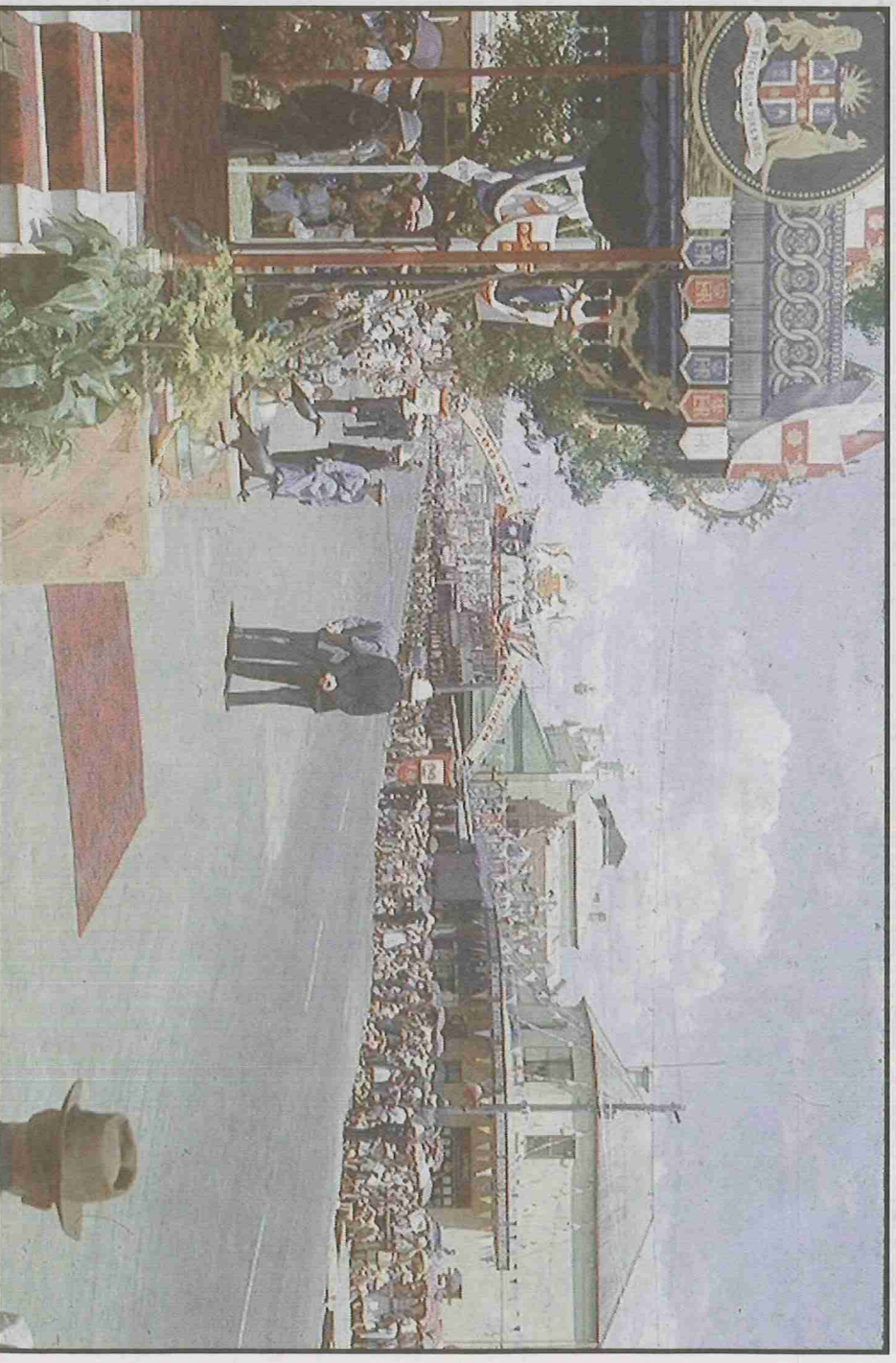


# Regal



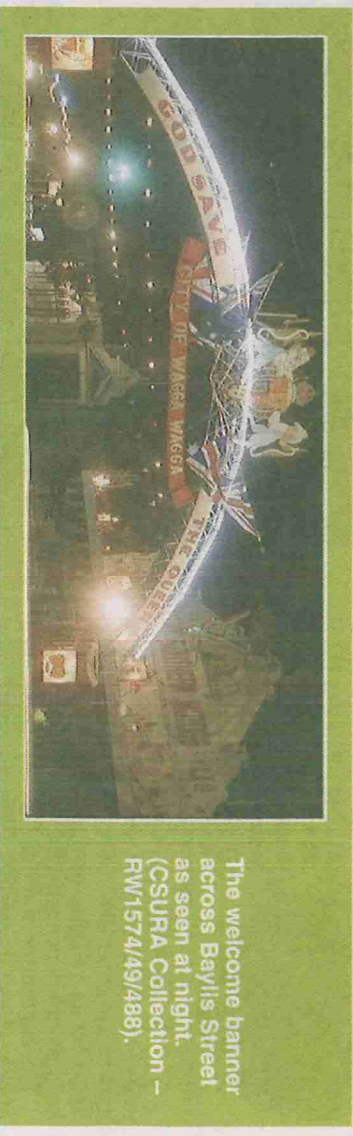
A photo taken from the front of the council chambers looking down Baylis Street before the arrival of the Queen and Duke on Saturday, February 13, 1954. The official dais can be seen in the foreground. (CSURA Collection – RW1574/49/488).

