



ARCHITECTURAL ROOFING AND WALL CLADDING

Four finishes. Four budgets.

How metal cladding finishes have evolved to suit different applications and budgets, shown through four Melbourne residences we have completed.

Fairfield

VMZINC Quartz-Zinc
Standing Seam roof

Middle Park

Vestis Aluminium Ash
Grey
Flatlock roof and wall
cladding

St Kilda

UniCote LUX Zinc
Graphite
Standing Seam roof and wall
cladding

Carlton North

COLORBOND Matt
Basalt
Standing Seam roof and wall
cladding

MARKET CONTEXT

How the surface choices widened.

Architects once chose between a few natural metals. Over four decades, manufacturers have added surfaces that echo weathered zinc through different means, each with its own balance of authenticity, consistency, weight and cost. Builders and architects now have a genuine range to specify from.

1837

ONWARD

1978

AND 1993

2010s

ALUMINIUM + MATT

2020s

PRINTED STEEL



Natural metals

VMZINC has rolled zinc since 1837, and copper has a similarly long record. Both form a protective patina, last 80 to 100+ years and call for specialist trades. Early weathering can look patchy while the surface settles.



Pre-weathered zinc

VMZINC introduced pre-weathered zinc in 1978 (Anthra-Zinc) and Quartz-Zinc in 1993. The patina is formed at the mill, so the material arrives looking close to natural zinc after years outdoors.



Pre-painted aluminium and matt steel

Architectural Metals Australia began importing Vestis in 2012 to widen the range of European-style cladding available locally. BlueScope's COLORBOND Matt, a flat paint finish on Australian steel, has also been available for over a decade. Matt greys and blacks followed architect demand.



Patterned and printed steel

UniCote LUX brings multi-layer PVDF prints of zinc, corten and timber to Australian-produced steel, giving architectural looks to projects with tighter budgets.

WHAT DRIVES THE CHOICE TODAY

Budget. Each surface sits at a different point on the cost scale.

Weight and structure. Substrate choice changes load and fold behaviour.

Colour consistency. Staged packages and large facades favour a uniform finish.

Exposure and warranty. Distance from the coast changes what each manufacturer will cover.

THE FOUR FINISHES

Same grey family. Different material stories.

All four finishes read as a mineral grey. What sits underneath, and how each surface behaves over time, is where they differ.

NATURAL ZINC

VMZINC Quartz-Zinc

MAKER	VMZINC (VM Building Solutions), France
SUBSTRATE	Titanium-zinc to EN 988
SURFACE	Pre-weathered natural zinc with a phosphate conversion layer. A metal surface, not paint.
OVER TIME	Keeps patinating. Minor batch variation settles as the surface matures. Light scratches self-heal.
OUR PROJECT	Fairfield · Standing Seam roof

PRE-PAINTED ALUMINIUM

Vestis Ash Grey

MAKER	Mazzonetto, Italy, supplied by Architectural Metals Australia
SUBSTRATE	Aluminium, 0.80 mm
SURFACE	High-durability polyester coating in a smooth matt finish.
OVER TIME	Even and consistent. Designed to hold its colour rather than evolve.
OUR PROJECT	Middle Park · Flatlock roof and walls

PRINTED, PRE-PAINTED STEEL

UniCote LUX Zinc Graphite

MAKER	Selection Steel, Australia
SUBSTRATE	Steel with a zinc, aluminium and magnesium metallic coat (AM150)
SURFACE	Multi-layer PVDF coating carrying a printed hairline zinc grain.
OVER TIME	Consistent. The grain is directional, so orientation is part of the design.
OUR PROJECT	St Kilda · Standing Seam and Flatlock, roof and walls

PRE-PAINTED STEEL

COLORBOND Matt Basalt

MAKER	BlueScope, Australia
SUBSTRATE	Steel with an aluminium-zinc alloy coat to AS 1397
SURFACE	Matt paint finish of about 3 gloss units, painted to AS/NZS 2728.
OVER TIME	Flat and uniform. A painted colour with no grain or patina.
OUR PROJECT	Carlton North · Standing Seam roof and wall cladding

Zinc is a living metal surface. The three painted finishes are engineered to look the same in year twenty as on day one. None of these approaches is better. They answer different briefs.



ARCHITECT EME Design

BUILDER Martin Builders

PHOTOGRAPHY Architectural Cladding Suppliers, AMC

PROJECT 01 • FAIRFIELD

VMZINC Quartz-Zinc, a surface that matures.

SYSTEM

Standing Seam

APPLICATION

Roof

MATERIAL

Natural titanium-zinc

PRICE TIER

Premium

What it is

Quartz-Zinc is natural zinc that VMZINC pre-weathers at the mill with a phosphate conversion layer. It arrives with the soft grey tone natural zinc reaches after years outdoors, and it remains a metal surface rather than a coating.

Because the surface is metal, minor scratches self-heal, and the patina continues to develop with exposure.

