

Albury Industrial Exhibition 1896

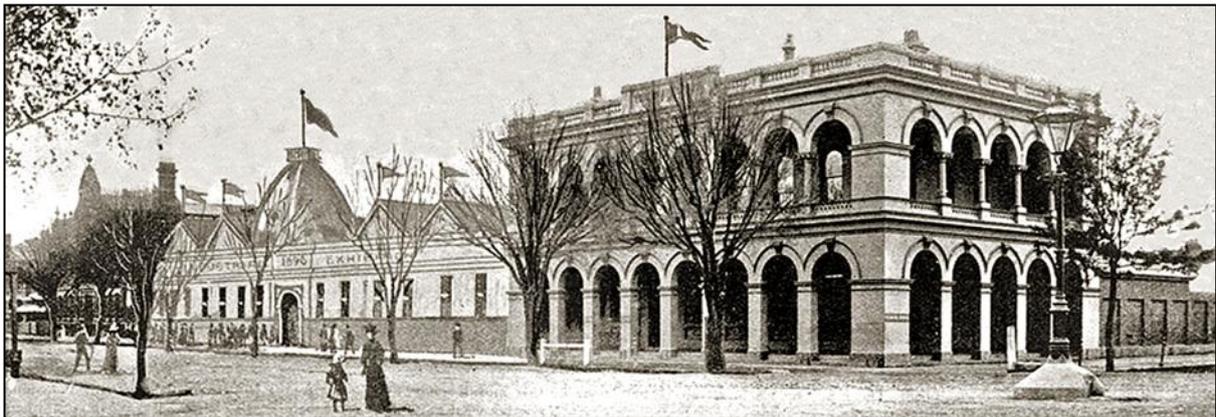
Ray Gear

Opened on September 8, 1896, Albury's second industrial Exhibition ran through to the evening of November 2, 1896. Seen as "affording the residents of Albury and from other areas an opportunity to exhibit their handwork, trades, and manufacturing."

The exhibition, was opened by the Mayor David S Watson before a large crowd. The mayor commented that the exhibition would be "an important lesson for the education of the rising generation, helping them understand and appreciate the progress achieved in science, art, and manufacture."

Planning for the exhibition began at the start of May 1896 to raise funds for the thirty-nine-year-old Mechanics Institute organisation. The task of organizing the exhibition was given to Albert S Manders who between 1892 to 1896 ran a local newspaper called *Table Talk*.

According to local newspapers, attractions were to be confined to items that would be interesting and instructive to the public and be of an intercolonial character. It would also be a source of "great attraction for the residents of this portion of the Riverina and to people from afar."



A temporary iron building was erected between the Mechanics Institute (left) and the Telegraph Office (right) for the 1896 Albury Industrial Exhibition.

The exhibition was held in the Mechanics Institution building, and in a temporary iron building erected in the Market Reserve from the Mechanics building's eastern side to the Telegraph Office on the corner of Olive Street. In mid-July building works commenced on the temporary building with Amos Crisp the contractor.

Electricity was not turned on in Albury until 1916. However, Alcock & Co of Melbourne installed lighting to illuminate the exhibition. These lights were turned on by Mayor Watson on August 31, 1896. For many in the crowd it was the first time they had ever seen the electric light.

On September 29, "fifteen thousand people were reported to have paid for admission to the exhibition." In addition to some nineteen specific classes of exhibits displayed, there were many demonstrations such as Roentgen rays (X-rays) by Dr Cleaver Woods; performances including cornet solo, concerts and recitation; there were dog, flower and doll shows; educational, musical and sports competitions; and sideshows.

At the closing of the exhibition John Wilkinson, president of the Mechanics Institute, congratulated all involved in organising the exhibition, announced it was expected a small profit would be made, and thanked the public for their support.

According to the *Border Post* newspaper of November 3 the exhibition did “more to advertise Albury throughout Australia than any other movement that had taken place in Albury.”