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**RELEASE**

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**LEETON**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

### **Behind the Scenes at the Roxy #5 Roxy Heritage Project Attention to Detail**

The redevelopment of the Roxy Theatre means specialised heritage professionals with decades of experience – (some of it gained via once-in-a-lifetime adventures) – have been converging on Leeton.

Recently, it was the turn of conservator and Antarctic expeditioner, Karina Acton.

Karina has been a member of the conservation profession for over 20 years. She has worked across the cultural heritage sector nationally and internationally with experience in museums and galleries, heritage, archaeological projects, contemporary art, preventive conservation and collections management.

Earlier this year, Ms Acton was part of an eight-week Antarctic expedition to work on the restoration of the heritage listed huts used by Australia's intrepid explorer and scientist, Sir Douglas Mawson, between 1911 and 1914.

Her job in Leeton has been to meticulously scrape back small sections of paintwork to identify the colour scheme of the Roxy when it opened in 1930.

'Think of it as paint archaeology,' said Ms Acton.

'Stripping back the layers to see what's there.

'I look around the Roxy project construction site and can envisage how beautiful the Roxy will be upon completion of the redevelopment,' she said.

Ms Acton's investigations have found that the Roxy Theatre has been repainted at least four times in the last ninety or so years.

'Once we receive final analysis from the laboratory, we will be able to ascertain the exact colour it was painted,' said Ms Acton.

Ms Acton described her job as 'fascinating', whether it be investigating colour schemes at the Roxy or helping conserve Mawson's heritage listed wooden huts on the blizzard prone, Cape Denison.

The wooden huts were home to more than 30 men who lived in them for a year after they missed their voyage home on the supply ship *Aurora*.

Ms Acton said working on the huts was an incredible experience in inhospitable conditions.

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'We lived in tents and a hut. My job was to monitor the state of the huts and ensure original objects like food and medicine containers remained in good condition,' she said.

Wagga architect and Leeton Shire Council's heritage advisor, Noel Thomson, has also been working on the Roxy Redevelopment Project.

Mr Thomson has been involved with restoration work on what he describes as three of Riverina's heritage listed 'jewels' – Tumut's Montreal Theatre, Junee's Athenium Theatre and the Roxy.

Mr Thomson said that any modifications to Roxy heritage listed structures were closely being monitored with detailed inspections taking place.

Every month, he must report to NSW Heritage about what is happening on the Roxy site and sometimes, further directions are issued.

A photo archive of the project works is also being created.

"Very careful restoration work on the Roxy is progressing and the result is set to be a civic centrepiece which all of Leeton will be proud," he said.

The Roxy Redevelopment Project is being proudly funded by the Australian Government under the Murray–Darling Basin Economic Development Program, the NSW Government under the Creative Capital Program, as well as Leeton Shire Council.

Attached: Photos

Ends

Proudly funded by the Australian  
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