

CASE STUDY

RESTORATION OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE CLOCK TOWER, TASMANIA



A new machine cast lead roof for the octagonal clock tower

Government House in Hobart is the official vice-regal residence of the Governor of Tasmania. With a striking neo-Gothic design and decorative stonework, it's regarded as one of the finest residences in the Commonwealth. Designed by colonial architect William Porden Kay, construction took place in 1857, the roof design incorporating slate tiles as well as cast lead sheet on top of the building's Police and Clock Towers.

With over 160 years in situ, the original lead roof on the towers had understandably started to fail, causing leaks inside the building. The contract to replace the lead roofing was awarded to **Architectural Roofing Services Pty Ltd (ARS)**, with Midland Lead supplying the BBA & EPD certified lead.

Before the works could commence, the Governor's Standard which flies on the Clock Tower was lowered, as was the Tasmanian Flag which flies on the Police Tower. Visitors to Government House may also have noticed that the clock (one of the earliest clock imports into the colony) was also stopped during works, to protect its mechanism from any dust.

In fact, the logistical preparations for this work (led by Alan Wiltshire, Government House Building, Assets & Heritage Manager) were significant! They included installing safe access system and anchor points on the roof and towers, preparing all lead in the Government House stables, and bringing a crane on-site to lift all materials on and off the roof.

Code 8 lead was used for box gutters and code 5 for cover flashings

Before the new lead could be installed in the octagonal clock tower, sheets of 12mm marine ply were screwed over the boards. Building wrap and geofabric was fixed to the ply, and new Oregon timber rolls were installed.

Contractors then fixed the top third of each lead bay in place using copper ring shank nails, to stabilise the bay whilst allowing for expansion and contraction in all weather conditions. Lead capping (Code 6) was installed on top of the timber rolls, with Code 8 lead used for box gutters and Code 5 for cover flashings. In total over 3 tonnes of machine cast lead was used to renovate the magnificent clock tower roof.

All lead removed from the roof was recycled, and the replacement lead roofing should last for another 100 years. Now that the roof works of the Police and Clock Towers are complete, the Governor's Standard and Tasmanian Flag can once again be seen flying from the Government House roof. To ensure the roof continues to remain in the best shape for the future, the 1850s slate will be replaced with new slate in the next phase of works.

Midland Lead is delighted that our lead is being used to preserve an important piece of Tasmania's heritage for the future!