

Scratch-resistant synthetic sapphire glass.

There is no substitute for HPA in the manufacture of synthetic sapphire and the product is also increasingly in demand as a key component of separators in new age batteries.

READ: Altech Chemicals granted patent for its unique high purity alumina production process

Granted Innovation Patent 2018101228 covers the production of alumina from all types of aluminous clay, including kaolin, using hydrochloric acid.

The prescribed process for an Innovation Patent following grant, is that the patent is examined by IP Australia and once this is passed, the patent is certified then published.

Granted patent in examination phase

IP Australia recently issued its initial examination report for this patent and has queried the innovation and novelty of the Altech HPA Process.

Altech now has six months to respond to IP Australia and remove grounds for revocation of the patent, else the Innovation Patent will cease.

The company, via its Patent Attorney WRAYS, will now respond to IP Australia with further clarification and justification as to the innovation and novelty of the process.

Re-use of HCl gas

It is the view of the company and WRAYS that a significant and innovative step of the Altech HPA Process described in the Innovation Patent is the recycling and re-use of HCl gas, which previous patents did not deploy.

WRAYS has advised that a response to clarify patent innovation and novelty following an initial Innovation Patent examination is not unusual.

Growing demand for HPA

Global HPA demand was around 25,300 tonnes in 2016 and demand is growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.7%, primarily driven by the growth in worldwide adoption of LEDs.

As an energy efficient, longer lasting and lower operating cost form of lighting, LED lighting is replacing traditional incandescent bulbs.

HPA is a key component of LED lights.

Current HPA producers use expensive and highly processed feedstock materials such as aluminium metal to produce HPA.

READ: Altech Chemicals prepares to begin HPA plant construction, to run in parallel with finance close

Altech has completed a Final Investment Decision Study (FIDS) for the construction and operation of a 4,500 tonnes per annum HPA plant at the Tanjung Langsat Industrial Complex, Johor, Malaysia.

The plant will produce HPA directly from kaolin clay, which will be sourced from the company's 100%-owned kaolin deposit at Meckering in Western Australia.

Altech's mezzanine debt and stream facility technical due diligence is on track and proceeding as planned for its proposed Malaysian high purity alumina (HPA) plant.

The proposed HPA plant in Malaysia.

HPA plant construction will run in parallel to finance close, as stage I construction is already funded and will begin shortly.

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