

FACT SHEET

KALGOORLIE TOWN HALL HISTORY



In 1906 the idea of building a town hall was first discussed. Tenders for the construction were called for in July 1907. After two rounds of tenders, the successful candidate was contractors: Messrs Williams, O'Donnell and Co., who agreed to complete the work in 12 months at a price of £12,296. The Architect was C. W. James and Tom Roberts. There was dissension amongst residents of Kalgoorlie as the decision was controversial – the tender price was not the lowest received. Elected members decided to proceed with the successful contractor, regardless of community sentiment.

The Foundation stone was laid on 6 November 1907 by His Worship, the Mayor J. H. Cummins J. P. in the presence of His Excellency the Governor. Construction progressed steadily but was spectacularly interrupted by a severe storm which hit Kalgoorlie on the 24 February 1908, which caused the back wall to collapse. This significantly postponed the completion date and pushed the final cost closer to £20,000. Construction was done with the use of local materials and labor wherever possible. A practice still observed today by the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder. His Excellency, The Governor, Admiral Fredrick Bedford, officially opened the Kalgoorlie Town Hall on the 8 November 1908.

The opening of the grand building was described as “a spectacular event” with the plush curtain being raised to reveal a splendid scene. The striking interior was thronged with spectators. At the conclusion of speeches, afternoon tea was served and a musical programme enjoyed.

The building is best described as an impressive Edwardian building with fine examples of ‘Gold boom’ architecture, which demonstrates the wealth and civic pride of a community thriving on the 1900’s gold boom. This Federation Free Classical style building is made of brick walls and a timber-framed corrugated galvanised iron roof.

The Kalgoorlie Town Hall is registered with the Heritage Council of WA and carries a Category 1 listing.

Over the years the Kalgoorlie Town Hall has been the venue for all manner of musicals, vaudeville and variety performances. Dame Nellie Melba and Percy Grainger played to audiences in the Town Hall. Theatrical productions of the Melbourne based J. C. Williamson Company, travelling to Perth by rail, stopped over at Kalgoorlie to entertain the Goldfields residents. The Town Hall was home of the Goldfields Musical Society from 1927 – 1953. Throughout its existence the Town Hall has continuously hosted important Goldfields civic and social events.

THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Council Chamber, located upstairs, has been used for Council meetings since 1908. The Council table and chairs was bought in 1909 and cost a huge sum of £60. The letter KMC carved on the Mayor's chair represents "Kalgoorlie Municipal Council". The Mayor's Parlour is adjacent to the Council Chambers and photographs of all the past Mayors of the Town of Kalgoorlie and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder adorn the walls.

The Council Chamber is 36ft.8in. by 21ft 7in by 18ft with a 'coved' ceiling for ornamental effect.



THE UPSTAIRS FOYER

The Upstairs Foyer provides an overflow area from the dress circle and is the entrance to Council Chambers.

The Foyer is home to the Sporting Hall of Fame, where photographs of Kalgoorlie-Boulders sporting heroes are on view. The Foyer showcases artifacts and memorabilia of events and important occasions in the history of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

A spindle in the sweeping staircase has been inserted upside-down and was perhaps deliberately placed as a memento of one of the carpenters.

When the building was completed in 1908 chandeliers and wall lighting were installed, putting the final touches on the grand building.



THE DRESS CIRCLE

A grand staircase, constructed of Queensland Coachwood and Jarrah, leads into a brilliantly lit Foyer and Dress Circle. The seats are iron framed, tip seat theatre chairs, upholstered in crimson velvet with seating for 224 persons. The Mayor traditionally has his own seat at the front of the gallery in Row A, seats 10 and 11.

THE MAIN HALL

The Hall is 77ft in length, 56ft in width and 34ft from floor to ceiling. The ceiling is "coved" at

the sides, with a center cove in the ceiling to afford ample ventilation during the hot months of the year, the latter being movable portion of the roof. The ceiling is of stamped steel. The opening for the proscenium is no less than 28ft in width and 24ft in height – and is finished steel. Around the walls is a fly gallery with provision for a painting frame.

The proscenium is closed with a handsome crimson velvet curtain which draws up without rolling. The central crest is embroidered with the letter "KMC", the date and crown.

THE BANQUET ROOM

The Banquet Room is situated on the ground floor and is used for civic receptions, social events and community meetings. It is facilitated by a kitchen and bar and is used in conjunction with events in the main hall.