



# AN ICONIC APPROACH TO INNOVATIVE FABRICATION

PROJECT MANAGING SOME OF THE LARGEST DEVELOPMENTS IN SYDNEY, ICON METAL TAKES GREAT PRIDE IN ITS DYNAMIC TEAM AND THEIR CAPABILITIES. THE COMPANY SPECIALISES IN THE FABRICATION AND INSTALLATION OF METALWORK, INCLUDING BALUSTRADES, GLASS AND CLADDING. WITH 35 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN CONSTRUCTION, ICON OPERATES ACCORDING TO THREE CORE COMPANY VALUES AND TAKES AN INNOVATIVE, QUALITY-FOCUSED APPROACH TO ALL OF THE PROJECTS IT DELIVERS.

Icon Metal Fabrications was established in 1996. Founder, Michael Pribula, utilised the experience he had gained in the industry over 20 years to launch the company. Icon started out with five employees, an office and workshop in Granville, western Sydney, specialising in miscellaneous metalwork.

According to Chris Farmer (General Manager, Icon Metal) Icon quickly built a reputation for excellent service and quality, and expanded rapidly. "When Icon was first established, the company focused on smaller jobs. We evolved slowly to begin with. Then, in the late 1990s, when construction was taking place in preparation for the Sydney Olympics, we won a significant contract with Multiplex to undertake works at the stadium. This contract catapulted Icon into the next tier," said Farmer.

"It was around this time that Michael Pribula's brother Stephen got involved in the management of Icon. Together, Michael and Stephen started working on larger projects. Around 2007, Icon secured the Queens Square Law Courts project, which is the first project I worked on with Icon."

"As the company grew, it became apparent that the future growth of the company required further expertise. In 2016, Icon Metal became part of the Teaminvest Private Group of companies, and in 2018, the company was floated on the Australian Stock Exchange. Since 2016, we have tripled in size, revenue and staff," said Chris.

In 2021, Icon moved from its longtime headquarters in Granville to a more spacious premises just around the corner, in Silverwater. In their new

7,000m<sup>2</sup> facility, Icon is able to accommodate their ever-growing team of designers, drafters, project managers and admin staff. Their skilled tradespeople have plenty of room to fabricate even the most complex of designs. Now, with 35 years experience in construction, Icon employs 65 staff, offering a range of services including structural steel, architectural feature stairs, glass, cladding, rigging and project management.

"We service tier one construction companies like Multiplex, Lendlease, Watpac, and Laing O'Rourke. We work across a wide range of products within the steel industry, from architectural metalwork to balustrades, and we also do structural steel and architectural feature stairs, as well as miscellaneous metalwork," said Chris.



## ICONIC VALUES

Despite their rapid growth, Icon maintains a small-company culture. Their people are their most valued asset. Icon invests in skill-building such as training and apprenticeships, and supports the development of all staff, right throughout their careers.

Icon has three core company values: mental health awareness, women in construction and reconciliation.

According to Bethan Farmer (Media Relations, Icon Metal) "Mental health is core to our values. The statistics for poor mental health outcomes for construction workers are extremely sobering and stubbornly high. Icon is a stigma-free company, where it is OK to not be OK, and where we challenge the culture of silence that surrounds mental ill health."

"By partnering with external workplace consultants, Mental Health Movement, we ensure that all our staff have access to training and workshops. We just recently ran training with our supervisors on mental health response. The training covered how to recognise the signs and symptoms of someone suffering poor mental health and how to talk to someone to help them get the help they need."

"We are also focused on improving opportunities for female participation in the construction industry. At the moment our female participation is 17%. We're focusing on building that up through a targeted recruitment strategy, with a focus on female apprentices. If we get

female candidates, we make sure they all get a fair go", explained Bethan.

Icon is a Silver members of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC), and encourages all their female staff to take advantage of the benefits this membership can offer, from seminars and site visits to mentoring.

"We were finalists for two NAWIC awards this year, which was a massive achievement for us. We've basically made ourselves as attractive a prospective employer for women as we can be. We celebrate female gains on social media and our website. When recruiting, we make sure that Icon is appealing to female candidates. We work with our managers on unconscious bias and compensating for ingrained thoughts and views in decision making processes."

"We really are aiming to counter the prevailing masculine culture in construction. It's an issue that we talk about quite a lot at Icon. As an industry, we all need to call out behaviours that are not serving our values and purpose," said Bethan.

The third and final core value by which Icon operates is reconciliation. In May 2021, Icon Metal had its first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

"Reconciliation is really important to us. Having our first Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia was a long-held ambition for

**"Our vision for the future of Icon Metal is one where traditional notions of what is acceptable in the construction industry are replaced by diversity, inclusiveness and equality of opportunity."**

~ Stephen Pribula  
(CEO, Icon Metal)

## IMAGES

**Left:** Icon Metal boilermaker works on a complex geometric spiral stair at AMP Capital's Quay Quarter Tower Precinct.

**Right:** Quality control checks by Icon Metal at AMP Capital's Quay Quarter Tower Precinct.

Icon, and one that we are committed to fulfilling. We're focused on ensuring that all our staff are educated and informed about issues like NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week."

