

THE MATE'S BUILDING: A BRIEF HISTORY

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Mate's building on the corner of Dean and Kiewa Streets is an Albury icon. It has the inscription "Established 1850," which is a little misleading. The business was established in 1850, but not on that site, or in that building.

T H Mate opened his first store in existing buildings on the corner of Hume and Townsend Streets in 1850. This was six years before the opening of the first bank, or the printing of the first newspaper, in Albury. A substantial building was constructed on the site in Hume and Townsend Streets in 1884, and business continued to be operated from there.

Thomas Mate retired in 1887 and his son-in-law, Mr D A Thompson took over as Managing Director.

In 1900, a new building was erected on the corner of Dean and Kiewa Streets. This location was originally the site of the National School. When the school moved to Olive Street in 1861, T H Mate had purchased the Dean Street site.

The building had two storeys along the Dean Street frontage only, and had large arched windows along the upper storey. Fire in the early hours of Sunday morning, December 12, 1915



T H MATE & CO STORE, DEAN ST (PRIOR TO 1915 FIRE)

destroyed the Dean St building - the fire is described in the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* of Friday 17 December 1915 (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/108145798>). Business was then conducted from other buildings including the Mechanics Institute.

Rebuilding was completed the following year, 1916. The rebuilt store opened in August 1916. The opening was described in *The Border Morning Mail and Riverina Times* of Thursday 17 August 1916:

Where but a few months ago was strewn the debris of the fire which completely demolished Messrs. T. H. Mate and Co.'s department stores, opposite the Albury post office, there now stands a most modern, up-to-date and imposing building. The building itself has shot up with great rapidity.....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/109971466>

The opening was also described in the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* of Friday 4 August 1916. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/101136552>



The second storey was limited to Dean Street until an extension opened in August 1931 so completing the Dean and Kiewa streets frontage of the building, the opening described in the *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* of Friday 7 August 1931.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/102279607>

The architectural style of the 1916/1931 building was modern, having strong horizontal and vertical lines.



D A Thompson's son died in WWII and this might have precipitated the sale of the company to Burns Philp in 1946. Little changed however, so that in 1948, Mate's had the Department Store, a Bulk Store, a Timber Yard, a Brickyard, and a subsidiary company: Tawonga Timbers Pty Ltd. The company employed approximately 200 people.

In 1952, a furniture store was built on the western side of Kiewa Street between Dean and Smollett Streets. In 1960, Mate's was extended south along Kiewa Street. A glass and concrete structure was erected over a large basement.

Mate's closed in 1976 when Burns Philp sold to Waltons which in 1987 became Venture Stores.

In 1988, the entire Dean and Kiewa Street building, comprising three levels, was refurbished at a cost of \$3.5 million.