



COLONEL LIGHT CEREMONY

Ceremonial Special Council meeting and Lord Mayoral Reception to mark Colonel William Light's Birthday Anniversary

Thursday 2 May 2019

in the Council Chamber and Queen Adelaide Room,
Adelaide Town Hall



Present:

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor
His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia
The Hon Dean Brown AO, Former Premier of South Australia
Mr Steve Georganas MP, Antonio Rea, and Barbara Pocock, Candidates for the Seat of Adelaide.
City of Adelaide Councillors Robert Simms, Franz Knoll, Phillip Martin, Mary Couros, Jessy Khera and
Helen Donovan and Alexander Hyde
City of Adelaide Director Growth Ian Hill & Acting Directors, Vanessa Godden and Klinton Devenish.
Commander Andrew Burnett, Commanding Officer Navy Headquarters SA, and Captain Steven Young,
representing Air Commodore Phil Gordon, Senior Australian Defence Force Officer
Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police, Peter Harvey, representing the Commissioner of Police
Representatives of the Consular Bodies from Ecuador (Gladys Arboleda), Slovenia (Adrian
Vatovec), Lithuania (Christine Jankus) and Malaysia (Alexander Kitingan)
Representatives from our fellow Councils Mayor Dr Jan-Claire Wisdom (Adelaide Hills), Mayor Kris Hanna
(Marion), Mayor Dennis Clark (Northern Areas), Mayor Kevin Knight (Tea Tree Gully)
Elizabeth Ho OAM, Chair of History Trust of South Australia and our Guest Speaker today
Distinguished Guests

Ceremonial Special Council Meeting Apologies and Leave of Absence

City of Adelaide Apologies – Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Houssam Abiad and Councillors Arman Abrahamzadeh, Simon Hou and Anne Moran.

Proceedings

The doors to the Council Chamber were opened at 5.00 pm whereupon guests entered the Council Chamber and were seated.

Special Ceremonial Council Meeting Proceedings in the Council Chamber commenced at 5.21 pm

The Master of Ceremonies, the Chief Executive Officer, Mark Goldstone asked all present to be upstanding as His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor and the official party led by the Mace Bearer entered the Council Chamber.

Address by the Master of Ceremonies, Chief Executive Officer, Mark Goldstone

The Chief Executive Officer, Mark Goldstone asked all present to be seated and welcomed guests to the Special meeting to mark the anniversary of Colonel William Light's Birthday.

The Chief Executive Officer, Mark Goldstone stated:

'Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen. I'm Mark Goldstone, I am the City of Adelaide Chief Executive Officer and your Master of Ceremonies this evening.

The City of Adelaide acknowledges that we are meeting on traditional Country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains, and pays respect to Elders past and present.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.

And we also extend that respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations who are present today.

I further acknowledge the presence of:

- His Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, Governor of South Australia
- The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Adelaide Sandy Verschoor, and Husband Gregg Mitchell
- The Hon Dean Brown AO, Former Premier of South Australia
- Mr Steve Georganas MP, Antonio Rea, and Barbara Pocock, Candidates for the Seat of Adelaide.
- City of Adelaide Councillors Robert Simms, Franz Knoll, Phillip Martin, Mary Couros, Jessy Khera, Dr Helen Donovan and Alexander Hyde
- City of Adelaide Director Growth Ian Hill & Acting Directors, Vanessa Godden and Klinton Devenish.
- Commander Andrew Burnett, Commanding Officer Navy Headquarters SA, and Captain Steven Young, representing Air Commodore Phil Gordon, Senior Australian Defence Force Officer
- Acting Deputy Commissioner of Police, Peter Harvey, representing the Commissioner of Police
- Representatives of the Consular Bodies from Ecuador (Gladys Arboleda), Slovenia (Adrian Vatovec), Lithuania (Christine Jankus) and Malaysia (Alexander Kitingan)
- Representatives from our fellow Councils Mayor Dr Jan-Claire Wisdom (Adelaide Hills), Mayor Kris Hanna (Marion), Mayor Dennis Clark (Northern Areas), Mayor Kevin Knight (Tea Tree Gully)
- Elizabeth Ho OAM, Chair of History Trust of South Australia and our Guest Speaker today

Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you all to this Special meeting of Council to mark the Anniversary of Colonel William Light's Birthday.

