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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brisbane's Convict Past a Star Exhibit

Museum and Gallery Services Queensland (M&GSQ) congratulates **Commissariat Store Museum**, one of nine museums and galleries from Brisbane metropolitan and surrounding regions who have completed a challenging year-long program assessing their practice against *The National Standards for Australian Museums and Galleries*.

Reviewers, Leanne Kelly and Richelle Leane, who played a vital role in providing free professional advice and assistance throughout the program, congratulated the **Commissariat Store Museum** for their considerable overall achievements:

'Over the years the Commissariat Store Museum has made very effective use of a limited budget and an enthusiastic volunteer work force to present exhibitions and programs about Brisbane's early history, manage its significant collection and involve the considerable expertise of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland (RHSQ) members in its activities.'

The Commissariat Store Museum is housed in the only occupied convict-built structure in Brisbane and holds a significant collection spanning Moreton Bay's penal colony, early free settlement in Queensland and social history in Brisbane and Queensland up to the 20th Century. The Museum provides a hands-on heritage experience with convict leg irons, keys, cooking utensils and convict made bricks. The Commissariat Store, itself the star exhibit, was constructed in 1829 through convict labour under the direction of Captain Patrick Logan.

The museum also displays a significant collection of artefacts from St Helena Island, which functioned as a high-security colonial prison from 1867. In addition to makeshift weapons, keys, handcuffs, playing cards, dice, dominoes on display, a small glass jar which contains the remains of human fingertips illustrates the desperate attempts by prisoners to avoid heavy labour by deliberately injuring themselves.

With the assistance of the Standards Program the Museum is on track to develop a Strategic Plan to guide its future activities in marketing, exhibition, education and event programming, audience development, collection research, documentation, cataloguing and de-accessioning.

Katy Law, Commissariat Store Museum Manager, said,

'Participating in the Standards Program was a productive exercise for our museum volunteers to recognise our significant achievements with the museum so far, despite limited resources. This can give all involved a confidence boost and the assurance that we are heading in the right direction.'

Rebekah Butler, Executive Director M&GSQ, commended the Commissariat Store Museum and gratefully acknowledged the pro bono work the Standards Reviewers, Leanne Kelly and Richelle Leane, undertook with the Museum and the support of the reviewers' workplaces, the Queensland Museum and the Museum of Brisbane, for their vital contribution to M&GSQ's Standards Program.

In 2011 the M&GSQ Standards Program will run in the Tablelands and Cook Shires of Far North Queensland.

Full program information is available at

http://www.magsq.com.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=709

The Museum profile and print quality images from the Museum are attached.

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IMAGE CAPTIONS:

Image 1 – Commissariat Store Museum receives its Certificate of Recognition L to R: Deborah Miles, Director, Creative Communities, Arts Queensland, Katy Law, Manager, Commissariat Store Musuem.

Acknowledgement – Graeme Mackay

Image 2 - The Commissariat Store Museum from William Street, Brisbane

Acknowledgement - Sue Finnigan

Image 3 – The Commissariat Store Museum from Queen’s Wharf Road

Acknowledgement - RHSQ

END RELEASE