

# EARLY EUROPEAN AND ABORIGINAL HERITAGE STUDY

## HAMILTON HILL SWAMP PRECINCT



Department of **Planning,  
Lands and Heritage**



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### Hamilton Hill Swamp Early European and Aboriginal Heritage Study

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct lies at the heart of our local community.

In 2017, Mark McGowan and I committed to delivering \$50,000 for a study of the site's rich Aboriginal and early European heritage.

Bringing together everything we know about the precinct in a single document has been a monumental but vitally important task. Years have been spent trawling through maps, records, and media clippings, and sharing the stories handed down about this country by successive generations.

Hamilton Hill Swamp was used by Nyoongar people as a camping, hunting and ceremonial meeting ground. It holds a special place in the Seven Sisters Dreaming and associated song lines.

Following European arrival, the site was closely identified with figures of Nyoongar leadership and resistance like Midgiegooroo and Yagan, whose stories are finally being heard and recognised as crucial aspects of Western Australia's history.

The precinct is also closely associated with prominent early colonial families, the emergence of the horse racing industry in Western Australia, market gardening, and community activism against projects like the Fremantle Eastern Bypass and Perth Freight Link.

While the funds were provided by the State Government, I am grateful for the work of Terra Rosa and the City of Cockburn in managing this project.

This study has also been driven, to a large degree, by traditional owners and local residents. I expected nothing less from such an active and engaged community, and thank everybody who took part and helped shape the study.

Having brought together the various threads of the Hamilton Hill Swamp's past, this study will provide a valuable guide and resource as our community considers how the precinct should best be used and managed into the future.

**Simone McGurk**  
State Member for Fremantle







# FOREWORD

The City of Cockburn (CoC) has identified the need for development of an early European and Aboriginal Heritage Study of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, intended to provide an up-to-date and comprehensive record which can be relied upon to determine the heritage values of the Precinct. The purpose of this study is to appropriately manage, protect, and interpret the values that should underpin future land use and development options at the site. We would like to acknowledge Hon. Simone McGurk MLA, State Member for Fremantle, who identified the need for this study and secured funding from the McGowan Government to make it a reality.

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct includes 12.5 hectares of land within the suburb of Hamilton Hill, Western Australia. The Precinct is bordered by tenure lines following Hurtford Street in the east, Starling Street and Rockingham Road in the south, Cardigan Street in the west, and Ommaney Street and Healy Road in the north.

Pre-colonisation, Nyoongar Traditional Owners used the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct to camp, hunt, practice ceremony and it also contains a bidi (walking track). The area holds important cultural values to Nyoongar people, their way of life and creation story. To other members of the local community and stakeholders the area is important for its Aboriginal significance and they engage with it for their own varying uses.

There are also many significant historical events and accounts pertaining to the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, which contribute to its heritage values since the time of colonial settlement in 1829.

Consultations have been carried out with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal stakeholders to assess the cultural heritage and historical values of the Precinct and to determine effective decision-making going forward. The Precinct holds historical and contemporary significance to all stakeholders, community members, local government, and Traditional Owners who consider it an integral part of the early European and Aboriginal history for the area.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Terra Rosa Consulting (Terra Rosa) acknowledges the Nyoongar Traditional Owners of the lands and waters where the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is today and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

Terra Rosa are grateful to all the people and organisations who contributed their time, energy, resources and ideas to the development of this Early European and Aboriginal Heritage Study, including:

All those who participated in drop-in sessions, workshops, online survey's, phone consultations, reviewed draft reports and draft studies or shared their historical accounts, knowledge, and stories for the area.

Alexei McKay  
Alison Bolas  
Anna Haebich  
Aurora Abraham  
Bertie Curtin  
Bob Lawrence  
Charlotte Antoine  
City of Cockburn  
City of Fremantle  
Darryl Kickett  
Dr. Helen Flavell  
David Carson  
Elisha Ricetti  
Finn Volger  
Friends of Clontarf Hill  
Geri Hayden  
Gillian Saunders  
Hamilton Hill Community Members  
Historical Society of Cockburn  
J Gilbertson  
Jane Baijal  
Jozina de Ruiter  
Justin O'Malley  
Karen Jacobs

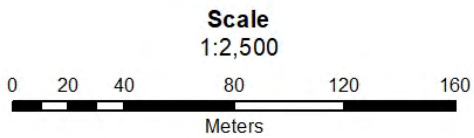
Kate Jones  
Kay Walley  
Kirsty Fitzpatrick  
Kylie Taylor  
LandCorp WA  
Leah Knapp  
Leah (Spearwood Library)  
Lyn Pringle  
Main Roads WA  
Nandi Chinna  
Nick Abraham  
Nola Brooks (McKay)  
Oonagh Vereker  
Paul Watson  
Pinakarri Community  
Randwick Stables  
Raymond Grenfell  
Riley Ashton  
Simone McGurk MLA  
Stanley Hedland  
South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council  
Susan Flavell  
Terry Baker  
Tom Allum





Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct - Project Area Overview

Job №: COC1901      Map №: 1      Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 50  
Date: 13/06/2019      Author: GlennC  
Disclaimer: The information in this map is accurate as at the date of issue. Spatial accuracy level of +/- 15m unless otherwise noted.





# THE STUDY AREA

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is located in the suburb of Hamilton Hill and is bordered by Rockingham Road in the south and Ommaney Street and Healy Road in the north. The Precinct covers 12.5 hectares of previously developed and 'undeveloped' land and is currently a mixed-use precinct, including an oval, basketball stadium, recreational space, playground, a park and horse stables. The Precinct is a historically rich area to Early European Settlement and Aboriginal heritage.







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# INTRODUCTION

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is the traditional country of the Whadjuk Nyoongar Traditional Owners and its history is intertwined in many events, industries and organisations during early European settlement. The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct holds high cultural heritage significance to Traditional Owners, local community members, local organisations, landowners, and key stakeholders.

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct contributes to the local identity of the surrounding community, CoC, and Perth's wider regional identity and history. It contains significant cultural and historical assets which have tangible and intangible values, and which require recognition and preservation. Whilst the demand for urbanisation and development is apparent, there needs to be an equal emphasis on conservation of cultural and historical values.

Aboriginal culture, now globally recognised as the world's oldest continuous living culture, is one of the Precinct's most unique and enduring assets. In addition, early European historical features include Randwick stables and market gardens, reflecting the early colonial uses of the Precinct. These cultural and historical values are rich and diverse in keeping with the various uses of the area and its surrounds.

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct must be strategically integrated into local planning and development in order to ensure its management meets the requirements of various stakeholders, community members, and Traditional Owners, and continues to contribute to the local area's cultural ecology and identity.



## PROJECT SCOPE

Terra Rosa Consulting was engaged by City of Cockburn in May 2019 for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive Aboriginal and Early European heritage study on the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. The study was requested to focus on some key research areas including potential burials, ceremonial site, potential massacre site, heritage listed trees and campsites. The study also requested to undertake research in relation to the extent of Early European history and heritage significance for the area including information pertaining to Randwick Stables, Charles McFaull's House, Sunnyside Homestead, Perth's first printing press, Perth's first vines and significant trees in the area.





# PARTICIPANTS AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

It was important that the study was delivered with appropriate community engagement as a key objective. A considered approach would ensure that stakeholders, community members, and Traditional Owners were appropriately engaged due to the number of interests from varying parties in the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. Community engagement occurred over the following steps:

- 1. Community Engagement Strategy** – detailing the various stakeholders and appropriate engagement processes which would be used to undertake the study.
  - a. Community comment, edits, and approval of Engagement Strategy
- 2. Early engagement** – community notices about the study placed around the community and online platforms and two public drop-in sessions.
- 3. Desktop Review** – Aboriginal and European Literature Review and Gap Analysis
- 4. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment** with Nyoongar Traditional Owners who met Terra Rosa Consultants at the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct to assess its Aboriginal heritage values and significance.
  - a. Publication of Consultation Report for review by the Nyoongar Traditional Owner participants.
- 5. Historical heritage consultation** – consultation with local historians and community members and the distribution of an online survey provided to those who attended the drop-in sessions or had indicated that they would like to be involved throughout the entire consultation process.
- 6. Review of findings** – this included providing a draft copy of this Study to all stakeholders, community members and Traditional Owners who participated.
- 7. Community presentation** at ‘The Hub’ in Hamilton Hill to discuss findings.

Those who participated indicated they were happy with the level of consultation and engagement to ensure the information about the Precinct was reliable and had captured the various views and opinions of its representatives. Terra Rosa would like to thank those who contributed to the Study.

**Best-practice approach to community consultation uses a 5-tiered approach:**

- 1. inform**
- 2. consult**
- 3. involve**
- 4. collaborate**
- 5. empower**

**This approach ensured that method and depth of consultation was tailored to the stakeholder – some asked for a more involved / high level of consultation and others preferred to just receive updates on the study.**





**The Nyoongar  
Traditional Owner  
consultation team  
at 'The Hub' in the  
Hamilton Hill.**



# DESKTOP RESEARCH

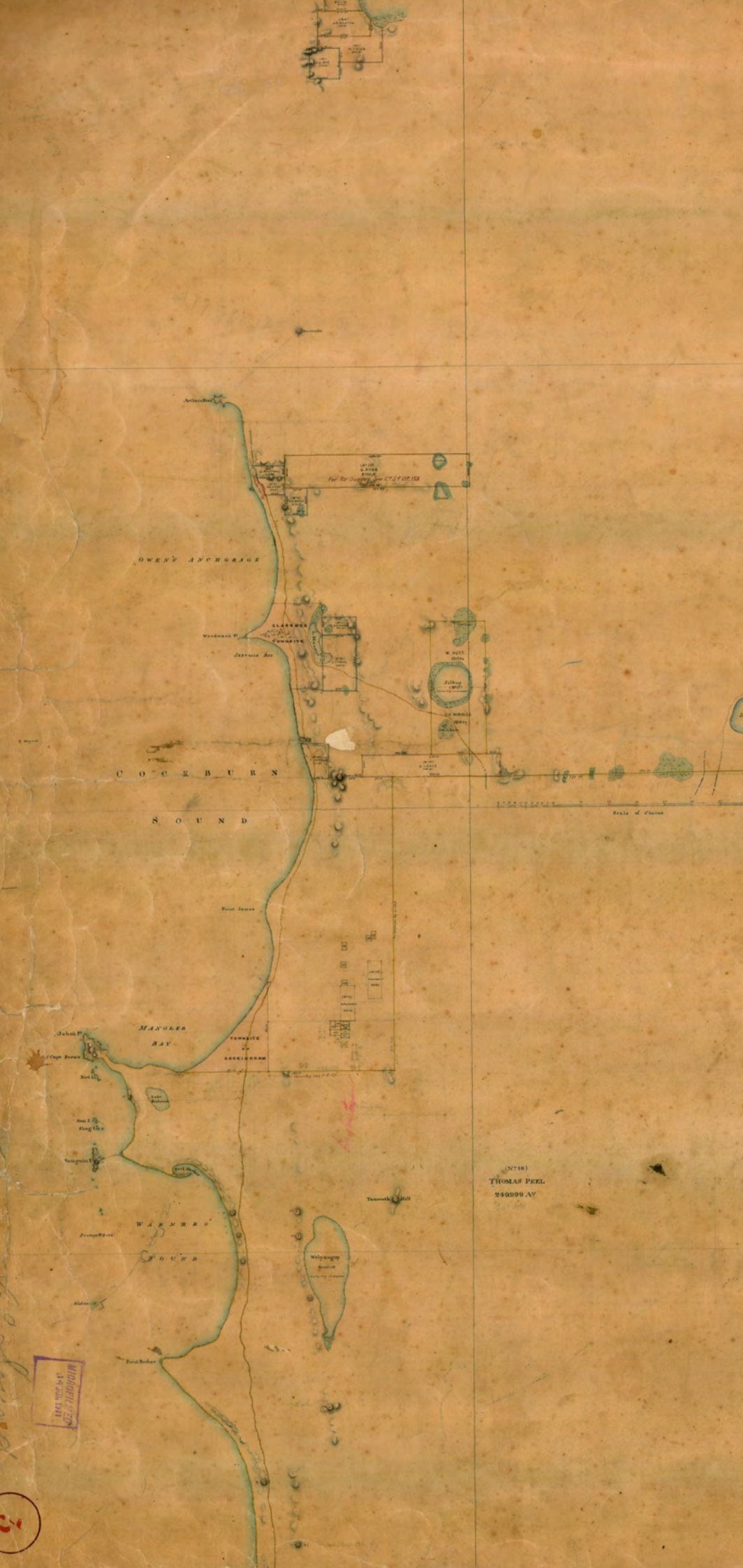
Initial understandings of the Aboriginal heritage of Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct were gained through undertaking a desktop assessment, site file review, literature review, and gap analysis of the available resources.

