

The Craft of Leadlighting

Leadlights are decorative windows made of small pieces of glass supported in lead comes (frames). Glass may be clear or coloured and it may be plain, textured, bevelled or etched.

The craft of leadlighting has been around for centuries and their designs are a reflection of the art of the day. Leadlights began to appear in Australian houses in the 1890s and continued to feature in homes until 1939 when wartime austerity led to less ornate domestic architecture. A high level of technical skill, equipment and time is involved in their construction.



How are leadlights made?

Design

Firstly the design is drawn on paper and then marked on to the glass. Pieces of glass and the lead comes (strips which hold the glass in place) are then cut in the correct dimensions.

Assembly

To assemble the window the leadlighter lays the cut pieces of glass on a flat board and starts threading the glass into the lead comes in one corner. He or she then builds away from the corner across the board until all pieces of glass and the lead comes are in place.

The joints of the lead strips are then soldered with lead/tin solder to hold the structure together. The glass panes are then cemented into the lead comes with waterproof putty.

The leadlight is then ready to put into the wooden window frame.