

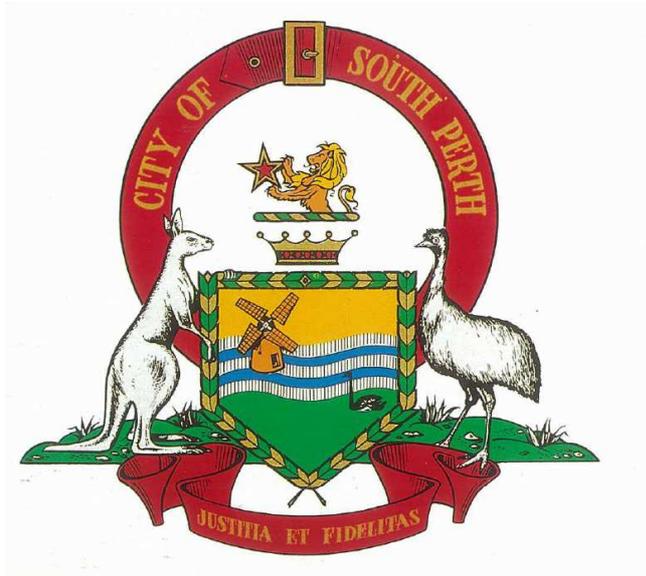


# **LOCAL HERITAGE INVENTORY**

## APPENDIX 2

### COAT OF ARMS

## City of South Perth Coat of Arms



*“I would like to see you approve a crest for the municipality. I think that we are big enough and important enough to have one, and it would add dignity to the Council and our new building.”*

Mayor, W C G (Billy) Thomas speaking at the January 1958 Council Meeting, prior to the municipality being declared a “City”.  
*The West Australian*, 29 January 1958

### HISTORY OF COAT OF ARMS

The Municipality of South Perth attained the status of ‘City’ on 1 July 1959. In expectation of this, and as part of its preparations for its new Civic Centre, the Council decided in January 1958 that it should have a Coat of Arms, or Crest, and that an open competition for its design should be arranged.

The Council’s decision was announced in *The West Australian* newspaper on 29 January 1958. The article advised that the Mayor, W C G (Billy) Thomas, had suggested the provision of a crest some time earlier, and that a space had been allocated for it in the design of the new municipal offices at the Civic Centre.

In May 1958, the Council approved the conditions for the competition which had been recommended by its Works, Finance and Town Planning Committee. These conditions included a range of very specific elements to be included in the design. The Coat of Arms, to be in a form which could also be used as a ‘seal’, was to include:

- (a) a Shield, consisting of four quarters. The Old Mill, a swan, a sailing yacht, the new bridge, etc, were suggested by the Council as suitable motifs;
- (b) Supporters, comprising a kangaroo and emu;
- (c) Field and Motto, comprising the words ‘*Justitia et Fidelitas*’ (Justice and Faithfulness);
- (d) a Crest, including a demi-lion rampant holding a five-point star surmounting a crown; and
- (e) a belt-like encirclement including the words ‘*Municipality of South Perth*’.

Designs submitted in the competition were required to be presented in both black and white and in colour, at a size of 15 inches x 12 inches (37cm x 30cm).

---

The assessors of the competition consisted of the Mayor, W C G (Billy) Thomas; Mr J A B Campbell, Superintendent of the Arts and Crafts Branch of the Education Department; and architect Mr K Duncan of Duncan, Stephen and Mercer, 9 Barrack Street, Perth.

The Council offered a total of 65 guineas (£68/5/- or \$136.50) in prizes for the best designs, divided into different categories as follows:

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) Open Category -               |                                   |
| ▪ 1 <sup>st</sup> prize:          | 35 guineas (£36/15/0 or \$73.50). |
| ▪ 2 <sup>nd</sup> prize:          | 10 guineas (£10/10/0 or \$21.00). |
| ▪ 3 <sup>rd</sup> prize:          | 5 guineas (£5/5/0 or \$10.50).    |
| (b) Junior Category 18 and under: | 10 guineas (£10/10/0 or \$21.00). |
| (c) Junior Category 16 and under: | 5 guineas (£5/5/0 or \$10.50).    |

The competition was announced in the *South Perth Community News* in July 1958 and entries invited to be submitted by 12.00 noon on Monday 1 September 1958.