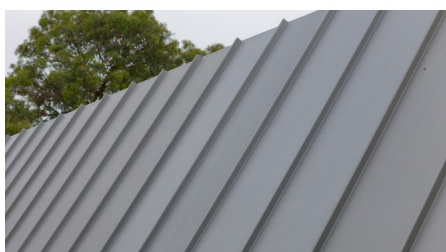
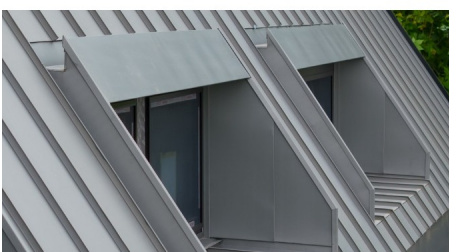
Why specifiers choose it

Authenticity and longevity. VMZINC quotes a design life of 80 to 100+ years, a 20-year standard material warranty and up to 50 years project by project when installed by an approved installer. AMC is an approved VMZINC installer.

It also carries a published EPD, 22% recycled content and around 95% end-of-life recovery.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Zinc needs a ventilated build-up, because trapped moisture causes white rust. Colour can vary slightly between batches, so panels are best ordered together. Keep zinc clear of copper, steel, acidic timbers and bitumen run-off. Within about 1 km of the sea, VMZINC notes salt staining is likely on unrinsed surfaces.





BUILDER Brady Property Group

PHOTOGRAPHY AMC

PROJECT 02 · MIDDLE PARK

Vestis Ash Grey, light and consistent.

SYSTEM

Flatlock

APPLICATION

Roof and walls

MATERIAL

Pre-painted aluminium

PRICE TIER

Mid-range

What it is

Vestis Pro Range is 0.80 mm pre-painted aluminium from Mazzone in Italy, finished in a matt polyester coating. Ash Grey gives a soft, even grey that echoes weathered zinc without a weathering period.

The colour is applied in the factory, so every panel, roof and wall, starts and stays visually aligned.

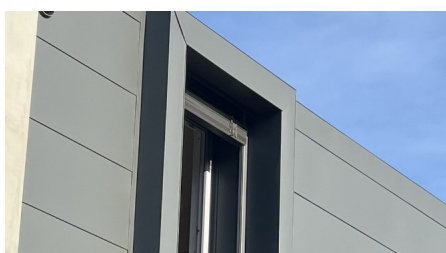
Why specifiers choose it

Low weight, at about 2.2 kg/m² against about 5 kg/m² for 0.7 mm zinc, and a substrate that folds well, which suits fold-intensive Flatlock detailing on both roof and walls.

Colour consistency across stages, full recyclability, and a manufacturer warranty of up to 40 years where the site is more than 3 km from salt water.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Warranty length reduces as a site gets closer to the coast, and every warranty is applied for and approved on a project-by-project basis. Aluminium expands slightly more than zinc, so long runs need movement allowance. Keep it clear of direct contact with copper and steel. Damage to a painted surface is repaired by touch-up or panel replacement.





ARCHITECT Richard Kerr Architecture **BUILDER** Element Homes Victoria
PHOTOGRAPHY Sarah Louise Photography for UniCote, AMC

PROJECT 03 · ST KILDA

UniCote LUX Zinc Graphite, a zinc look in steel.

SYSTEM

Standing Seam and
Flatlock

APPLICATION

Roof and walls

MATERIAL

Pre-painted steel

PRICE TIER

Lower to mid-range

What it is

UniCote LUX from Selection Steel is pre-painted steel with a zinc, aluminium and magnesium metallic coat (AM150) under a multi-layer PVDF finish. Zinc Graphite carries a printed hairline grain that reads as dark, aged zinc.

The effect is built into the coating, so it looks the same from the first day.

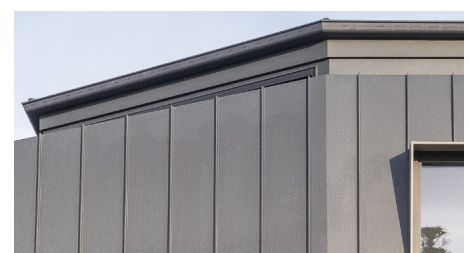
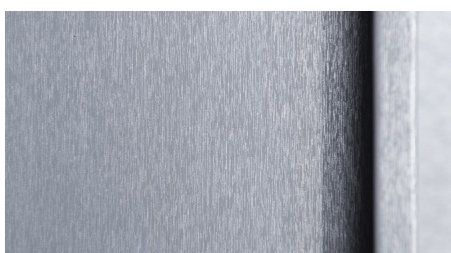
Why specifiers choose it

A zinc-like character at a lower price point, with a PVDF coating tested to AS/NZS 2728. UniCote publishes it as non-combustible to AS 1530.3 and BAL-FZ rated to AS 3959.

Warranties run up to 25 years, set per project, with pre-approval typically returned within 48 hours.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The printed grain is directional, so panel orientation and fold direction are best agreed against a sample. LUX is listed for sites 400 m or more from marine influence, and UniCote offers coastal grades for closer sites. Steel moves about half as much as zinc or aluminium with temperature, and weighs more than aluminium.





ARCHITECT Michelle Stender Architect

BUILDER BUILTARC

PHOTOGRAPHY Metal Cladding Systems

PROJECT 04 · CARLTON NORTH

COLORBOND Matt Basalt, matt steel made in Australia.