**1. Desktop Assessment** – Initial desktop research relied on the Register of Aboriginal Sites maintained by the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage (DPLH), which is a catalogue of Aboriginal heritage places previously recorded within the area. Before the start of the consultation process, the scoped assessment area was entered into the DPLH's Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System (AHIS) to learn whether any heritage assessments have previously been conducted and whether any registered Aboriginal sites or other heritage places (OHPs) exist in the area. After the AHIS search had been completed, relevant site files and assessment reports were requested from the DPLH for review.

**2. Site File Review** – A number of previous studies, reports, and surveys have occurred within the vicinity of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. The AHIS search revealed four previous surveys which had taken place over the Precinct and encompassed some of its surrounds. Site files which could be accessed from the DPLH were requested and reviewed prior to the consultations. The AHIS search revealed no previous registered sites or OHPs exist within the Study area; however, the search did indicate that Robbs Jetty (DPLH ID 3707) and Clontarf Hill (DPLH ID 18332) are within close proximity.

**3. Literature Review and Gap Analysis** – Completed during the first stage of the development process to determine and understand the extent of the existing heritage research undertaken to date within the Study area (see appendix 3). This research included a list of documents and texts found through local archives, libraries, universities, and online sources.

Any relevant unpublished material (heritage reports not registered with the DPLH), books, journals, and newspaper articles were also reviewed prior to consultations and are included in the heritage assessment results where relevant.





## Aboriginal Heritage Inquiry System

### Map of Other Heritage Places

For further important information on using this information please see the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage's Disclaimer statement at <https://www.dplh.wa.gov.au/about-this-website>







# PREVIOUS STUDIES

Review of CoC's local government inventory revealed relevant newspaper accounts of historical events happening in the area, the significance of the Norfolk Island pine trees, information on Randwick Stables, and prominent historical figures during the early years of settlement, such as Charles McFaull, Wee-Waw, and R.M Lyons.

No comprehensive studies have previously been conducted on the Precinct itself; however, a detailed account of Clontarf Hill by Dr. Nandi Chinna was written in 2015. Clontarf Hill lies approximately 130 m to the north of Healy Rd (the northern border of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct) and contributes to the significance of the swamp precinct, as it ties into the cultural landscape for the area. Dr. Chinna's study, funded by Lotterywest, provided a useful account of the area including general background information, Nyoongar history, settlement, farms and industries in the area including Randwick stables, and the establishment of market gardens. Dr. Nandi Chinna had also produced a series of poems on the Perth wetlands, including one specific to Dixon Park within Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct.

Local historian Paul Watson has previously written about the heritage significance of the Hamilton Hill Swamp and made significant contributions to the study in relation to the European History for the area. Paul provided invaluable information pertaining to the divisions of land, the location of Charles MacFaull's house and histories relating to Sydney Smith, Charles Manning, the Dixon family, the Chamberlain family and Sunnyside homestead.

Several early exploration journals exist detailing the parties who travelled through the area at the time of colonisation including surveyor journals by Alfred Durlacher and exploration journals of Septimus Roe and James Stirling. These journals recount swamps in the vicinity of Hamilton Hill and provide accounts of meetings with the local Aboriginal groups.

Information in these documents are used within this Study to fill in historical gaps, contextualise information, and contribute to the understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct.



# CONSULTATION AND SITE SURVEY

## ABORIGINAL CONSULTATION

Several phone and email discussions with the Nyoongar Traditional Owners occurred to explain the Scope of Works and gain any further suggestions for the appropriate people to be contacted. Dates and timing for the Aboriginal values workshop were arranged. The workshop provided everyone in attendance with information about the purpose, scope, and proposed method of the study. During the workshop, the heritage values of the swamp precinct were discussed and recorded. A consultation report was written and sent to the Traditional Owners for review to ensure that culturally sensitive information was appropriately managed and to confirm the recommendations provided. Feedback was integrated into the final edit of this report.

## NON-INDIGENOUS CONSULTATION

Non-Indigenous Stakeholders, community members and organisations were contacted via phone or email to explain the Scope of Works and purpose and proposed method of consultation. Following this a mail drop detailing information for two community drop-in sessions was completed within a 2 km radius from the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct to capture local community members and residents. During the two drop-in sessions individuals wishing to be further involved in the consultation process were sent an email calling for further information they may hold in relation to the history of the Precinct. Due to the low response rate of this call for further information, it was decided that an online survey was a more appropriate means to gain further understanding and knowledge of the Precinct. The online survey was used to determine the cultural and historical values of the Precinct in conjunction with the Aboriginal significance assessment to construct a cultural and historical landscape.







## HAMILTON HILL SWAMP PRECINCT SURVEYED AND RECORDED AS AN ABORIGINAL SITE

During the Aboriginal heritage workshop, Nyoongar Traditional Owners undertook a physical survey of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. During this time the heritage values and significance of the Precinct were spatially defined. One of the key outcomes of the assessment was a concern amongst Traditional Owners for the Precinct's future protection. Traditional Owners agreed that the area should be registered as an Aboriginal site with the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage (DPLH) as a means of protection. In order to register the Precinct as a site, a Heritage Information Submission form (HISF) must be submitted to the DPLH. The submitted form documents the details and heritage values of the cultural significance of the site and delineates a boundary for the site.

There were some differing opinions regarding the most appropriate site boundary, which resulted in the delineation of two boundaries for the site, which will both be submitted to the DPLH. The site boundary contains the extent of the Aboriginal cultural values that were agreed upon on the ground with Traditional Owners.

The first boundary represents the site as a site complex involving several individual areas that are interconnected to form part of one site. The site complex encompasses four areas to the north and south of Rockingham Road. The boundary in the east follows a historic outline of the infilled swamp with a buffer to account for Traditional hunting and camping activities. The remainder of Dixon Reserve was excluded as it was considered 'developed' and the sites tangible cultural values have been disturbed. The majority of the other areas were defined using the underlying tenure from Main Roads, Reserve and Landcorp boundaries.

The second site boundary connects the four areas of the site complex to make one large site and includes the entirety of Dixon Reserve.

Traditional Owners requested the site be recorded as a mythological site, water sources, camping and hunting grounds, massacre site and natural feature site.



## BOUNDARY 1 (page 18)

**Area 1** includes most of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct but excludes a portion of Dixon Reserve. The boundaries were delineated using Main Roads and Landcorp tenure lines which run along Rockingham and Healy Roads. The eastern boundary was defined by using the historic outline of the infilled swamp and a buffer in place to allow for the Traditional hunting and camping activities that would have taken place. The southern boundary was defined by Rockingham road but altered to exclude any council infrastructure adjacent to the road;

**Area 2** including the women's ceremonial hill, was delineated using Main Roads tenure lines, and runs along Rockingham Road and Bellion Drive;

**Area 3** including a Bidi track was delineated using Main Roads tenure lines and runs along Rockingham Road and Cardigan Street; and

**Area 4** including Clontarf Hill was delineated using reserve tenure lines and runs along Healy and Clontarf Roads. For a depiction of the site complex and the included area please refer to map 3 below.

## BOUNDARY 2 (page 19)

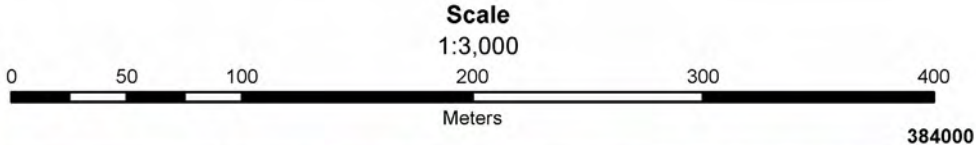
Connects the four site complex area's demonstrated in map one, using Main Roads, Landcorp and Reserve Tenure lines and includes the entirety of Dixon Reserve.





Aboriginal Heritage Site Plan - Current Imagery

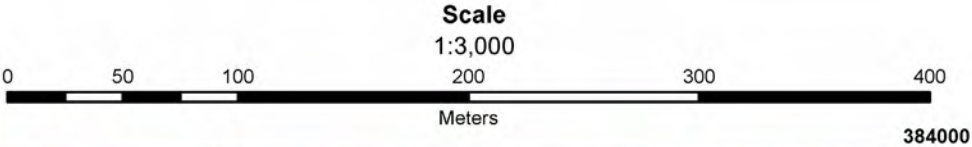
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Aboriginal Heritage Site Plan - Current Imagery

Job №: COC1901    Map №: A\_SP5    Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 50    Date: 28/07/2020







# WHADJUK TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP

## WELCOME TO WHADJUK COUNTRY

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is situated within the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Nyoongar Traditional Owners, located within the suburb of Hamilton Hill and falls under the City of Cockburn.

The Whadjuk People Native Title application (WC2011/009) is in the Southwest region of Western Australia and includes the Perth metropolitan area and Fremantle. The claim is bordered to the north by the Yued, to the east by the Ballardong People, and to the south by the Gnaala Karla Booja. It sits within the Swan Coastal Plain bioregion that runs from the City of Perth to Cape Naturaliste in the south.

## SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS

Nyoongar country has been inhabited for a considerable period of time; the Upper Swan Bridge camping ground has been dated to 38,000 years BP (Pearce & Barbetti 1981). The primary geographic feature of this bioregion is the Swan and Canning Rivers which are fed by smaller tributaries from the hills of the Darling Scarp.