A total of 48 submissions were lodged. The winners were announced at the October 1958 Council meeting. The winning design was submitted by Mrs Irma June Ashton of 27 Marsh Avenue, Manning, a 27 year old mother of two young children. Mrs Ashton won first and third prizes in the Open Category.

The other winners in the competition were:

- Second prize in the Open Category: Vaclav Macha, of John Street, Gooseberry Hill;
- Under 18 category: Raymond Bradley of 93 Gardner Street, Como; shared equally with Peter David Menmuir of 85 Gwenyfred Road, Kensington.
- Under 16 Category: Madeleine Joy Drenth of Mundaring.

Having selected its preferred design, the Council negotiated with Mrs Ashton for various improvements to be made until it was to the Council's satisfaction. The amended design was adopted at the February 1959 Council meeting as the Coat of Arms for the Municipality, and a recommended colour scheme that had been sought from the assessors, was adopted. Mrs Ashton was then commissioned to redraw the Coat of Arms in the adopted colours for a fee of £15/15/0. The Council also decided to take action to preclude the unauthorised use of the Coat of Arms.

The following description appeared in the March 1959 *South Perth Community News*:

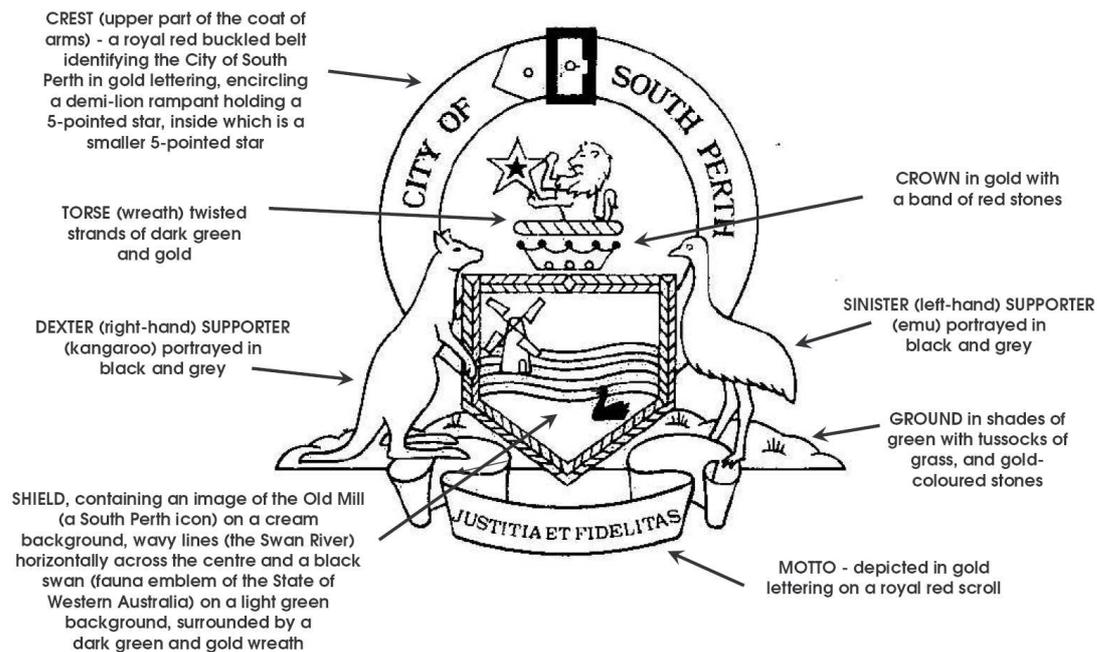
*"In anticipation of 'City' status being granted by the Governor in due course, the words 'City of South Perth' appear on a pale blue belt that forms the upper part of the design. Centred inside the belt is the top portion of a lion holding in its paws a red five-pointed star with a small five-pointed star inset. A black and gold-banded bar separates this portion from a golden crown that is shown below it. Next there is a dark green and gold-coloured, wreath-edged shield supported by a kangaroo on the left side and by an emu on the right, each standing on a field in shades of green with stones in gold. In the original design, the face of the shield was quartered by a red cross, each quarter coloured differently and depicting respectively the Old Mill, a yacht, a black swan, and the bridge across the Narrows. The revised design has been simplified and made more emblematical of South Perth. The top section is cream-coloured and the bottom, a light green. Three wavy lines in light blue running across the shield horizontally are used to represent the river. Superimposed on the upper left side is the Old Mill and on the lower right is a black swan. At the base of the coat-of-arms is a light blue scroll bearing the municipality's motto: *Justitia et Fidelitas*.*

