

8. METALS

- 8.01 Iron
- 8.02 Galvanized Iron
- 8.03 Morewood & Rogers
- 8.04 Corrugated Iron
- 8.05 Structural Corrugation
- 8.06 Nails & Ironmongery
- 8.07 Ornamental Cast Iron
- 8.08 Pressed Metal
- 8.09 Steel & Welding
- 8.10 Metal Windows & Curtain Walls
- 8.11 Non-ferrous metals

Metals used for building in Australia were almost entirely imported from Britain or elsewhere until the early twentieth century. It was natural enough that the more specialised components were fabricated at the point of origin rather than made in Australia, especially in the case of the non-ferrous metals, which were scarce and expensive. One would scarcely expect to find much of cultural significance in the use of a material which is itself imported, most often in a fully processed form, and which tends to be handled at a sophisticated technological level. In fact, however, even the fully processed sheets of corrugated galvanized iron imported from Britain were transformed into an Australian vernacular by their use in verandah roofs and water tanks, and their simple ubiquity. The kerosene tin shanty was made of reprocessed material and was archetypically vernacular.

In the hotter areas generally, and in North Queensland in particular, elements such as window hoods and roof ventilators are often ornamented with cut fringes, varying from zigzags to more complex patterns.¹ The use of decorative pressed metal for ceilings, lining and cladding was not so distinctive except, again, by its ubiquity, and in terms of the occasional design with Australiana content, such as waratah flowers. The local casting of ornamental ironwork created a distinctive range of design and pattern of use in verandahs and balconies, which have sometimes been compared with (rather than likened to) those of New Orleans. It is true, however, that these aspects are aesthetic. There is little of distinction in terms of the culture of technology, except perhaps the invention of the Angus McLean column.

¹ See Peter Bell, *Timber and Iron* (St Lucia [Queensland] 1984), pp 173-9.