

Media Release 28/08/2024

Colan Australia Celebrates 70 Years of Manufacturing Excellence

Colan Australia, the country's sovereign manufacturer of engineered industrial textiles, recently celebrated its 70th anniversary with a gathering at its Huntingwood headquarters.

Founded in 1954 by Geoffrey Coghlan, Colan opened new frontiers in Australian manufacturing, serving industries such as defence, aerospace, marine, transport, infrastructure and sports. Throughout its 70-year history, Colan Australia has weathered various economic cycles, demonstrating its adaptability and commitment to innovation, allowing the company to thrive in both prosperous and challenging times.

Early products included acoustic fabrics engineered to absorb vibrations in radiograms and television speakers. Colan pioneered specialised fibreglass fabrics for boat builders and surfboard manufacturers, a product line that has since evolved. Another early milestone was the development of multiaxial fabric capability for the Huon-class Minehunter, built for the Royal Australian Navy. The product range has since expanded to roofing, Formula 1 cars, naval vessels, refrigerated semi-trailers, caravans, and surfboards.

Colan was the first to innovate with high-performance and sustainable fibres, maintaining its status as Australia's sole manufacturer of advanced technical fabrics, including carbon fibre, Kevlar™ (Aramid™), and Innegra™. These materials are essential for high-performance applications such as ballistic fabrics, flame-retardant materials, and specialised composites across various industries.

True to its forward-thinking approach, Colan has embraced sustainability by integrating eco-friendly fibres like hemp into its product lines, reducing environmental impact while maintaining high-performance standards.

Colan's high-performance textiles have supported Australian industries and played a critical role in developing new markets worldwide, expanding the company's global footprint and contributing to its long-term success. Colan also patented a synthetic polyacrylate fibre with high-temperature resistance that was designed explicitly for bushfire blankets.

"My father was a pioneer in Australia's industrial textile industry, and his vision for technology-driven manufacturing has always guided us," said Genelle Coghlan, Managing Director of Colan. "Today, we continue pushing boundaries with new fibres and fabric constructions across diverse industries like defence, industrial, and sports."

Geoffrey Coghlan's influence extended beyond Colan. As a founding member of Composites Australia, he fostered collaboration in the sector. His legacy is carried on by his daughter Genelle, who served as President of Composites Australia and helped shape policies to leverage domestic and global opportunities for sovereign manufacturing.

As Colan celebrates 70 years in business, it remains a key player in sovereign manufacturing. Its contributions to national defence,



infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing reflect a legacy of innovation, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to quality. In her speech, Ms Coghlan emphasised the loyalty of customers and staff, attributing this to solid collaboration with manufacturers who depend on Colan's products for demanding applications.

Colan's ongoing investment in research and development ensures it remains at the cutting edge of textile technology, catering to ever-evolving industry demands.

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