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MEDIA RELEASE

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Big crowds turn out for 'Woolworths Day' New Cove era

THE pioneer of any kind of shopping at Cooloolo Cove LJ Hooker franchisee Rod Robertson had his own experience as a comparison yesterday.

Assessing the opening day crowd for the new Woolworths-based Cooloolo Sands shopping centre, he observed: 'I'd like to have got numbers like this everyday.'
A busy crowd and fully choked car park told the story as Mayor Ron Dyne cut the ribbon to mark the centre's official opening.

Rod sold the first groceries in the history of Cooloolo Cove, back when it was still called Cooloolo village and before there was any second stage known as Cooloolo Sands.
The little shop, which closed last week stands across the carpark from yesterday's action, about where a tavern is planned in the near future.

Ten years ago, it was the once pioneering suburbs first convenience store. "They let me serve the last customer," Mr Robertson said. "They said I'd served the first customer in the shop, so I may as well serve the last."

Rod was one of the three business identities who had chopped in to help in the final mad rush to prepare the site for yesterdays opening, along with Ray Sampson and Brendan Patterson.

"When we first came here, it was supposed to have been built within 12 months- and that was 23 years ago,' said Daphne Kenyon, credited with being one of Cooloolo Cove's first residents.

"But people who buy now pay more then 10 times what we did when we brought here," she said. Paul Fleming, whose Fleming Group of Companies owns the new centre, said he and his family also had a long association with retailing, as well as with Woolworths.

His father opened a grocery store which became the basis of the Jewel Food Stores Empire, which operated 130 Supermarkets by 1995, before being sold to Woolworths.

The \$15 million shopping centre is built on \$2.7 million worth of land. Its Woolworths Supermarket will provide 50 permanent jobs, plus the jobs contribution of 12 specialty retailers and a medical centre. Store manager Trevor Rice said Woolworths would host the medical transport service for Coast residents needing treatment in Gympie.