# preparations

The Archives' Wayne Doubleday looks back at how Wagga prepared for its biggest day ever – the Queen's visit in 1954 – in this the second of a series of articles.



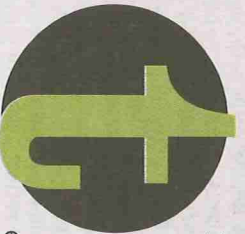
at the archives  
Wayne Doubleday



The welcome banner across Baylis Street as seen at night. (CSURA Collection – RW1574/49/488).

what you need to know

■ The CSU Regional Archives are open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakemore Building on South Campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue. Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those people unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straight-forward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour including copying and postage. For further information, phone 02 6925 3666, email [archive@csu.edu.au](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au), or visit our website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.



he importance placed on Wagga's preparations for the visit of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh in February 1954 is evident through the expenditure of the city council for the event.

Despite allocating a budget of between £2000 and £3000 for the expenditure was revealed afterwards to be in excess of £6300.

This was indeed a large sum at the time, particularly when you considers that the visit was to last for just over two hours – from 1pm to 3.05pm.

The entire visit was timetabled down to the minute:

- 1pm – Royal plane (RAAF Dakota) to arrive at Forest Hill Airport.
  - 1.02pm – Royal car departs for Wagga.
  - 1.15pm – Royal car reaches the railway gates at Tarcutta Street.
  - 1.24pm – Official welcome at Wagga Council Chambers.
  - 1.45pm – Royal car departs for Wagga Showground.
  - 2.03pm – Royal party enters the Wagga Showground to view exhibitions of sheep shearing, wool rolling, wool classing, wood chopping and boomerang throwing.
  - 2.27pm – Depart for Bolton Park.
  - 2.37pm – Arrive at Bolton Park to visit the waiting school children.
  - 2.49pm – Depart for Forest Hill Airport.
  - 3.05pm – Royal plane leaves for Canberra.
- With the huge influx of visitors from all over

the Riverina flocking to Wagga for the day, it was decided that Wagga should cater for the extra people by putting on some special events and programs.

The Murrumidgee Turf Club (MTC) held a race meeting, which was to commence at 3pm sharp.

The Wagga Motor Cycle Club conducted a meeting at the North Wagga Speedway also commencing at 3pm.

The Wagga City Baths had extended opening hours for the day – from 10am to 10pm. The bowling greens throughout the city were open from 3pm to midnight, and all the night tennis facilities were also open.

Both the Capitol and the Plaza theatres ran continuous programs and movies from the conclusion of the Royal visit, and a total of 15 bands were booked to provide entertainment and music throughout the city (including three pipe bands).

Not surprisingly, a dress-rehearsal was held to replicate the Queen's arrival at the council chambers.

On the evening of February 10, a mock procession of motor vehicles simulated the royal party's arrival, which as *The Daily Advertiser* reported, resulted in "...one of the biggest traffic jams experienced in Baylis and Fitzmaurice streets for many years".

Special traffic conditions were also put into place for the actual day of the visit –

Saturday, February 13, 1954.

The Sturt Highway was closed for a large part of the day and the whole of Tarcutta Street was reserved for the parking of buses only. No cars or bicycles were permitted in the exclusion zone.

The whole area from the Tarcutta Street railway gates to Fitzhardinge Street was reserved for children only to view the royal procession, before they were marshaled into the Bolton Park area to assemble for the Queen and Duke.

After reaching the Tarcutta Street intersection, the Royal procession proceeded down Edward Street, on to Baylis Street and down to the council chambers.

After the conclusion of the official reception, the motorcade moved into Fitzmaurice Street, then Gurwood, Beckwith, The Esplanade, Thorne, Edward, Docker and Bourke streets to the showground.

After leaving the showground, the procession went back down Bourke, Docker, Edward and Fitzhardinge streets to Bolton Park. Finally, on to Edward Street and the Sturt Highway to the airport.

■ **References:** *The Daily Advertiser*, February 9 to 13, 1954; Kyeamba Shire Council File No: 1656 – Royal Visit to Wagga 1954 (CSURA Collection – RW97/60); Riverina Royal Visit brochure (CSU Library Wagga – WS 390/A/1/2/pamphlet).