

ST HILLIERS

TEXT: MICHAEL BROWN PHOTOGRAPHY: GAVIN SMITH & JEREMY HEYWOOD

PROJECT MANAGER: Baracon Group
 ARCHITECTS: Williams Boag
 ENGINEERS: Arup
 DESIGN MANAGEMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND REFURBISHMENT: St Hilliers

A CERTAIN TRAGIC IRONY RESIDES IN THE TURN OF EVENTS

in which one of Australia's most iconic buildings, the Melbourne GPO, was very nearly destroyed by a faulty computer. The 1867 Heritage listed architectural icon was almost betrayed by the modernity with which it had gradually become accustomed.

In the early hours of the morning of September 10, 2001, whilst the fervent fingers of Australia Post mail sorters were filing Melbourne's mail, an electrical fault in a computer caused a spark, starting a fire that quickly became an all-consuming blaze. This blaze caused several million dollars damage to the interior of the Melbourne GPO building, including the Heritage listed Postal Hall.

Only months earlier, Morry Schwartz's Pan Urban and Adam Garrison's Wetherby Capital had won development rights for a retail complex at the GPO, and the GPO had closed as a public facility. Their proposal had won Town Planning Department and Heritage Victoria approval. Then the fire struck.

Responding quickly to the disaster, Australia Post's Victorian Commercial Manager, Mr. Peter Lavis announced on September 18, 2001, that the Corporation would lease the GPO building to Morry Schwartz and Adam Garrison's Melbourne GPO Pty Ltd (MGPO) under strict heritage and maintenance conditions. "This redevelopment will breathe new life into one of Melbourne's architectural icons and help transform the Elizabeth Street end of the Bourke Street Mall. It will increase public access to the GPO, maintain the building's heritage values and ensure its commercial future," Mr Lavis said. "We needed to select developers who were sensitive to these issues and could also make the project work commercially," Mr Lavis said.

The development of the Melbourne GPO had been simmering for a decade, awaiting an economically and architecturally viable realisation. The destructive fire breathed new life into the development process, forming a catalyst for the development of the building to its current character.

For GPO architects, Williams Boag and Associates Pty Ltd, the fire was formative for their goals. "The fire was significant. Something now had to be done to protect and stabilise the building," said Mr. Peter Williams, Director of Williams Boag. The fire served as an important turning point from which the Melbourne GPO could be effectively developed and enhanced with extended scope, whilst retaining its architectural grandeur, landmark qualities and heritage features. "The cultural and social sustainability requirements for a building like the GPO are very high," said Mr. Peter Williams, Director, Williams Boag. "As part of this response we have created a more accessible place and returned the building to the public in a way that it has never been in the past," he said.

The Melbourne GPO's latest incarnation provides a sincere restoration of the 150-year-old landmark building, and establishes the Melbourne GPO as a major retail precinct, Melbourne's grand shopping arcade.

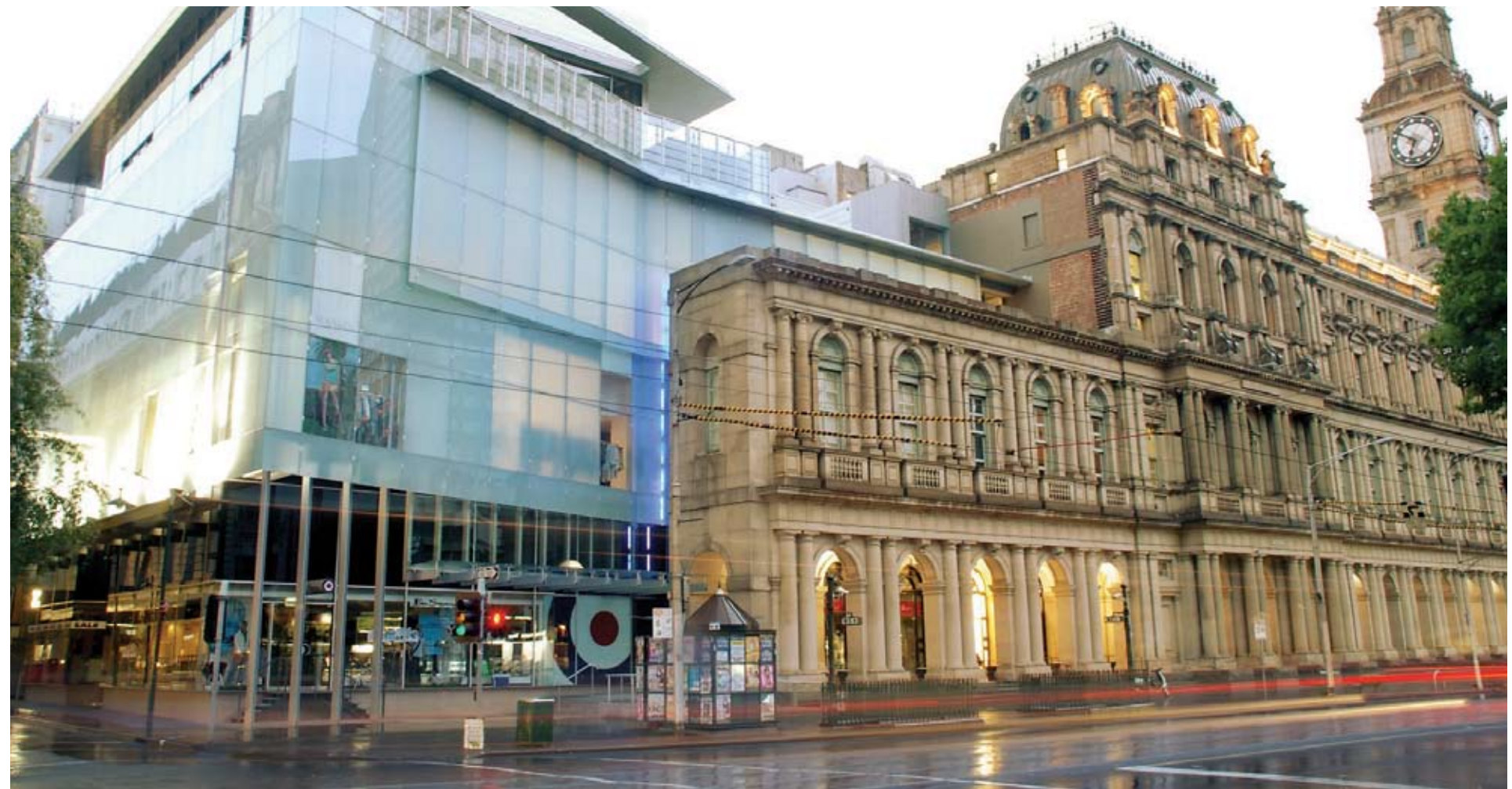
Baracon Group was selected by MGPO as Development and Project Managers for the refurbishment, charged with converting the historic building into Melbourne's newest retail centre.

