



MEDIA RELEASE

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Brisbane's Treasury Casino & Hotel provides a rare glimpse into a prehistoric art



Pictured: Vince MacKenzie-Ross, Queensland Heritage Masonry. Image by Jeff Camden.

Working with a wooden mallet and chisel, Vince MacKenzie-Ross is determined to ensure traditional stonemasonry does not become a lost art.

Vince is one of Australia's leading stonemasons and is working on the multi-million dollar heritage conservation program for the beautiful sandstone buildings that house Brisbane's Treasury Casino & Hotel.

"Stone carving, and the process known as 'bankering', have been part of civilisation since prehistoric times," Vince said.

"It is important that the work we do is carried out with the same degree of precision that matches the work of the original craftsman. Using traditional tools and learning quite unique skills enables stonemasons to produce intricate stonework of the finest quality. It requires patience, however, as the process can be quite meticulous."

Today 30 building conservation professionals climbed scaffolding surrounding Brisbane's Treasury Casino & Hotel buildings to inspect the multi-million dollar stonework conservation program that is ensuring the beautiful heritage sandstone buildings stand the test of time.



Treasury Casino & Hotel organised the scaffold tour and stone carving display in Queens Park, or Queens Gardens as it was originally named, as part of a National Trust of Australia (Queensland) seminar on 'The Art of Building Conservation: Caring for Stonework'.

The event featured as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival 2015, of which Treasury Casino & Hotel is a sponsor.

The seminar covered topics including the current program of conservation work on the Treasury Casino & Hotel buildings, the techniques and materials used and future work planned.

The existing stone conservation program, which won the 2008 and 2014 Queensland Heritage Council Gold Award, started on the Treasury Casino building's William Street facade in 2007. The current works on the Queen Street facade are expected to be completed by mid-July. Work will then commence on the George Street side of the building, before moving to the Elizabeth Street facade.

The Treasury and Land Administration buildings, on either side of Queens Park, are highly distinctive sandstone buildings that form an important part of Brisbane's identity.

"We are proud of our work to conserve these historic buildings in Brisbane for future generations," said Geoff Hogg, Queensland Managing Director of Echo Entertainment Group, which operates Treasury Casino & Hotel.

"Brisbane has a rich, distinct and unique heritage which reflects its development over the past 180 years. Queenslanders have a strong attachment to their heritage buildings, and a strong desire to conserve them.

"The beautiful stone buildings that house Treasury Casino & Hotel are a key contributor to Brisbane's identity, and since taking stewardship of them 20 years ago, we have invested more than \$55 million to restore and repurpose them for public use."

Echo Entertainment Group is part of the Destination Brisbane Consortium, which is a proponent bidding in the Queensland Government's Queen's Wharf Brisbane precinct project. The redevelopment area is state-owned land, located between the Brisbane River and George and Alice streets.

Mr Hogg said: "Our proposal to redevelop Queen's Wharf is an opportunity to extend our existing heritage conservation and help repurpose the many beautiful heritage properties within that district.

"Queen's Wharf marks the place of Brisbane's early settlers 180 years ago. Destination Brisbane Consortium's vision is to activate the river front of our river city and reinvigorate the greatest collection of heritage buildings and places in Queensland."

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