

Dolphin Bay Installs Africa's First Permacure ACQ Plant For Millpres

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Dolphin Bay has helped MillPres set up Africa's first Permacure ACQ (Alkaline Copper Quaternary) plant to treat timber poles for the export market.

It's a new plant for a new business – a string of "firsts" within our industry.

MillPres is a partnership between Brondal Treated Timbers and the timber exporter TimberX. *"The new plant is located on the Brondal site, northeast of Mbombela, and it's a mirror image of their existing CCA plant,"* explained Dolphin Bay's Darren Marillier. *"Brondal will continue to produce CCA poles, while MillPres will produce ACQ poles."*

"Most of my business is centred around the export market," explained TimberX's Shaun Cullen. *"My clients are mostly zoos and theme parks, where there are lots of animals and children."*

ACQ is preferred in those environments in markets like the United States, Australia, and the European Union, where the industry has voluntarily adopted alternatives to the traditional preservatives.

The idea for the new plant was born in 2024 when Dolphin Bay installed South Africa's [first preassembled](#) wood treatment plant for Brondal. *"When we installed the CCA plant, they told us about their plans to set up a plant for non-CCA chemicals,"* Darren said. *"It didn't make economic sense for them to outsource the ACQ treatment to a third party; they wanted to do it themselves. But they needed a plant first."*

Dolphin Bay sourced a unit for MillPres and facilitated the sale. *"We took it on as a turnkey project,"* said Darren. *"We collected the plant, upgraded it, relocated it, and re-established it at Brondal."*

"The MillPres team did thorough research, which revealed that Permacure ACQ was the clear choice."

Said Bertus: *"The MillPres team did thorough research and made a very clear choice for ACQ. They looked at alternatives – including copper azole preservatives – and visited the Dolphin Bay factory in Mossel Bay, where we gave them a demonstration on how to treat timber with Permacure ACQ in our pilot plant."*

"For us, it was important to give them a sense of how it feels to work with the product. It was also critical to discuss that ACQ is a recognised wood preservative worldwide. After careful consideration, they agreed that it was the best option."

The differences between ACQ and CCA presented Dolphin Bay's plant installation team with a unique set of challenges. *"ACQ is an alkaline chemical, whereas CCA is acidic,"* said Darren. *"There's a big difference in the corrosivity on certain components of the plant. ACQ is a lot more corrosive to white and yellow metals – so anything copper, brass, bronze, or aluminium had to be swapped out with either stainless steel or cast iron."*

The MillPres ACQ plant, like Brondal's CCA plant, is running on Dolphin Bay's [Pro-Treat digital treatment book](#). This, too, presented some challenges. *"Pro-Treat was geared for CCA, and the treatment calculations for ACQ are somewhat different,"* said Darren. *"But we managed to get Pro-Treat customised for ACQ as well. Now, whenever we set up a new customer, we can select either CCA or ACQ for their plant."*

Despite the technical challenges, the plant installation process was quick. The first meeting took place in late July; by the end of October, MillPres's first ACQ-treated poles were rolling off the production line. The final step in the installation process was a site inspection by the South African Bureau of Standards.

"The processes for treating ACQ and CCA are very similar; it's just the specifications that differ," said SABS Inspector Francois Louw. *"The end result is the same, in that you need to have the right [retention](#) and penetration. My job is to ensure that the result meets the required standard."*

Francois was "very happy" with what he saw on his first visit and will do a follow-up inspection to conclude the SABS certification process.

"We congratulate the MillPres team for the pioneering step they have taken in setting up the first such treatment plant in Africa."

The MillPres team was delighted with the plant. *"Everything's going smoothly, and the service from Dolphin Bay has been really excellent,"* said Brondal's Cobus du Preez. *"I'm happy."*

Cullen agrees. *"We're very, very happy with Dolphin Bay,"* he said. *"The level of customer service and the overall feeling of working with them has been great – and that's really important to me. I place a high emphasis on customer service myself, and I find it very frustrating when I don't receive the same from my suppliers. Dolphin Bay has been amazing."*

"We are absolutely delighted to have been entrusted with this project and the continued support," said Bertus. *"This project has truly been a team effort, with Shaun, Cobus, and Tony visiting the site to experience the product first-hand and strengthen our collaboration – a process we continue to enjoy and value deeply."*

"We congratulate the MillPres team for the pioneering step they have taken in setting up the first Permacure ACQ treatment plant in Africa. We are pleased to see CCA and ACQ being produced on the same side for different markets, proving the sustainability and feasibility of both preservatives."