

QUICKSTEP AWARDED KEY AUSTRALIAN PATENT

- **Australian patent application awarded for co-curing, joining and bonding (melding) aspect of the Quickstep Process for composites manufacture.**
- **Significant enhancement of Quickstep's IP covering the ability to join composite components without the need for bolts and rivets.**

Advanced materials group Quickstep Holdings Limited (**ASX: QHL**) today announced that the patent application covering one of the key components of its composites manufacturing technology with particular application in the global aerospace industry has been granted in Australia.

The grant of the patent – covering the co-curing, joining and bonding (melding) aspect of the Quickstep Process for cost effective composites production – represents an important enhancement of the Company's intellectual property portfolio and reflects the growing recognition and acceptance of the technology worldwide.

Patent applications for this aspect of the technology are in place in Europe, the United States, China, South Korea, Brazil and elsewhere. The basic Quickstep Process itself is protected by patents in force across the globe in Australia, the United States, Germany, Spain, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands and Sweden.

The Quickstep Process is an innovative fluid-based curing technology for the production of panels or components made of advanced composites which reduces the cost and production lead-time compared with conventional autoclave production processes.

Co-curing refers to the ability of the Quickstep Process to heat up and cool down composite materials rapidly and suspend the curing reaction at any point in the cycle by applying cold heat transfer fluid (HTF) to quench the reaction. This allows the whole part or a section of the part to be held uncured or partly cured, providing added flexibility to the process.

Joining and bonding (melding) refers to a combination of melting and welding, enabling one part to melt into and become part of another part with no physical difference or separating surface remaining between them. Quickstep's melding works by precisely controlling the temperature on the contact area of the join, and can meld one part to another to create larger or more complex parts, without the potential weakness of a secondary bond.

Quickstep's Managing Director, Nick Noble, said the ability to join or meld composite components in a process akin to welding without a requirement for rivets or bolts represented one of the most revolutionary aspects of the Quickstep Process, with potentially far-reaching significance particularly in the aerospace industry.

"This aspect of our technology has attracted particularly strong interest internationally, including amongst some of the world's leading aircraft and aerospace companies, who are increasingly looking to incorporate composites into their designs," Mr Noble said. "The ability to produce larger composite parts by joining components together seamlessly without the need for bolts or rivets represents a potentially massive step forward for the composites industry.

The cost and weight savings would be enormous, combined with a significant improvement in performance," he added. "These features have been one of the key drivers of growing levels of interest in the Quickstep Process, particularly in 'high-end' applications in the aerospace industry, and we are very pleased that we now have relevant patent protection in force in Australia."

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Background on Quickstep Holdings Limited

Perth-based **Quickstep Holdings Limited** (ASX Code: **QHL**) is an advanced materials company which listed on the Australian Stock Exchange in 2005 following a successful A\$6 million IPO to underpin the worldwide commercialisation of an innovative, fully proven Australian composites manufacturing technology with application in the multi-billion dollar aerospace and automotive industries as well as other mid-tier market segments.

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 unique and patented Quickstep Process is an innovative 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 fully automated Quickstep plants operating at three separate locations in Japan, in Geelong, Australia at the Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing (VCAMM) and the University of Manchester in England.

Global alliances are also in place with major international advanced materials suppliers, alongside R&D Agreements with groups such as VCAMM, the University of Manchester and the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra.

Quickstep's business model is to generate multiple revenue streams from equipment and licence sales to major aerospace, automotive and marine manufacturers; joint venture arrangements and 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.

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