The Council Acknowledges the vision of Colonel William Light in determining the site for Adelaide and design of the City with its six squares and surrounding belt of continuous Park Land which is recognised on the National Heritage List as one of the greatest examples of Australia's planning heritage.

Would you now please join me in Prayer:

Almighty God, we ask your blessing upon the works of the Adelaide City Council; direct and prosper its deliberations to the advancement of your glory and the true welfare of the people of this City. Amen.

It is now my pleasure to introduce to you our host for this evening, The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Ms Sandy Verschoor.'

Address by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor addressed the Special meeting:

'Marni Naa Pudni

Ngadlu tampinthe ngadlu Kaurne yartangka tikanthe

Nya-dlu tampandi nya-dlu Kaurna yar-tang-ga tikandi

Welcome to all.

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on traditional Country of the Kurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land.

Good evening and welcome to today's ceremony to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Colonel William Light, as well as his remarkable contributions to the City of Adelaide.

Excellency the Honourable Hieu Van Le AC, many distinguished guests including former Deputy Lord Mayor David Plumridge and Uncle Ivan Tiwu-Copley from our Reconciliation Committee, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the City of Adelaide, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the Council Chamber at Adelaide Town Hall on this wet and blustery day.

As you know, May is history month in South Australia which we celebrate with the annual History Festival.

This year there are over 700 events run by over 400 organisations – a remarkable outcome proving we have much to celebrate about our past in this State.

Of these, there are 236 events across the month in the City of Adelaide alone.

This shows that there is an increased appreciation of our heritage and history and continued growth in demand for unique experiences that celebrate it.

The City of Adelaide is proud to be the program sponsor of South Australia's month-long History Festival and is celebrating the City's history by hosting 32 events as part of the festival.

This year, as with others, I want everyone to discover some different about our city.

I encourage you to circle a couple of events in the program that are different from the kind you might usually attend.

The wonder of history is learning something new and I encourage everyone to enjoy the journey of discovery.

The city's history is playing an important part in our present.

Council has developed a new 'brand' which will be officially launched next month and is already being rolled out in our public communications and marketing and it intrinsically speaks to the legacy Colonel William Light created for our city.

When he designed Adelaide, he learned from the local Kaurna people about the strategic importance of the location which is now home to our community.

Halfway between the ocean and the hills, this site has become vital to a new community, as it has to the Kaurna people and neighbouring language groups for thousands of years and continues to be today.

Witnessing the poor social outcomes from an overcrowded London, Adelaide was planned from the outset to be city with lifestyle and wellness of the people as core tenants.

Adelaide is a city designed for life.

Today, we celebrate the 233rd Birthday of Colonel William Light, founder and surveyor of the City of Adelaide, born the 27th April 1786.

We will later enjoy a toast to Colonel William Light in the Queen Adelaide Room.

In 1858 Colonel Light's old friend and one of the South Australian Commissioners, George Palmer sent a silver bowl to the Mayor and Corporation of the City of Adelaide.

Palmer also sent some of the wedding cake from the marriage of the Princess Royal to the Crown Prince of Prussia.

So, began the tradition of eating cake with South Australian wine.

Palmer also gave the Council the self-portrait of Light which hangs in the Colonel Light Room.

In 1859 the Council authorised the expenditure of funds on colonial wine and the annual tradition of a toast to Colonel Light began.

It later became custom for the Mayor to deliver an address, as I have done today.

I will now hand back to the City of Adelaide CEO, Mark Goldstone, to formally introduce today's wonderful guest speaker.'

