



FREEMASONS  
Queensland

FOR FURTHER  
INFORMATION  
PLEASE CONTACT:

Grand Secretary  
UNITED GRAND LODGE  
OF QUEENSLAND

MASONIC  
MEMORIAL CENTRE

311 Ann Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000  
GPO Box 2204  
Brisbane QLD 4001

Ph: 07 3229 3533

Fax: 07 3229 9288

Email: [grandsec@freemasonsqld.org.au](mailto:grandsec@freemasonsqld.org.au)

[www.freemasonsqld.org.au](http://www.freemasonsqld.org.au)



WHY FREEMASONRY?



FREEMASONS  
Queensland



## WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

Freemasonry is unique. It cannot be likened to any other organisation in that it offers experiences not found anywhere else. It is non-profit in structure.

Freemasons are ordinary men, aged 18 years and over, from all walks of life. They come from diverse backgrounds and are of many faiths. They are united in their concern for humanity and the maintenance of moral standards. They have respect for justice and decency, the laws of the land and the rights of individuals.

Freemasonry sheds light on time-honoured ritual and symbolism. It promotes self-development and offers members hands-on opportunities to be involved in charitable and community help projects. It also enables members to meet socially with men from all walks of life, in a setting without political or religious barriers.

With a fascinating background, Freemasonry is one of the world's oldest and largest fraternal institutions. There are some five million Freemasons worldwide. They number some 75,000 in Australasia.

Freemasonry sets out a code for living in today's society. It encourages virtuous and ethical behaviour. Freemasons strive to live by the fundamental principles of integrity, goodwill and benevolence.

## WHY DO YOU CALL YOURSELF A FRATERNITY?

Freemasonry gladly accepts men from all occupations, regardless of their race, creed, colour or social status. As Freemasons, they share a common bond of friendship and brotherly equality.



Within the lodge, members refrain from any political or religious discussion in order to preserve an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This has long been a Masonic practice.

After business in the lodge room is completed, members usually relax informally and enjoy light refreshments together. Freemasons often say they "meet on the level and part on the square". This means they meet as equals and part as true friends.

Freemasonry, when well programmed, can involve men and their families in activities such as charity drives, seasonal celebrations, picnic days and other social get-togethers.

Freemasonry insists that a member's family is to be valued above all else. It should always take precedence over his membership. However, it is important that his family understands his Masonic association and supports his involvement in the Craft.

## WHAT DOES FREEMASONRY OFFER ME PERSONALLY?

Freemasonry cultivates an understanding of philosophical ideas based on integrity and altruism.

It presents a practical blueprint for daily life. It teaches self-confidence and boosts self-esteem. It guides members in decision-making techniques. It develops communication skills such as public speaking, organisational procedures and mentoring strategies.

It admits the members into a new circle of friendship with men who strive to excel in everything they do.

whyfreemasonr



# history

## WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY?

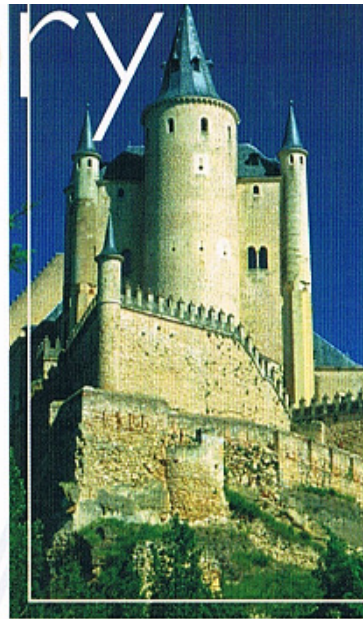
The precise origins of Freemasonry have been lost in time. However, its traditions date back to the Middle Ages when stonemasons built the castles and cathedrals of Europe. To undertake these tasks, the builders had to have considerable knowledge of geometry, arithmetic and engineering.

They therefore formed themselves into "lodges" to protect the skills and secrets of their trade and to pass on their knowledge to trusted apprentices. Importantly, these men were not bondsmen and were free to travel to any building site. Hence the origins of the word "Freemason".

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many vast building projects had been completed and worthy men who were not workers in stone were progressively accepted into Freemasonry's ranks. These were called "free and accepted" Masons, and continue to be known as such today.

## WHY AND HOW IS RITUAL AND SYMBOLISM USED?

Ask any member about Masonic ritual and he is likely to explain it as an extraordinary and inspiring experience. Ritual is the core of Freemasonry. The ritual uses a range of objects, symbols and scenarios. These vividly illustrate Freemasonry's precepts and convey its traditions.



These rituals are centuries old. Symbols, such as medieval stonemasons' working tools, are displayed to suggest how a member may refine his lifestyle.

Symbols in the lodge room convey intrinsic messages. The most widely recognised of

Freemasonry's symbols are the square and compasses. This familiar motif reminds members of the ethical lessons they learn in lodge. It also points out the need for order and direction in life.

The square teaches them to conduct themselves properly, as in "square conduct". The compasses teach them to control their passions and prejudices and keep them within due bounds. Some Freemasons wear this symbol to openly identify their pride of membership.

## IS FREEMASONRY A SECRET SOCIETY?

There is nothing essentially "secret" about Freemasonry. Freemasonry used to be discreet about its activities – even its community work. Today, times have changed. And so has Freemasonry. Freemasons talk openly about their activities. Their lodge rooms are often open to visitors. They welcome enquiries about their work.

Back in the Middle Ages, people were predominantly illiterate. It was necessary, therefore,



# why freemasonry?

for Freemasons to use recognisable symbols, such as the square and compasses. They also used handshakes, passwords and signs to identify themselves and so protect the highly prized technical knowhow of their trade.

Nowadays, these inherited modes of recognition are used in lodge ceremonies. Their purpose is to indicate a member's sincerity and his competence in the Craft.

## IS FREEMASONRY A RELIGION?

No. This is a misconception. Freemasonry has no theological doctrines. It offers no sacraments. It does not claim to lead to salvation. It is not a substitute for religion, nor is it a forum for religious discussions.

Freemasons are required, however, to believe in a "Supreme Being". They come from many faiths.

They have respect for the sacred customs of others. There is nothing whatsoever in being a Freemason that conflicts with a member's religious beliefs or practices.

Freemasonry strongly advocates unity and tolerance among all men and does not discriminate against religion. It could be said that its teachings complement its members' individual faiths.



## WHAT COSTS ARE INVOLVED IN FREEMASONRY?

As with most organisations, annual subscription fees are payable. These may vary from lodge to lodge, depending on the style of lodge. Membership in some lodges is expensive. However, fees of most lodges are reasonable and structured not to exclude any member of society.

When first becoming a Freemason, a one-off joining fee is payable. A new member will need to buy (or obtain) a Masonic apron. He may also prefer to acquire the formal or semi-formal attire customarily worn at meetings.

## WHAT CHARITABLE WORKS ARE FREEMASONS INVOLVED IN?

By tradition, Freemasons have always generously supported deserving charities. Their benevolence has been readily extended to those in sickness, need or distress.

Organisations, large and small, have benefited substantially. Freemasonry administers homes throughout the state for the aged and infirm. It freely offers aid in cash and kind, where necessary. Funds are raised at local, regional and state level through many initiatives originated by lodges.

Members have been involved annually in charitable activities in this country since European settlement. You are invited to contact your local Grand Lodge for further details.