

20 February 2008

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Lindsay Electorate: Old St Marys Council Chamber

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (9.50 a.m.)—I rise to inform the House of a significant event that has recently occurred in the electorate of Lindsay. On Saturday, 9 February 2008 I had the privilege of attending the official reopening of the refurbished St Marys Council Chambers. On this important occasion I joined my councillor colleagues, including the mayor and the deputy mayor, Councillors Greg Davies and Jackie Greenow, who I know have been passionate supporters of this project.

Originally opened in 1933, the St Marys Council Chambers served as the seat of local government in the district until 1949 and later served the local community well as a baby health centre and a library. It was a long wait for the St Marys municipal council, which was first incorporated in 1890. For more than 40 years after its first elections, the council lacked a home of its own. The council met monthly in the Protestant Hall, paying rent of five shillings per meeting. At the original opening of the building, Mr J Jackson MLA was reported in the *Nepean Times* as saying:

I know of no sweeter word in the English tongue than 'St Marys'. Any man entering this village from the hilltop gazing across the panorama, if he dwells here, can feel nothing but pride in the fact that in this township is his residence. It is a township that has a very wonderful history.

As a serving East Ward councillor I wish to breathe some contemporary life into the words of Mr Jackson by echoing his sentiments today. The chambers is a beautiful building with heritage and local historical significance. It has a great deal of potential that can now be more fully realised.

The chambers will become the home of many user groups—significant local groups building the social infrastructure on which our local community depends. I wish to acknowledge those groups—in particular, the St Marys and District Historical Society, the St Marys Development Committee, the Chrysanthemum Society, the Encore Sewing Group, the Porcelain Painters and the Tapestry Group.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the St Marys and District Historical Society and, in particular, to its indefatigable president, Norma Thorburn, and her husband, Tom. I wish to thank Margaret Dwyer, Lyn Forde and Charles Connelly for their ongoing involvement in the project. Mr Connelly, an old stalwart of the district, was instrumental in researching the building and putting in place this proposal.

I acknowledge the leadership of Penrith City Council, its officers, including the general manager, the director of city services and its former facilities and operations manager, Mr Gary Dean. I thank Linda Sack and Michael Mendham. I also acknowledge the assistance of the St Marys Rotary Club. Also present on the day was Mr Tony Biddulph and his wife, Sheila. Mr Biddulph is the president of the St Marys Development Committee. I also saw the publicity officer, Isobel Lowe, and her husband, Neville. He was on hand, as he often is, to capture the occasion on film. It was a great occasion and I am certain that this facility will be a great tribute to the efforts of those who have contributed to it.