

# Cairns historian set to launch book 18 years in the making

Dominic Geiger, The Cairns Post  
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AN 18-year “intellectual marathon” is almost at an end for ardent Cairns historian Timothy Bottoms.

On Thursday, his book *A History of Cairns – City of the South Pacific* will officially be launched at Wild Bean Cafe in the Cairns Botanic Gardens.

Appointed by former mayor Tom Pyne to write the book, Dr Bottoms said it was fitting that Mr Pyne’s son and Member for Cairns Rob Pyne would host the event.

Having started the book project in 1997, the historian said he was relieved it would soon be available to the public.



Local historian and author Timothy Bottoms in his home office. He has written a new book detailing the history of Cairns. PICTURE: ANNA ROGERS

“It was very demanding – I burnt out a couple of times writing it but I think it’s a ripping good read,” Dr Bottoms said. “I tried to give the reader as much information as they’re ever likely to need – I don’t think anybody would go to the same trouble as I went to ever again.”

Coincidentally, Dr Bottoms’ brother John released his own book, *Paw Paw Lawyer – Tales of Legal Practice in North Australia*, just last week.

But the historian said there was no real rivalry between himself and his older sibling.

“It’s purely accidental,” he said. “I’m very proud of what he’s achieved.”

According to Dr Bottoms, *A History of Cairns* provides “a balanced coverage of events and people” from the founding of Cairns in 1876 until 1995, with a few little “forays” into the future.

It includes a recount of the Battle of Parramatta Park – a conflict between a small percentage of employed locals and unemployed squatters during the depression.

It also deals with the slaughter of Aboriginal inhabitants by early settlers, however, unlike his previous work, *Conspiracy of Silence*, it is not the focus of the book.

“It’s inclusive of all people that made that move up to the Cairns district,” Dr Bottoms said.

“For those who are genuinely interested in the Cairns region and Cape York, there are insights in there that are very informative.”

Dr Bottoms said he hoped tour guides would use his book to better inform visitors to the Far North.

“I’m just thrilled it’s going to help promote the region so we’ve got well informed tour guides, and all the tourism infrastructure we need to contextualise it,” he said.

*A History of Cairns – City of the South Pacific* is available for \$49.99 at Collins Booksellers at Smithfield, and Cairns Books at Cairns Central, as well as several newsagents.

The book’s launch begins at 10am on Thursday at Wild Bean Cafe.

Dr Bottoms said he wanted to thank Cairns vet Dr Paul Matthews for his philanthropy and support of the project.