The strength of the GPO development prompted Mr. Jock Rankin, Executive Director of the Victorian division of the Property Council, to pronounce the Melbourne GPO as "the springboard to the revitalization of the CBD." Mr. Rankin said that the development would give a major boost to the revitalisation of the city centre, and help re-establish the retailing strength and the attractiveness and accessibility of the Bourke Street Mall. "I am pleased that the heritage features are being protected and the interior restored, and I think Melbournians will be excited by the vision of the developers," he said.

That vision has been realised throughout the development process, which has involved the refurbishment

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of the GPO, and the construction of a new six level building to the north of the site. The developers embraced the building's heritage, protecting and preserving the GPO internally and externally, whilst inviting modern modes to the development. Schwartz insists that the building's heritage was its main asset. "People are scared of heritage; we love it," said Garrison.

Heritage restoration award-winner, St Hilliers, was contracted by Australia Post to complete the refurbishment, and is also principal contractor for the new building stage for the developer, MGPO Pty Ltd. "We are delighted to be working with Australia Post and MGPO Pty Ltd to rejuvenate this spectacular Melbourne icon that will, in conjunction with the new retail and commercial space, continue its role as an important element in the city fabric," said Tim Casey, Group Managing Director of St Hilliers.

The Postal Hall restoration involved reconstructing the original four storey postal atrium and the ornate ceilings, giving the Postal Hall an ambience reminiscent of the past, ripening the appeal of the timeless luxury of the modern fashionable boutiques that inhabit the arcade.

The reinstatement of the Postal Hall, including reestablishing many of its intricate archways, cornices and the vaulted ceilings, was an arduous task requiring rare solid plastering skills, skills that were found in heritage restoration specialists, Ad Astra Stone. "There would be few solid plasterers alive who had completed a vaulted ceiling like those in the GPO," said Ad Astra Managing Director, Mr. Tom 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 mouldings of the fire damaged GPO, in a meticulous restoration job. "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. A team, including heritage architects Williams Boag, scoured the State Library and National Trust for records and photographs. "There were enough bits left intact to crack mouldings and recreate them from photographs," Mr. Garrison said.

The restoration extensively uses very light paint to lighten and open up the old postal hall and floors above. Garrison says the paint, plus generous use of glass and white, stainless steel, "brings out the beauty of the building".

On the exterior, the facades of the nineteenth century building facing the Bourke Street Mall and Elizabeth Street have been preserved and modestly modified. The Little Bourke St façade has been adorned with 30mm thickness exfoliated pink granite slabs. At a height of 700mm from ground

level, and running 1.5 metres each horizontally, the collection of slabs spans 40 lineal metres along the façade. Extensive areas of Tasmanian sandstone also enhance the principal façades.

To protect and beatify the façade, specialist architectural conservation practice, Allom Lovell and Associates Pty Ltd, documented and supervised the stonework conservation and repairs to original external elements. Their restoration of original elements encompassed the Mansard pavilion and the west façade facing Elizabeth Street. The conservation of the GPO's stonework required an investigation of the existing work.

"The stonework was generally in very good condition, with areas of localised damage," said Mr. Peter Lovell, Director of Allom Lovell and Associates. Allom Lovell managed Ad Astra Stone's stone restoration works in the postal lane, now opened to pedestrian traffic, and Cathedral Stone's works on the Elizabeth St. Central façade. Allom Lovell also integrated make safe works to building externals in their process of restoration.

Allom Lovell's conservation work for the Melbourne GPO extends beyond physical conservation, to the development of a Conservation Management Plan for developer, MGPO Pty Ltd. "Heritage Victoria required an update of the GPO's Conservation Management Plan. The original CMP was written in the 1980's, and was very out of date. The new CMP provides guidelines on which to base future restoration work," said Mr. Lovell. "Allom Lovell will be involved in an ongoing conservation and restoration program for the Melbourne GPO, including stonework restoration, lead work, and various other works," said Mr. Lovell.

The second stage of the redevelopment of the GPO utilises the long inactive square beside the GPO on the corner of Elizabeth and Little Bourke streets, where a modern, structurally separate, six level building has been constructed.

The new building, while structurally separate from the GPO, is integrated with the retail precinct, connecting traffic and services with the original GPO building, but is structurally separate so as not to impact the structural integrity of the original building. Tenants in the building include restaurants, shops and offices. The new structure houses the mechanical and electrical services for the redevelopment, and has been erected almost entirely from precast components.