Acclamation

The Chief Executive Officer Mark Goldstone then invited Elizabeth Ho OAM, Chair of the History Trust South Australia to give an address.

Address by Ms Elizabeth Ho OAM, Chair, History Trust of South Australia

Elizabeth Ho OAM Chair of the History Trust of South Australia addressed the Special meeting:

'To be standing here this evening, just a day after the announcement of the Adelaide City Council's intention to seek world heritage listing for the Adelaide Park Lands is indeed an honour.

Not to mention the fact that certain citizens want to revive the Kingston memorial tribute to Light which used to grace the city.

It's quite a week for Light. How can I best pay tribute on this, his birthday?

Let me share some thoughts about this incredible man – and I speak not as a scholar but as an observer.

Light was a go-getter.

An artist – multilingual – a negotiator with tough Spanish fighter bands in the Peninsular War, and brilliant enough as an officer for the great Wellington to have him as a mapping and reconnaissance man during the Napoleonic wars.

He was a lover and casual explorer of the bright sunlit coves and inlets of the Mediterranean. His other loves were at least three women in succession who shared his wandering life. As usual, we know little of these female partners.

Perhaps we would know more of them if Light's cottage had not burned down in 1839 and his papers and surveying documents had been saved. Thank goodness The History Trust has the original Light's Plan in safekeeping. It takes my breath away to see it – as significant as the Mona Lisa for anyone who loves the history of their place.

As the son of the intrepid founder of Penang, the British Frances Light and Eurasian Martinha Rozells (thought to be of Portuguese and Thai descent), he was different among the Britishers in a period when the Empire was convinced of its cultural and racial superiority over all others. I often wonder what this meant for him. Did it hold him back in his career, or was it of no consequence ?

I personally doubt that it was of no consequence.

This diversity in one human being of the staid Victorian era has always fascinated me and others. To add to this portrait, his South Australian experience ends what seems to have been a largely charmed and positive life.

Here is a man who escapes injury in 40 European battles, but finds his assignment here as our first Surveyor General under - resourced and unbelievably taxing.

He was a loyal, stressed, talented, and hardworking public servant trying desperately to meet unrealistic expectations.

Then there was his relationship with his superior, Governor Hindmarsh. Despite Light's obvious war time talent for negotiating, their differences were unresolved, their clashes dispiriting, and Light scored constructive dismissal.

He then set up what we would now term a private consultancy.

Soon afterwards, his affliction with TB brought him down forever.

But what ideas influenced his very fine plan for our city ?

Think for a moment about the argy-bargy that must have gone on in the 1830s in London to devise a colony of South Australia 12,000 miles away. Money and reputations at stake. New ideas and various opinions about how things should be.

I'm not going to give you a history lesson. But I would like you to feel the mood – these were times of an expanding, inventive, optimistic, wealthy and arrogant Empire.

There was also a very dark side to this success. The Industrial Revolution had wreaked havoc on the health and wellbeing of the British masses, now crammed into production towns and cities.

A diversity of ideas about the social order gained footing as the reality of that human devastation dawned.

Jeremy Bentham posed a new humanist philosophy.

Charles Dickens wrote the popular stories of child exploitation.

Robert Owen spoke out about terrible working conditions.

The demands stimulated by these ideas ranged far and wide.

Everything from calls for schooling for the poor, to anti- slavery and universal suffrage movements sprang up.

There amongst that ferment of debate, were new planning ideas proposing green space in teeming cities, where the humble classes could breathe.

The idea of space for cities cannot be sourced to one single mind, one single inventor. It arises from a time of questioning, of imagination, and a balance of logical arguments about what humans need in order to survive and thrive.

Switching back to our city, let's for a moment consider how those far away ideas crossed the ocean and took hold in colonial Adelaide. As we know many of the names on our streets were reformers who did not come here. Yet in a sense they did. Their thinking deeply influenced many aspects of the founding of this place. Let me list a few.

