



## Landmark building changes Geelong landscape

The new Geelong Library and Heritage Centre is being hailed a landmark building for Victoria's second largest city. The nine-storey state-of-the-art facility is a spectacular addition to Geelong's cultural and architectural landscape. Its unique dome design and precast Glass Reinforced Concrete (GRC) cladding is central to the architecture of this ambitious \$45.5 million project.

### PRECAST GLASS REINFORCED CONCRETE

Adelaide-based National Precast member Asurco Contracting manufactured the GRC for this exciting development. 332 panels were produced in the company's Royal Park factory and carefully transported to Geelong. The GRC is easy and fast to handle, according to Asurco's Des Pawelski. "While the GRC is light-weight, it retains the enduring qualities of concrete. It's so flexible in its design and finish, which means it's suited to varying architectural styles," Mr Pawelski said.

The Geelong Library and Heritage Centre is an impressive demonstration of the flexibility of GRC. In this case, the GRC was manufactured complete with a secondary steel sub frame and then bolted to the primary structure to create the domed façade. "Our factory produced panels in various sizes up to 3.5m," said Mr Pawelski. "The dome panels are asymmetrical and geometrically pentagonal or hexagonal. Our team managed well with the designs as well as the production schedule".

#### Precaster

Asurco Contracting

#### Builder

Kane Constructions

#### Client

Geelong City Council

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## NEW AND OLD BLEND

The panels were designed to serve two purposes. They reinforce the appearance of the curve of the domes and they allow the building to complement the surrounding masonry buildings. The panels were finished in a palette of four muted browns, with the pattern aiming to accentuate the crest of the dome. The colours link the new building with the surrounding historic architecture, while also staying true to the structure's own distinctive aesthetics.

The GRC not only looks visually stunning, it's also designed to be long lasting and environmentally friendly. GRC is durable and strong and will last as long as conventionally reinforced precast concrete. The lightweight material also saves transport costs and by using less material, reduces environmental impact. This was an important factor for the new Library and Heritage Centre, which is a 5 Star Green Star-rated building.

## CHANGING THE STREETScape OF GEELONG

The new building was opened in late 2015 as a community hub for the city. Mr Pawelski says it was satisfying to be involved in such a landmark structure. "It's rewarding for our company to showcase our GRC production capabilities as part of a contemporary and relevant development, which is so important to the people of Geelong," he said.

The new spherical structure has been likened to something from "Star Wars", a soccer or golf ball and even a "big brain". But no matter how it's labelled, there's community agreement the Library and Heritage Centre is a building that will forever change the skyline and cultural landscape of Geelong.

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