St Hilliers and consulting engineers, Arup, in conjunction with Hollow Core Concrete Pty. Ltd. developed a strategy, employing precast components. They had determined that precast components offered significant advantages, the major benefits being the speed of construction and the access available to following trades. Hollow Core

custom designed construction techniques for the extension and provided the majority of the precast components required, including precast columns, beams, hollow core planks, solid cantilevered planks and lift panels for the new building as well as the stair panels and stair flights extending from the original building.

The extension features extensive glazing on its façade, designed and installed by Architectural Glass Projects. "A strong guideline in the original design was that we couldn't fix to the original building," said Mr. Brett Pryor, AGP's Project Manager for the Melbourne GPO project. "The new building is an extension, neatly tucked in behind the original to appear as if the original is flowing through into the extension," he said.

According to Peter Williams of Williams Boag, it was a challenge to create the new six level building whilst establishing an effective interface between this new building and the heritage structure of 1867.

Whilst the refurbishment and restoration works have returned the GPO to its former glory and beauty, the six level addition at the North of the site proffers sensitivity and respect to the character and quality of the original building, and complements this character whilst establishing its own modern brand of architectural and aesthetic quality.

The original building, with a 135 year record of service to Australian postal services, will now house over 60 retailers offering what the developers call, "funky" and "edgy" shopping experiences infashion and food, homewares and healing.

Generations of Melbournians have arranged to meet each other at the most well known landmark in town, the GPO. Garrison says GPO Melbourne will continue to be a meeting place. Melbourne GPO has been reborn as GPO Melbourne after a true baptism by fire, and will continue to be a Melbourne landmark for generations to come.



THE HISTORY OF A HERITAGE ICON

A post office has existed on the current GPO site at the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets since 1841.

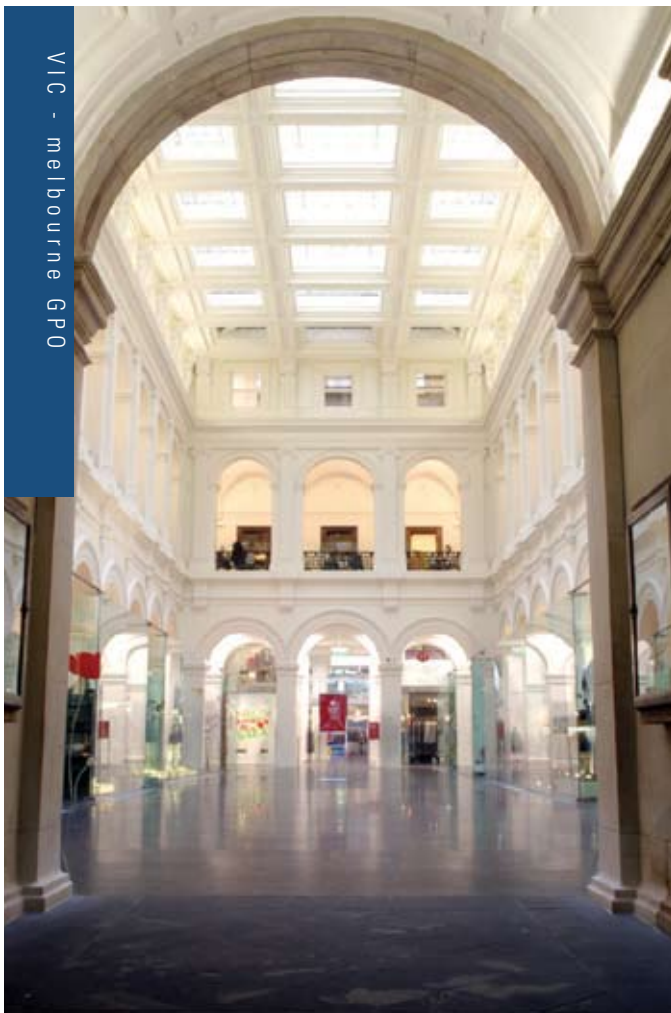
In 1859 the first GPO was on the present site. The present building was constructed in three stages between 1859 and 1907, all to the design of A E Johnson. The third level and tower were added in 1887. The external design of the building caused controversy in 1859 when the winners of a design competition were overlooked by the government for the second placegetters.

Post World War I, US architect Walter Burley Griffin designs the renovation of the GPO in 1919, opening the GPO to the public for the first time.

Over 70 years later, in 1992, Australia Post had flagged the end of the GPO's postal role, and suggested it may be sold. Australia Post deployed a scheme for a retail development occupying the North quadrant of the GPO, and in 1993, a shopping mall planning permit was granted. "A permit was granted by the Historic Buildings Council but development never occurred. A retail development in that part of the city wasn't viable at that time," said Mr. Peter Williams of Williams Boag and Associates. In 1997, a proposal involving Multiplex and Tuscan Hotel group, entailed establishing the GPO as a hotel complex. A 10 level hotel tower at the North was to be incorporated into the existing building, with the Postal Hall to become a grand reception space.

In June 2000 a permit was issued to alter and develop the Melbourne General Post Office for conversion to a hotel. "It was not possible to find an occupier and operator for the proposed hotel development," said Mr. Williams. In 2001, Morry Schwartz's Pan Urban and Adam Garrison's Wetherby Capital won development rights for a retail complex at the GPO, and the GPO closed as a public facility. September 12, 2001 fire almost guts the GPO. May 20, 2003, Morry Schwartz and Garrison unveil their new development concept. The Melbourne GPO will be reborn as GPO Melbourne. By 2005 construction is completed and GPO Melbourne begins a new era for the historic building.





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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.