The Swan and Canning Rivers hold great significance to the Nyoongar people and their neighbours, as they are believed to have been created by the Rainbow Serpent or Waugal, a dreamtime being in the form of a giant snake. In the dreamtime story the Waugal created creeks, waterholes, lakes, and valleys on its journey to the ocean from Mt Eliza, including the Swan River (Hughes-Hallett 2010: 4, 11). The Waugal is inherently linked to the Dreamtime responsible for creating the landscape and water sources (Shaw & Martin 2011: 53).

Previous patterns of distribution indicate that Nyoongar people used waterways as pathways through country, facilitating travel and access to important cultural sites, raw material sources, and seasonal resources.



## THE WAUGAL AND THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER

Prior to European settlement, the coastal plain comprised a series of freshwater wetlands. This included the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, which is interconnected with several other major and minor waterways associated with the Waugal Dreaming, and whose energy still runs beneath the ground. Like the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, the majority of these wetlands were drained, filled, or cleared since 1832. Major freshwater wetlands remaining in Perth include Lake Monger, Herdsman Lake, Bibra Lake, North Lake and Manning Lake, which are all of special significance to the Nyoongar Traditional Owners. Permanent and underground water sources continue to be of high cultural importance, indicating the health of Country, which in turn reflects the health of culture (Barber & Jackson 2011).

Permanent water sources were often linked via known walking trails ('bidis' in the Nyoongar language). One such track exists within the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct connecting the women's ceremonial hill to the south of Rockingham Road, through a small triangle of bushland, north to Clontarf Hill. These bidis were used primarily during ceremony times to link several places in the broader area of Hamilton Hill and connected water sources around Bibra Lake.

During consultation the Traditional Owners explained that the Waugal is a significant Dreaming relating to Hamilton Hill Swamp. As a water source the area holds intangible values relating to the Waugal and the wider cultural landscape through its interconnection with the broader wetlands system and the Waugal's energy which still runs beneath the ground. It is said, that to break the chain of these wetlands is to break the path of the Waugal, which can result in people becoming sick or even dying.

The limestone hills along the coast (not far from the low lying swamp areas) feature many caves which are said to have been created by the Waugal and where people would often camp due to the limestones thermal qualities.







## THE SEVEN SISTERS DREAMING

Consultation revealed that Hamilton Hill Swamp is also associated with the Seven Sisters Dreaming (Marajinbangga Gurdjir Koodjal Djoorkaarn) which includes the limestone hills (Djidong) running along the Swan River and south along the coast.

Traditional Owners confirmed that this Seven Sisters Dreaming is different to the Seven Sisters Dreaming common in the north of Western Australia. This Dreaming connects Cantonment Hill (Dwerdaweelardinup) and Clontarf Hill (to the north of the Swamp), and various other hills in the vicinity, which have since been razed for development. The Seven Sisters Dreaming and its associated songline, contributes to the intangible values of the Precinct. Knowledge for the Dreaming has been passed down to the current generation of Traditional Owners, who wish to see it and its associated natural features preserved.

Dreamings hold great importance in Aboriginal culture, as they are the creation beings who gave life and form to the land. Dreaming stories are often passed down through the generations and only told and held by people with permission to do so.



## CEREMONIAL PLACE

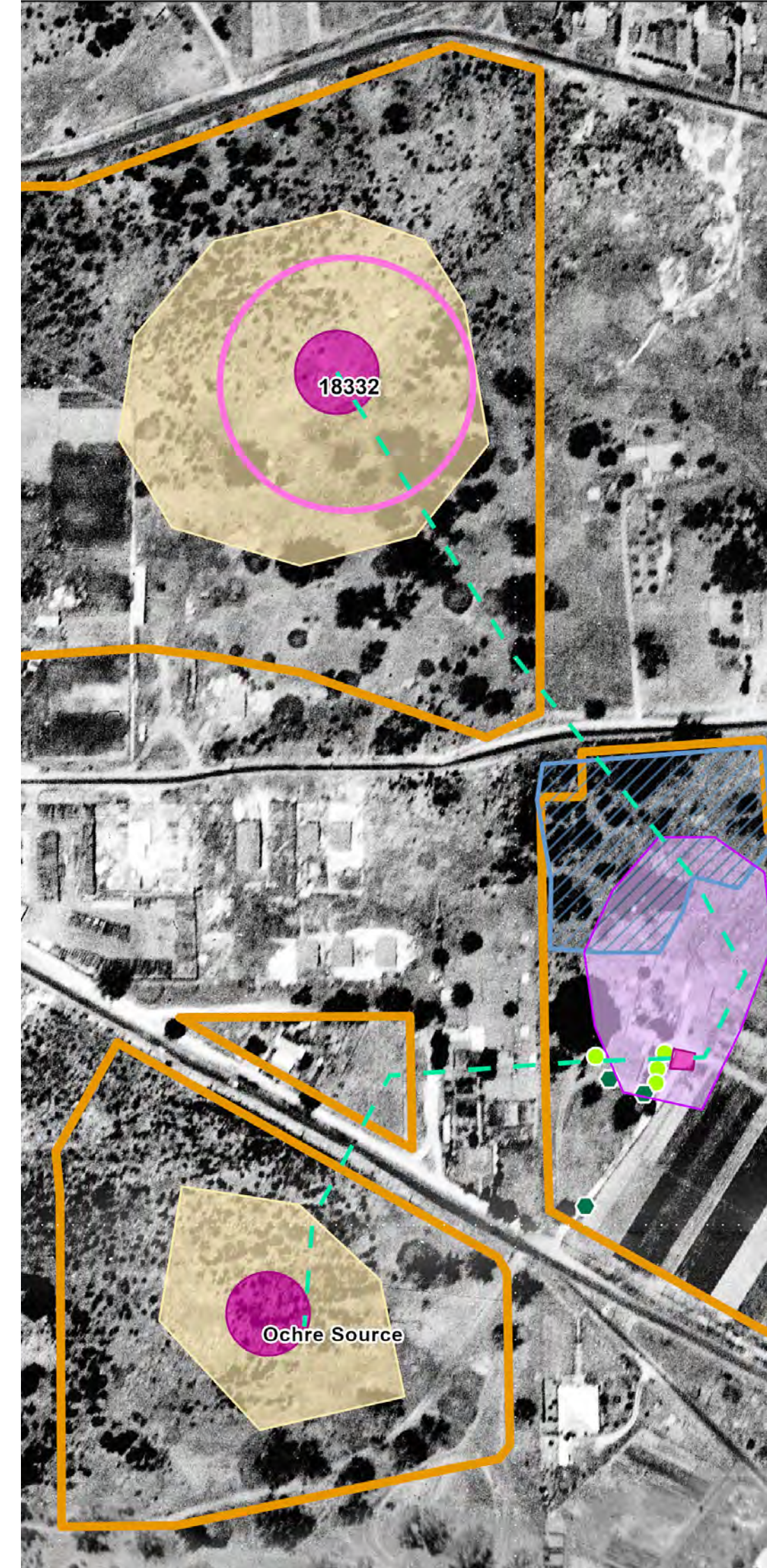
Ceremonial and mythological sites are found throughout Nyoongar Country and are of exceptionally high cultural significance to Nyoongar Traditional Owners. Several historical texts and articles acknowledge the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct as being used for ceremony. In 1930 the Fremantle Advertiser newspaper featured a retrospect of the Hamilton Swamp 60 years prior (est. 1870s) which recorded Aboriginal people gathering from far and wide at the Swamp for corroborees that would last for a few days (Fremantle Advertiser 1930: 2).

In recounting the early Swan River Colony, Calder (1977: 35) reports that Midgiegooroo's son Yagan was sighted around the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, which led to Aboriginal groups performing ceremonial dances in the Aboriginal resistance fighter's honour. Appleyard and Manford (1980: 103) also acknowledge ceremonies taking place in the Hamilton Hill vicinity.

During the consultation, Traditional Owners described the area as 'high ceremonial grounds' of great significance and being connected to a larger interconnected ceremonial web winding through Hamilton Hill, Fremantle, and Manning Park in Spearwood. Traditional Owners said ceremonies would occur where the palm trees (currently standing in the western portion of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct up to Cardigan Street) are located.

Ceremonial grounds located in the Precinct include specified gender segregated men's and women's ceremonial areas. Nyoongar informants advised there is a women's ceremonial hill to the south of Rockingham Road. This ceremonial hill is known to have red and white ochre pits used for painting women during the ceremonies. An important bidi (track) also runs from this women's ceremonial hill, through a small triangle of vegetation north to Clontarf Hill, which was marked by stones and rocks. Traditional Owners have said this is just one example of a large web of interconnected ceremonial sites which continue to run south through the landscape.

Today's ceremonial grounds within the Precinct consist of a man-made stone arrangement in the west of Area 1, which is used for ceremonies currently.







# WHAADJUK TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP

## A CAMPING / HUNTING PLACE

The wetland and estuary environment which would have once defined the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct included paperbark and ti-tree swamps as well as banksia and tuart woodland. It also attracted several different bird and fish species making it an ideal camping and hunting area.

The unique ecosystem provided traditional medicine plants used by Aboriginal people prior to, during, and after settlement. During consultation Traditional Owners confirmed that many bush medicines were found throughout the area, as well as a number of fish species including whiting, tailor, herring, cobbler, oyster, and crabs.

The knowledge and use of various plants and animals by the Nyoongar people is indicative of the inherent ongoing connection they have to Country.



Camping grounds near reliable water sources such as the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct are common on Nyoongar Country. The abundance of resources would have contributed to the area's attractiveness as a camping place. Appleyard and Manford (1980: 103) record 'Aboriginals' running along the hills in the swamp vicinity and the presence of a number of camps. The Fremantle Advertiser also mentions the Mandurah-Fremantle tribes using the area as part of their hunting grounds (Fremantle Advertiser 1930: 2).

During the consultation, Traditional Owners advised that Hamilton Hill Swamp was the summer campground for Aboriginal leader, Midgiegooroo. The swamp grounds would have flooded to over 1 m deep making it an ideal spot for camping and hunting in the warm months, due to the abundance of water and the wildlife it attracted. Midgiegooroo's connection to the swamp contributes to the significance of the Precinct. As a leader for Aboriginal people and a symbol of Aboriginal resistance, Midgiegooroo contributes to the historical and cultural significance for the area.

Chinna's (2015) study suggests the area was used as campgrounds by Aboriginal people until the 1940s and 50s. This is corroborated by the current Traditional Owners, whose knowledge of campgrounds in the area reside within their living memory through stories that have been passed down through the generations.

**"Mobs of brumbies, semi-wild, was well as the Fremantle town herd, used to water at the swamp. The surrounding country was densely wooded. White Gum, Jarrah – in those days called mahogany – banksia and she-oak, thickly interspersed with wattle, blackboy, grass trees, palms and numerous other species. There was bird-life galore. Black cockatoos in thousands feeding and screaming up among the treetops... even odd kangaroos were to be seen in the locality. Possum hunting out round the swamp provided great sport and much appreciated addition to the larder" (Fremantle Advertiser 1930: 2).**





## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Since much of Nyoongar Country, including the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct has been disturbed, infilled, and subject to ongoing development, there is a lack of surface archaeological material. Artefact scatters and rockshelters are most likely to be found within the limestone caves and dune system such as those at Clontarf Hill, where Quartz flakes have been recorded at the base of the hill. It is likely that wherever there are rockshelters and suitably sized overhangs, at least some of these contain cultural material (Chinna 2015, 31). Many Traditional Owners were concerned about what was lying below the ground of the Precinct and suggested that if an excavation were to occur, materials may be uncovered due to the previous hunting and camping uses for the area.