SYSTEM

Standing Seam

APPLICATION

Roof and walls

MATERIAL

Pre-painted steel

PRICE TIER

Entry

What it is

COLORBOND steel Matt is BlueScope's pre-painted steel with a flat paint finish of about 3 gloss units, against about 25 for the Classic range. Basalt Matt is a deep, even grey.

The base is aluminium-zinc alloy-coated steel made in Australia to AS 1397, painted to AS/NZS 2728.

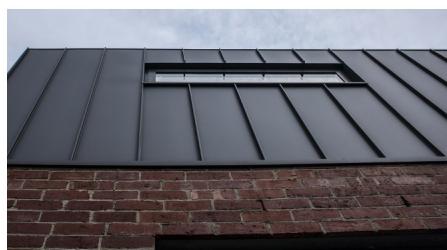
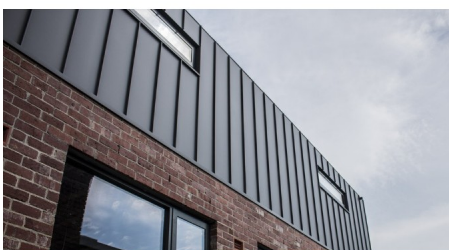
Why specifiers choose it

Familiarity and availability. It is a well-known Australian product, matched to a BlueScope warranty for approved applications, at the most accessible point on the cost scale.

Steel carries a spread-of-flame index of 0, and BlueScope states it can form part of a compliant system up to BAL-FZ.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

The matt range has limited colours. It is a painted colour with no metal grain or patina. Near the coast, BlueScope advises its standard and Matt steel for walls only beyond about 800 m from breaking surf or 200 m from calm marine water, with Ultra grade closer in. Damage to the paint is repaired by touch-up or panel replacement. Warranty terms depend on the application and exposure, and are applied for per project.



SIDE BY SIDE

What each finish offers.

	VMZINC Quartz-Zinc	Vestis Ash Grey	UniCote LUX Zinc Graphite	COLORBOND Matt Basalt
Surface	Natural metal, pre-weathered	Polyester coating on aluminium	PVDF print on coated steel	Matt paint on coated steel
Look over time	Patina keeps developing; subtle variation evens out	Uniform; designed to hold colour	Uniform; printed grain stays constant	Uniform; flat matt colour
Scratches	Light scratches self-heal	Touch-up or panel replacement	Panel replacement	Touch-up or panel replacement
Weight	About 5.0 kg/m ² (0.7 mm)	About 2.2 kg/m ² (0.80 mm)	Heavier than aluminium; figure not published	Heavier than aluminium; varies with thickness
Thermal movement (mm/m/°C)	0.022	0.0235	About 0.011 (carbon steel)	About 0.011 (carbon steel)
Published warranty	20 years standard; up to 50 years project by project	40 years beyond 3 km from salt water; 20 years at 1 to 3 km; up to 10 years under 1 km	Up to 25 years, project-specific	BlueScope warranty; term set by application and exposure
Coastal guidance	Standard warranties apply; salt staining likely on unrinsed surfaces within about 1 km	Warranty term reduces with proximity to salt water	Listed from 400 m; coastal grades for closer sites	Walls advised beyond about 800 m from surf or 200 m from calm marine; Ultra grade closer
Fire testing	Tested to AS 1530.1 and AS 1530.3	Tested to AS 1530.3; compliant with AS 1530.1	Non-combustible to AS 1530.3; BAL-FZ to AS 3959	Steel with spread-of-flame index 0; BlueScope states it can form part of a BAL-FZ system
Environmental	22% recycled content; published EPD	100% recyclable	Steel from electric arc furnace mills	Steel is recyclable; products include recycled material

Figures are manufacturer-published. AMC confirms whole-system fire, wind and bushfire compliance on every project, because the cladding alone does not determine the result.



CHOOSING A FINISH

Match the surface to the brief.

INDICATIVE PRICE POSITION



Relative installed cost for comparable systems. Position moves with profile, detailing complexity and site conditions.

When material authenticity leads

A real metal surface that matures, self-heals and carries the longest warranty horizon, with a published EPD.

VMZINC Quartz-Zinc

When consistency and weight lead

An even colour across stages and facades, low weight and a substrate that suits fold-heavy Flatlock.

Vestis Ash Grey

When budget and a zinc look lead

A printed zinc-grain surface in steel, with Australian Standards testing and a published BAL-FZ rating.

UniCote LUX Zinc Graphite

When cost and familiarity lead

A flat matt steel from an Australian maker, widely stocked, with a BlueScope warranty at the most accessible cost.

COLORBOND Matt Basalt

SEE IT BEFORE YOU SPECIFY

Samples of all four are available.

We install every one of these finishes. Talk to us early about warranty pre-approval, coastal exposure and detailing, and we will help match the surface to the brief.

Michael Kumschick

0497 009 390

michael@advancedmetalcladding.com.au

[@advancedmetalcladding](https://www.instagram.com/advancedmetalcladding)