WILLIAMS BOAG PTY LTD ARCHITECTS

WILLIAMS BOAG PTY LTD ARCHITECTS IS A MELBOURNE BASED

independently owned architectural firm providing expertise in the fields of architecture and planning, urban design and interior design, specialising in institutional, cultural and residential architecture and planning projects.

Williams Boag Pty Ltd Architects was established in Melbourne in 1975 and has achieved an enviable professional reputation based on carefully designed, finely crafted architectural solutions. Williams Boag is committed to design driven quality, and will soon open a Research and Development department to enhance design vision.

Williams Boag Architects practise with an alignment of purpose, personal commitment and accountability, and share one common goal: to provide fit for purpose design solutions married to major project delivery capacity. Williams Boag is committed to a sustainable future. The company's approach to responsible design is to address social, cultural, ecological and economic sustainability issues with regard to a considered approach in the design process.

"The cultural and social sustainability requirements for a building like the GPO are very high. As part of this response we have created a more accessible place and returned the building to the public in a way that it has never been in the past," said Mr. Williams.

Williams Boag has been involved in each of the development proposals for the Melbourne GPO since 1989. Having amassed a 15-year rapport with development ideas for the grand Melbourne icon, Williams Boag's expert architectural services were infused with a value added wealth of specialised project knowledge.

"The current developer, MGPO, knew of our strong association with the history of development proposals for the site and our continued work with Australia Post. They considered our expertise, supported by Post and we became involved," said Managing Director, Mr. Peter Williams. On this current project Williams Boag provided full architectural services up to the construction phase, at which time their role was novated to the builder. Architectural services provided encapsulate planning services and heritage advice in consultation with Allom Lovell and Associates

Williams Boag's scope of works for Melbourne GPO Pty Ltd included developing the GPO as a specialist retail

and lifestyle precinct, modified from the earlier office commercial project. According to Mr. Williams, it was a challenge to create a new six level building and establish an effective interface between this new building and the heritage structure of 1867.

Williams Boag also managed the reinstatement of interior fabric following the fire in 2001, in collaboration with Andrew Ward, conservation architect.

Williams Boag Architects comprise a staff of 26 diverse individuals contributing to the design culture of the office under the leadership of Director Peter Williams. Under his guidance Williams Boag has been acknowledged by numerous design awards at a national and state level. Most recently in November the firm received a National Commendation in the Year of the Built Environment Awards presented at the Sydney Opera House in the Towards a Sustainable Community Category.

In May 2000, Williams Boag Architects and five other Australian firms, located across Sydney, Brisbane, ACT, Darwin, Perth, entered into a strategic alliance in response to an initiative by Sydney based GroupGSA Architects. The Alliance provides a National network of resources and experience to each of the member firms on a project-by-project basis. Access to this national skills network is transferred to clients, including the interaction of firms on projects where the combined skills suit that project's requirements.

Williams Boag Architects has won twelve design awards from the Royal Australian Institute of Architects alone. To view Williams Boag's full range of awards, or for more information, visit www.williamsboag.com.au. For more information on the GroupGSA National Alliance visit www.groupgsa.com.

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P.D. JOINERY

STORY BY: NICHOLAS RAMEKA

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Tony Peake 14 years ago. At a time when it was almost impossible to get a reproduction of heritage type joinery, it seemed the only way to get such a job done was to either compromise or do it yourself.

"Because nobody could produce what the customer wanted, they were given the closest possible default," said Tony. "I wanted to produce exactly what the customer wanted."

The rest is history. Today, as a specialist in architectural and heritage type joinery, P.D. Joinery can produce anything to order. They also adhere to a strict policy of anti-cloning; in other words, every job is a once off. This was no better demonstrated than when they completed a refurbishment for the Melbourne GPO.

The vision for the Melbourne GPO project was simple; replicate the aesthetic heritage style. The mission, however, was somewhat more complicated: refurbishing doorframes, doorjambs, handrails, window frames, not to mention the replacement and manufacture of fire damaged items.

"All of the timber work... was specially manufactured in our factory," said Tony. Using existing works in the Melbourne GPO as samples, "even those that were charcoal still gave an idea of the shapes and style required." The timbers were carefully selected to match."

*Baltic Pine matched the existing hopper style windows on the third level, and was also used for architraves, skirting and floor works.

*Victorian Ash, a durable, fine quality timber, was used for doorframes, doorjambs, skirting, and window frames, and for the high use shop fronts.

*Kalantis was used for internal doors because of its close appearance to the GPO's existing Australian Cedar.

The refurbished GPO is just one of the fine examples of Tony Peake's approach to joinery.

"So many styles of joinery are staple, crash and bang operations," said Tony. "We take on apprentices one or two at a time, and we steer them towards being good tradespeople. Our joiners could leave our shop and work in joinery anywhere in the world, because our line of joinery is skills based, hands on and instinctive."

P.D. Joinery has the dedication and expertise to offer value and quality to their customers. Although they do some standard joinery, they prefer "interesting projects for variety and experience," and will opt for specialty and detail work whenever possible.

"Our clients know that they are going to get exactly what they require... good quality at a competitive price..."

For more information on what P.D. Joinery can offer you, contact Tony Peake of P.D. Joinery on (03) 9818 0323.



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ALLOM LOVELL & ASSOCIATES PTY LTD

ALLOM LOVELL AND ASSOCIATES PTY LTD was established as a specialist architectural conservation practice in 1981.

Allom Lovell & Associates has a core of over 35 professional and administrative personnel, augmented by specialist consultants and contract staff as required for specific projects.

Allom Lovell & Associates specialises in heritage advice and planning, historic building conservation, adaptation and reuse of historic buildings and design of new buildings and additions, thus offering expertise both in traditional and contemporary design. Allom Lovell offers the specific expertise required for a project of the scale and heritage of the Melbourne GPO redevelopment.

