

MAYORAL SPEECH

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Official Opening Ulmarra Sesquicentenary Celebrations and 2007 Festival of the River.

Thank you for the invitation to be with you today as we celebrate the 2007 Ulmarra Festival of the River and especially the 150th anniversary of the founding of the historic village of Ulmarra.

I welcome all to this special event and especially the descendents of the pioneer families represented here today. I also thank elder Pauline Gordon for her welcome to country, acknowledge the Bungelung people as the traditional custodians of these lands and on your behalf pay respect to their elders past and present.

It is fitting to also recognise today one of Ulmarra's most respected residents who on last Tuesday became only the second elected deputy mayor of Clarence Valley Council. I refer of course to Cr Kerry Lloyd and on your behalf extend to him congratulations on his recent election to this office.

As we know the Ulmarra pioneers first sailed to the Clarence district in 1838 in search of 'red gold' – the red cedar tree. Then in 1857 Thomas Small purchased 76 acres of land here for 81 pounds and fourteen shillings and proceeded to subdivide and sell the location as his own village.

Sugar and maize were crops in the Ulmarra district from as early as 1856 and the Belmore sugar mill opened in 1868. Dairying also prospered.

By as early as 1861 there were 29 students at the Ulmarra School and ten years later in 1871 there were nearly 1000 people living in the district. The Commercial Hotel was built in 1873 and the Clarence River Pioneer butter factory opened in 1892.

By the turn of the century and the early 1900's Ulmarra was a bustling township boasting 4 blacksmiths, a killing factory and bacon works, a hospital, 2 hotels, 3 schools and 3 permanent police officers.

I have good memories of Ulmarra in the 1950's as a visitor to my Great Aunt Maude Inmon, a spinster who made just the best cakes, scones, jams and pickles. At that time Ulmarra was still a very busy township.

Ulmarra has a rich history and a number of famous Australians were born here. For example John Jacob Cohen (1859-1939) was an architect, politician, barrister and judge. Charles Herbert Currey (1890-1970) was a teachers college educationalist and a legal historian who generously gave half of his estate to promotion of writing of Australian history.

Clarence Hunter Northcott (1880-1968) was a school teacher and author who in 1918 secured a Doctor of Philosophy Degree at Columbia University USA. He was a pioneer in personnel management and industrial relations and completed an early sociological study of Australia.

A very significant day for Ulmarra was 30th October 1978 when the National Trust classified Ulmarra village as a unique example of a 19th century Australian river port. I believe such listing has done much to secure the future of Ulmarra.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all those business owners and people of Ulmarra who in recent years have worked hard to give the village a wonderful makeover. This does you great credit and enhances the village as a tourist destination.

Clarence Valley Council is also committed to preserving the history and heritage of Ulmarra village and in March 2007 agreed to a 'peppercorn' lease of council's building at 11 River Street for a community museum.

Works plans are being developed, building works will soon commence and Council has allocated \$26,000 in its current budget for this purpose.

I wish you all a great day of celebration on this the Ulmarra sesquicentenary and have much pleasure in declaring officially open the 2007 Ulmarra Festival of the River.

Ian Tiley
Mayor
Clarence Valley Council
23rd September 2007.