

Press Release:

Fibreglass for Africa: Vital Engineering features a new, versatile range of fibreglass products for harsh mining and corrosive conditions

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Rough conditions, remote locations and a harsh climate epitomise the mining sector in Africa. The demand is for hard-wearing, versatile materials, designed for optimum safety. Vital Engineering has responded with its large range of quality non-slip floor gratings, stair treads, expanded metals and safety hand railings in a range of materials, including galvanised steel, stainless steel and aluminium.

Now the company has introduced moulded fibreglass gratings to the market, and is finding the demand for this material growing, particularly within the mining and water treatment sectors.

“The response to our fibreglass range has been very positive, and we are seeing many mining and mining contracting companies now specifying Vitaglass for their floor gratings,” notes Chris Spacey, Export Executive at Vital Engineering.

The fibreglass gratings are manufactured with continuous glass fibre strands interwoven in both directions with thermosetting resins. As an alternative to steel and stainless steel, the benefits of fibreglass are many and varied, especially in a mining plant, or corrosive environment context, according to Spacey.

“Advantages of Vitaglass gratings include the fact that the weight is half that of steel gratings, which makes for much easier handling and installation. Fibreglass is also fire retardant, non-conductive, non-slip, with a quartz grit top surface, and is virtually maintenance-free.

“It is also anti-corrosive, making fibreglass a highly viable alternative to steel in the acid environment which often characterises many corrosive areas in diverse industries, including mining,” says Spacey.

Vital Engineering has been servicing the South African industry since 1939, with an established reputation for service and the quality of their products, which are produced under the brand names of Vitagrid and Maclock. The company supplies the petrochemical, power generation and structural engineering industries; as well as a number of Australian and Canadian mining companies operating beyond our borders. These include projects and clients in Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ghana, Burkino Faso, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Namibia and Botswana.

“We are constantly developing new products for challenging environments, identifying the most cost-effective and practical solutions for our clients in developing industrialised countries, with safety as our number one consideration. We have supplied in excess of 10 000 tons of product over the last 5 years alone to the African mining industry, including gold, coal, uranium, copper and cobalt,” says Spacey.

“Another major advantage which Vital Engineering brings to the market is our ‘cost of installation’ philosophy, which is extremely economical, and with little or no down-time on site. This is as a result of pre-trial layouts prior to shipping, no re-work at high day-work costs, and first-time fitment, apart from other additional value-adds,” notes Spacey.

In addition, fibreglass - unlike steel - does not have any intrinsic after-market value, and therefore is not subject to the risk of theft, according to Spacey.

“Fibreglass, because it requires little or no maintenance and is unlikely to be stolen, offers industry a hard-working and lower maintenance product, which reduces replacement and maintenance cycles considerably.

We are confident that our fibreglass range will enjoy continued uptake because it answers to all the demands and challenges of the exacting African mining environment,” he concludes.

Ends

(520 words)

Note to Editors

Since 1939 Angus McLeod and Vital Engineering have established a reputation for quality and service in the manufacture of all types of gratings, stair treads, pressed floors and safety handrails. Its brand names of Vitagrid and Maclock have become synonymous with versatility, quality and service.

The Group offers a wealth of product expertise and has been involved in the supply to power plants, petrochemical plants, materials handling projects, mining, process plants, food, beverage as well as most facets of the civil and structural engineering industries, both domestically and internationally.

A variety of products and materials for numerous applications are readily available, when either costs or corrosion are factors. The range includes bitumen dipped, galvanised (610g/m²) and mild steel. Other grades of materials such as SS304, SS316, structural grade aluminium and 3CR12 can also be manufactured.

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