

Thursday 7 August 2014

RYDE CIVIC CENTRE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

In 1964 The Beatles toured Australia, the Gladesville Bridge opened (the world's longest concrete arch at the time), Dawn Fraser won Gold at the Tokyo Olympics ... and the Ryde Civic Centre opened to great fanfare!

Fifty years on, the Council is celebrating the Ryde Civic Centre's half century of service to the community with the unveiling of a plaque and a look-back at the history of the landmark building with a special display.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Roy Maggio, said: "The building represented the Council's pride in the growth and development of the locality.

"The Ryde area was transitioning from green belt to residential/industrial zoning and the area was booming. Ryde boasted the state's first 'modern' shopping centre at Top Ryde, a new university was in the pipeline, Meadowbank was home to the Technical College and the CSIRO was expanding operations.

"We were a 'city' in everything but name and the Council applied to the State Government for city status."

Looking Back – our Civic History

- 1870 The Municipality of Ryde was proclaimed
- 1871 - 1879 Council Chambers located in old Wesleyan Chapel in Church Street
- 1879 - 1903 Council Chambers moved to Tucker's Inn (later Stanley's Inn) cnr Blaxland Road and Tucker Street
- 1903 New Town Hall containing Council Chambers and offices built cnr Blaxland Road and Tucker Street
- 1922 Separate administrative buildings were built adjacent to the Town Hall in Blaxland Road
- 1947 'The need for a New Town Hall and Council Chambers has recurred' wrote MC I Levy in *Wallumetta: a history of Ryde and its district, 1792 to 1945*
- 1957 New South Wales first suburban shopping centre built at Top Ryde (second in Australia)
- 1958 Local newspapers proclaimed 'Ryde move on Civic Centre: island block chosen as site'
- 1961 Council still debating whether island block site should be used for the Civic Centre or as an extension to the Top Ryde Shopping Centre.
- Sept, 1961 Architects Leslie J Buckland and C Druce were chosen to design the building. The building's curved 'curtain wall' design was inspired by the AMP building which was erected at Circular Quay in 1962.
- 1962 Excavation work began at the end of the year on the site of the new Civic Centre to replace the old building described as a 'rabbit warren ... because there were so many employees crammed into such a small space'.
- Oct, 1963 Ryde Council applied to the State Government for City status (which was rejected)
- 1964 Saturday 15 August 1964 – Ryde Civic Centre, at a cost of £500,000, opened by the Premier of New South Wales, The Hon J B Renshaw. The event was described as "one of the most historic and significant in the history of this Municipality".

The Ryde Coat of Arms, bearing the inscription *Progress Through Endeavour*, was received at a special Council meeting. Its design made reference to the district “once as the granary of the newly established colony of NSW and later as the huge industrial and residential district it is today”. Ryde was one of only 25 cities and municipalities in Australia to have received a similar grant of armorial bearings from the London College of Arms. The Coat of Arms was later erected over the entrance to the Civic Centre.

1992 City of Ryde proclaimed

Ryde Civic Centre 50th Celebrations

Friday 15 August 2014, 11.00am to 12.00 noon, Civic Centre, 1 Devlin Street, Ryde

Refreshments will take place outside. In the event of wet weather refreshments will be moved to the supper room.

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