Due to widespread destruction of Aboriginal archaeological sites in the Perth metro area, Traditional Owners highlighted that it is the intangible cultural heritage of places (oral histories stories, Dreaming, cultural knowledge for place) which holds primacy during Aboriginal site recording. It was these values which were the focus of the Aboriginal site recording process.

Whilst this section of the Study has considered the 'traditional' (pre-colonial) values of the Hamilton Hill Swamp, the following section will consider European colonisation of the region and the massacre connected with the site.







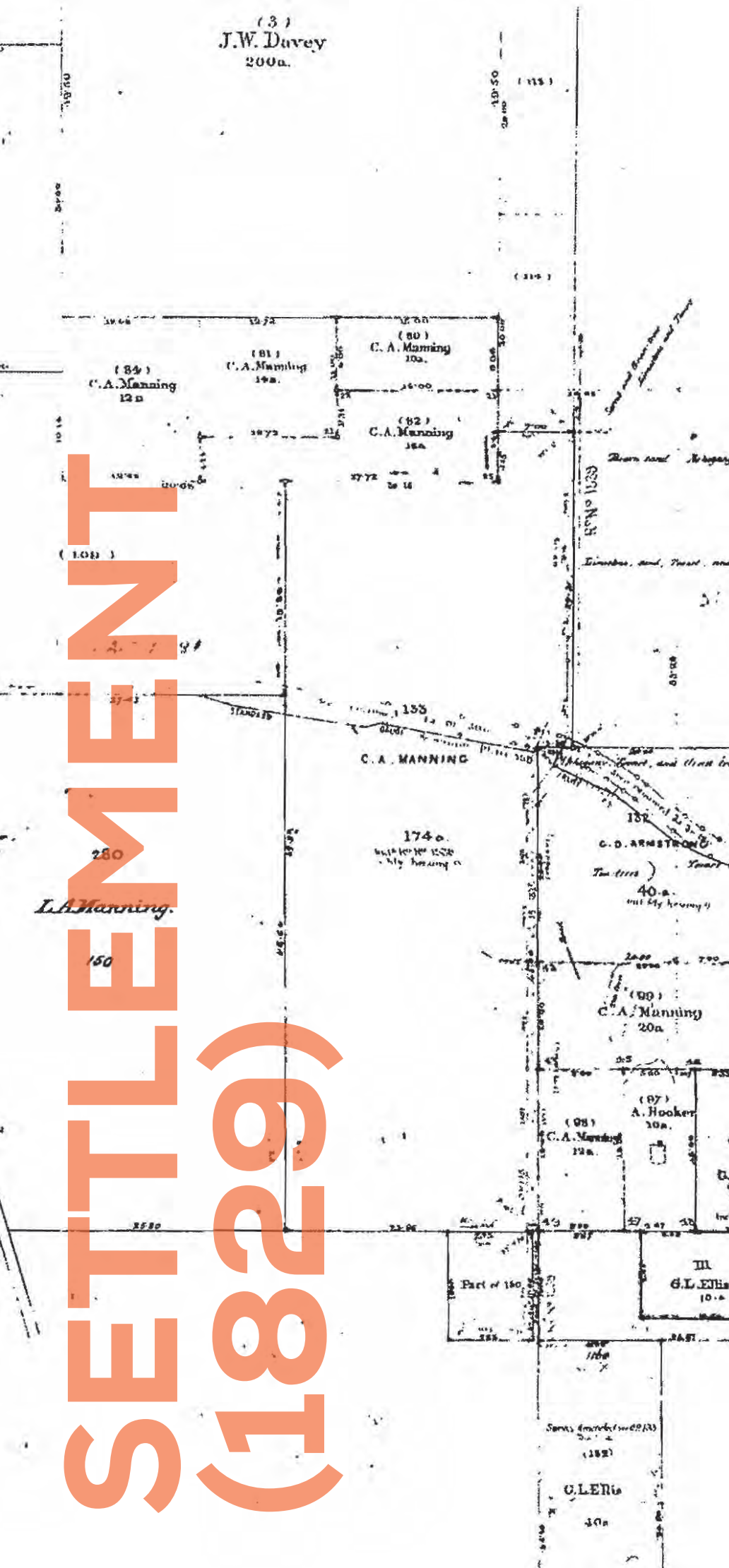
# SETTLEMENT (1829)











## LAND DIVISIONS

The division of land post 1829 is evident through a number of maps drawn from 1830-1931 and surveyor maps detailed by Alfred Durlacher in his surveyor field book.

The State Records Office of Western Australia holds some of these early surveyor maps from the mid 1800's, detailing the allocation and ownership of land in the Hamilton Hill area. Many names of the early families who settled in the area are detailed in the maps, including the Le Froy, Healy, Robb, and McFaull families. These family names are mentioned frequently throughout the literature pertaining to early settlement in Hamilton Hill and played a vital role in what was to become of the area. There is no recognition of Hamilton Swamp in the early maps for the area; however, conclusions can be drawn of the approximate location of the Swamp and whose title of land it would have fallen under.

It can be determined from the surveyor maps that the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct fell into the portion of land originally belonging to George Robb. Robb applied for a 2000 acre land grant in 1830 which extended from what is now Cardigan Street in Hamilton Hill east to North Lake. In 1899 Robb's original title of land was then divided up into 42 sections. During this time of land division it was reported that many people were squatting in the bushland around the Swamp Precinct. Charles Manning was another prominent early member of the Swan River Colony. He was sent to Fremantle by his older brother Henry to expand the Manning empire across the globe. Manning acquired much land in the area and attempted to claim ownership over Robb's title of land but was unsuccessful. The Dixon family from Fremantle bought thirteen sections (around one quarter of the whole subdivision of Robb's title) and this is where the Dixon Park name has been derived from. Henry Septimus Dixon held 24 acres at Ommanney Street, of which five acres of his land was around a swamp (inferred to be Hamilton Hill Swamp) that is partly now buried under a section of Dixon Reserve and the adjacent road reserve. Hamilton Hill Swamp fell within the title of land owned by the Dixon's who came to be a prominent family for the area. The title of land owned by Henry Septimus Dixon should not be confused with that of John Dixon, who was a prominent butcher in the area.

The Bakers were another family who held strong ties to the Hamilton Hill area. Two of the Bakers married into the Dixon family creating an intertwined history for the area. Twins, Joseph and Levi Baker were pioneering butchers for the Hamilton Hill area and contributed to the establishment of the butchering industry. Two Aboriginal men, Wandi and Ned Brown, were employed by the Baker twins, of whom, Wandi, was brought up by the Dixon family.







# EARLY SETTLEMENT (1829-1834)

## ABORIGINAL ENCOUNTERS

Much of the known information of early Aboriginal historical accounts comes from newspaper articles. These assist in painting a cultural landscape of the lives of the people who were living, camping, hunting, and practicing traditional culture at the time of colonisation.

Many newspaper articles provide insight into the area and the local Aboriginal groups. The Fremantle Advertiser reported on a retrospect of the Hamilton Hill Swamp. The retrospect was published in 1930 and was told by a man who, 60 years prior, recalls playing cricket around the Swamp. The article describes the cultural landscape of the swamp precinct being rich in plant and animal species and the Aboriginal camp and hunting grounds used at the Precinct. The article states that corroborees were held in the area for a number of days and many would travel from far and wide to attend (Fremantle Advertiser 1930, 2).

A number of other articles reference relationships between Aboriginal people and early settlers including the Perth Gazette (1833), which provided examples of the relationships with Aboriginal people at the time of colonisation. Unwarranted attacks were made upon Aboriginal groups leading to contentious relations and further conflict. The West Australian Journal (1833: 11) reports an attack on local Aboriginal people at Armstrong's Point: "Although unprovoked by any act on the part of the Natives, they fired several rounds upon them. Admitting this, the attack was equally unwarrantable, and it is to be hoped will not be repeated".

These early accounts reflect the tenuous relationships between Aboriginal people and early settlers during the years of colonisation.



"Natives were everywhere in the old days, and they grew fat on the refuse from the whaling plants. They used to have wonderful corroborees at Hamilton Hill swamp. Natives from hundreds of miles used to gather and they would keep up the celebration for days. Only the tribes from around Geraldton were not allowed to join the fun. They had the reputation of being dangerous boggans. It's a wonder we youngsters did not get spears through our sides, the jokes we played on those niggers. Once a plague of measles struck Fremantle. A lot of white people succumbed, and the natives died off like flies. The poor niggers nearly went mad when they began to run a temperature, and dozens ran into the river and were drowned.

### THE NATIVES.

The Natives, principally women, have been in and about Perth for the past fortnight, but not in any considerable numbers. Their object in visiting us, they say is, to renew the friendly understanding which existed previously to the affair at Fremantle, and which was followed up by bloodshed and murder. If they are permitted to enter the town, they ought, we are of opinion, never to be allowed to be out of the sight of some authorized persons, who should have the power of controlling the conduct of individuals towards them, at the same time, that they protect the public from any aggression on the part of the natives. We must say their carrying firebrands through the street appears extremely dangerous, but if they do come into the town, it would be the height of cruelty to debar them this comfort; which, in severe weather is as essential to them, as additional clothing to us: it however calls for some precautionary measures. As an instance of their timidity at present, on being questioned by Mr. Armstrong, who seems to have a very good knowledge of their language, why Migo of the party did not say he had said he had

## A RETROSPECT HAMILTON HILL SWAMP

(By Nomad)

It is just on sixty years ago when, as a small schoolboy, I first wandered beneath the tall white gums or through the paper bark trees of Hamilton Hill swamp, and played cricket on a small couch grass clearing which was the site where the first grape vines were planted in the State and according to the late Harold Stirling (Hugh Calyptus) of old-time memories in the "Western Mail" and "Sunday Times" newspapers—also the birth-place of Australian journalism in 1831. Anyhow, 60 years ago it was as complete a bit of West Australian wilderness as youth could desire, and the home of the Fremantle-Madurah tribe of aboriginals, who, with fast-decreasing numbers, held their corroborees, finally fading off to their happy hunting grounds. Mobs of brumbies, semi-wild, as well as the Fremantle town herd, used to water at the swamp. The surrounding country was densely wooded. White gum, jarrah—in those days called mahogany—banksia and she-oak, thickly interspersed with wattle, blackboy, grass trees, palms and numerous other species of the vegetable kingdom.

There was bird-life galore. Black cockatoos in thousands feeding and screaming up among the tree tops, bronze-wing pigeon, magpies, squeakers and thousands of the smaller denizens of the feathered world were then in evidence, even odd kangaroos were to

in evidence, even odd kangaroos were to be seen in the locality. Possum hunting out round the swamp provided great sport and a much appreciated addition to the larder. Thus it was, in the early seventies, civilisation was represented by an occasional pair of pit-sawyers, a few wood cutters and the ubiquitous stockman, though the latter mostly resided in Fremantle.