Allom Lovell prepared the initial heritage permit application and continued negotiation with Heritage Victoria for approvals throughout the project. Allom Lovell also managed client and consultant liaison throughout the project. Allom Lovell restored the GPO's Conservation Management Plan (CMP), designed the internal decorative scheme in the Postal Hall, and conserved stonework and completed repairs to original external elements.

The conservation, research, investigation and documentation was undertaken by Peter Lovell, Director, and Associate Director, Robyn Riddett with input from stonework specialist Julian Horman, and Adele Brooks.

Allom Lovell's conservation of stonework first required evaluation of the existing work. "The stonework was generally in very good condition, with areas of localised damage," said Mr. Peter Lovell. Allom Lovell managed Ad Astra Stone's stone restoration works in the postal lane, now opened to pedestrian traffic, and Cathedral Stone's works on the laneway façade. Allom Lovell thoughtfully integrated make safe works to building externals in the restoration.

Allom Lovell's restoration of original elements encompassed the Mansard pavilion and the west façade facing Elizabeth Street. "The original Mansard pavilion, from the 1880's, had been badly fatigued and showed signs of stress where it had heated up and expanded, then cooled and contracted," said Mr. Lovell.

The Mansard was refurbished by James Charlwood, using precisely the same sized lead sheets as the original. St.Hillier's sourced second hand Kauri timber to replace the original Kauri timber. A strong but flexible timber, Kauri allows for the bending required to structurally support the Mansard. In the materials used, Allom Lovell ensured as many of the Mansard's original features as possible were retained.

"Designing the internal decorative scheme for the Postal Hall involved establishing what areas needed replacing and what areas needed retaining, to assist Williams Boag Architects in satisfying the heritage permit conditions," said Mr. Lovell. Interior restoration involved French polishing, stonework cleaning and the resolution of paint colours.

Allom Lovell provided historic and heritage expertise when developing a Conservation Management Plan for developer, MGPO Pty Ltd. "Heritage Victoria required an update of the GPO's Conservation Management Plan. The original CMP was written in the 1980's, and was very out of date. The new CMP provides guidelines on which to base future restoration work," said Mr. Lovell.

Allom Lovell has been involved with various proposals for this site since 2002. "Allom Lovell will be involved in an ongoing conservation and restoration program for the Melbourne GPO, including stonework restoration, lead work, and various other works," said Mr. Lovell.

ACCESS HARDWARE PTY LTD.

ACCESS HARDWARE IS A FAMILY OWNED COMPANY established in 1975, distributing architectural hardware to the building industry. Their diverse product range incorporates locks and latches, door furniture, door stops, door hardware including hinges, seals, tracks and closing devices, master key systems, electronic access systems, cabinet hardware, window hardware, and bathroom accessories.

Access Hardware boasts an impressive portfolio of clients, operating as a preferred supplier to many major building developments throughout Australia, and was contracted to St. Hilliers to supply all architectural door hardware for the Melbourne GPO project.

Access Hardware used the schedule prepared by Allom Lovell and Associates to supply a range of architectural door hardware providing suitability, style and functionality.

"We used tried and trusted brands for the Melbourne GPO project, such as Dorma door closers, Lockwood locks, Pitella lever furniture, and Raven door seals, which seal all edges creating a dustproof, soundproof seal," said Mr. Mark Zadow of Access Hardware.

"Lockwood locks were used in conjunction with Pittella lever furniture, with aesthetic motivations. The finish, colour, and look appealed to the client," said Mr. Zadow.

Dorma products used included Dorma BTS

range of floor springs, and heavy duty Dorma rack and pinion TS83 door closer. Dorma service mounted cam action door closers were used for the public building, allowing ease of access, as the force required to open the door decreases as force is applied. Access Hardware also provided BWN Automatics automatic door operator systems, and JD MacDonald specialist bathroom equipment.

The provision of products to meet the overlapping aesthetic and functional needs of the Melbourne GPO building exhibits the product knowledge, skill and expertise of Access Hardware.

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ARCHITECTURAL GLASS PROJECTS PTY LTD

ARCHITECTURAL GLASS PROJECTS (AGP) is Australia's leading specialist manufacturer and contractor in the design, engineering, and installation of custom built, specialised architectural glass and metalwork.

AGP was engaged to design the glass façade for the new six level building to the north of the Melbourne GPO, in cooperation with Williams Boag Architects. St. Hilliers later appointed AGP to complete the installation of the glass façade.

"A strong guideline in the original design was that we couldn't fix to the original building," said Mr. Brett Pryor, AGP's Project Manager for the Melbourne GPO project.

"The new building is an extension, neatly tucked in behind the original to appear as if the original is flowing through into the extension," said Mr. Pryor.

The new building, while structurally separate from the GPO, is integrated with the retail precinct, and houses restaurants, shops and offices along with the mechanical and electrical services.

AGP utilised a superbly experienced design group for the design of the glass façade. Max Turner, Richard Stace, Mick Stapleton, Brett Pryor and draftsman Sam Wai, turned an architectural ideal into a workable and affordable realistic solution.

Project Manager, Brett Pryor, directed a full time installation crew consisting of nine glaziers and six shop fitters.

Once the slabs were poured and cured,

AGP took ownership of the slab, and began set out and bracket installation. Mullions, which support the framing system, were then craned into the site. The heavy duty framing system comprises 200mm by 50mm aluminium box section with 6mm and 8mm wall thickness. Once these mullions were supported and in place, the framing system was established. The glass components were then installed using the site tower crane and small mobile cranes located on the slab.

