### **Establishment of Quickstep GmbH i.G.**

In addition to the establishment of the Technology Advisory Board, Quickstep has also bolstered its commitment to establishing the Quickstep Process in Europe, today announcing plans to establish a new wholly-owned subsidiary company, Quickstep GmbH i.G.

Quickstep intends to officially launch Quickstep GmbH i.G. at the JEC Composites Show in Paris, where it will announce plans to establish a new testing and manufacturing facility near Munich in May 2007.

Mr Noble said Quickstep GmbH i.G would initially operate one QS20 machine, which will be commissioned in Perth by the end of March and installed in Munich during May 2007. The QS20 will be committed exclusively to the testing and product development for a select group of European customers.

Quickstep has already hired its first two employees who will manage its German operations, both of whom have already completed a 3-month induction course in Perth.

Dr Jens Schlimbach has been appointed CEO of Quickstep GmbH i.G., and has six years of experience in advanced composite manufacturing technologies, including design and development of carbon fibre reinforced polymer (CFRP) structures as an alternative to steel and aluminium. Dr Schlimbach has provided consultancy services to a number of aerospace companies, including Eurocopter, the world's largest helicopter supplier.

Dr Amol Ogale will be responsible for production and development of the Quickstep technologies in Germany and has more than five years of experience in dry fibre based composite manufacturing technologies including preforming, liquid composite moulding and development of CFRP components as an alternative to existing metallic parts.

Both Dr Schlimbach and Dr Ogale have extensive project management experience, having managed a number of German national and international projects at the Institut für Verbundwerkstoffe GmbH ("Institute for Composite Materials") in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Mr Noble said Quickstep GmbH i.G. would target a number of high-potential target markets in the region. "We are in advanced discussions with a leading European aerospace manufacturer regarding the establishment of a framework cooperation and development agreement intended to achieve certification for aerospace components for the Quickstep Process, a forerunner to actual aerospace components manufacture," he said.

"Both Quickstep and its potential cooperation and development partner believe the establishment of Quickstep GmbH i.G. will allow Quickstep to work more closely with European-based aerospace manufacturers to achieve this necessary certification."

Mr Noble said he expected a positive conclusion to the negotiations and a formal announcement in May 2007.

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### **Background on Quickstep Holdings Limited**

Western Australian -based **Quickstep Holdings Limited** ASX Code: **QHL**) is an advanced materials company which owns a scalable platform for the energy efficient manufacture of performance efficient composite materials.

Listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2005 following a successful IPO, Quickstep initially raised A\$6 million to underpin the worldwide commercialisation of its innovative and proven technology with application in the multi-billion dollar aerospace, automotive, mass transit and renewable energy sectors.

Composites combine high strength with light weight and are key materials in aerospace, automotive, marine, defence, public transport and industrial applications. The global composites parts market is growing strongly, reflecting a shift towards the greater use of composites as an increasingly desirable replacement for metals in many applications because of their high strength and reduced weight.

Quickstep's proprietary process is based around a fluid-based curing technology that significantly reduces the cost and time involved in the production of composites compared with conventional processes. Quickstep has been at the leading edge of the growing need to reduce part costs since the early 1990s, with a significant investment in the development of the Quickstep Process over the past decade.

Quickstep already has automated Quickstep pilot production facilities operating at three separate locations with one in Japan; a second at the Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing (VCAMM) in Geelong; a third at the Northern Aerospace Technology Exploitation Centre (NATEC) in Manchester, England in conjunction with the University of Manchester; and a fourth in the US at Dayton, Ohio, the birthplace of the aviation industry.

Global alliances are also in place with major international advanced materials suppliers such as Toray Composites (in the USA and Japan) and German-based industrial chemicals and performance materials giant Degussa AG, alongside R&D and Applications Development Agreements with groups such as VCAMM.

Quickstep's business model is a mix of equipment and licence sales to major aerospace, automotive and marine manufacturers; joint venture arrangements, co-branding and co-marketing agreements with leading composites manufacturers, Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM's), Tier One suppliers and alliance partners; and contract and in-house manufacturing operations and sales utilising the Quickstep Process.

### **Background on Professor Andrew Walker**

Professor Andrew Walker is the Director of a UK Research Initiative to develop future civil aircraft. Based at the University of Manchester, he brings together key academics with Industrial partners and Aviation authorities. Andrew previously worked for Airbus as Chief Manufacturing Engineer on the A380. He designed the \$1bn A380 wing factory at Broughton, Chester, UK. Andrew has also built factories in China and Germany, for Unilever, ICI and Federal Mogul. Andrew is a world expert on composites; he developed "Saffil" reinforced engine pistons in the 1980s, and has been involved in materials processing for over 25 years. Andrew has three international visiting/honorary Professorships in Engineering, he also has a PhD (Process Metallurgy) and a BSc (Metallurgy), both from Imperial College, London.

### **Background on Dr Bronwyn Fox**

Dr Bronwyn Fox is a Senior Lecturer at Deakin University and a researcher at the Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing (VCAMM). VCAMM has supported the research at Deakin through its mission to ensure that Australian industry remains innovative, competitive and flexible.

### **Background on Mr Lou Luedtke**

Lou Luedtke brings more than 30 years of engineering, technical sales and business leadership experience to the National Composite Center. He is particularly adept at creating and maintaining long-term partnerships leading to mutual benefits for highly technical product development. He has served the power and environmental markets and has held leadership positions in US Fortune 500 companies and foreign-owned global companies. In 1999 Lou was hand selected to take the National Composite Center to a new level of performance and help it fulfill its original purpose - development and commercialization of cost competitive composite materials and processes. Under Lou's leadership, NCC has launched several new businesses in Ohio and is helping customers across the US get their products to market quicker. His strategies have also helped the Center develop a supportive incubation environment for composite companies and industrial manufacturers. NCC's innovations in manufacturing processes and the resources it offers through a comprehensive menu of capabilities have positioned the Center as a vital technology partner for today's companies.

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