

# ***Pure Water for Windsor Residents***

## ***130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Turning of First Sod for Windsor's Water Scheme***

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Wednesday, 31st July 2019 marked the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the turning of the first sod for the construction of the Windsor water scheme, by Windsor Mayoress, Mrs Rebecca Mortley nee Dyer, my great-great grandmother.

Ironically, also a Wednesday, it was a beautiful winter's day and gazetted as a public holiday in the district. All the banks, public offices and schools were closed so residents could attend and enjoy the celebrations.

My great-great grandfather, Frederick James Mortley, was the instigator for Windsor receiving a modern water supply, whilst serving his third consecutive term as Mayor.

A dais was erected on the bank of the Hawkesbury and a string of flags of all nations were flown with pride. Approximately 500 townspeople and visitors from various parts of the district were in attendance. The Mayor, Mayoress, Aldermen Primrose, Linsley, Simon, Smith, Dunstan and Fitzpatrick all took their place on the dais.

Alderman Primrose began proceedings, proudly stating that the water scheme had become a reality, trusting that it would always prove beneficial to the Borough of Windsor and a great boon to all. He was sure Mrs Mortley would be glad to see Windsor flourish, having industries brought into their midst as a result. He claimed that the district stood second to none in NSW, as it had what was better than gold – it had a good name!

He trusted that the turning of the sod would result not only in the turning of the tide of prosperity in the district, but in the whole colony.

The Mayor was congratulated on the success of his efforts to supply residents with pure water and deserved the compliments for his energy and pluck.

Members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment band, under bandmaster Mr Davey, enlivened proceedings.

A silver spade was to be presented to the Mayoress on the occasion of turning the first sod. However, through some misfortune, it was not available in time.

Celebrations drew to a close with cheers for Queen Victoria, the band played God Save the Queen, then three cheers for the ladies.

Discussions for a modern water supply had been well considered since 1874, with a number of sceptics. Finally, in 1888 the project was commenced in earnest with tenders called in July 1889. The engineer in charge of the work was Mr J P Sharkey.

In order to construct the water scheme, the council obtained a loan of £6,500 at five percent from the AMP Society in December, 1888, with the loan falling due in February, 1919.

The pumps were started for the water supply on the 9th January, 1890, Mr J Sowden being placed in charge of the water supply at that time. Electricity was applied to the pumps in 1916.

The water tower is 13.71 metres (45 feet) high, the reservoir has a capacity of 1,137,500 litres (250,000 gallons) and was listed on the NSW State Agency Heritage Register in January 2000.