



PROJECT: CENTRAL STATION METRO
LOCATION: SYDNEY, NSW
MASTER PRECASTER: WAEGER CONSTRUCTIONS
STAINING: ECOTONE

AESTHETIC BRILLIANCE THAT TELLS A STORY

In the constantly evolving fabric of urban landscapes, the significance of visually appealing infrastructure goes beyond mere visual attractiveness. Beyond the superficial charm of well-designed structures lies a profound connection between meaning, beauty and sustainability, weaving a narrative of communal pride and environmental stewardship.

Communities that take pride in their surroundings are more likely to engage in sustainable practices. Aesthetically pleasing infrastructure that embodies meaning, becomes a symbol of a community's commitment to preserving its heritage and nurturing its future.

Two ventilation and service buildings located at each end of the new platform 14 of Sydney's Central Station feature a stunning artwork that establishes a visual link between the historical and contemporary elements.

Designed by renowned Bundjalung artist Dr Bronwyn Bancroft, the artwork has been created by incorporating stained bricks into 216 precast panels. A modern interpretation of "Connection to Country", titled 'Time Travellers', the artwork features imagery resembling a serpent, symbolising one of the numerous creation stories passed down by First Nation's people for over 60,000 years.

The project is part of the \$955 million transformation of the 117-year-old station, executed by Laing O'Rourke for Sydney Metro. It stands as one of the most extensive upgrades undertaken on Australia's busiest railway station in decades.

Waeger Constructions, a National Precast Master Precaster, manufactured the panels,

with the vibrant staining process handled by ECOTONE, a National Precast Industry Supplier member. The outcome has achieved a remarkably resilient and innovative finish... a visual effect that is reminiscent of glazed bricks in various colours.

Sarah Bachmann, CEO of National Precast, highlights that staining provides a contemporary yet durable alternative to painting, showcasing its versatility.

"The project at Central Station's new buildings exemplifies the application of staining, where inlaid bricks were stained. There are many other projects where the precast itself has been stained, which emphasises the broad use of this innovative technique in infrastructure development," says Bachmann.

Ms Bachmann notes that staining, traditionally utilised for colour correction in brickwork and, more recently, in cast insitu concrete, has become a common practice in precast as well. It allows for stunning colour statements ranging from translucent and opaque to metallic finishes. The durability of staining makes it a valuable application, particularly when applied in the factory, maximising the advantages of off-site manufacturing for both infrastructure and building projects.

The use of staining on precast, much like in brickwork, serves the purpose of colour correction by penetrating the surface. When harnessed to its maximum capability, staining has the ability to produce vibrant, natural-looking colours that harmonise seamlessly with the concrete, delivering an authentic appearance surpassing that of paint.

In contrast to paint, stained precast remains resistant to peeling, flaking or chipping over time, ensuring a more enduring finish that retains its vibrancy for an extended period. As well, stains offer artistic flexibility, allowing for customised applications that create diverse effects, from translucent hues revealing the concrete's texture to more opaque tones for a solid colour.

Stained concrete offers increased resistance to fading from UV exposure due to weather conditions, making it a practical choice for both indoor and outdoor applications. Its low maintenance requirements and environmentally friendly formulations contribute to its appeal, making stained precast concrete a versatile and sustainable option for architectural and design projects.

"Staining precast provides a variety of benefits that enhance both aesthetic appeal and durability. In this instance, the final outcome delivers a wonderfully pleasing aesthetic that also tells a story. At the same time, it has incorporated the off-site manufacturing efficiencies and durability that are inherent in precast concrete construction," Bachmann concludes.

