

BRINGING CONVEYORS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

A CHANGING OF THE GUARD HAS LED THE FATHER-SON DUO OF THOMAS AND GRAEME GREAVES TO TURN A NEW CORNER IN CONVEYOR INNOVATION. *AUSTRALIAN MINING* WRITES.

Graeme Greaves is a veteran of the conveyor industry, having bought leading Western Australian conveyor specialist DYNA Engineering 14 years ago.

Along with his wealth of experience in the engineering industry, including in the food manufacturing and automotive sectors, DYNA itself has been in the conveyor market for 30 years.

The highly-specialised skills he has brought to the company allowed it to thrive, while the niche group of 'traditional' mining engineers eagerly learned about the technical intricacies involved in conveyor engineering.

Fast-forward to the dynamic pace of the internet-fuelled 21st century and the landscape has changed, with the mining industry craving the next innovation, something DYNA has responded to.

Enter Thomas Greaves, Graeme's tech-savvy son and for the last 18 months, the general manager of DYNA Engineering.

His influence on the company has been profound, as the focus has shifted towards leading the charge in the conveyor industry with regards to innovation and a closer relationship to customers.

"We want to start bringing in engineering to suit the 21st century. The perception is that it's old school and there currently isn't that much accessible information on it out there," Thomas says.

"A lot of the general public just think someone digs up the ore and sends it somewhere, and there's a lot of junior engineers leaving university who don't have the practical knowledge that comes with experience, so we aim to educate people."

The result has been a 'changing of the guard' of sorts as Thomas has joined the family business, updating DYNA Engineering's image and the way it communicates with its customers, while keeping the technical DNA that his father provides.



GRAEME GREAVES, DYNA ENGINEERING'S MANAGING DIRECTOR WITH SON, THOMAS GREAVES, GENERAL MANAGER.

The pair now combine to mix the father's sophisticated knowledge of the conveyor industry with his son's ability to communicate the technicalities to a vast customer base – and it has delivered proven results.

"We've seen a substantial increase in enquiries, a lot of people knew about our business beforehand but now we've really started to engage our customers and introduce them to the broad range of conveyor products we have," Thomas says.

DYNA Engineering's most recent innovation is what Thomas describes as a "game changer" – a plastic conveyor guard that uses high-density polyethylene (HDPE), which is light-weight, low maintenance and corrosion free in comparison to its counterpart.

Conveyor guards in general are used to protect personnel from harm associated with conveyors,

either by preventing them from entering the danger zones or to contain rogue material within the conveyor.

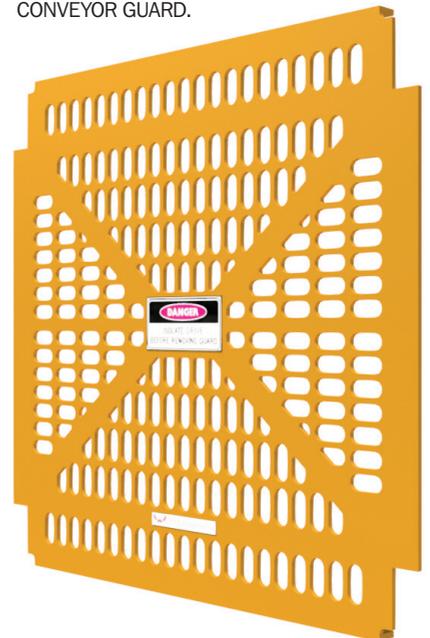
The real drawcard to the product is the 'X design' that is exclusive to DYNA Engineering – the design's discovery is truly emblematic of the father-son partnership.

After finding himself "doodling" on a piece of paper sketching ideas, Thomas drew out the 'X design' which was noticed as Graeme walked past.

A "lightbulb moment" from the conveyor expert led to a casual afternoon sketching session that turned into what could be the next major innovation in the conveyor industry.

The design itself, increases a conveyor guard's strength substantially when compared with the standard plastic mesh guards that were previously used.

THE PLASTIC CONVEYOR GUARD.



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This results in reduced deflection and is above the minimum Australian standard that is implemented to ensure personnel on mine sites are kept safe.

DYNA Engineering is anticipating a surge in interest for its new product, and under the watchful eye of Graeme, it seems to be the perfect moment to pounce on the desire mining companies are having for safer and more economical equipment.

“I noticed a gap in the market; I’ve been making guards for a long time and we’re always looking for better ways to build them,” Graeme says.

“This product isn’t something that was built overnight, it’s something we’ve been putting together for a number of years.”

The benefits the plastic conveyor guard offers are particularly appealing to mining companies given their light weight, ensuring

the engagement with them are a one-person job.

There is also a significant cost-saving benefit due to the minimal need for maintenance, given the plastic guard is resistant to rust or corrosion.

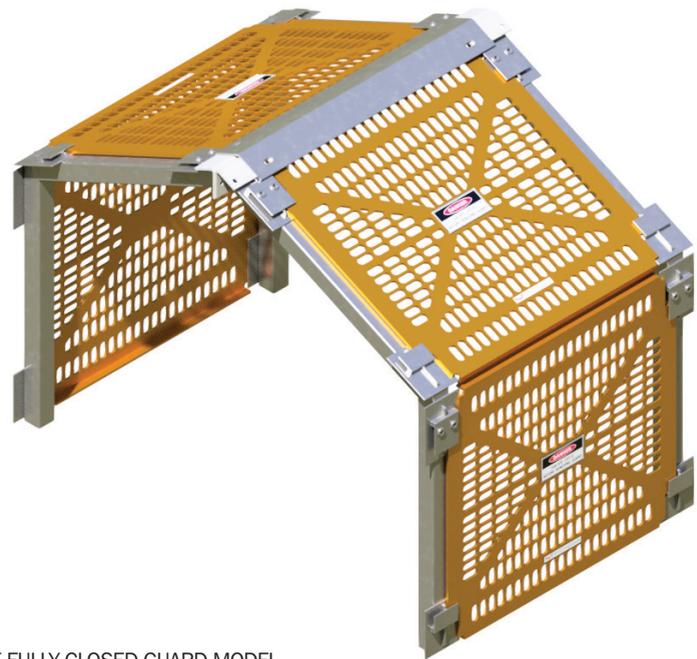
Reduced costs also stem from the ease of installation, given the increased demand for simplified processes by customers.

There is now no need to cut, bend and weld steel guards when they don’t fit on site, which can be costly due to on site labour.

The improvements highlight the state of the conveyor market, which is begging for an upgrade in safety and economic features, according to Graeme.

“A lot of conveyor guards haven’t changed over the years, they’ve just used metal mesh because its cheap,” he says.

“They rust, they’re heavy and the health and safety to personnel



THE FULLY CLOSED GUARD MODEL.

suffered. The plastic we plan to use is a common material but it hasn’t been used in conveyor guards successfully. We think our design will solve a lot of issues.”

The improvements have been made off the back of Graeme and Thomas consulting with customers, which they emphasise is the most productive way of

designing products.

This new communication process has allowed DYNA Engineering to tailor the range of products to meet specific demands from operators working on site.

It has set the scene for an exciting period that the company is entering into, as the changing of the guard literally comes into fruition. **AM**