

# Tradition and Change

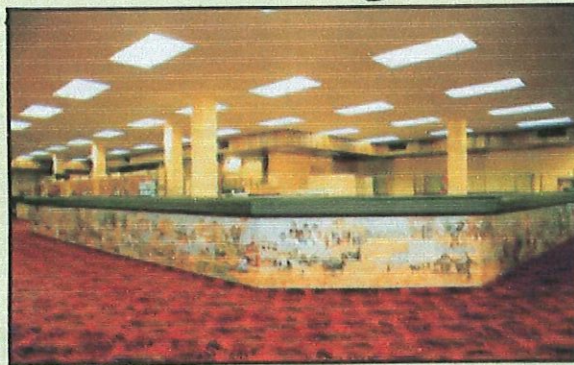
When Griffith NSW branch was renovated late last year it acquired all the trappings of a modern bank — full air-conditioning, up-to-the-minute furnishings and (of course) an Autobank. But the most striking feature of this "new" branch is a ceramic mural that celebrates not only the future world of banking but its colourful, complex past.

Tracing the history of Griffith from pre-World War I days when the settlement was known as Bagtown, the mural is a pictorial record of tradition and change both on the land and within the Bank.

Made up of 16 tiled panels, each illustrating a different facet of Griffith's rich rural character, the mural is like a "memory-scape" of images that typify the Australian struggle to settle in a harsh, wild country.

Woven into this central theme is the Bank's role as a promoter of rural and industrial development. Citrus and stonefruit orchards, grazing properties, rice and wheat farms merge with images of old bank notes and Commonwealth cheques.

Turn of the century street scenes focus on Griffith's first Government Savings Bank branch (which was eventually taken over by the Commonwealth Bank) and the familiar "Get with the Strength" slogan features prominently over a young couple's half-built dream house.



The message is clear. From the wartime drive to buy loan bonds to the services made possible by the electronic wizardry of modern banking, the Bank has played a vital part in the prosperity and expansion of Griffith.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the mural is the way it slides back in time — from the high-tech gold and black Autobank terminal through the growth and establishment of Griffith's wine, wool

and cattle industries to the long distant time when Aboriginal tribal life dominated the area.

Although the mural's overriding theme is one of progress, there is a strong sense of origins — of building on the achievements of the past to ensure a better future.

The theme for this pictorial timeline was developed after many hours of research through the Bank's Archives, Griffith Library and the Water Resources Commission's files. The "wrap-around" mural, which covers nearly two-thirds of the counter face, is the brainchild of local architect Vic Budd and was hand-painted by artist David Byard, another local.

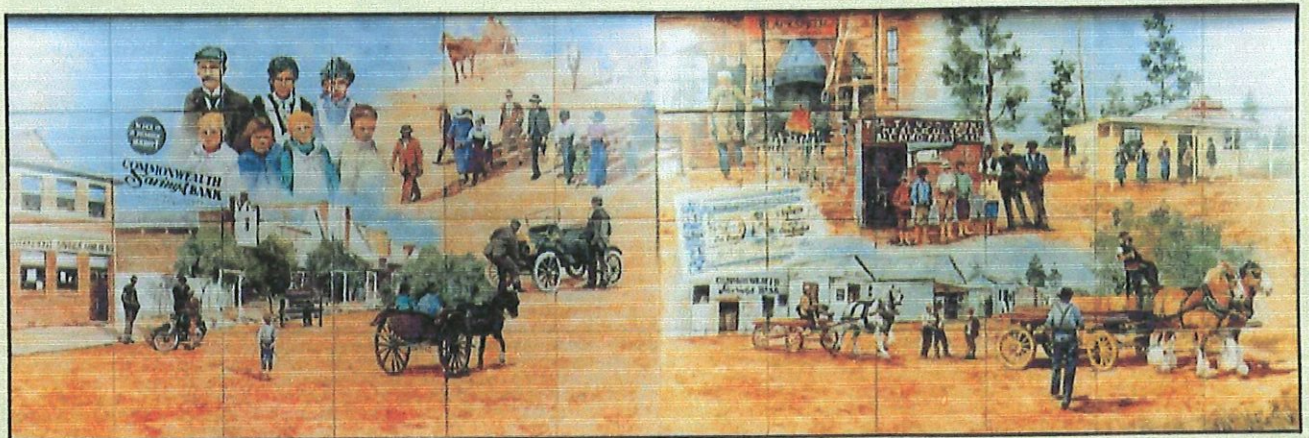
The detail and complexity of the time-line design must have been in itself a challenge but David had the additional task of composing each modular panel of 24 hand-glazed tiles which had been fired in a ceramic kiln. David took only three months to complete all 384 pieces!

The branch is understandably proud of its colourful ceramic masterpiece and so are the people of Griffith. ■

*Below: Two of the panels, illustrating scenes from Griffith's past. (Photos by courtesy of architect Victor Budd).*

*Above: A section of the mural.*

*Centre: Main counter showing entire mural.*



# Bank facelift as pretty as a picture

A second of the remarkable Griffith artist, Mr David Byard's murals will be unveiled for the first time this week.

The mural has been built into the front of the main counter of the renovated Commonwealth Bank building at the corner of Banna Avenue and Kooyoo Street.

Mr Byard was responsible for the mural which has attracted so much comment in the renovated Yenda Diggers' Club.

The mural has already attracted much comment at the bank.

While workmen were busy last week completing the refurbishing of the bank for opening this week, the mural was exposed and stopped many passing pedestrians.

The official opening of the building will take place this afternoon.

Renovations have been carried out on the building over several months, with the aim to have the "new look", complete by Christmas.

While the bank has been re-built, with most of the original architecture retained, the bank branch has operated from temporary premises.

Right: Mr Byard with his mural at the Commonwealth Bank.