Icon Metal has an ongoing charitable partnership with The Settlement, a charity based in Chippendale, Sydney, that supports predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and young people through the provision of social housing, after-school and school holiday care, and leadership training.

#### **AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH**

Icon Metal has invested in innovation on several fronts, helping to accelerate the company's expansion. From improved processing capabilities, through to the introduction of a new digital quality control system, innovation is a key ingredient to their success.

"It's a very interesting time in the Australian manufacturing industry as a whole. On the back of COVID-19 and the resultant changes to supply chain reliability and transport costs, Icon has changed the way it views and operates its business. As a result, we are looking to advance our processing capabilities quite significantly, with a greater focus on our capacity to manage fabrication in-house," said Chris.

"We are constantly working on continuous improvement within the organisation, including a strong focus on quality control processes and compliance according to AS/NZS 5131 *Structural steelwork fabrication*. We're also accredited to AS/NZS 4801, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001."

"Icon is taking on more and more technically advanced projects, as well as government funded projects, that have higher benchmarks for compliance. So a focus on quality assurance is essential. We're also in the process of introducing a digital control system that has 100% traceability for all the components we manufacture. The system will register all necessary quality documentation that we're required to present to clients at the end of a project. It will greatly improve accuracy and reduce wastage," said Chris.

Icon Metal is also a member of the ASI's Environmental Sustainability Charter (ESC), which demonstrates a commitment to sustainable business practices, taking environmental responsibility and sharing their

knowledge of sustainability with others. In addition to their certifications, Icon upholds socially responsible values, recycling all their scrap metals and buying materials only from suppliers with certified sustainable practices.

"The standards to which we hold ourselves are demonstrated by our high incidence of repeat clientele – we deliver quality results without compromising on safety or consideration for sustainability," said Chris.

Chris believes that innovation is essential to the future of the Australian steel industry. "Australia's competitiveness with overseas markets depends upon innovation. Here in Australia, we pay a lot of money for labour compared to some other countries. The introduction of specialist equipment and investment in innovative systems, processes and training can help reduce these labour costs while improving efficiency, accuracy and quality control. All these efforts make Australian fabricators not only more competitive with international markets, but within local markets as well."

**[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ICON METAL AND THEIR INNOVATIVE OPERATIONS >>>](#)**

## **SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE CONCERT HALL REFURBISHMENT**

#### **The Brief:**

To increase the load-bearing capacity of the stage from 8 tonne to 38 tonne by reinforcing the main stage and choir stall area.

#### **Challenges:**

- Difficult access
- Working in confined spaces
- Working safely at height
- High fire danger

To fulfil the brief required the installation of 180 tonne of steel inside the cavity between the outer shell of the Opera House and the internal wall of the auditorium, and 25m above the auditorium in the Tech Zone from where the stage is suspended.

Without using a crane, up to 2 tonne of steel at a time was brought into the building in stages using pulleys to lift and trolleys to move the steel around inside the cavity. In places the space inside the cavity was less than a metre wide.



## ICON METAL'S PREVIOUS PROJECT EXPERIENCE

### Quay Quarter Tower

*A complex geometric spiral stair with glass balustrade and stainless steel handrails*

Quay Quarter Tower is a 200m high skyscraper located at 50 Bridge Street in Sydney. Originally built as the AMP Centre in 1976, the structure underwent a redevelopment from 2018. The redevelopment is scheduled for completion later this year. Designed for AMP Capital by Danish architects 3XN, the new building comprises a series of shifting glass volumes stacked upon each other to provide a striking façade and an atrium that cuts all the way through the building. The tower features the latest in commercial office technology and is targeting 6-star Green Star and 5.5 Star NABERS ratings. There have been a number of 'construction firsts' with the building, including the tallest cranes in Sydney and the highest erected scaffolding in Australia. Spanning 48 floors, the spiral stairs at Quay Quarter Tower are Icon Metal's largest and most ambitious project to date. Icon Metal was part of the delivery team led by contractor Multiplex. The project encompassed 35 sections of steel spiral stairs, painted pure white. The stairs will become a major public feature in this iconic building.

### Wynyard Station

*Balustrade and glass screen works in Icon Metal's first project with Transport for NSW*

Wynyard railway station is a heritage-listed underground rail station in the north-west precinct of the Sydney central business district. The station opened on 28 February 1932 to coincide with the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. As Sydney's third busiest station, Wynyard recently underwent redevelopment, increasing the station's capacity to 150,000 people per day and improving links to Barangaroo and Sydney's financial district. The project established Wynyard station as a modern Australian rail benchmark for comfort, safety and efficiency. The Wynyard Station upgrade was delivered by Novo Rail, an alliance of Transport for NSW in partnership with Aurecon, Laing O'Rourke and RCR Infrastructure O'Donnell Griffin. Novo Rail commissioned Icon Metal to undertake the balustrade and glass screen works. Icon Metal delivered high quality certified and compliant product solutions that supported the architectural intent. All of this work was completed either after hours or as the station was operating, which demanded a high level of pedestrian control and safety.

