

Lara Museum & Historical Centre



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The opening of the Lara Museum and Historical Centre is a story about community spirit.

Through the passion of the Lara residents to preserve and celebrate the town's history, the Lara Museum and Historical Centre on the corner of Forest Road South and Canterbury Road West, was officially opened on April 18, 2013.

Its opening was the culmination of more than three years of planning and hard work by the people of Lara, Lino Bisinella and the rest of the team at Bisinella Developments. The project also demonstrated what can be achieved when residents and businesses work together for the common good.

Long-time Lara residents and friends Ian Board and Les Kelly had often discussed the need to preserve Lara's history, and the lack of any facility to collect historical material and make it readily accessible to the public.

In mid-2011, Ian and Les heard that the former Lake Bank Hotel property had been sold to Lino Bisinella, managing director of Bisinella Developments.

The Lake Bank is Lara's only surviving 19th century hotel. One of Lara's oldest buildings, it was constructed in 1860 for Scottish immigrant James Henderson and operated as a licensed hotel until 1908. The distinctive limestone buildings were home to five generations of Mr Henderson's family. The property had been sold to Lino by James Henderson's great grandson Jack and his wife Brenda Darcy.

Ian and Les approached Lino about the possibility of using the historical buildings as a community museum.

Lino quickly gave Ian and Les his commitment that, provided they could muster sufficient community enthusiasm and support, he would fully renovate the historic buildings at his own cost and allow them to be used for a community museum.

A public meeting was held in September 2011 to gauge public interest and a provisional committee of eight was elected to start work.

The Lara Heritage and Historical Inc was incorporated on January 12, 2012.

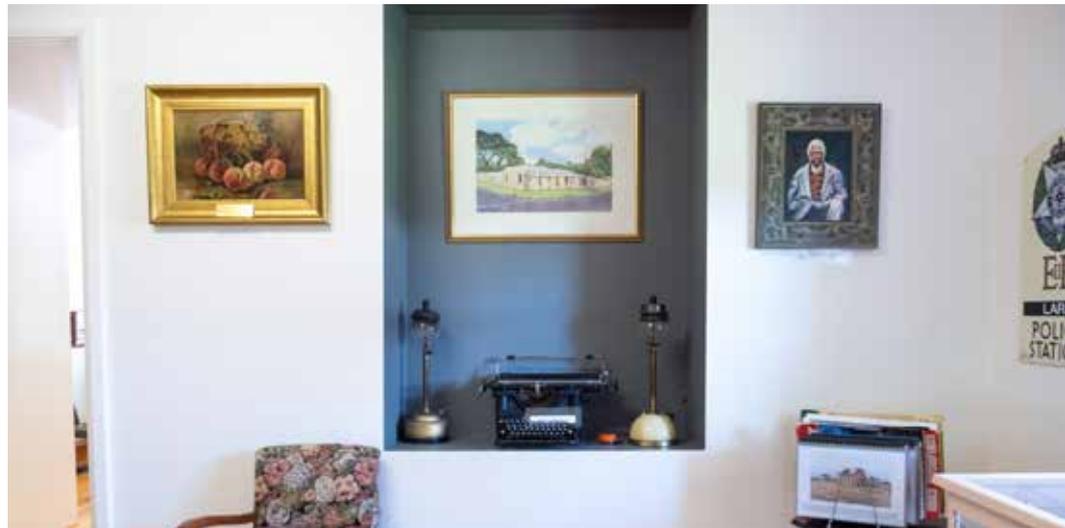
Lino set about personally overseeing every single detail of the somewhat challenging renovation project. It was very much a labour of love. The building was lovingly restored and refurbished at a cost to Lino of about \$500,000. He then leased the property for a \$1 a year to the local community group formed to operate the museum.

Ian, Les and their members worked closely with Lino and the Bisinella team throughout the renovation project. At the same time they started the process of collecting historical information and items from the community.

Since it opened, memorabilia and items of historic interest have continued to be loaned or donated to the museum, bringing local history to life in the ideal setting of the old limestone buildings.

The Lara Museum and Historical Centre is open to the public from 11am to 4pm on Wednesdays and Sundays. Group bookings are available by appointment. For more information visit www.laramuseum.org.au







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