- early establishment of representative government
- separation of church and state
- the first City Council in Australia
- initially benign if patronising attitudes to the Kaurna people
- freedom of religion – that's why German colonists came here
- radical ideas about land ownership, housing and space.

Ideals of human dignity framed our colony and eventually our state.

They led to the world we know now. And yet most of our citizens hardly know this story.

We take for granted notions of providing for the poor and infirm, of freedom of expression, and of embedding the relationship between space, land rights and wellbeing in our planning policies.

I see Light himself as a paragon of those times in his professional world.

He and his survey team intelligently took on board the most up-to-date ideals of wellbeing in framing ideas for our city in an unknown and challenging landscape.

He sought balance in the city framework between open and built space, between the wealthiest and the poorest, and he went for the most sustainable option in his choice of site, despite fierce differences with Governor Hindmarsh.

This has resulted in Adelaide being heralded as one of the finest examples of city planning by many experts, not just in the past, but up to contemporary times.

Was our plan unique ? No.

Other green parkland city ideas took off in Canada, Britain and the United States. In Spain, where Light had spent a lot of time, edicts about city public space had been codified in the 1570s.

But check the survival of many nineteenth century visionary city plans built on the principles I have spoken of today.

A Toronto green belt plan of 1788 was never realised. Most US green belts in original city plans have fallen to city expansion or been diminished.

We are almost unique. To use the John Olsen phrase - our *City in the Park* has survived. How many of us know how special this is?

If anyone needs to absorb the arguments for world listing there are good articles to be found in the Adelaide Parklands Symposium Proceedings (2006), and available on line. It was assisted by The Hawke Centre at the University of SA, where I was then the inaugural Director

To finish, I leave you with a comment and a pitch. Many of our young people are apparently disenchanted with democracy. We have had more than one generation of limited focus on history and

geography and generally a feeling around that heritage does not matter. This despite our current History Festival of 700 events. Everyone in this room should be concerned about that. Our heritage is an asset in every sense.

Let's be sure our young people understand what dictatorship is and what evil it can bring when power no longer sits with the people. Let's show them the past so they can build the future wisely.

Let's also encourage them to take pride in their special place. Let's tell the stories that at least show that ideals came here even if they were not always adhered to. (To err is human.)

Let's put those stories out on every street and every relevant online corner so to speak.

Let's also continue to recognise the First Nations people of this place and tell the difficult truths of their colonisation.

That's what The History Trust of South Australia is striving to achieve.

Thank you.'

Acclamation

Address by the Master of Ceremonies, Chief Executive Officer, Mark Goldstone

The Chief Executive Officer Mark Goldstone addressed the Special meeting as follows:

'Thank you Elizabeth.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes our Special Council Meeting. I now invite you and the Official Party to the Queen Adelaide Room for refreshments and the traditional toast to Colonel William Light and Serving of the Fruit Cake.

We thank His Excellency for attending this Special Council Meeting, however due to another engagement, His Excellency will be departing shortly.

Those who are able, please be upstanding as His Excellency, the Lord Mayor and Official Party depart the Council Chamber.'

The official party led by the Mace Bearer left the Council Chamber for the Lord Mayoral Reception in the Queen Adelaide Room at 5.41 pm

Closure of Ceremonial Special Council Meeting

The Special meeting to mark Colonel William Light's Birthday Anniversary closed at 5.41 pm.

Lord Mayoral Reception in the Queen Adelaide Room

Guests entering the Queen Adelaide Room were greeted at 5.43 pm by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor.

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor asked all present to raise their glass and join her in a toast to Colonel William Light..... *'Let us salute Light's achievements and drink, in silence, to his memory. To Colonel William Light, founder of the City of Adelaide'*.

Canapes and refreshments, including the traditional slice of fruit cake, were served.

Closure of Lord Mayoral Reception in the Queen Adelaide Room

The Lord Mayoral Reception to mark Colonel William Light's Birthday Anniversary concluded at 7.00 pm