

# A LEAP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

The Thomas Dixon Centre Refurbishment and Performing Arts Expansion will provide new world class facilities, enabling the Queensland Ballet to accommodate more dancers, expand their training programs and enhance community initiatives.

**The refurbishment of the Thomas Dixon Centre will provide world class contemporary performance and rehearsal spaces for the Queensland Ballet.**

Renovations to the existing building included the provision of new offices, boardrooms and back-of-house areas, soft and hard landscaping to the perimeter of the site and the conversion of five historic air raid shelters into the Bunker Bar. New facilities include a wellness centre, expanded dressing and fitting rooms, wardrobe space and a dancers lounge.

The design includes a roofed promenade that links the new four storey structure and the heritage building with the two buildings connected by an elevated walkway at level 1. The new building has a performance venue with seating for 330, a rehearsal studio, performance spaces and a public studio, all over two levels of basement car parking for 66 vehicles.

“Hansen Yuncken worked in close liaison with the heritage architect to ensure that the works were being undertaken in strict accordance with the Department of Environment and Science Queensland

Heritage Act,” explained Hansen Yuncken Project Manager, Justin McGrath.

“The existing windows needed upgrading as well as the installation of the new dance floors, mechanical services, and audio visual equipment to the four performance studios on level 1. The ground floor now houses administration areas and offices, the gym, rehabilitation facilities, a cold spa and the staff kitchen.”

“We installed floors of hollowcore panels and Bondek slabs with structural steel walls and floors to the main performance studio. External cladding is a combination of Colorbond, precast concrete

and glass, the eastern elevation has a coloured sand-blasted concrete finish and the perimeter walls of the performance studio are also precast concrete clad with Hebel wall panels.”

“Asbestos was also discovered in the ceilings and the old concrete floor slabs, as well as lead paint on most of the timber. This required the introduction of detailed work method statements to enable safe removal and remediation while the rest of the build continued. An especially challenging aspect of the project was the interface between the heritage building and the new construction and we had weekly site inspections with consultants to ensure the work was in accordance with the design intent.”

“The building is entirely unique: the overall fit and finish throughout the project is of a very high standard due to the numerous types of finishes and different interfaces. With projects where new work has to marry with existing heritage materials, we focus on detailing how the new materials dovetail with the old.”

The site was very restricted with buildings taking up the full footprint and materials handling required meticulous planning. COVID-19

restrictions had an impact and then floods slowed the final stages of the project, yet with up to 130 workers onsite during peak periods, the project was completed by May 2022.

Hansen Yuncken have recently completed several performing arts projects in other states, Her Majesty’s Theatre Redevelopment in South Australia, completed in 2020 was another major project requiring renovation of heritage listed structures. New builds include the stunning Sydney Coliseum Theatre in Rooty Hill, completed in 2019 and The Hedberg, in Tasmania, delivered in 2018.

“At Hansen Yuncken we are proud of taking on projects that other contractors steer away from. That’s what sets us apart, Hansen Yuncken has a successful history of innovation, performance, and collaboration, with a review process to help clients find alternatives, adding value and reducing costs. Projects such as the Thomas Dixon Centre may bring challenges, however, the Hansen Yuncken team excel in the delivery of more complex, bespoke and technical jobs. We see them as an opportunity to step outside the box with creative and innovative thinking,” added Justin.

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CLIENT : Department of Energy and Public Works  
MAIN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY : Hansen Yuncken  
ARCHITECT : Conrad Gargett  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER : Bligh Tanner  
CONSTRUCTION VALUE : \$55 million



**Fitout Glass and Aluminium is the leading provider of high quality internal and external glazing packages including the installation of spectacular high performance façades for the commercial construction industry.**

In January 2020 Fitout Glass and Aluminium commenced the \$1.5 million contract for a full glazing package comprising internal and external works at the Thomas Dixon Centre.

In the existing heritage listed structure, timber frames were rectified and new glass fit. New work included a complete internal fitout with partitions, timber linings and skylights as well as the construction of the walkway roof and glazing to the new four-storey structure.

“We had a lot of design input on this job, we detailed some of the drawings and consulted often with the designers and the builders,” said Owner, Micah Woods.

“We installed a structural glazed window wall façade on the new building and used a new product for the glass units – a custom made brass mesh interlayered between the panes. The material helps with thermal and acoustic insulation and gives a rustic appearance,

matching the old structure with the new. It was challenging fixing the large mirrors in the rehearsal space, the substrate had to be perfectly flat so the mirrors could give a true reflection, a critical requirement for the dancers, and we spent a lot of time getting it right.”