Grey structural silicone secured the glass components to the framing system. The colour blends in with the framing system and the silicone supports the wind loads on the glass components. Deadload brackets support the weight of the glass.

The glass components used averaged 3010mm high by 1788mm wide, with a thickness of 12.38mm. AGP used four main styles of glass for the building; clear glass, clear laminated translucent white, clear toughened translucent white, and clear laminated translucent white matelux non-reflective glass. The facade also incorporated a glass operable louvre system.

Although AGP have a strong reputation for its glazing work, they also excel in stainless steel and aluminium fabrications. Such multi-skilling means that in projects requiring both metal and glass construction, AGP is the only company you need to turn to.

By choosing AGP you can be assured that only AGP will be responsible for the job, a one stop shop for all your design, engineering, manufacturing and installation needs. AGP has the skilled personnel,

equipment and resources available to undertake almost any project requirement.

AGP's full range of products includes Specialist Glass and Glazing including glass assemblies, glass balustrades, glass roofs, glazed awnings and underwater windows; Operable Glass Facades incorporating prestige glass and metal louvre systems; Entrance Systems and Automatic Doors; Security Entrance Technology, offering a range of products to suit your security requirements; Electronic Smart Glass; and Architectural Metalwork design and fabrication. AGP has completed work in every state and territory in Australia as well as selected works overseas.

AGP Pty Ltd incorporates Architectural Glass Projects Pty Ltd and AGP Door Systems Pty Ltd. For more information on the products and services offered by these companies, visit www.agpgroup.com.au, or call 02 9671 0000.

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BARTUCCA TILING AND CONSTRUCTION PTY LTD

FRANK BARTUCCA WAS BORN IN ITALY and began working with stone at the age of 13. Frank injects his experience and expertise into Bartucca Tiling and Construction (BTC).

BTC won the Master Tilelayers Association Excellence in Construction Award in 2001, and Excellence in Tiling and Excellence in Construction Award in 2003.

BTC recently completed work for the distinguished Melbourne GPO project. BTC supplied and installed 400mmX800mm bluestone to the ground floor and basement area, covering approximately 1000m². For the public toilet area in the basement level, BTC used 400mmX400mm bluestone, and 100mmX300mm white ceramic tile for the shower areas.

BTC delivered an impressive array of artistic tiling features for the Melbourne GPO project.

BTC lifted the appearance of the lifts. On both the ground floor and level two, BTC lay Calcutta Marble to a height of 1.6m in the 800mm wide strip separating the two sets of lift doors. BTC also installed an impressive Turkish Limestone feature wall on the ground floor.

BTC also completed external work for the Melbourne GPO. On the facade facing Little Bourke St, BTC affixed 30mm thickness exfoliated pink granite slabs using a Dynabolt and silicone combination. At a height of 700mm from ground level, running 1.5m each horizontally, the collection of slabs spans 40 lineal metres.

BTC's expertise was in strong demand for the GPO's retail tenancies. Digby's, Mimco, David Lawrence and Secrets all employed BTC for their boutique stores.

BTC specialise in marble, ceramic, brick paving, stonemasons, waterproofing, kitchen and vanity tops, and marble and terrazzo polishing.

BTC offer competitive prices, experience and quality. Call, fax or email Bartucca Tiling and Construction for any enquiries for domestic or commercial jobs.

BARTUCCA TILING AND CONSTRUCTION PTY LTD

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CUT AND CORE PTY LTD

CUT AND CORE ARE SPECIALISTS in the cutting and coring industry, and were contracted to the Melbourne GPO project to create core holes for services for the refurbishment and the new building.

The refurbishment of the GPO as an extensive retail precinct required the drilling of around 1000 service holes, from 50mm up to 600mm and 700mm in diameter, said Mr. Neil Horne of Cut and Core.

Drilling large diameter holes required fixing the drill rigs to the wall with a Ramset fixing product which was sensitive to the existing brickwork structure, said Mr. Horne.

Melbourne GPO has thicker walls than most standard buildings, and due to the composition and age of the brickwork, standard drilling procedures need to be modified, said Mr. Horne.

Cut and Core offer floor sawing, core drilling, wall sawing and grinding services. Cut and Core's flooring division, Grind and Seal, offer dustless grinding, shotblasting, and floor preparation.

For Cut and Core's full range of services, go to www.cutandcore.com.au. For more information on Cut and Core's flooring division, Grind and Seal, visit www.grindandseal.com.au

CUT AND CORE PTY LTD

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STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS LTD

STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS LTD IS A SPECIALIST professional engineering and contracting company, providing innovative skills and techniques to the Construction and Mining Industries.

Structural Systems Ltd employ a delicate balance of embracing the best in modern progressive technologies, combined with 35 years of experience in the industry. Structural Systems is committed to providing cutting edge and cost effective solutions for large scale Construction and Mining Projects worldwide.

Structural Systems manages a large number of construction projects varying in both size and value. Structural Systems was engaged for the Melbourne GPO Project, fulfilling the structural engineering role of design and construct of concrete frame structures. Structural Systems designed and constructed an approximately 700 square metre slab for the mezzanine level of the Melbourne GPO redevelopment.

"For this project, we looked at the St. Hilliers brief and produced the most effective, economic design for that portion of the project," said Mr. Mick Pope of Structural Systems. "We then submitted this initial design for approval, and it was accepted so we proceeded with our construction role," said Mr. Pope.

"For the construction of the slab, the whole process took about two months, from establishing the formwork to pouring the concrete," said Mr. Pope.

"The whole project traveled very smoothly. It was a great job to be involved in, as our client, St. Hilliers, had not one major problem with our work. We were in and out, on time and on budget, with no

comeback or alterations to our work," said Mr. Pope.

