



AD ASTRA STONE PTY LTD

WHEN MR. TOM CARSON DECIDED TO FOUND A BUSINESS, HE FIRMLY STATED HIS DESIRE FOR SUCCESS, naming the firm Ad Astra Stone. The name is derived from the Latin phrase Per Ardua Ad Astra, roughly translating as, 'through hardship, to the stars'.

"I believe that any attempt at something good requires some amount of struggle, and Ad Astra Stone has had some hardship" said Mr. Carson, Managing Director. This hardship has wrought success for Ad Astra Stone. The company doubled their turnover each year in the eight years following the company's conception, and has established a reputation in the heritage restoration market as second to none for boldness and creativity.

Ad Astra fulfilled heritage restoration works for the Melbourne GPO project, removing damaged materials and completing solid plastering and stonemasonry. Ad Astra is a heritage restoration company, specialising in stonemasonry, solid plastering, and architectural sculpture and cleaning. Its primary objective is to achieve a level of quality, unsurpassed in Australia, in preserving not only Australia's heritage buildings but also the skills that were required to make them.

Ad Astra's enthusiasm for preserving heritage restoration skills extended to this project. The GPO project, requiring rare solid plastering skills, provided a learning environment both for Ad Astra's own experienced solid plasterers, and for students of the Holmesglen TAFE solid plastering course, the only such course in Victoria. Over 18 months, Ad Astra Stone hosted 50 apprentices at the site, exploiting the learning experience available from such an important work of solid plastering.

The solid plaster works completed by Ad Astra were on all three levels in the Postal Hall and the Colonnade. The work ranged from patching and replacement of flat walls to the reinstatement of the vaulted ceilings on the level one Colonnade.

Ad Astra's reinstatement of the vaulted ceilings in the level one Colonnade exhibits the rarity of the skills needed for heritage restoration. "There would be few solid plasterers alive who had completed a vaulted ceiling like those in the GPO," said Mr. Carson. Mr. Gerard Jones, Co-Ordinator of Victorian works for Ad Astra Stone, said, "Ad Astra was able to provide solid plasterers with both local and international experience capable of reproducing the vaulted ceilings to a high standard, which gives the GPO some of its unique architectural appearance."

Ad Astra also reinstated the plaster moulds of the fire damaged GPO. "The reinstatement of the moulds at the GPO ranged from simple and straight forward skirting and string course moulds to large and complex moulds such as the consul corbels. Moulds were made from casts taken from remaining moulds on site and from reference to photos taken both before and after the fire," said Mr. Jones.

The project also involved some significant stonework restoration and the carving of new stone for the building entry. Ad Astra's skilled heritage stonemasons undertook this work.

Ad Astra's work was concise due to excellent coordination. A multi team approach saw Ad Astra's solid plasterers, stonemasons and labourers working in unison with mould makers, Gino Giacobbe and Zebra Architectural Products, and the specialised team from Upgrade Interiors. Project Manager Gerard Jones, Administrator Leigh Grandy, and a full time foreman coordinated this team approach. This managed unity ensured maximum productivity and optimum quality.

To subscribe to Ad Astra Stone's self published newsletter, Heritage Works, or for more information, contact Tom Carson, Managing Director, on 03 9490 5000.

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