“The new building and walkway component required a focus on fitting new members to the existing work, and with a team of 20 on the job, the façade and the internal works were completed by the end of April 2021,” said Project Manager, Simon Inns.

Established in 2015 Fitout Glass and Aluminium began fabricating and installing glass and aluminium partitions, doors and windows, frameless glazing systems and balustrades for internal fitouts.

Fitout Glass and Aluminium has grown in its expertise in external façade installation and has a list of successful commercial projects under its belt, including previous work with Hansen Yuncken.

The \$140 million, University of Queensland Andrew N. Liveris Building boasts a unique and spectacular multi-coloured façade, highly articulated with balcony pods and a dual skin façade to the lower levels, a complex project completed in early 2020.

Also for Hansen Yuncken, at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Fitout Glass and Aluminium completed a total internal fitout package of glazing and aluminium framing for the four Levels of the Foundation Building in 2020.

Fitout Glass and Aluminium offer an extensive design, manufacture and install service. With years of experience and established industry relationships, they are able to source unique products, develop the design, and assist in creating solutions to challenging issues.

They operate a 2,000m<sup>2</sup> manufacturing facility in Eagle Farm, currently employing 10 people working on over 100 projects. The large scale and organisation of the factory allows the quick turnaround of high quality product.

Brisbane based, Fitout Glass and Aluminium serve south east Queensland and into northern New South Wales. They work across a range of commercial sectors including offices, retail and health facilities, cinemas, shopping centres and schools.

Successful projects for Fitout Glass and Aluminium include Aurizon, the 5 Star Green Star rated office block in Brisbane where they

provided a \$2 million integrated internal fitout package comprising 14,500m<sup>2</sup> of glazing to 12 Levels.

The job included aluminium framed partition glazing, doors and frames, frameless automatic sliding doors, frameless glass pivot doors and custom fabricated aluminium portals and planters.

The stylish bespoke façade at The Complex is another fine example of Fitout Glass and Aluminium’s work. Completed in 2021, the \$4 million façade redevelopment included the installation of a frameless assembly and a massive glass atrium roof with individual glass panels weighing up to 250kg.

*For more information contact Fitout Glass and Aluminium, 185 Lavarack Avenue, Eagle Farm QLD 4009, phone 07 3393 9033, email [info@fitoutglass.com.au](mailto:info@fitoutglass.com.au), website [www.fitoutglass.com.au](http://www.fitoutglass.com.au)*

**Below** HME Services delivered innovative stage engineering designs for the Thomas Dixon Centre.

**Builders Hansen Yuncken called on HME Services, Australia's premier entertainment industry engineers for over 29 years, to deliver innovative stage engineering designs for the Thomas Dixon Centre's new Performance Studio and Rehearsal Studios.**

HME Services has recently completed Sydney Theatre Company's Wharf Theatres, new venues for the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Australian Theatre for Young People, Brisbane's Princess Theatre and Christchurch Convention Centre. HME Services is currently engaged in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall refurbishment.

You cannot have a functioning theatre without appropriate design and safety measures and that's where HME Services stepped up.

"Our scope of work for the Thomas Dixon Centre entails the design, manufacture, supply and installation of theatre equipment including theatre rigging, curtains, tracks, motors, lighting bars and ladders, cyclorama, DMX/data infrastructure, power and control outlets plus a Tension Wire Grid. All of this is completed in accordance with the project documentation and Australian Standards, Codes and Legislation" said Kiran Musharraf, HME Service's Project Manager.

"It is our job to ensure that the theatre equipment works well and contributes to the functionality of the space," commented Kiran. "It also needs to be user friendly and most importantly, safe."

One of the most interesting aspects of the Thomas Dixon Performance Studio is the Tension Wire Grid that we installed beneath all of the hung theatrical equipment. This creates a permanent overstage floor strong enough to carry the weight of theatre technicians so they can have permanent access to moveable equipment such as lights, speakers and stage rigging.

"The Tension Wire Grid has to be strong enough to take two people standing within a 1m<sup>2</sup> space with each carrying a 25kg load," said Jonathan Yeoman, HME Service's Head of Sales. "By negating the need for moveable scaffolding or ladders – and also catwalks – the Tension Wire Grid makes any performance space much safer for everybody."

The Tension Wire Grid is strong, safe and virtually invisible whilst not interfering with the light beams – even the house lights are hidden from view!

HME Services set out to provide an extremely configurable space and so above the Tension Wire Grid is a custom-designed system that allows the lighting bars to be easily moved forwards and backwards giving complete flexibility to where the lights can be positioned. This is achieved by placing the 10 lighting bars, two FOH and eight over the stage, on roller trollies. Cable management to the trolley beams in the grid ensures no entanglement.

