

# QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

CHS 94

## TIOXIDE AUSTRALIA PTY LTD COLLECTION

Industries, Commercial, Northern Tasmania

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## INTRODUCTION

Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd was formed in 1937 as Australian Titan Products Ltd to set up a plant at Heybridge, near Burnie. Plans for development were disrupted by the Second World War and construction was delayed until 1945. The first plant to be constructed outside the UK by British Titan Products, the Heybridge plant was commissioned in December 1948 with a production capacity of 1800 tons a year and 100 employees. The site was chosen because of its proximity to port facilities, plentiful water, cheap supplies of electricity, in a suitable position for direct discharge of effluents to the sea and a good supply of sulphuric acid from the Electrolytic Zinc Company at Risdon.

With markets throughout Australia, South East Asia and the Pacific region, the Heybridge plant produced titanium pigments used in products ranging from paint, plastics, printing ink, paper, flooring, cement products, wall coverings, cosmetics, ceramics, rubber and textiles.

Upgrades and extensions to the plant which increased capacity were undertaken over the years. In 1972 Australian Titan Products Pty Ltd changed its name to Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd. The 1980s saw a long period of improvements for better efficiency and cost savings and in 1988 capacity increased to 42,000 tonnes per annum.

The Heybridge factory was subjected to criticism for the discolouration of the sea by its discharge of liquid effluent. This increased over the years as production was raised. Following the 1973 State Government Environmental Protection Act, although temporarily exempt from some of its regulations, Tioxide Australia spent millions of dollars to progressively reduce emissions both to the atmosphere and the sea.

In December 1995 Tioxide's UK parent company announced the Heybridge factory would be closed due to uneconomic production from a technically outdated plant. The final production came off the line on 7 July 1996. When it closed, Heybridge was the smallest and oldest of Tioxide's plants. In the course of its life the factory produced 982,795 tonnes of pigment. It was a significant industry in terms of Tasmania's mid 20th century development and a major employer.

The factory was put up for sale in 1996 and a series of auctions was held to sell of assets. Demolition of the factory started early in 1997. A costly environmental clean up was necessary, involving the rehabilitation of the sludge dams, building a new landfill to take material not capable of being recycled, wetlands work and landscaping.

The numerous photographs and slides of the factory, commencing with the undeveloped Heybridge site through to the rehabilitation work undertaken after the its closure and including aerial views, are a feature of the collection.

The collection was donated to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in September 2005.

## ***1.Minutes of Meetings***

1/1 Australian Titan Products Pty Ltd, minute book of Board and general meetings 1937-1966

## ***2 .Miscellaneous Records***

2/1 *Souvenir of the opening of the new factory of Australian Titan Products Pty Ltd by the Honourable Robert Cosgrove, M.H. A. (Premier of Tasmania) at Heybridge, near Burnie, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1949* 1949

2/2 Australian Titan Products Pty Ltd, Burnie Tasmania, 'Annual report to directors, 1950', typescript 1950

2/3 Australian Titan Products Ltd, staff discussion group material in folder (includes *TAPL Newsletter*, 26 June 1996) 1960

2/4 Australian Titan Products Pty Ltd, *The first hundred thousand*, Burnie, c1963 c1963

2/5 Australian Titan Products, 'The early development of titanium dioxide pigment', typed extract from autobiography of WS Robinson, first Board chairman of British Titan Products 1971

2/6 *Tioxide Australia*, promotional brochure c1980

2/7 *Tioxide*, promotional brochure c1985

2/8 Tioxide Australia, large folder of items relating to the plant (includes material concerning plant's closure and auction sale, photographs and ruler) 1981-1996

2/9 Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, site plan of Burnie plant 1988

2/10 Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, *Tioxide: taking care: a summary of Tioxide's commitment to the protection of the environment*, Burnie, c1989, also a variant copy c1989

2/11 Tioxide Australia, *Tioxide: committed to improving the environment*, media release 1990

2/12 Tioxide Group Ltd, *Environmental performance site report*, Burnie 1993-1996

2/13 Tioxide Asia Pacific, *Tioxide Australia quality manual*, Burnie, 1995 ***Oversize item*** 1995

2/14 Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, *Emergency procedures*, pamphlet 1995