Undoubtedly the most epoch-making decade in the history of W.A. since the first settler arrived was the eighties, when Phil Saunders in Kimberly and Jim Whitnell of the Nor-west pioneered the golden history of West Australia. It was during those years that three of the large family of Dixon brothers, viz., Horace, Alf and Sept. marked off homestead blocks at Hamilton Hill swamp. Other brothers of the Dixon clan went further out, they cleared land, built homes and reared families. Some of them have now great grandchildren playing around their knees in comfortable, substantial stone built houses that have long since replaced the paper bark huts. Many of the latter generations were born in.

Those early settlers of the swamp, as it was then more commonly known, were soon followed by others. Conspicuous among them were the brothers Joe and Levi Baker, founders of the well-known Fremantle butchering firm. 'Tis pleasing to meet still so many of those dear old faces, so well remembered of those dear old days of long ago, to see the scores of happy homes with their surrounding fields, romping children pedigreed stock, bitumised roads, motor cars, etc., etc.—all the adjuncts of modern days that replace the mia mia, the dense bush, the sandy bush tracks, the brumbie and the poor old black brother so long passed out, as well as many loved ones of my own race and kin. Yes, and pleasant memories are the fruits of retrospection.



## EXPEDITIONS

Several early exploration parties were dispatched around the Fremantle area at the time of settlement. Journals of these early explorers such as Stirling and Roe recount 'swampy land' approximately half a mile inland from Robbs Jetty (currently a registered Aboriginal Camp) (Schoobert 2005, 376). These are likely referring to the chain of swamps interconnected with the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. In his surveyor field book, Alfred Durlacher describes the general country around Hamilton Hill as 'country timbered with white gum, zamia, blackboys, wattle, with good grass' (1829: 20). Durlacher also mentions the plethora of swamps in the area, commenting on 'many tea-tree swamps' and 'swamps almost unpassable, thick with tea-trees' (ibid: 20).

Early exploration journals around the Perth region from Sir. James Stirling, Captain Irwin, Captain Ellis, and John Septimus Roe detail discoveries, routes, vegetation, and interactions with Aboriginal groups during the colonisation of Western Australia. During the early years of settlement, expeditions took place inland to York, south to Bunbury, south to the Great Southern and Albany (King George Sound), and north to the Swan Valley. John Septimus Roe conducted many exploration expeditions between 1829 and 1849 including the exploration of the Swan and Canning Rivers in 1829 and visits to Hamilton Hill. He continued to revisit many of these places and their surrounds until 1848.

Explorers such as George Grey, George Fletcher Moore and Johnston Drummond, observed the relationship between the country they explored and the Aboriginal groups occupying those areas. Moore, during his expedition to the north of the Swan River in 1835 wrote 'Here we first saw the tree from which the shields are made, called by the natives "Combuil"'. Moore was also shown sacred sites and told about customs and rituals when entering area's so as he would not get sick (Green 1984: 129). Stannage notes that often early exploration parties were not met with any conflict or violence from Aboriginal people. It was believed to be the lack of understanding on behalf of early settlers, of the land's significance to the Aboriginal culture, that caused land use issues and disagreements leading to conflict and violence. This began towards the end of the first decade when settlers began to seek new pasture for their rapidly expanding flocks and began to explore beyond the current settlements (Stannage 1981: 86).

Many Aboriginal people acted as guides on these early expeditions, leading them to water spots and allowing them to travel further due to knowledge of the land as well as acting as farm-hands, mail runners and police aids/trackers.







# A ROMANCE OF THE PRESS.

(By W. Charnley.)

In the vaults of "The West Australian" newspaper building is a huge printing press which probably represents the last word in modern newspaper production—at least far as the Southern Hemisphere is concerned. Being of great size, its output is enormous. White paper flows into it by a mile, while the printed sheets, all neatly folded for delivery, come from it in sheaves. A small army of men tends it.

Standing on the floor of Backett Hall, the Perth Public Library is the first printing press that turned out a newspaper in Western Australia. At first it appears to be a mere toy, quite small as it is that the whole apparatus, including accessories, could easily be packed in an ordinary petrol case. In design, it worked in the same manner with a crew, which lifted the type forms up and down as one by one the copies were taken off. The printed sheet, which came out of it, of which samples still survive, is about the size of a page of writing.

Around this tiny press, the "Ruthven" for, like its giant sisters of today, is dignified, with a name—is woven into the story which is probably unparalleled in the Australian printing machines. Fully it came from Van Diemen's where, in the early days of that colony, it was used for printing. First "The Town News," then "The Western Examiner." What grim recollections and hangings the little recorded in those days can only be guessed; but it did its work well, since the papers prospered and grew in size necessitating a larger press, with the result that the tiny Ruthven went for an owner.

Captain Mr. Weavell then bought it and being about to visit the newly settled settlement on the Swan River, it along as a speculation. The early in 1831, the settlement being quite two years old. The advent of a printing press was hailed by the colony with considerable satisfaction since, largely a community of educated men and women, the lack of a reliable printer was keenly felt. Hitherto this had been in a small measure supplied by a manuscript paper much after the style of the old manuscript paper, which consisted of foolscap, first named "The West" being edited by a William Nairne (Clark) a capable journalist, writer, something of a deal of an adventurer with the pistol, and highly regarded in the colony.

## A Shilling

The first adventure were Charles Macfaul who hired the new rental of two guineas time was lost in securing a supply of 1832. "The Fremantle" light as this colony's the price being one

It is curious to recall State's tremendous paper production and the identical moment of copy was being struck of locally grown wheat into flour, both historic in the building which Latour's horse flour mill chronicle sagely, the colony attained in one production of food both for the mind. Incidentally was grown by W. B. price for grinding was

For two years after "server" was printed at Hamilton Hill; but it was small, and even at it failed to provide a livelihood the result being that it was ultimately seized for the rent and for a little while without a newspaper.

The next adventurer was a Captain Temple G dropped in from Sierra Africa. Becoming interested in W. Nairne Clarke was somewhat aggrieved of his manuscript sheet, a session of the tiny press for and "The West Australian" revived in the dignity of. Joined in this venture, provided a supply of paper merchant, Mr. G. F. John distance of time it is deceive of politics on the yet politics there were a

## CHARLES MCFALL

Charles McFaull arrived in Western Australia in 1830 and took up a grant of land in the Hamilton Hill area between Robb's grant and the sea. McFaull was responsible for the first grape vines brought into West Australia and for hiring a printing press leading to several of the state's first newspapers (Truth 1929, 7).

Newspaper articles retell John Weavell importing the Ruthven printing press from Tasmania into West Australia and renting it to McFaull, Messrs and Shenton. The three men went on to produce several papers in Western Australia: the Fremantle Observer; Perth Gazette; and the Western Australian Journal. However, early on, the men had a disagreement and McFaull took the printing press to Hamilton Hill and situated himself three miles into the bush (believed to be at the base of Hamilton Hill Swamp) and continued to publish the Fremantle Observer in a tent for the next few years. The press was later seized for non-payment of hire and McFaull was then contracted to print government notices until his death in 1846 (Truth 1929, 7).

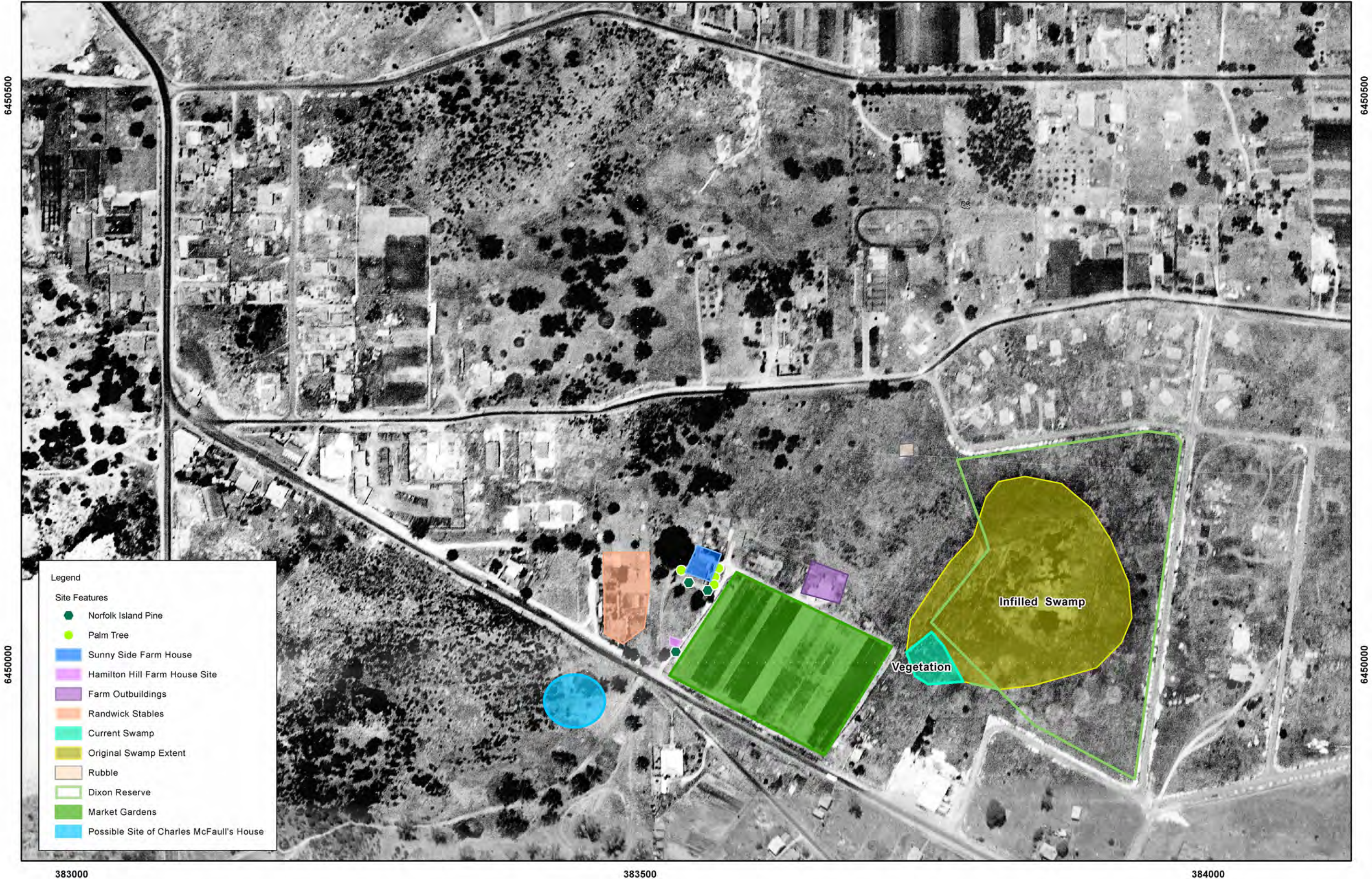
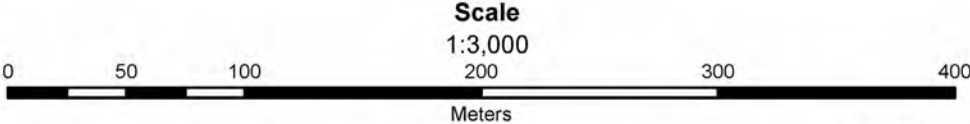
There is some disagreement and confusion if McFaull truly was the first settler to produce a newspaper in Western Australia. Historian Steve Errinton writes that in 1929 Anthony Gardner produced four handwritten pages of paper, weekly, to provide to the colony. He states that in 1831 Gardner was succeeded by William Shenton (one of the three men who originally hired the Ruthven Press) who took on McFaull as an editorial partner (Errington 2015). An article from the 'Truth' paper in 1929 corroborates that it was Gardner who commenced the first newspaper (Truth 1929: 7).