Dance companies rely a lot on side lighting using lighting ladders and so we installed six lighting ladders that are also on roller trollies, again delivering the ultimate flexibility. Clearly, on a roll, we designed the masking legs to roll on track too!

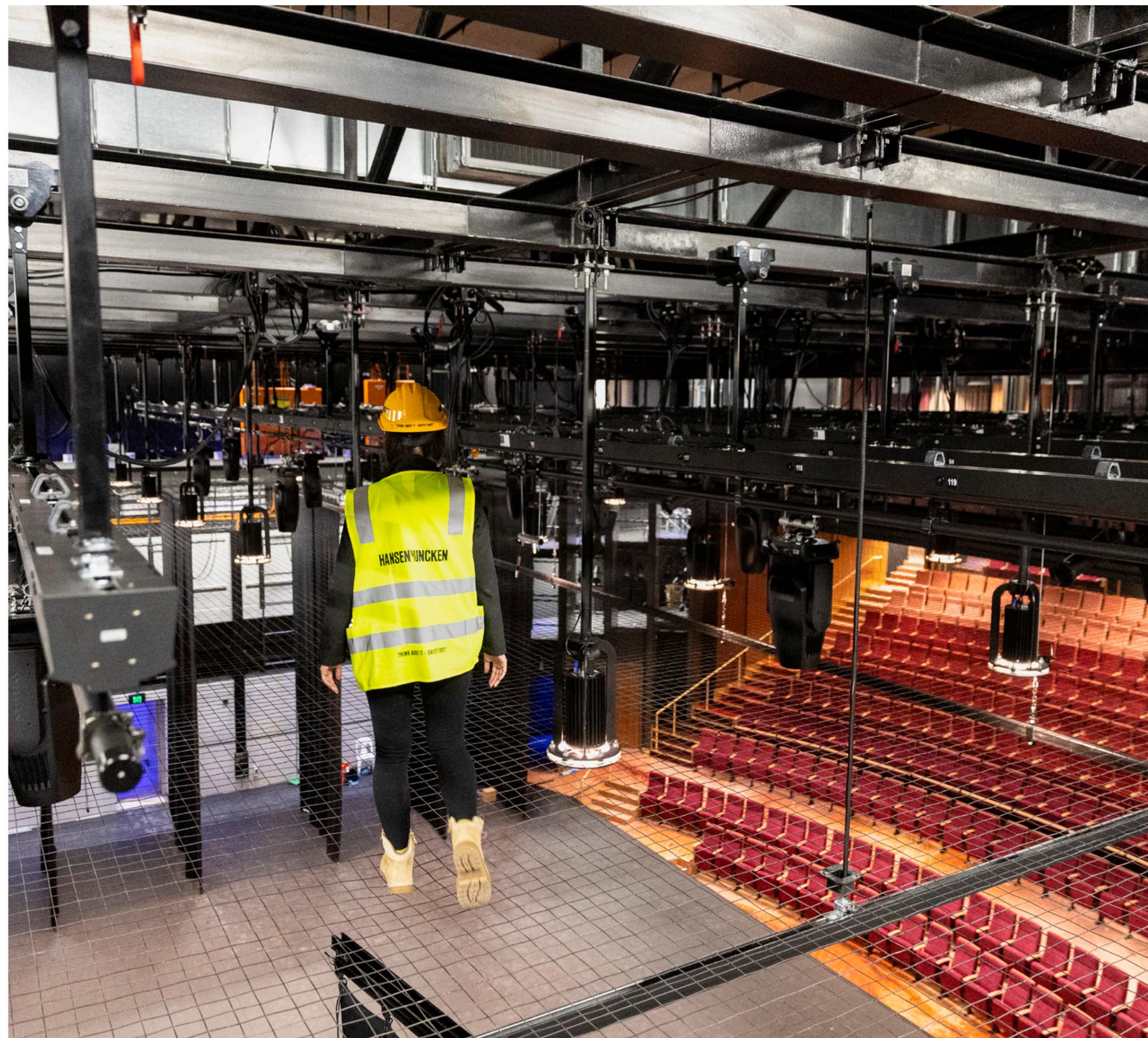
HME Services designed, manufactured and installed four 500kg capacity drum hoists to enable scenery to fly in and out at a variable speed. Each drum hoist has its own controller for simple operation by the crew.

The Performance Space features a motorised house curtain that can be operated either from the side of the stage or from the control booth. There are also rear stage traverse curtains, rear stage crossover curtains and masking legs, along with a large white cyclorama.