- 2/15 Tioxide Asia Pacific, *Meeting the challenge of change, Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd Heybridge Plant* 1996
- 2/16 *Site prospectus: major industrial site... (owner Tioxide Australia)*, Burnie, [1996] [1996]
- 2/17 *For sale now: titanium pigment manufacturing, process plant & equipment, complete installations for removal – ex Burnie Tasmania, Australia: a rare opportunity to acquire late model plant and spare parts: currently in operation, closes July 1996*, large folded colour poster [1996]
- 2/18 Tioxide Asia Pacific, *Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd: a pictorial history 1946 to 1996*, Ulverstone, 1996 1996
- 2/19 The Advocate, *Burnie, 175 years*, article on Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd [2002]
- 2/20 John M Graham, *From British Titan Products to Huntsman Tioxide: a company history 1930 to 2000*, North Yorkshire, UK, 2002 2002
- 2/21 Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, certificate of registration on change of name to Echo Projects Pty Ltd 2003
- 2/22 Australian Titan Products Pty Ltd, *Titanium oxide pigments*, Burnie, nd nd
- 2/23 British Titan Products Co. Ltd, ‘The titanium pigment story’, typescript re documentary film nd
- 2/24 Tioxide, *Group safety, health and environment policy statement* **Oversize item** nd
- 2/25 ‘Tioxide titanium pigments, R-XL, 25kg net, Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, Burnie Tasmania, product of Australia’, label from part of a bag nd
- 2/26 ‘Tioxide, titanium pigments for paints, plastics, paper: I’ve made the grade at Tioxide’, white folder cover nd

### **3. Photograph Albums**

- 3/1 Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, photograph album, effluent line, 1973, 1975, 1976 1973-1976
- 3/2 Small photograph album, sludge dams 1986
- 3/3 Small photograph album, dry calciner feed 1987

3/4	Photograph album, Jan 1987, sludge dam no.1, 1987, 1991, no.2, 1990 etc <i>Oversize item</i>	1987-1991
3/5	Photograph album, various photographs of the plant <i>Oversize item</i>	1996
3/6	Photograph album, sludge dam, landfill etc	1996-1997
3/7	Photograph album, tip, site demolition etc	1997
3/8	Photograph album, demolition of factory site, construction of landfill	1997
3/9	Photograph album, 'Plant Site', views of plant demolition, topsoil spreading, tip, sludge dams, landfill, wetlands	1997-1998
3/10	Photograph album, wetlands	1997-1998
3/11	Photograph album of aerial photos of the plant and coast line <i>Oversize item</i>	nd

#### ***4. Photographs and Slides***

- 4/1 A large collection of slides and black & white and colour photographs of external and internal views of the factory, aerial views of the factory and coast line, rehabilitation of the site and of people associated with Tioxide. Some negatives are included. (Consists of three reflex boxes, five slide boxes and a number of items in *Oversize* drawer)

#### ***5. Videos and Films***

5/1	[Tioxide Australia], videos, Tioxide effluent pipeline, nos.1, 2, 3, 4)	1981
5/2	Video, Vertical run along coast	1985
5/3	Video, 52K expansion, marine pipeline	1988
5/4	Video, Tioxide pipeline	1995
5/5	Tioxide Australia Pty Ltd, video, Factory site demolition, landfill/sludge dams, Jan '97-Sept '97	1997
5/6	Tioxide Australia, video: tape 1, Demolition, landfill construction, D Rundle	nd
5/7	Video, tape 2, Demolition	nd
5/8	Video, 3, Demolition summary	nd

5/9	Video, copy of Dave Rundle's small VCR tapes, of wetlands, landfill & demolition	nd
5/10	Video, Tioxide pipeline and diffuser	nd
5/11	Video, Nature link	nd
5/12	Film, Effluent pipeline installation; negatives, experimental line, 1962	1962
5/13	Film, Coastal sea survey	1972
5/14	Film, Effluent pipe laying	nd
5/15	Film, No.2 sludge dam, superntant liquor pump installation	nd
<b><i>6.Newspaper Cuttings</i></b>		
6/1	Australian Titan Products/Tioxide Australia, newspaper cuttings	1945-2001

#### **OTHER SOURCES**

QVMAG, Community History, Documentation series, 2008.P.0073