

Voting gap worries the dentist Mayor

Sydney's Lord Mayor, Alderman Emmett McDermott, has an unusual problem as he prepares to face the City Council's yearly elections.

Ironically, some people may think his Civic Reform team has done such a good job that it is unbeatable.

"Some people may consider we can't possibly lose, and so not bother about voting," he said this week.

"If that happened, we could be on the losing end of the scale when the votes are counted."

"So my only real worry is to see everybody entitled to vote does so."

"I think it is important all persons exercise their franchise and participate as much as possible in civic affairs."

Ald. McDermott, 59, a dental surgeon by profession and Lord Mayor for the past two years, talks

matter-of-factly of what his Civic Reform Group has done for Sydney.

"We have done more in just 22 months than the old Labor administration did in 22 years," he said.

He reels off a list of achievements that have captured the imagination of Sydney month after month since Civic Reform has been in office.

"If there is any message we will use for the election, it will be a very simple one," he said.

"It is this: We have done a lot . . . and we will do a lot more."

Ald. McDermott said his Civic Reform Group's success was not only evident by its impressive record of tangible achievements.

"What we have done in a general sense is restore the civic image of the city and given it dignity," he said.

"At the same time we have set an example of just how good local government can be."

GOOD TEAM

"This has been possible because we have had such a tremendously good team — men of special abilities, experience and dedication."

"We have shown men and women of this calibre can be attracted to serve in local government."

"So much can be done if local government affairs are not stifled by national political party approaches to what are non-political matters."

"This was not so under the old Labor administration."

"And we are sure the people don't want to see a return to that sort of administration."

Ald. McDermott sees as the main key to the success of the Civic Reform Group is that it has worked as a definite team.

Aldermen have devoted their own particular skills and experiences to specified spheres of City Council affairs.



● AN ARTIST'S model showing how the completed Martin Place plaza may look.

Final preparations for the official opening of Sydney's most exciting project — the Martin Place plaza — are under way.

The plaza committee is confident that the opening will take place before the end of September.

The official ceremony is planned for September 1, the first day of spring. But industrial trouble has delayed work on the project.

To the casual passer-by, Martin Place probably looks like a battlefield. But most of the final work is going on behind the scenes.

Work on the street furniture is almost complete. It should be delivered soon and ready to install.

Once the paving is finished the furniture in and the few final touches applied, the plaza will be ready for the big day.

So the final sketches of the project, released last week, should become a reality before long.

Airy, uncluttered, lined with trees and gay lamp-posts, the plaza will be a welcome relief from the grimy heavy banks and business houses surrounding it.

But it hasn't been designed merely for decorative purposes.

USEFUL

The comfort and convenience of pedestrians looking for a place to rest their tired feet has been the prime consideration from the beginning.

A total of 252 seats, contoured to fit body lines, will be arranged back-to-back in semi-circles of 18 around the plaza.

They are made of concrete, which may not sound the latest word in comfort, but the fibreglass maroon cover to blend with the paving stones will solve that problem.

The seats are being treated to make them vandal-proof and quick draining after a shower. "We want to keep the plaza uncluttered but useful," Alderman Leo Port, chairman of the plaza sub-committee said last week.

"The people showed that they needed something like this. It's due to public support that the project became a reality. So we've planned it for the people."

The old flower stalls will be replaced with attractive kiosks. So will the present newspaper stands.

Even the litter bins and bubblers have

City's plaza no longer a dream

been designed to fit in with the cosmopolitan atmosphere.

The northern side will be lined with lamp standards, topped by gay glass balls in a variety of colors.

Floodlights from the GPO will illuminate the plaza at night, and planners hope the effect will be dramatic.

All in all, the plaza has cost \$400,000.

The most expensive item was the paving, which cost more than \$250,000. The paving is made of blocks of pink Tarrara granite, each six inches thick.

FREE HAND

The City Council commissioned a leading town planning firm, Clarke Gizzard Architects Pty Ltd., to design the plaza.

For the two principals of the firm, George Clarke and Don Gizzard, completion of the plaza will be a dream come true.

They have been pushing the idea of a plaza in Martin Place for nearly 20 years.

"Actually, the idea has been spooking around for about 100 years," Don Gizzard said.

"People were talking about a plaza way back when the present GPO was built in 1874."

"But we put forward the first really firm proposal for the project."

The City Council gave Clarke Gizzard Architects a completely free hand in the design, subject to their satisfying the requirements of service authorities and the Department of Transport.

They also had to satisfy the requirements of the RSL as far as the Cenotaph was concerned.

The RSL and a section of the public were concerned that a pedestrian plaza might endanger the sanctity of the Cenotaph.

"There's no danger of this happening," Mr. Gizzard said.

"The Cenotaph will be protected by a low hanging chain supported on a series of posts."

The paving around the memorial is also slightly raised. People won't be able to sit on the steps and eat lunch, or do anything else which might desecrate the Cenotaph.

"The RSL has already seen the model and is very happy with the precautions."

Only one feature shown in the sketch has not been finally approved.

That is the white, futuristic structure at the far end of the plaza.

"We hope this will be an information centre for the people of Sydney," Mr. Gizzard said.

"If the council does approve it, people will be able to find out what's happening in Sydney just by pushing a button."

"It could contain a

continually changing audio-visual display which could show, for example, the latest civic projects being planned for the city."

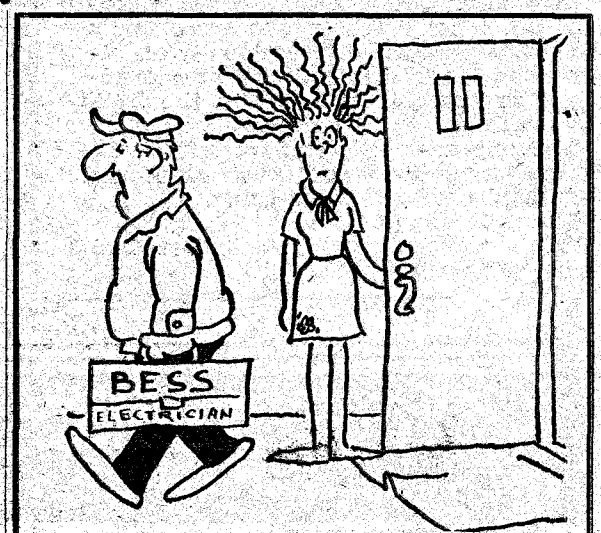
Ald. Port believes that Martin plaza is just the first of a series of exciting projects the council is planning for Sydney.

"We'll soon be exhibiting the plans for the William Street boulevard and the Wynard pedestrian network," he said.

"We're sure that the public will be just an enthusiastic about these projects as they are about the Martin Place plaza."

370 DAYS ON BAIL

LONDON, Fri.—Gianco Bottali, 19, who reported to a police station every day for 370 days while out on bail, was cleared of housebreaking charges yesterday. When his case finally came up the prosecution offered no evidence against him. Judge Henry Elam said: "The police must have got sick of the sight of him." He awarded Bottali \$22 out of public funds "as a gesture."



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