Structural Systems is a multidisciplinary team of professionals collating their skills and experiences to create a company that prides itself on its achievements. The ability to undertake the works required for a project such as the Melbourne GPO redevelopment, with absolute clarity and proficiency, will certainly be added to the Structural Systems list of achievements.

Just as Structural Systems builds strong solid structures, the company has developed a solid foundation, resting upon the cornerstone of experience. An exceptionally experienced Board of Directors leads the Structural Systems Group. Mr Bruce Crome (B.E. (Civil)) is a founding director and former managing director of the Structural Systems Group, with over 35 years experience in the construction industry. Robert Freedman, (Dip Bus Admin) MIEAu, is managing director and a founding director of Structural Systems predecessor in 1970, and a member of the Institution of Engineers Australia. Appointed as a Director in 2003, David Perry, Company Secretary and Chief Financial Officer (B. Econ Macquarie) joined Structural Systems in July 2002 as Chief Financial Officer. He has 19 years experience in the financial and commercial aspects of the construction industry. The experience of these Directors imparts professionalism and dedication to the Structural Systems team.

Structural Systems was founded in 1970 and has this year boasted strong profitability and demand for services. In their 2004 report issued on August 27, Structural Systems said all ongoing businesses traded profitably in the second half of the financial year and demand for the company's products and services is strong.

STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS LTD

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BAO ENGINEERING PTY LTD

IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT PAST, BAO ENGINEERING RESPONDED UNIQUELY to the demand in the construction industry for an effective method of formwork construction for staircases. Drawing on structural steel engineering methods, BAO Engineering developed the revolutionary Easystair system.

BAO Engineering's involvement in the redevelopment of the Melbourne GPO project is reflective of the development of the Easystair system. The Melbourne GPO has undergone a modern reinterpretation, with respect to its historic integrity. The Easystair system uses modern technologies and abilities to reinterpret techniques behind a long-standing process such as staircase construction.

Easystair is a prefabricated all steel permanent formwork system, one of the best handrail systems ever designed, and a registered design of BAO Engineering. Easystair consists of steel risers, stringers, reinforcement and soffit. Its handrails consist of a 50 OD top rail and post, and two 33 OD mid-rails.

BAO Engineering uses the Easystair formwork system to form up concrete staircases in four simple stages, for quicker, easier and more cost-effective construction.

BAO Engineering's Easystair system can prepare a concrete staircase in around 48

hours. The first stage involves forming up in the morning. In the second stage the

Easystair structure is placed, with top, bottom and middle propping. Thirdly, the stringer is nailed to the wall, the handrails are bolted to the outside of the stringer, and the start bar is tightened. Lastly, concrete can be poured into the resulting formwork and the staircase will be ready for use the next morning. The return bend is fixed after the stair flights are installed.

For a pictorial demonstration of the Easystair system being used to form a staircase in 24 hours, visit www.bao.com.au. For more information call Mr. Jim Hu of BAO Engineering on (03) 9793-5499.

BAO ENGINEERING PTY LTD

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**BAO ENGINEERING
PTY. LTD.** ACN. 075 798 873

HIGGINS COATINGS PTY LTD.

HIGGINS COATINGS WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1949, AND HAS OVER HALF A CENTURY OF EXPERIENCE in painting works. Higgins Coatings is renowned for delivering painting works of any calibre whilst maintaining a high level of standard, service and professionalism.

With decades of expertise and thousands of projects forging their abilities, Higgins Coatings rose to the challenge presented by the painting work required for the GPO.

Higgins Coatings' ongoing project involvement has lasted approximately nine months to the end of 2004. This nine month commitment has seen the fastidious repair of the fire damage sustained by the GPO, and the painting of the base building works and several tenancies in accordance with architectural specifications.

Due to the nature and heritage of the building, Higgins was required to carry out painting dental work. The final result achieved was flawless to show the ornate cornices and ceilings in their full and original glory.

Through various stages of the project, Higgins Coatings were capable of altering from traditional methods of painting to the modernity of airless spray guns to paint various surfaces of the GPO in conjunction with the use of modern access equipment.

Higgins Coatings' internal paintwork was conducted with utmost proficiency and in direct compliance with the internal decorative scheme prepared by architects, William Boag and Associates.

For all your paintwork needs, consult the experts at Higgins Coatings on (03) 9646 9999 who will do "whatever it takes" to ensure a job well done!



HIGGINS COATINGS PTY LTD

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Higgins
Better painting management



SKYLINE CONTRACTORS PTY LTD

SKYLINE CONTRACTORS WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE LATE 1970'S.

Skyline Contractors has grown into a well-established, extremely reputable and experienced scaffolding company.

The accrual of over 25 years of experience provides Skyline Contractors with a distinct and unique advantage over their competitors.

It is testament to their wealth of experience that Skyline Contractors were selected to provide their scaffolding expertise for the challenging scaffolding required for the Melbourne GPO redevelopment project.

Skyline Contractors comprise a skilled team of 24, and 11 were engaged for the Melbourne GPO project.

Skyline Contractors supplied, erected and maintained perimeter and dome scaffolding at the Melbourne GPO site. Erecting scaffolding for the dome structure involved much lateral thinking. The successful completion of this difficult task illustrates the determination, experience and ability of Skyline Contractors.

Of the scaffolding systems currently available, Kwikstage scaffolding is the only product used by the team at Skyline Contractors.

The Kwikstage scaffolding system requires only manpower for construction, so the team from Skyline Contractors erected the scaffolding system by hand. Steel beams were used to support the scaffolding in some areas and these steel beams were placed by crane.

Skyline Contractors' use of the Kwikstage system directly benefited the construction process.

