

National Queensland

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# Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial unveiled after seven years

By Jorge

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The Queensland city built on mining has finally completed a memorial to the 186 lives the once-perilous profession stole away.

Seven years after old miners decided it was time to pay tribute to their long lost mates, the Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial was unveiled on Saturday afternoon.



Former miner Graham Kelly, who mined for 35 years at Sth Cross. ROBERT SHAKESPEARE

Three hours later, Mayor Paul Pisasale said he was "still wiping away the tears" from an emotional ceremony, which saw hundreds of former miners and their families lay floral tributes.

Mining first came to Ipswich in 1843 and it's often noted Brisbane was built from the sandstone plucked out of the ground in what is now a rapidly expanding urban centre.



Retired miners placing flowers into the memorial holes in memory of their fallen comrades. ROBERT SHAKESPEARE

"It was the most moving thing I've ever been involved in, to see all the families and grandparents right back from the '80s and descendants come together and lay flowers at every name of the miners," Cr Pisasale said.

The majority of the \$800,000 needed for the memorial was fundraised, with Ipswich City Council and the state government chipping in \$100,000 each.

Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial Trust chairman Beresford Evans said the architect-designed wall would become a place for reflection and commemoration.

It would be a place for people like Graham Kelly, who worked in the mines for 35 years.



BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA - OCTOBER 17: Retired miners placing flowers into the memorial holes in memory of their fallen comrades. A memorial to Coal Miners who have died is unveiled on October 17, 2015 in Brisbane, Australia. (Photo by Robert Shakespeare/Fairfax Media) ROBERT SHAKESPEARE

A place for his kids, his grandkids and the friends he lost.

"It was an industry that formed the backbone of the community for generations and served to develop the greater Queensland region at critical times in history," Mr Evans said.



Ipswich Mayor Paul Pisasale says Ms Lin's comments were 'crazy'. ROBERT SHAKESPEARE

The memorial will honour the contribution and, most importantly, commemorate those boys and men who gave their lives whilst working the mines."

But while mining is still a proud part of the city's identity, it's no longer the economic force of years gone by.

In fact, [the birthplace of Queensland mining went anti-coal last month](#), declaring it would not support new mine operations or expansions.

"Today we did what was necessary to stop and reflect and salute those people but this is now a celebration of what they achieved, so their life, and what they did for this city will be forgotten," Cr Pisasale said.

"To me people are now starting to realise and generation after generation will know what dad and grandad and great grandad did and what the people of Ipswich did for the whole mining industry in Queensland."

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