

This year's Asian Paint Industry Council (APIC) meeting was hosted by the Malaysian Paint Manufacturers' Association in the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur. *Sally Gibson* was there to hear the latest updates from Asia's paint industry

Malaysia hosts APIC 2019



This year's Asian Paint Industry Council (APIC) meeting was both fun and informative, as ever. Hosted by the Malaysian Paint Manufacturers' Association (MPMA), the conference proceedings were opened by Gladys Goh, Chairman of the MPMA. She reiterated how the meeting serves as a "platform for industrial leaders to come together to discuss the issues in their industry," allowing the member paint associations across Asia to discuss the ever important topics of changing regulations, environmental sustainability and general updates relevant to Asia's coatings industry.

World Coatings Council

Starting the official presentations was Andy Doyle, President of the World Coatings Council. He noted how the WWC is focusing on sustainability for the upcoming year, with much of its efforts focused on responding to unwarranted restraints on biocides and polymers in coatings, imposed by government. He acknowledged that although there is a need to monitor the safe use of biocides and the potential for polymers in coatings to add to the microplastics problem, the WCC is concerned that concerns from governments, in particular from the EU, will lead to the need for unreasonable and alarming warnings on paint tins. The ongoing appeal against the recent TiO₂ classification from the EU was a clear

example in this case. As well as defending the industry's interests in this manner, another key focus of the WWC in the upcoming year is the United Nations Lead Paint Alliance, which continues to help with establishing legal restrictions on lead use in paint.

Japan

Hideo Nakamura, Executive Director of the Japanese Paint Manufacturers' Alliance (JPMA) detailed how even though Japan's market growth is below the global average and has been unable to keep up with levels of economic growth since the crash in 2008, sales from Japan's 12 listed paint companies have been growing fairly steadily since 2012, with profit also growing. It comes as no surprise, that this is attributed to the success of foreign acquisitions made by Japan's leading paint companies. He noted that the main issues for Japan's paint industry are the need to increase domestic demand for paint; labour shortage; and enhancing environmentally friendly products.

Malaysia

Updates from Malaysia included the improvement in consumer confidence, consumer spending and the business confidence index since the new government came into force in Malaysia in mid-2018. More positive news from the MPMA was that Malaysia is on track





to eliminate lead from paints in Malaysia by 2020.

Singapore

Amidst Singapore’s declining GDP growth and manufacturing rates, the Government has made an assessment of Singapore’s most pressing challenges over the next 50 years and is investing in a lot of ‘urban greenery’ to tackle these issues, which include demand for space as urban density increases. The increase in urban greenery will require coatings to adapt in that there will need to be reduced leaching from biocides because of the plants. Improved indoor air quality is also a priority, eg low odour.

Indonesia

Kris Adidarma of the Indonesia Paint Association detailed how the relocation of the country’s capital city from Jakarta to East Kalimantan will provide a boost for the coatings industry. Indonesia’s decorative segment is currently experiencing challenging growth, although it is expected that relocating the capital city will adjust this, while the automotive coatings market is booming.

Paintback initiative

Karen Gomez, CEO of Australia’s Paintback Ltd, was on hand to speak about the successful paint recycling initiative that

is currently active in every state across Australia. The scheme aims to collect 8Kt/yr of unused paint from consumers and businesses for recycling back into the system. In 2018, the scheme collected 6250t, giving a positive indication that the target can be achieved. More information on the scheme, how it works and how the paint is recycled, can be accessed on the website: www.paintback.com.au.

Summary highlights

Presentations were also given from representatives from China, Korea, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Taiwan and Thailand, in what was an incredibly well attended APIC meeting. The vast majority of these updates included information about changing regulatory landscapes amidst an increased focus on environmental obligations. Technical presentations were also given by Louis McCulloch, James Consulting; and Everlight, Thor and Dow, who were amongst the event’s sponsors.

Following on from the meeting itself, the MPMA was kind enough to host a dinner for attendees in the KL Tower, Rotating 360° in each dinner sitting, it offers the best possible view of the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur, with excellent company from all the meeting’s attendees. APCJ looks forward to next year’s APIC meeting in Shanghai! ■

