

COUNCIL HISTORY

Ipswich, the oldest provincial municipality in Queensland, has a history going back before the proclamation of the Colony of Queensland on 10 December 1859.

Indeed, a petition signed by 91 residents of Ipswich was received by the Governor of New South Wales on 16 November 1859, seeking to have the area known as Ipswich declared a municipality. When Queensland separated from New South Wales the petition was then forwarded to the first Governor of Queensland, Sir George Ferguson Bowen, who published it in the first Queensland Government Gazette on Saturday, 10 December 1859.

The petition stated: “that according to the last census, Ipswich contained a population of nearly three thousand souls. That they are desirous of availing themselves of the powers of municipal self-government, and the endowment connected therewith under the Municipalities Act. And the petitioners pray as follows - That your Excellency, with the advice of the Executive Council, will be pleased to declare Ipswich to be a municipal town, under the name of Ipswich.”

The Municipality of Ipswich was proclaimed on 3 March 1860. A notice dated 17 March 1860, in the Queensland Government Gazette, stated the corporation “shall consist of a mayor and aldermen”. It nominated Henry Buckley, of Ipswich, as the first returning officer and set the first meeting of electors for noon, at the Court House, at Ipswich on Thursday, 12 April 1860.

The boundaries of the municipality were proclaimed on 16 March 1860.

On 11 September 1861, the Mayor of Ipswich, Alderman John Murphy, told a council meeting it was necessary for the municipality to have a “seal”. A committee, comprising Aldermen Donald Bethune and John Malbon Thompson, was appointed to design a seal and arrange for its production. Reverend Lacey H. Rumsey, M.A., Rector of St Paul’s Church, was requested to create a design. The same crest is still in use by the City of Ipswich today.

The arms portray the history of early industries with a symbol of faith in God, who made possible those industries and production, so too the resultant prosperity of the Ipswich area. It recognises also the toil of the pioneers of Ipswich and the surrounding districts, and is a memorial to them.

The town of Ipswich had progressed so much by 1904 that the aldermen considered the time was opportune for the town to become a city. At the council meeting on 22 November 1904, Alderman Alfred John Stephenson moved, seconded by Alderman Robert Goleby, that council should apply to the government to have Ipswich proclaimed a city.

An application was made and was successful and the City of Ipswich was proclaimed on 1 December 1904.

At a subsequent ceremony, Mayor Hugh Reilly became the first mayor of the City of Ipswich, with the title “The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ipswich”. In the presence of a large assemblage of people he was invested as mayor with his robe of office by the Attorney-General of Queensland, the Honourable James W. Blair.



Nicholas Street, Ipswich early 1900s

Courtesy Picture Ipswich