*It will be seen that the composition of the coat-of-arms is such that it is representative of the Motherland, the Crown, the Commonwealth, the State and, finally, South Perth."*

In April 1959, the design of the new Coat of Arms, was again modified by changing the colour of the belt at the top of the crest and the scroll across the bottom of the crest, from pale blue to royal red with gold lettering. Mrs Ashton was again requested to redraw the Coat of Arms.

The City's Coat of Arms is now only used on official occasions and does not appear in the City's more commonly used logo or seal.

## HERALDIC ELEMENTS COMPRISING THE COAT OF ARMS



### Description of elements of the Coat of Arms (*Coat-Armor, Cote-Armure*)

The term 'coat of arms' is commonly used to mean the 'complete achievement' of all of the elements comprising it. However, for simplicity and in line with common understanding, this article will use the term 'coat of arms' throughout. Heraldically, the 'coat of arms' is only one element of the whole design. Originally, armorial bearings were embroidered on the surcoat of the wearer. The surcoat was the garment worn over the armour to protect it from sun and rain, and usually blazoned heraldically. A coat of arms is made up of several elements. Heraldic design uses a limited number of contrasting colours (called *tinctures*) and a highly developed system of hatching and cross-hatching in the case of monochrome representations.

Typically, a coat of arms contains various symbols which describe the subject. The coat of arms of the City of South Perth contains the following elements:

- **Crest:** The 'crest' is a figure or symbol usually affixed to the top of a helmet. The 'crest' means the upper part of the coat of arms, as in the crest of a hill. The crest of the coat of arms of the City of South Perth, comprises the following elements:
  - **buckled belt** - a buckle is an ancient and honourable symbol signifying victorious fidelity in authority. In the City's case, the belt carries the name of the City of South Perth.
  - **demi-lion rampant** - the upper part of a lion is rising with fore paws in the air, as if attacking. The right legs should be raised higher than the left, and the animal should face dexter (right, as seen from behind from the point of view of a person wearing the decorated garment or shield). In general, the lion is a popular symbol, representing majesty, strength, justice, military might and deathless courage. Erect on his hind legs, in profile, the lion is emblematic of magnanimity. The lion in the City's coat of arms is coloured light brown with a cream mane and a red tongue. The lion traditionally features in British heraldry. Hence, the use of a lion could represent recognition of Australia's relationship to Britain as a former colony or member of the British Commonwealth, and hence the City's loyalty to Britain.

