

Australian Museum recognised at UNESCO Cultural Heritage Awards

Westpac Long Gallery wins third award for architectural heritage



Sydney, 30 October, 2019. The Australian Museum (AM) has received an Honourable Mention for its restoration of Australia's first gallery, the Westpac Long Gallery, at the recent UNESCO Asia - Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage held on 14 October in Penang.

Recognising the efforts of organisations who have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage in the region, the UNESCO international architectural acknowledgement follows two other significant awards - 2018 Australian Institute of Architects (NSW) Award for Heritage Conservation and the 2018 National Trust of Australia (NSW) Heritage Award for Conservation - Built Heritage.

Director & CEO of the Australian Museum, Kim McKay AO, said the international recognition of the restoration of the Westpac Long Gallery is a reflection of the technical quality by the architects and designers to ensure authenticity and integrity of the historic fabric of the AM.

"The Westpac Long Gallery lies at the heart of the Australian Museum. The first museum gallery to be built in the young colony in 1850, by State Government architect Mortimer Lewis, it is an integral part of Sydney's history and the cultural landscape of the city," McKay said.

"Now, thanks to heritage architects, Design5, and AM exhibition designer, Aaron Maestri, we have a beautifully restored permanent museum gallery, dedicated to telling the story of our region, providing residents and tourists with a world class experiences for understanding our nation," she added.

Architect, Design 5's Alan Croker said the conservation work and carefully considered new insertions at the Westpac Long Gallery allows it to be experienced as the original architects wanted – a grand architectural display cabinet.

"The team at Design 5 are very proud to have worked and collaborated on a design which involved both restoration of key historical elements as well as insertions that support and strengthen the renewed identity and program of the Australian Museum," Croker said.

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“Using design elements from its original iteration – from 1850 to 1890, the restored Westpac Long Gallery is a wonderful example of strategic, design-led planning that showcases and complements the original architectural intent and detail,” he added.

AM Designer Aaron Maestri said the aim of the restoration was to re-establish the visual links across the three floors of the gallery by using the architectural rhythm of the gallery to inform the exhibition design.

“Taking cues from the gallery’s historic, architectural details and maintaining rigorous conservation principles, we have created a gallery that shows our collection in a seamless and harmonious environment,” Maestri said.

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About the Australian Museum

The Australian Museum (AM) was founded in 1827 and is the nation’s first museum. It is internationally recognised as a natural science and culture institution focused on Australia and the Pacific. As custodian of more than 21.9 million objects and specimens, the AM is uniquely positioned to provide a greater understanding of the region through its scientific research, exhibitions and public and education programs. Through the Australian Museum Research Institute (AMRI), the AM also has a leading role in conserving Australia’s biodiversity through understanding the environmental impacts of climate change, potential biosecurity threats and invasive species. To find out more, visit: <https://australianmuseum.net.au/>

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