In 1830, McFaull brought grape vines from the Cape of Good Hope to West Australia. These were of the sweet water variety. The Inquirer and Commercial Newspapers in 1866 reported that 'the vines were expected to do great things in those days' (Inquirer & Commercial 1866: 2). In 1939 the Western Mail reported that the vines were showing 'better than average growth'. The article continued to explain that the West Australian soil and climate were ideal for the growth of vines, enabling the vines to compete within world markets. The article acknowledges that the first vines were planted at Hamilton Hill by McFaull, and the significance Hamilton Hill and McFaull's contribution to West Australia's viticulture industry (Western Mail 1939: 22).



Historic Site Plan - 1953 Imagery

Job №: COC1901    Map №: H\_SP1    Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 50    Date: 21/08/2020







## HORSE RACING AND RANDWICK STABLES

In the early 1830s, the West Australian horse racing industry was founded in Hamilton Hill. In 1833 the first horse race in Western Australia took place at South Beach, to the south of Clontarf Hill. Hamilton Hill and Fremantle became a hub for those in the industry including racers, trainers, and stables which began to congregate in the area along Rockingham Road, Newmarket Street and the surrounds. Horses were exercised on South Beach and on what is now known as C.Y O'Connor Beach (to the south), and this practice continues today.

Newmarket Street became a popular spot for stables to cluster including Randwick Stables, Johnson Stables, and Daly Stables which are still currently operating in the area. Randwick stables was established in 1932 by the Marks family, who brought the house from Kalgoorlie via train, horse and dray, and established the six limestone stables and jockey room. The stables were then owned by a succession of racing



families including Jim Banks, who trained Beau Vasse, the winner of the 1950 Perth cup. Banks used the funds from the win to buy Randwick Stables where he and his wife Florence lived for 49 years. The Newmarket Hotel was built in 1912 and became a popular drinking spot for those in the racing industry. Every Sunday local trainers would meet at Randwick Stables after exercising their horses and would roll a keg from the Newmarket down to South Beach and would spend the day playing 2-up before riding the horses home. This brought with it some social problems pertaining to the Hamilton Hill area and its reputation. In the 1930's and 40s Hamilton Hill became known as 'Silly Town', with no access to movies, television, or cars, Hamilton Hill became a place for illegal betting and gambling and was worlds away from the vibrant South Fremantle.

Randwick Stables is a heritage listed building on Rockingham Road, which still functions as a stable today and is located adjacent to the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. Randwick stables trainers still follow a historic route to exercise the horses, which includes going down Cardigan Street, across Rockingham Road, through the commercial sector behind Newmarket Hotel, across Cockburn Road, along the cycle path to Hollis Park, over South Terrace to South Beach Reserve, and down to the beach to the south of the groyne. The shed attached to the stables referred to as the 'Church', is currently still used as a workshop by the local blacksmith. Randwick Stables' proximity to the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, contributes to its historical values and demonstrates previous uses of the area.

Randwick stables represents the large number of stables that operated in the area and contributed to the development of West Australia's racing industry. The Norfolk Island Pine Trees are another contribution to the area's heritage associated with the stables. The pines are considered to represent the colonial vegetation that survived urban development and are associated with early settlers including the Dixon family. City of Cockburn advises the trees provide a historical reference to the former use of the area for horse stabling and are currently listed with the state heritage office of Western Australia.





## CONFLICT (1830-1840)

Early encounters between explorers, settlers and Aboriginal people were often characterised by conflict. For the most part, early encounters at the time of settlement were cautious, with each side endeavouring to avoid open conflict. Nyoongar people would often travel inland during the colder months of winter, however upon their return in the spring and summer months, they would burn the country before the colder months would return to ensure richer growth of the land for the following season. It was recorded in 1830, that the burning of their territories is what brought the initial problems of contact. Land which was traditionally and periodically burnt by the Aboriginal people now grew tenuous crops, upon which the settlement would depend on for flour and was also required for forage pasture during the dry summer months. The Aboriginal periodic burning led to the destruction of valuable crops causing initial stages of conflict between Aboriginal people and settlers (Stannage 1981: 81).

The tension and unrest of early settlement begins to appear in the diaries of early explorers as small conflicts which over time increase in seriousness. This would involve small issues such as the stealing of food leading to larger issues, such as the killing of livestock. These larger issues would cause retaliation from settlers and result in distrust and fear on both sides. Some of the first major conflict encounters were led by Captain Irwin in 1830 at Lake Monger.

Stannage (1981: 81) reports on Governor John Hutt's early exploration journals of Captain Irwin, who in the first few months of arrival assembled his troops to advance on some 'puzzled Aboriginal people' that curiously 'appeared one day on Cantonment Hill overlooking the fort', but retreated to maintain a defensive distance. Irwin's expeditions in the 1830s caused several conflicts including the first in a 'skirmish' with a group of Aboriginal people at Lake Monger. This conflict caused Irwin to conduct what were known as the first raids or punishments. The first of these was focused on an Aboriginal encampment north of Fremantle in the belief that the camp contained Aboriginal men who had 'broken into and plundered the house of a man called Paton' and killed some poultry (Stannage 1979: 27). No other references could be found of this man Paton; however, it was recorded that Paton then called together a number of settlers who, armed with muskets set after the Aboriginal people and came upon them not far from Paton's home. In the raids and actions that followed over the next few days more Aboriginal people were attacked.



Over the following years many texts and newspaper articles demonstrated the tense relationship between Europeans and Aboriginal people and several conflicts, massacres and deaths including that of the prominent Aboriginal leaders Midgiegooroo and Yagan. Midgiegooroo played a key role in Aboriginal resistance to white settlement and was the leader for his home county 'Beeliar'. Midgiegooroo's land rights were passed onto his son Yagan before his untimely death when he was fired upon by soldiers. Yagan continued Midgiegooroo's legacy as a resistance fighter and is now an iconic figure for Aboriginal rights and recognition. No real effort was made to understand Aboriginal social organisation, however, and the fear of organised attack was a persistent theme during early settlement years. Due to these fears amid settlers, several small military garrisons were established throughout the Swan River Colony by the end of 1831. In 1832 Yagan was declared an outlaw with a price placed on his head and taken to the Round House Prison in Fremantle, where he was then saved from execution by Robert Lyon, a white crusader for Aboriginal rights. Yagan was exiled to Carnac Island but managed to escape and was not caught again until the following year when he was betrayed and fired upon.

In 1834 James Stirling and Septimus Roe led a party of corps south from Preston Point to an encampment of Aboriginal people at Pinjarra. It was noted in Western Australian Exploration 1826-1835 by Schoobert that Stirling's party stopped at Robb's hut in Hamilton Hill. Stirling describes the location of the hut as being on a barren rocky outcrop connected to the ridges immediately behind the low scrubby land on the shore. The party arrived at Robb's hut at 12.30pm and stayed for a few hours before resuming their travels south at 3.15pm and continuing to Pinjarra (Schoobert 2005: 376-383). The party led an attack on the camp which resulted in the killings of many Aboriginal people, more commonly known as the Pinjarra massacre. Following the Pinjarra massacre were several killings in the York area in 1836 led by Henry William and Pierre Bunbury. Attacks continued to take place in the following decades as exploration into unknown area's continued.

Some did try to understand the Aboriginal people and their way of life at the time of settlement including Robert Menli Lyon. A series of articles written by R.M Lyon, explored not only the names of Aboriginal districts in the Perth area, but also their boundaries, their social structures and their languages. Mr Lyon arrived at the Swan River Colony in 1829 and took up a 2200 acre grant close to Fremantle. Lyon wrote to the Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal over his concerns with the treatment of Aboriginal people, he described the need for treaty with Aboriginal people and that they were guilty of no crime but that of fighting for their Country. Lyon was a champion of Aboriginal land rights, which put him at odds with the government of the day.

**'BY 1833, HE [R. M. LYON]  
SPENT MUCH OF HIS TIME WITH  
ABORIGINAL PEOPLE, LEARNING  
SOME OF THE LANGUAGES OF  
THE DIFFERENT GROUPS  
AROUND THE COLONY AND NOTING  
STRICT BOUNDARIES OF THEIR LAND'  
-CITY OF COCKBURN ARCHIVES**





## HAMILTON SWAMP AS A MASSACRE SITE

Early documents as well as oral histories, recall a series of attacks known as the 'first punishments' or 'first raids' occurring in the early 1830s. The Traditional Owners believe that one of these 'first punishments' took place at Hamilton Swamp leading to the killings of a number of women and children.

Stannage's (1979: 27) account of the first official punishment raid north of Fremantle was thought to be connected to the massacre at Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. The Traditional Owners stated, although this account recalls the raid 'North of Fremantle', upon consultation, Traditional Owners clarified that at the time of these raids, the centre of Fremantle was not located where it now stands today and was located further south, potentially placing it in the vicinity of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. Traditional Owners also stated in relation to this raid, that Captain Irwin was searching for the Aboriginal leader Yagan (Midgiegooroo's son). Green continues Irwin's account quoting, 'This daring and hostile conduct of the natives induced me to seize the opportunity to make them sensible to our superiority, by showing how severely we could retaliate their aggression' (Green 1984: 54). Again, this reiterates the contentious relationship between Aboriginal people and early settlers and the ill treatment of Aboriginal people during early European history around the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct.

This assumption of white superiority over the Aboriginal population, remained within the colony and is characterised by many newspaper articles at the time.

Current Traditional Owner Geri Hayden recalls her great, great grandmother, Granny Sarah Bennell (nee Isaac) telling her the story of the massacre at Hamilton Swamp, which was passed down in oral tradition. Traditional Owners state the 'first punishments' are what led to the Pinjarra massacre in 1834 by Stirling and were followed by the massacres in York in 1836, led by Henry William and Pierre Bunbury. Although there is no documented evidence of the Hamilton Swamp massacre in 1830, (apart from Stannage's account of Irwin) historical texts and articles construct a context of conflict between Aboriginal people and early settlers and that the initial raids began in the early 1830s.



Traditional Owners describe the massacre as being led by Captain Irwin and occurring during a women's ceremony at the Hamilton Swamp. The killings are said to have resulted in the deaths of approximately 50 women and children. An area on the northwest slope of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct was indicated to be where the massacre had occurred (near some currently standing trees but not as far as the erected fence).

