



Media release

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Albany Town Hall bells ring out once again

The clock bells of Albany's historic Town Hall have begun ringing out once again for the first time in decades.

The clock has not regularly chimed since the early 1980s, when a major upgrade to the town hall's theatre was completed.

Thanks to modern technology, and without making any major changes to the historic clock mechanism, the bells can now ring out between certain hours of the day.

Deputy Mayor Greg Stocks, who was part of an Albany Central Business District working group tasked with identifying potential improvements to the city centre, said the bells would add another layer of interest to Albany's central hub.

"Switching the Town Hall bells back on was one of the recommendations of the CBD working group, and it's exciting to see it become reality," he said.

"The City of Albany is currently leading a significant revitalisation of the City Centre in preparation for the Anzac Albany events, including the new Town Square adjacent to the Town Hall, and the upgrade of Stirling Terrace.

"Having the Albany Town Hall bells sounding out once again will be welcome boost to the vibrancy of the City for locals and visitors alike."

Initially the bells will chime between the hours of 7am-7pm. In the coming months the City may undertake a community survey on preferred chime times.

This initiative aligns with the following objectives of the City of Albany's Community Strategic Plan: to maintain vibrant places and spaces, to be a sought after visitor destination and to have a strong connection with the community.

END



BACKGROUND

- For more than 125 years, Albany Town Hall has been a highly valued venue for municipal use, as well as cultural and community events, such as theatre, cinema, meetings, dances, art exhibitions, fashion shows and much more.
- The building was completed and opened in 1888. There was no clock in the original building.
- In early 1890, after considerable debate as to the respective merits of French and British clocks, a large clock with four faces was ordered from Potts & Co. Ltd. of Leeds, England (makers of Big Ben) at a cost of £425 including duty. The clock was installed in early 1891.
- The bells, comprising a strike bell, to strike the hour, and two bimbam bells, to strike the quarter hours, continued in regular operation through into the early 1980s.
- The original clock mechanism did not easily allow the bells to be switched on and off, nor did it allow for the bells to chime only at certain hours of the day.
- The clock at the old Post Office building (currently UWA) has also been refurbished.
- Both clocks have had their counterweights significantly reduced resulting in power savings and improvements to safety. The timing of the clock chimes is now able to be controlled with greater ease.
- With the construction of the Albany Entertainment Centre in 2010 the Albany Town Hall was no longer the premier regional performing arts venue in the Great Southern.
- However the Hall has remained in use for select community events. In fact, usage of the Hall has steadily increased, with over 16,000 people passing through its doors for a range of community events and exhibitions in the past two years.