

Administrator's Minute – Auburn Council Chambers

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On 26 September 2000, in the midst of the optimism and excitement generated by the Sydney Olympic Games – a few kilometres from here, the first Council Meeting was held in these Chambers.

While the eyes of the World were on Sydney Olympic Park, the business of Council proceeded. Decisions were made, staff toiled over business papers and Councillors debated motions.

Prior to the construction of these Chambers and associated civic buildings, Council Meetings (including the pre-amalgamated Lidcombe Municipality) were held at a variety of locations including the Lees Temperance Hotel in Mary Street, Auburn; the Congregational School Hall in John Street, Lidcombe; the Church of England Hall in Taylor Street, Lidcombe; the Lidcombe Community Centre; and for over 30 years meetings were held at Council Chambers located in the former Auburn Council building, completed in 1965, which was demolished to be replaced by the present buildings.

While we have the minutes of the meetings held, it would be so much more instructive and illuminating if the walls could speak so that we may hear of some of the drama that has unfolded over the years.

It is no secret that in recent years these Chambers bore witness to behaviour by a select few Councillors and staff that did not meet the minimum standards of probity, transparency or decency that the public has every right to expect from its public officials. If not for the intervention of other arms of Government or the continued efforts of other Councillors, this behaviour would have continued.

To dwell on the negative is to omit from this story the wonderful contributions of many people who did seek to act in the interest of the public, including past Alderman, Councillors and Council Staff. Their public service is honoured and recognised.

It is bittersweet that we today mark the occasion of the last Council Meeting to be held in these Chambers. This room will now be returned to the community as an extension to an already overworked and crowded library. Future Cumberland Council meetings will be held at the Merrylands Council Chamber.

It is important that we do not forget the past and these Chambers hold many lessons for the future, as we build Cumberland for the benefit of the whole community.

Lastly I would like to thank those who offered prayers at the commencement of the meeting. It was an interfaith recognition of the many different cultures represented in the area and a true acknowledgement that the new Cumberland Local Government Area is a tolerant and welcoming community.

I so move this Administrator's Minute.