Current Elders hold much grief around the event and find it difficult to talk about. Traditional Owners identified this as an important site for Nyoongar people, due to historical events and being a place where traditional practices occurred, and ceremonies were held. They said they would like recognition of the massacre happening here, and a retelling of truth for the area so that people can heal from the trauma the historical events have caused over generations. Traditional Owners envision the Swamp as a healing place, where all people can feel safe to visit and share their stories. They said it is important to bring community back here, Traditional Owner Stanley Hedland stated:

**'if you can heal the land you can heal the people'. Understanding the past is to free those of the present and future".**

Kay Walley stated that the story of the massacre had been handed down to her saying, 'this is an oral history, that has been handed down by our old people'. Kay further explained 'somewhere out there, this story has been recorded, but it has been buried so deep', she said the oral history account was very emotional for people to retell.







## BURIALS AND 'WEE-WAW'

Traditional Owners rejected the idea that the Precinct was a burial site as they said burial sites were mapped properly by colonisers and that there were often designated areas for burials away from camping areas. It should be acknowledged that skeletal remains have historically been unearthed in the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct.

Remains unearthed in the 1870s were recorded as belonging to an Aboriginal man 'Wee-Waw', who was reported on by several newspapers and received much attention. There was some confusion over who Wee-Waw was and where he came from, with a number of different accounts existing in Perth historical records. It was reported that the man was an old warrior from the Nullagine region and was killed by a group of Nyoongar men who buried him near the swamp. City of Cockburn archives holds records of a man only referred to as 'Old-Timer', who reminisced his boyhood in the 1870s and told the story of Wee-Waw. Old-Timer said that Wee-Waw was the only man rumoured to still be alive (at the time) that was at the Pinjarra massacre in 1834 and therefore some confusion exists regarding whether he came from Pinjarra. There are also records of Wee-Waw being tried and sentenced for murder, imprisoned at Rottnest, and later pardoned and working for Henry Septimus Dixon. It was revealed during his trial in the 1840s that he was a survivor of the Pinjarra Massacre and therefore there is a strong argument for Wee-Waw being a Binjareb man. Reports of Wee-Waw being from the Nullagine area came many years after his trial as demonstrated above.

A newspaper article in 1913 reported on the Hamilton Swamp stating, "Gruesome things are constantly being unearthed at the Hamilton Swamp; this day a human jawbone, that day a shin, and some other day a skull. Some time ago there came to the surface the perfect skeleton of a good-sized native, the frame of which was perfect, excepting that both arms and legs had been broken. This discovery caused great excitement among the oldest inhabitants. They gathered around the remains, and all instantly recognised them. 'Wee-Waw!' said one. "Yes," muttered another, as he gazed at the broken bones, 'that was Wee-Waw'" (Daily News 1913: 2). Although the remains were identified as the man named 'Wee-Waw', the Traditional Owners said that this was just a name people had made up and that the name itself was not of any significance. Historical records indicate, however, that he was tried and sentenced under the name Wee-Waw suggesting this was in fact his real name.

Other bodies unearthed at the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct included that of an Afghan cameleer, Abdul Hoosin. It was said that the Afghan's had an encampment within close proximity to the Swamp and brought their camels to a number of wells which have since been filled in. It was said the man was believed to have been murdered and dumped near the swamp.



## WEE WAW, THE PER- VERSE

### THE BOGEY OF FREMAN- TLE TRIBE

#### TWO GRAVES FOR ONE BLACK MAN.

#### A REMARKABLE STORY.

Hamilton Hill Swamp, Fremantle, is now wearing the polished, urbane expression of the well-groomed.

Its hirsute adornment in the shape of banksia bush has been shaven clean; rugged surfaces have been manured and furrowed by two horse ploughs, and the gentle reticulation of a water service regularly supplies the shampoo. Yesterday it was a wilderness and a native graveyard. To-day's it is a garden holding of fecundity. Gruesome things are constantly being unearthed at Hamilton Hill Swamp: this day a human jaw bone, that day a shin, and some other day a skull. Some time ago there came to the surface the perfect skeleton of a good-sized native, the frame of which was perfect, excepting that both arms and legs had been broken. This discovery caused great excitement among the oldest inhabitants. They gathered around the remains, and all instantly recognised them.

"Wee Waw!" said one.

"Yes," muttered another, as he gazed at the broken bones, "that was Wee Waw."

"Alas, poor Wee Waw," added Mr. P. C. Hughes, as he pressed his way through the throng, "I knew him well."

And he did! Wee Waw flitted across the ken of Mr. Hughes in the early sixties. The former belonged to a tribe

sixties. The former belonged to a tribe of natives 60 strong, whose headquarters were at Fremantle, but whose native boundary extended to Mandurah in the South. He was not born within the sound of surf bells, but came from the Nor'-Western interior.

The Hinterland came down with him.

In some manner he had garnered the various distinctions of Out There. He represented the vast, mysterious stillnesses of the Nullagine, for he was a native of few words. His vocabulary consisted mainly of the expression "Yow," and he made it apply affirmatively or negatively, by a significant inflexion of the voice. In his constantly detected when one saw the uncompromising misery—the desolation—of the sand stretches beyond Marble Bar. Moreover, he looked as sinuous as the Great Inland Cattle Track. Wee Waw was thin, cadaverous looking, and bent. Which relieves one of the rhetorical task of saying he was always unhappy. This strange black man was invariably ailing—or he said he was. He cried "Wolf" so often that when he became seriously indisposed, the other tribes-people neglected him. And they were deeply grieved when they heard that he had succumbed to the malady. Wee Waw had been a man high up in the affairs of the tribe, and he was accorded the full dignity of a head man's funeral.

In a prominent part of Mandurah-road, South Fremantle, is now to be seen a vacant block of ground, which was once used as a native burial place. Modern tenements have crowded almost every inch of the territory, but this particular area has remained untouched. Here they buried Wee Waw in the year of grace, 1882. The bucks dug a four-foot grave for him, and placed the body in a sitting position, facing the rising sun. Then the gins—as was customary—covered the body

as was customary—covered the body with dry leaves, and threw a two-inch layer of sand over the grave. So affected was the tribe at the loss of one of their principal men, that they immediately broke camp and made for their munga (or fishing ground), situated at the mouth of the Serpentine River, near Mandurah. As the women and children had to travel slowly, they did not arrive at their destination until a march of three or four days.

Meanwhile, weird happenings had taken place at the Mandurah-road Cemetery. Wee Waw had merely been the victim of catalepsy, and after a few hours' sojourn under his canopy of leaves and sand he recovered his senses and hurrowed his way out. Hearing that his tribe had mournfully trekked south, he set out after them.

On the night of the fifth day after the burial the Sad Sixty were haunched at their evening meal. Suddenly one of the gins looked up; and there, there in the nor'ard gloaming, was the advancing form of Wee Waw. Tall, lank, and stooping, he was not unlike a thin bird listening for some expected call. That call never came! The gin's frightened equal aroused the whole camp. Three score natives rose to their feet, looked at the visitor, and so convinced were they that they were looking at the departed spirit of their head man that they trembled in every limb.

"Yow!" yelled Wee Waw, with all the intensity of loneliness and despair.

But the thin, wailing voice only served to make them all race away for their lives. The poor savages, now feeling certain that this was really the earnest invocation of the incorporeal Wee Waw, never stopped running until they reached a white settlement at Peel Inlet, three miles away. There they told the strange tale of the visit-

they told the strange tale of the visiting spook, and a reconnoitring party of white men soon found a very solid-looking Wee Waw finishing his people's meal.

"What! Wee Waw?" ejaculated one of the party.

"Yow!" responded that worthy, as he tore the hindquarters off a long-tailed gohanna. Then he added with an unusual burst of verbosity, "They killum poor black pfeller, too quick."

From that day Wee Waw became a black Ishmael. He was never allowed to associate with one of the tribe, nor

did he enjoy any tribal rights or privileges. As far as they were concerned, he was as dead as Caesar. Had they not buried him? For two years Wee Waw, an ostracised, lonely black man, minded the killing flock of Mr. John Dixon, a butcher, whose place is still to be seen on the Rockingham-road.

Then Wee Waw died in earnest. Vengeful hands plucked him from his deathbed. A merciless stone hammer hit him thrice on the head, and broke both of his arms and legs. A special corps of sinewy young men took the remains out to the Hamilton Hill Swamp, and a good cavernous six-foot grave was dug for him. Twice three score feet padded down the covering earth, and willing arms brought large boulders to place over the disturbed earth.

Wee Waw never rose again—at least not in a materialistic sense.

They caught him with his gloves down. He was never even given a fair fighting chance.

"Wee Waw was a bogey man for years," says Mr. Hughes. "I remember the time when pensioner children used to run after the gins and call out: 'Look out, here comes Wee Waw!' Then they would scream, run away a





# MARKET GARDENS & AGRICULTURE (1850s – 1900s)

## MARKET GARDENS AND AGRICULTURE (1850s – 1900s)

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is a historically rich area that contributed to the industries and lifestyles which developed around Hamilton Hill.

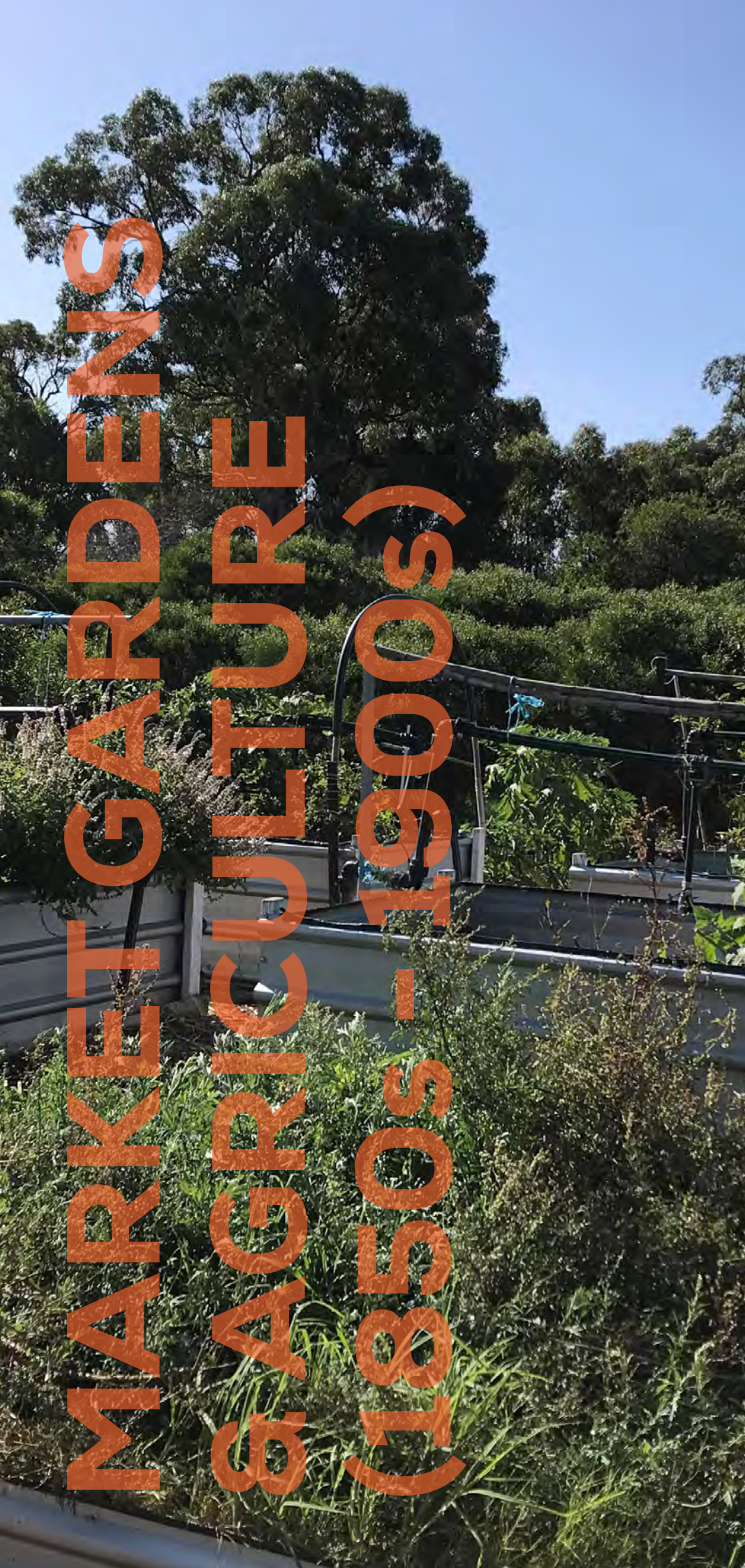
During settlement, land surrounding the Swan River and its tributaries including the wetlands were deemed inhospitable due to the infertile landscape. There was difficulty in growing crops and lands were more suited to pastures. Due to this, farming industries were viable and began to develop around the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. There were cattle and dairy farms as well as piggeries and poultries. Associated industries began to be developed in the area such as butchers and dairies which supplied much of the Fremantle region. Market gardens were also established and created a sense of community for the area.

