**HISTORY OF THE FREMANTLE MARKETS**

The gold rushes of the 1880s and 1890s created rapid population growth in Fremantle and demand for fresh food and produce led to the Fremantle Council holding a public architectural competition for the design of a fresh food market on the corner of Henderson Street and South Terrace.

Winning architects Oldham and Eales chose a Federation Romanesque style and the foundation stone was laid by Premier Sir John Forrest on 6 November 1897. Works were completed in 1898 at a cost of £8268. In 1903, Fremantle Markets became the premises for fruit and produce merchants HJ & F Simper Ltd who became the longest tenant and who, by 1921, had taken over most of the interior space.

The market flourished until the 1960s when suburbanisation, shopping centre and supermarket development led to a decline. The produce auction business closed and the interior was used for storage.

The Fremantle Markets was eventually restored for the City of Fremantle, and Murdoch Investments Pty Ltd was selected to redevelop the site as a retail market. The Murdoch family has managed the Markets through a succession of leases since this time.

On 31 October 1975 the Fremantle Markets reopened and newspapers reported that the start of trading was marked by ‘traffic jams outside and pedestrian jams inside’.

In the 1980s the Fremantle Markets was placed on the register of the National Estate, classified by the National Trust and added to the list of heritage places by the Heritage Council of WA. A conservation plan was prepared in 2008 when the current management company, Fremantle Markets Pty Ltd (FMPL) was granted a new 18-year lease. By the end of the lease the Murdoch family will have been responsible for managing Fremantle Markets for more than 50 years.