- **mullet (five-pointed star)** - traditionally seen as a light shining in the darkness, the star is often considered a symbol of truth, constancy, celestial goodness and nobility, and the spirit of hope. In the case of the City, the demi-lion is holding a five-pointed star (*mullet*), inside which is a smaller five-pointed star. In the originally approved design, the outer star was coloured red with a white inner star. The mullets are also sometimes depicted as a gold outer star with a red inner star. The 5-pointed outer star could symbolise the City's place within the wider City: in 1958 when the design of the coat of arms was being formulated, it was anticipated that South Perth would become the fifth local government in Perth to be proclaimed a 'City' (a higher status than a 'Town' or a 'Shire'), the other Cities being Perth (1856), Fremantle (1929), Subiaco (1952), Nedlands (1959), and in anticipation, South Perth (1959). The inner star could symbolise the City of South Perth's five wards at the time - Civic, Como, Kensington, Manning and Mill Point. Hence, the fifth City, containing five wards.
- **Torse:** The crest sits on a 'torse' or wreath. The torse is a wreath of twisted skeins (traditionally made of silk) of two alternating tinctures, usually a metal and a colour, depicted supporting a crest. The wreath is generally a symbol of victory and to some, immortality, although a laurel wreath is a symbol of triumph, an oak laurel is a symbol of strength, rosemary is a symbol of remembrance, etc. In the City's coat of arms, there is a horizontal torse above the crown and an encircling wreath around the shield, both coloured in dark green and gold.
- **Crown:** The 'crown' is a symbol of monarchy, state and power and denotes dignity and accomplishment. In medieval and modern times, the crown is generally made of metal, often gold or silver and inlaid with precious gems. In the City's case, the use of a crown is depicted as being of gold with red stones inlaid, and represents the City's loyalty to the 'Crown', the Queen of Australia.
- **Shield:** The main part of the complete achievement, is the 'shield', which is the 'coat-of-arms', 'arms', or 'armorial'. The design of the arms is exclusive to the subject to whom it applies. The shield contains the emblems (*charges*) of the coat of arms. It originally represented the war shield of a knight, upon which his arms were displayed. In times when soldiers in warfare wore protective armour covering their heads, it was essential to decorate their garments and shields to identify who they represented on the battle field. In the case of the City of South Perth, the Council's original instructions for the coat of arms design competition required the shield in the coat of arms to consist of four quarters containing emblems representing South Perth, such as the Old Mill, a swan, a sailing yacht, and the bridge across the Narrows. Later, the idea of 'quarters' was abandoned and the shield divided horizontally (*per fess*), with the following elements:
  - the Old Mill depicted in brown and black in the upper left-hand quadrant (dexter chief) of the shield, representing arguably the most famous landmark within the City of South Perth. The upper part of the shield is coloured cream;
  - blue wavy lines across the centre, representing the Swan River which borders the City of South Perth on three sides;
  - a black swan in the lower right-hand quadrant (sinister base) of the shield, an animate emblem, representing Western Australia's faunal emblem. This indicates the City's relationship with the State. It also indicates the wildlife surrounding the City on the Swan River. The lower part of the shield is coloured pale green;
  - the wreathed bordure around the shield in dark green and gold is described above. (Refer to 'torse'.)

- **Supporters:** The 'supporters' are generally in the form of animals, literally depicted as supporting or holding the shield. Originally decorative in nature, supporters have come to be considered as part of a subject's coat of arms. They now appear only in the arms of governments, titled families, and those in positions of authority. The supporters in the City of South Perth coat of arms are a kangaroo and emu, two typically Australian animals which appear on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms. Both of these are Australian national emblems and are regarded as suitable for use in heraldry design. In the case of the City, although the Council did not indicate a preferred species of kangaroo, the animal is a rather stylized shape, but could be assumed to be the same as that depicted on the Commonwealth Coat of Arms - a Red Kangaroo (*Megaleia rufa*) which is the widest distributed species on the continent. The emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) and the kangaroo identify the City of South Perth as being Australian. Both of the supporters are depicted in black and grey.
- **Ground:** When a coat of arms includes supporters, it is common to provide a visual element for them to stand upon. This is called the 'ground', and may appear as a natural form (eg. a hill) or as a decorative bracket. In the City's case, the 'ground' is in the form of a green field containing tussocks of grass and gold-coloured stones.
- **Motto:** Mottos are chosen by the subject to express an ideal, goal, or admonition. They are often in Latin, although not necessarily so. The motto in the City's coat of arms is '*Justitia et Fidelitas*' (Justice and Faithfulness).

It should be noted that heraldic directional descriptions, *dexter* (right) and *sinister* (left) are taken as if the coat of arms is worn by its subject, that is, as seen from behind, and not looking at it from the front. For example, while a dexter supported appears on the left of the design when viewed by an opponent, it is really on the right-hand-side of the wearer.

#### SOURCES:

Armorial Gold Heraldry Symbolism Library: <http://www.heraldryclipart.com/symbolism/1.html>  
Council Minutes, 1958 and 1959.  
Florey, Cecil C: "*Peninsular City - A Social History of the City of South Perth*". City of South Perth, 1995.  
Pimbley's Dictionary of Heraldry: <http://www.digiserve.com/heraldry/pimbley.htm>  
*The West Australian*, 1958 and 1959.  
*The South Perth Community News*, 1958 and 1959.  
University of Notre Dame Heraldic Dictionary: <http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry>

This document has been prepared as a supplement to the  
City of South Perth Local Heritage Inventory, adopted November 2015.

Researched and prepared by Gina Fraser, 2005.