Kwikstage is easy to erect and is extremely adaptable to any building shape. The use of Kwikstage scaffolding expedites the construction process. Installing scaffolding can be an intricate process with the potential to delay construction.

Kwikstage, however, requires minimal time and effort to erect and places the least possible delay on construction.

The less delay incurred, the more productive the work effort, and the more cost effective the project. Skyline Contractors' use of Kwikstage scaffolding, in conjunction with their experience, was a clear benefit to the progress of the overall construction.

For more information on Skyline Contractors, please contact (03) 9484 7705.

SKYLINE CONTRACTORS PTY LTD

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SKYLINE
contractors



ATS AUSTRALASIAN TECHNICAL SERVICES HAS THE CAPABILITY AND EXPERTISE, the manpower and equipment to undertake any Asbestos removal or Soft Demolition requirement small or large.

ATS has been involved in many large scale removal and replacement projects in recent years and the management and senior staff have many years experience in all types of asbestos removal and allied works.

A number of recent projects exhibit ATS's years of experience in successfully executing projects of exceptional sensitivity.

ATS recently completed asbestos removal works on several levels at the Royal Melbourne Hospital with occupied floors above and below the work area. ATS has also completed a major asbestos removal project at The Royal Brisbane Hospital, Herston, for the Abigroup. ATS recently completed a two-year project of asbestos removal in a location where silence is hallowed, the Victorian State Library. ATS operated in various locations throughout, whilst the library was staffed and open to the public.

The expertise and experience of ATS senior staff is utilised where possible, and they play an active role in the works of the firm. For the Melbourne GPO project, due to the sensitive nature of the site and its location in the centre of the CBD, work carried out was placed under the control of Managing Director, Ian Kang.

ATS completed removal and safe disposal of asbestos based products and Synthetic Mineral Fibre (SMF) based products from various locations within the building. ATS managed the work for Delta Demolitions over a two month period.

ATS completed the safe removal and disposal of lead paint and the cleaning of contaminated dust build up, involving working within confined spaces. ATS also removed pigeon droppings and pigeon remains, known Biological Hazards. This three-month process was completed by ATS for St. Hilliers Contracting Pty. Ltd.

ATS' Insulation work for this project involved insulation and cladding to heating, hot water and chilled water pipework including Plant Rooms, and Insulation of Air Conditioning Ductwork. ATS carried out this work for A.G. Coombs over a period of six months.

ATS Australasian Technical Services are licenced asbestos removalists in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT. ATS has Quality Assurance accreditation to NATA Certification Services International (NCS) Q Base Code (1995), and Occupational Health and Safety Management System to AS/NZS 4801:2001. ATS possess insurance cover for Public Liability and Products Liability, and Asbestos Liability to the value of \$20million each.

For more information, contact ATS Australasian Technical Services Pty Ltd, on 03-9562- 6113.



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BRENNISTON IS A WHOLLY AUSTRALIAN

owned supplier of first aid and workplace safety products, and their aim is to help customers achieve and maintain a safe environment at work, home or wherever their spare time takes them. On the Melbourne GPO project, Brennstion supplied first aid and workplace safety gear to the site, provided on-site servicing of kits by dedicated Area Managers, and facilitated specialist consultations.

The present drivers of Brenniston's success, owner/managers Michael Boltman and Pia Abrahams, bought the business in October 2000, bringing new vitality to a company that had serviced the first aid and workplace safety needs of Australia since 1973.

"The company has been renewed, restored, and revitalised, and this is very exciting," said Mr. Michael Boltman, Managing Director. "We combine the Brenniston expertise of almost thirty years with our own energy and enthusiasm for an industry we see great business opportunity and a strong sense of community responsibility in," said Mr. Boltman.

Brenniston offer fast and flawless customer service, an innovative range, and excellent product knowledge from a passionate team of industry professionals.

"We work really hard. We are very good with builders, and when they say jump, we say 'how high?' We work hard to provide fast response and we care about getting service right," says Mr. Boltman. This philosophy of customer service perfection drives the team from Brennstoff.

Area Managers such as those that serviced the Melbourne GPO site, specialise in servicing large workplaces with high turnover, multiple first aid stations, maintaining stock levels and attending to any specific needs of a workplace. Specialist consultations are also available so that, where necessary, Area Managers can bring a consultant to your workplace to thoroughly review your requirements. Brenniston have most recently arranged consultations with specialists in respiratory protection, eye protection, and safety signage. Brenniston can also organise first aid training for your workplace, club or any other group through our affiliation with Premium Health

Brenniston's innovative range of products is supported by a easy-to-use online ordering system for Internet users, and delivery is available within 48 hours to most locations across Australia for orders placed before 12 noon.

Brenniston is a one-stop first aid shop without the retail prices. Brenniston provide a full range of first aid kits designed with efficiency, durability and versatility in mind. Brenniston's workplace safety range is motivated by their conviction that safety in the workplace is paramount. Brenniston's hygiene range includes personal hygiene products and a full range of janitorial equipment and canteen supplies.

Brenniston offer special corporate services such as custom design, bulk supply and corporate branding of first aid kits; and exclusively discounted prices on first aid, safety, hygiene and canteen essentials for the construction industry.

Brenniston first aid kits are also available in Officeworks and Kmart stores across Australia. Brenniston has recently extended its scope of services, opening a new retail outlet at 194 - 196 Burnley St, Richmond Victoria. The store showcases Brenniston's full product range of first aid and safety equipment, and stocks a huge range of workwear.

Brenniston are ready to meet your supply and servicing requirements with a history of expertise behind them, and a fresh approach to first aid and safety ahead.

Visit Brenniston online at www.brenniston.com.au. Contact Brenniston's central office on 1300 730 079, or call the regional manager in your area directly.