

OPENING OF EXHIBITION HISTORY OF ILLAWARRA AND POST OFFICE

Wednesday, 23 April 1997 saw the culmination of months of work by our museum helpers when these two exhibits were opened by Mrs Hazel Hawke, Chair of the Heritage Council of NSW.

Fortunately it was a delightful autumn day as a hundred or so invited guests enjoyed morning tea in the Museum's Courtyard before the opening. Mrs Hawke impressed every-

one with her friendly manner, lively sense of humour, interest in our exhibit and willingness to talk to visitors.

The exhibition really consisted of two distinct parts:-

1. History of Illawarra

This was a landmark in the history of our museum as it was our first professionally produced display. Made possible by a grant from NSW Ministry for the Arts, the grant was carried out by the Wollongong City Council's marketing division. In a setting painted by Nick Brash, the exhibit re-creates the interior of a pioneer home in three separate stages of development in which are hung thirty frames illustrating Illawarra's from 1788 through to the industrial era. Being limited to 30 frames, these had to be selected with much care in order to convey the message. As photographs of the early years do not exist, we had to draw on works of art to illustrate that period.

2. Post Office

By courtesy of Australia Post and with lots of help from Mr Ross McLachlan we have been able to recreate the atmosphere of the museum building as it was when it served the NSW Post Office until 1892. We are very grateful to Australia Post for donating the magnificent red cedar counter and other items accompanying it, especially the 1873-mosel NSW post-box. We are very fortunate to have this postage stamps through courtesy of the Wollongong Philatelic Society represented by Mr Keith Little. The stamps are accompanied by photographs of a variety of post offices throughout Australia.

The president wishes to thank all those people who gave so willingly of their time to make these exhibits possible. It is always dangerous to name names, but in this instance special mention must be made of Mrs Joyce McCarthy, without whose vision and dedication these displays would not have eventuated.

Frank Osborne