HME Services ensured lighting and power distribution throughout the Performance Space and Rehearsal Rooms including a Stage Lighting Dimmer System, DMX/Data Racks and DMX Splitters, Socapex and DMX/Data Outlet Boxes. Curtains and masking drapes were also supplied throughout.

HME Services are proud to assist the Queensland Ballet to reach its goal of becoming a leader on the world stage by redeveloping the Thomas Dixon Centre to be a state-of-the-art ballet centre.

*For more information contact HME Services, phone 1300 873 463, website [www.hmeservices.com.au](http://www.hmeservices.com.au)*



**Below** Arden Architectural Staircases designed, manufactured and installed the staircases, balustrade systems and structural steel portals.

**Below** Schiavello manufactured, supplied and installed workstations and boardroom tables throughout the development.



**Arden Architectural Staircases designed, manufactured and installed eight magnificent staircases, eight balustrade systems, seven structural steel portals and up to 2km of stainless steel and brass handrails at the Thomas Dixon Centre.**

In early 2020, four designers from the Arden team worked collaboratively to complete design development and produce the workshop drawings as CEO, Jim Browne explained:

“We integrate the architectural intent with the engineering whilst combining our own vast experience to present the best possible design outcomes. What we provide is all about buildability while satisfying the consultants’ wishes and ensuring code compliance. We strive towards not making any changes to the aesthetic, although, where required, it is done sympathetically and in close consultation with the architect and other stakeholders.”

“The architects, Conrad Gargett, had conceptualised traditional style stairs in the old building and dramatic minimalist stairs for the new. Brass handrails with LED puck lights featured throughout. The feature staircase, running from the basement to top level, comprises about 10 tons of steel plate with overlay timbers of Silvertop Stringybark.

The feature balustrade bounding the ‘Catwalk’, has micaceous iron oxide painted steel frames, woven brass mesh infills and brass handrails,” said Director of Sales and Design, Scott Nicholas.

Fabrication of all components took six months in Arden’s 2,500m<sup>2</sup> facility ready for onsite work to commence in March 2021 and, with a team of 12 installers, the job was completed within 13 months.

“We have offices in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, and we have worked into Adelaide, Darwin, Perth, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands. We recently completed the 80 Ann project in the Brisbane CBD including 20 structural steel helical stairs while simultaneously undertaking the Rio Tinto Project at Midtown Centre installing six staircases and multiple levels of balustrades and planter boxes featuring Corten Steel which exhibits a rusty look.”

“We pride ourselves on quality of finish, professionalism, and a dedication to preserving design intent. This we do whilst delivering on time and on budget,” added Scott.

*For more information contact Arden Architectural Staircases, phone 07 3267 6100, email [admin@arden.net.au](mailto:admin@arden.net.au), website [www.arden.net.au](http://www.arden.net.au)*

**In May 2021 Schiavello started the D&C contract to manufacture, supply and install functional and well crafted workstations and boardroom tables, as well as sourcing and connecting high quality whitegoods to the Thomas Dixon Centre.**

The 110 workstations were located throughout the ground and first floor levels, with a range of whitegoods being installed, including fridges and microwaves in the kitchens and washing machines in the wardrobe and dressing areas.

Manufacture of the office furniture with metal bases and laminated desktops started in 2021 and took a full six weeks at Schiavello’s 90,000m<sup>2</sup> facility. Onsite work began in December 2021 and with a team of eight installers the job was completed within four months.

“We have a good working relationship with Hansen Yuncken,” said Operations Manager, Fabio Colonico.

“We started work with them on the Liveris building in August 2021, where we manufactured and installed contemporary workstations and loose furniture items, finishing the job within seven months.”

Established in 1966 Schiavello is a 100% Australian own manufacturing company. The Schiavello story begins with Tony Schiavello, an Italian furniture maker who came to Australia in the 1950s, bringing with him a can-do attitude that drove him to set up shop providing partitions and internal carpentry services.

With younger brother Joe, Tony established Schiavello with the mantra ‘anything is possible’. The company has grown into a global organisation that employs over 1,100 people, with two manufacturing plants and 10 showrooms, operating from award-winning headquarters in Melbourne.

“We are a company that remains true to the strong work ethic and family values on which we were built. Quality and service excellence is ingrained in our people, and a vision to lead and innovate is at our core,” said Fabio. “From humble beginnings, Schiavello has grown to become one of Australia’s top 100 privately owned companies, proving time and time again that ‘anything is possible’ some 52 years later.”

