

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC,  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA TO OPEN THE 2014 RICHMOND  
VILLAGE COLONIAL FAIR,  
SUNDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014**

This year marks the 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the naming of the township of Richmond<sup>1</sup>, making it one of the oldest towns in the State. Not surprisingly then, it is the site of some of the oldest buildings in Tasmania including two churches, the Richmond Courthouse and Gaol and, of course, the famous Richmond Bridge. The Bridge, St John's Church and the Richmond Primary School each claim the title of being Australia's oldest, bridge, church and primary school still in use.

As the Richmond Village Fair states on its website,<sup>2</sup> the Richmond Market Association, which was formed at a meeting at the Richmond Courthouse on Saturday 5th January 1828, made the decision to conduct Markets and Fairs at Richmond. The web site also states that the *Colonial Times* newspaper of the day reported<sup>3</sup> that at that meeting it was firstly resolved that:

*The Establishment of regular Fairs and Markets in  
Country Districts is calculated to advance the  
interests of the Colony,- not merely as affording a  
greater facility in disposing of agricultural produce,  
but because such established plans of meeting are  
favourable to that species of intercourse amongst*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.richmondvillage.com.au/history.html> accessed 7th March 2014.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.richmondvillagefair.com/> accessed 7th March 2014

<sup>3</sup> [http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/8643944?searchTerm=richmond fair&searchLimits=sortBy=dateAsc||l-title=24](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/8643944?searchTerm=richmond%20fair&searchLimits=sortBy=dateAsc||l-title=24). accessed 7th March 2014

*the Settlers, which leads to the discussing of subjects relating to agriculture and the rural interests of the Colony, and discussions tend to promote public unanimity and private emulation in exertions for introducing an improved system of agriculture.*

However, although not noted on the Fair's web site, I see that the report in the *Colonial Times* newspaper of that decision to establish markets and Fairs at Richmond also published another resolution that was passed at that meeting namely:

*"That a Committee of Members be appointed to manage the affairs of the Association, and to solicit His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor to grant Fairs to be held at Richmond, on such days in the year as the Committee shall deem fit, after communicating with the Managers of the other Country Markets ...."*

Now, I don't want to spoil anybody's fun today, but I regret to inform you that no member of the present Fair Committee has solicited me to grant this Fair be held at Richmond on this day, nor indeed, on any other day which lead me to the conclusion that, not only could I not open this Fair as I had been asked to do but, it clearly being without gubernatorial authorization and therefore presumably unlawful, I would have no option but to close it forthwith.

However, you will be relieved to know that I discussed this dilemma with my wife before I left this morning and she pointed out to me that it would not be a good look to read in Monday's edition of the *Mercury* newspaper, which by the way, absorbed the *Colonial Times* newspaper in 1857, "Governor Underwood lynched by angry mob at Richmond for attempting to close down the Richmond Village Colonial Fair on the grounds that he was not solicited by a member of the Committee." As I always do, I heeded my wife's advice and have decided not only to proceed with the opening as planned, but to go a step further and congratulate all those who are responsible for the organisation of this Village Fair on doing a great job.

You see, the mounting of a Fair like this by a small rural community speaks volumes for the integrity of that community. I was reading a paper the other day about communities and read that "Communities are a product of their past [and that] current development activities take place against a historical backdrop. Historical factors may hinder or help the implementation of community ... projects; [but] what is undisputable is that they will have an impact on the success of those projects."<sup>4</sup> I think that that is right in the case of the Richmond community. I see it as a tight knit, unified community living with, and united by, the history of the village. In and around Richmond there are some 56 places that are listed on the Australian Heritage data base, so, of course, it has

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/docrep/w7483e/w7483e06.htm#key> "Characteristics of the community." accessed 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

an important place in the early history of Australia after white settlement.

It appears to me that the Richmond Village Colonial Fair is a reflection of, and a product of, the social cohesion of the Richmond community that collectively recognises the value of the built heritage in which it lives, and with unity of purpose has decided to celebrate that value and share it with others. The long and extensive list of local sponsors for this event is evidence of this, as is the number of and variety of the stalls at this Fair, all showcasing the attractions in the village and the food and wine products of the district and all supporting or complementing a celebration of the community's long colonial history.

So, I say congratulations to Timothy McCulloch, President of the Richmond Village Fair Inc and his Committee; they are few in number but big in output. It is a great Fair that has been put on today. I say to congratulations to all the stall holders and volunteers without whom, I guess, the Fair would not have happened. Today, all the members of the Richmond community should rightly be proud to be part of a close knit, focused, and supportive group that lives in one of the most beautiful places in the world.

So, even though I was not solicited, I have much pleasure in declaring open the 2014 Richmond Village Colonial Fair.