

Heritage award to raise fire station profile

Perth's old No.1 Fire Station was recognised for more than its historic architectural appeal when it recently stood proud among winners of the 2011 Western Australian Heritage Awards.

Home to the FESA Education and Heritage Centre (FEHC), the 110 year old Murray Street landmark was entered in the 'Outstanding Interpretation Project' category, winning a high commendation.

The judges said the building captured the imagination of visitors, allowing them to access and explore the rich history of the state's fire services.

In addition, FESA offered fantastic interactive programs and displays that engaged with younger audiences.

Director Community Engagement Suellen Shea said one of the key aspects of the award was the comprehensive interpretation of the building and its operational history.

"Visitors to the centre can gain a unique insight into Western Australia's fire services through our extensive object, archive and vintage fleet collection," Suellen said.

"An interpretation trail covers the entire building, describing the use of each room during its 79 years as a fire station and fire service headquarters.

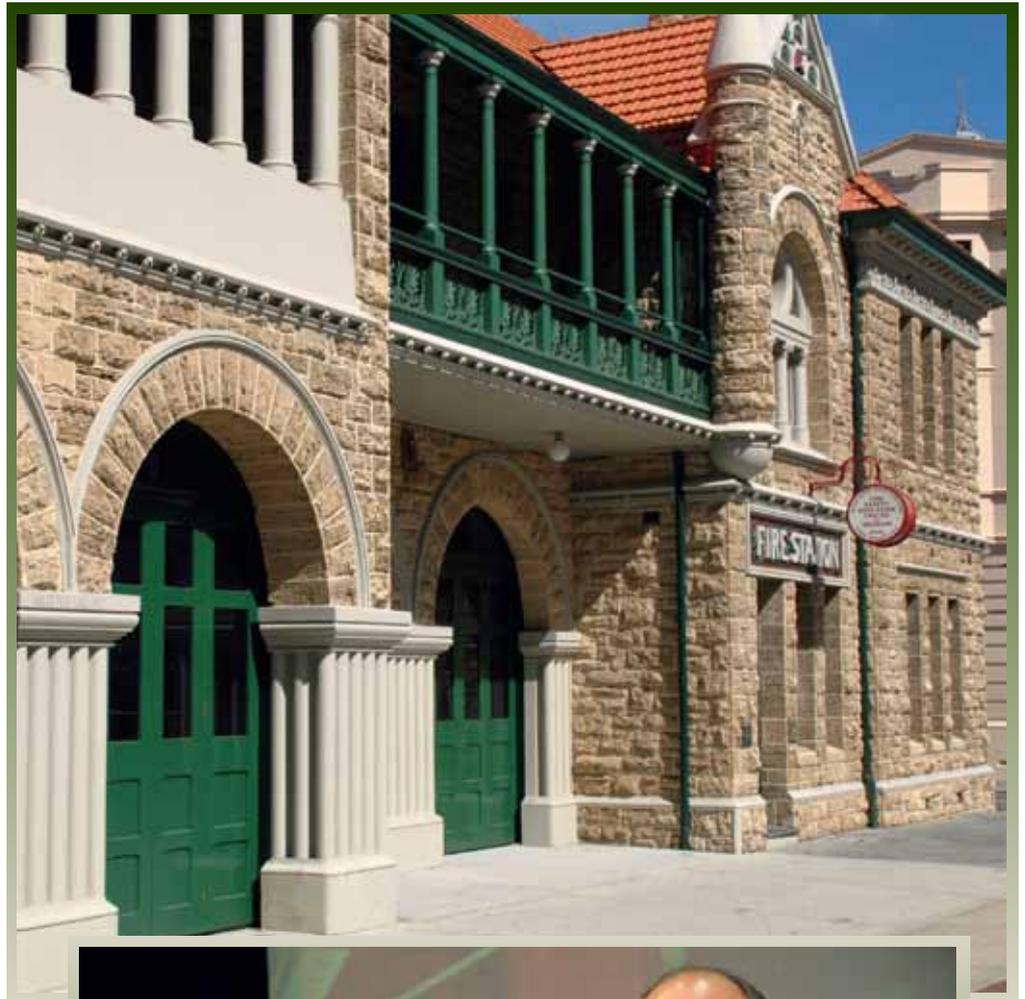
"The appliance room and dedicated fire services heritage gallery present a nostalgic look at the Fire and Rescue Service, while the upper gallery is all about modern museum learning.

"Children can explore the history of the building and the fire services through dress ups and examining the equipment and vintage fire trucks we have on display."

Suellen said the award was gratifying for all involved and underlined the centre's success.

"Our objective in redeveloping the old Perth Fire Station was to create an interface between FESA and the community," she said.

"In particular we wanted to establish a strong link with schools through a state of the art education venue that offered a broad FESA community safety experience.



FEHC Manager Su Ferreira accepts the award from Heritage Minister John Castrilli.

"We are now seeing these aims come to fruition and are pleased to report that since opening in September 2009 the Centre has welcomed more than 20,000 visitors through its doors.

"This high profile award is a great tribute to the staff and volunteers who have worked on the FEHC project so enthusiastically over the years.

"Their drive and effort have helped to keep the fascinating history of the WA Fire and Rescue Service alive. In addition they have assisted with the creation of Australia's first contemporary natural hazards education gallery featuring interactive exhibits."

The FEHC is open from 10am-4pm every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.