*For more information contact Schiavello, 265 Coronation Drive, Milton QLD 4064, phone 07 3368 3388, website [www.schiavello.com](http://www.schiavello.com)*

Below Safeguard Scaffold delivered scaffolding to the perimeter of the old building and for the inside and outside of new buildings.

Below Mozbiz required a strategic plan to remove 350mm and 460mm thick brick walls from WWII bunkers.



Safeguard Scaffold is a professionally run scaffold company serving Brisbane, Toowoomba, Gold and Sunshine coasts and far north New South Wales. In June 2020, Safeguard Scaffold started delivery of scaffold to the Thomas Dixon Centre. “We wrapped scaffolding around the perimeter of the old building to enable restoration of the heritage façade and provided scaffold for constructing the new buildings inside and out,” said Owner, Adam Young. “We had 400 tons onsite at the peak of construction.”

There were many design changes throughout the build due to the complexity of the architecture, Safeguard Scaffold were able to maintain supply, quality and safety standards throughout the project, solidifying their reputation for reliability. With 40 men onsite at peak periods the scaffolding was managed extremely well onsite by team leader, James O’Neill, supported by the inhouse design and engineering team.

“We worked well with Hansen Yuncken and have become one of their trusted contractors, based on this work at Thomas Dixon Centre, and our previous project at RACF Caboolture. We have just started the early works on the \$30 million Plant Growth Facility at the University of Queensland and look forward to the continued association with one of the country’s most reputable building brands,” continued Adam.

Established 2004, Safeguard Scaffold is a family owned and operated company with Adam and designer/estimator Nick Brooker working as the engine room of the business, supported well by a raft of long serving staff.

“We are big enough to serve large scale projects, yet we provide quite a personalised style of service. We pride ourselves on managing all aspects of our operation inhouse, using our own scaffolding equipment, trucks/transport, and preferred scaffold subcontractors,” Adam concluded.

“In addition to scaffold equipment, we have recently secured exclusive rights to import and distribute Green Formwork in QLD/NT. It will become known as the safest and most labour efficient formwork system in the market,” said Adam.

A new patented product, not seen before in Australia, Green Formwork allows Safeguard the opportunity to take advantage of its current market position, and continue its rise up the ranks of one of the most trusted names in the industry for the discerning builder.

For more information contact Safeguard Scaffold, 19 Cairns Street, Loganholme QLD 4129, phone 1300 971 603, email [estimating@safeguardscaffold.com.au](mailto:estimating@safeguardscaffold.com.au), website [www.safeguardscaffold.com.au](http://www.safeguardscaffold.com.au)

Mozbiz (Potrzeba heritage) are the leading brick and masonry restoration specialists, a family company of five generations with years of experience working with the fabric of older structures. In August 2020, Mozbiz were contracted to renovate the existing Thomas Dixon Centre with both external and internal works.

“The job involved the careful disassembly and cleaning of the bricks and rebuilding. The early works involved taking apart the WWII bunkers. The brick walls were 350mm and 460mm thick and required a strategy for removal. There was also some graffiti to be saved and that required some planning however the main challenge was the boiler room where we had to remove 20,000 bricks,” explained Owner, Maurice Potrzeba.

“There was also a number of walls that required special treatment and we lined them with paper to draw the salts out of the bricks, washed and vacuumed the surfaces and repointed. Restoring the heritage listed masonry fence was the last part of the project and with a team of nine onsite we finished up at the Dixon Centre in April 2022.”

“We always use traditional methods with lime putty mortar and we use hand tools to avoid damage to any existing work. I have enormous respect for the people who built the old structures. In 2010, we were

awarded a Churchill Fellowship and I went to the UK to study with a master mason.”

Mozbiz are expert bricklayers for new work and for restoration projects. They offer a consultancy service or will inspect, provide a quote and a report on the condition of the building fabric. A string of National Trust Heritage Awards is testament to the quality and authenticity of their restoration work.

They have recently moved a small brick building at Ravenswood a distance of 5km and undertook the separation of three historic chimneys of 18m, separating them every 3m and moving them to storage for later re-building.

“My son, Alek works with me and he has learnt the trade working for me over the past 18 years. When he left school he spent two years on Brisbane’s Saint John’s Cathedral and its unique vaulted masonry ceiling. He is an expert problem-solver and my right-hand-man,” added Maurice.

For more information contact Mozbiz, 68 Lillian Avenue, Salisbury QLD 4107, phone 0418 882 126, email [mauric@mozbiz.com.au](mailto:mauric@mozbiz.com.au), website [www.mozbiz.com.au](http://www.mozbiz.com.au), [PotrzebaHeritageMasonry](https://www.instagram.com/PotrzebaHeritageMasonry)