During this period of development and the later stages of settlement, the Aboriginal and settler relations tended to be emerging autonomously from political and bureaucratic decisions. Policies and control over Aboriginal people emerged which resulted in many people rebelling against the unfair treatment they were receiving against their white counterparts and causing continued tensions between Aboriginal people and settlers.









## MARKET GARDENS

Henry Septimus Dixon held 24 acres of land at Ommanney Street, of which 5 acres was around Hamilton Hill Swamp. It is recorded that Henry Septimus Dixon produced a thriving market garden on this swampy land. Current local resident and descendant, Terry Baker stated his family owned a market garden and poultry farm. Terry recalls Hamilton Swamp being to the back of his family property and has a number of photographs depicting the swamp in the 1900s. The history of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct therefore has a strong association with market gardening and a small community garden is still present in the far western portion of the Precinct. The market gardens were often used to bring communities together and many residents attempted to maintain this aspect of community during urbanisation and during the push for market gardens to move further south towards Rockingham.

The Brbrichs were one of the first families to run a small market garden when they moved to the area in 1948. The Brbich's son Frank recalls market gardens stretching down to Annie and Jean streets and playing down at Hamilton Hill Swamp where a number of brumbies would roam around, and he and his friends would try to catch them. The Danseys were another early family who ran a small market garden on Newmarket street that specialised in herbs. The fennel that was planted there spread to the neighbouring yard and can still be seen today.

Richard (Dick) Jones built his house near the corner of Newmarket Street and Healy Road and his two daughters recall walking over the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. The sisters Beverly and Valerie, said there was a large Mulberry and Pear tree that they would climb, and that the ground they would walk across was muddy and swampy. The sisters recalled at the base of Clontarf Hill, adjacent to their property, there was a gardener known as 'Marko', who cleared the vegetation to establish a market garden. Marko had a small shed and pump house and watered his garden from a well that is still in existence.



The Market Gardens of Hamilton Hill and Cockburn were fully established by early 1917 and the market garden culture thrived in bringing community members together (Berson). The extent of market gardens within the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is not well documented, but there can be seen a clear down-sizing in the market gardens surrounding the area post World War II, evident from aerial photography and likely due to increased subdivision and urbanisation.



**Local resident Terry Baker pictured on the Baker's property with their family dog.**



**The Dixon family**



**Terry's father pictured riding his motorcycle on the family property.**



## AGRICULTURE

Several agricultural industries were established at Hamilton Hill during the early years of settlement and continued later into the 20th century. The Brbich family moved to the area in 1948 and ran a market garden mentioned previously, the Brbich's young son Frank recalls most of the business around the Hamilton Swamp area being that of dairy and poultry related.

Cattle, poultry and piggeries were all established in the vicinity of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct and resulted in the construction of associated infrastructure and buildings including dairies and butchers. These industries were cemented by some of the first families who settled in the area including the Dixon's, Baker's, Healy's and Davenport's.

Septimus Dixon and the Baker Twins, Joseph and Levi were both responsible for the development of piggeries in the Hamilton Hill vicinity, and the Baker twins went on to become pioneer butchers for the area. Several dairies were also established in the area, including that of Irishman John Healy who arrived in 1858 and at one point was supplying most of the milk to Fremantle. The Davenport family arrived in Hamilton Hill in 1913 and also opened a dairy adjacent to the Healy family property. The breakout of the disease Rinderpest forced many of the dairies operating in the area to greatly deplete their stock through extermination of herds, which resulted in both the Healy and Davenport dairy's suffering greatly and taking years to re-establish themselves.

Sydney Smith was one of the earliest known settlers in Hamilton Hill. Smith was Captain George Robb's agent and was left at Hamilton Hill to establish a farm on behalf of Robb. Smith greatly contributed to the early agriculture for the area by establishing the farm. In a letter dated by Smith in 1830 he referred to the area as 'Hamilton Hill' and this is believed to be the first record of the

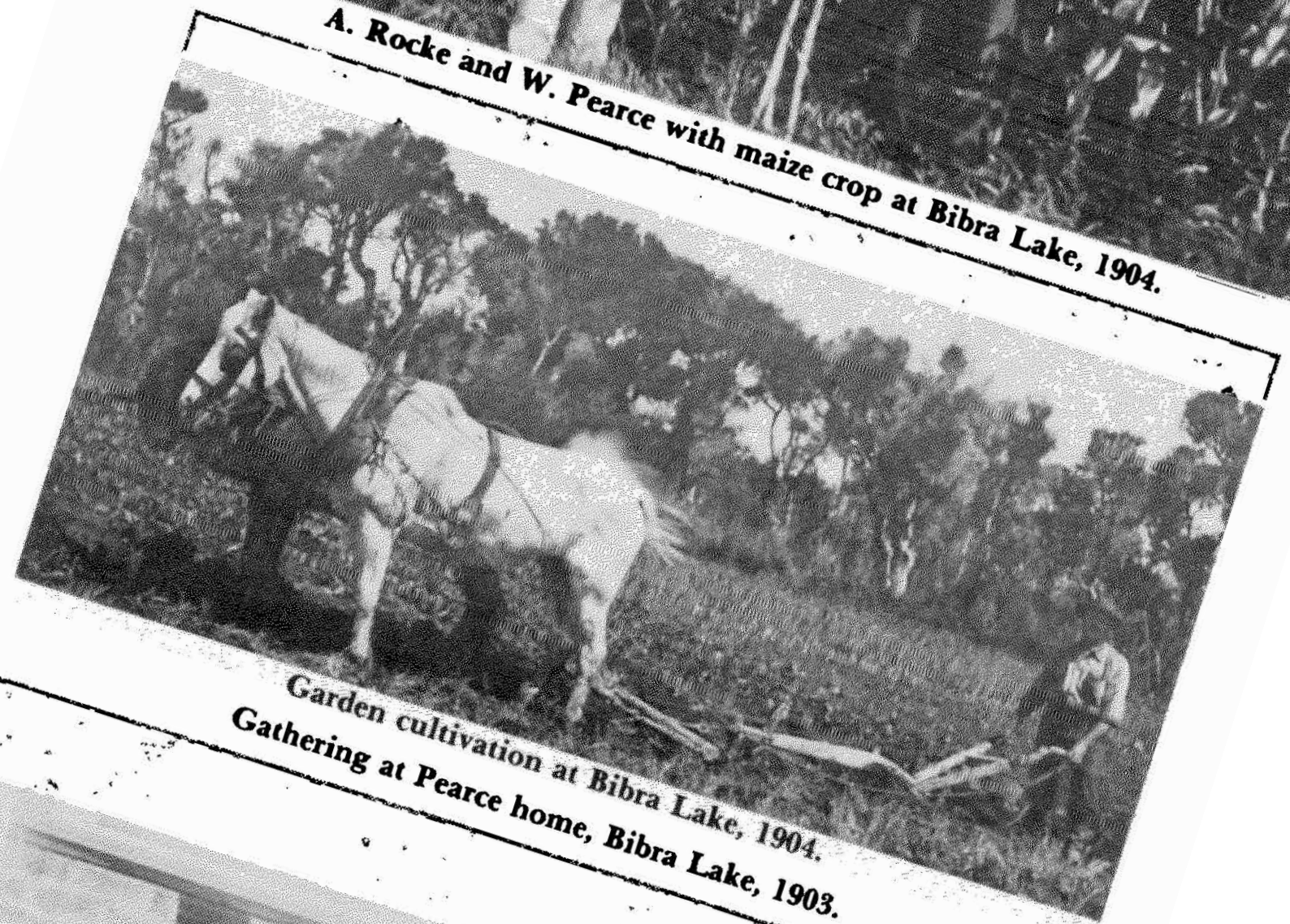
**Top: The Chamberlain Family 1925**

**Bottom: A couple at the Sunnyside Homestead**



name Hamilton Hill being used. Robb never returned to Hamilton Hill and the origin of the name and whether it was Robb or Smith who did the naming remains unknown. Landgate suggests the name is derived from the 'Hamilton Ross Company of Cape Town' which operated the 'Leda', the ship which brought Robb and Smith to Western Australia.

A number of homesteads were also built in the area including Sunnyside homestead. Sunnyside was originally owned by Richard Bishop in 1891 and was later bought by W.A Chamberlain in 1902. The Chamberlains brought much success to the homestead including winning a number of agriculture and horticulture prizes for the region. After Chamberlain the homestead was bought by George Stelia in 1940 only to be sold a year later to Mr. Gerovich in 1941. Mr. Gerovich appeared to have sponsored workers from Jugo Slavia. Bob Ricci then bought the homestead in 1948 who sponsored many Italian immigrants





## CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

### URBANISATION

Post World War II there was an increase in urbanisation, which also resulted in a great increase in recording, record keeping and photography. It wasn't until post World War II that people were able to put the time and energy into the preservation of a time period and lifestyle that was quickly changing. Previously, settlers were still establishing themselves and the land, and were focused purely on survival.

In the 1920s the area began to take on a much more suburban nature, as workers from Fremantle and surrounds began to build houses in the area due to proximity to industries and the port. The proximity of Fremantle Port to Hamilton Hill, brought many people to the area who recognised the potential in the location of the land and the employment opportunities it afforded.

From the 1970s onwards the Hamilton Hill area was transforming into suburbia. People were looking to the future to see a more interconnected city. During this time people were concerned with preserving a rapidly disappearing past. The 70's was a turning point in the suburb of Hamilton Hill where the old market gardens were quickly transforming into suburbs and the demand for residential land was pushing market gardens further south towards Rockingham. Planning and council authorities became concerned with preserving the integrity of historical heritage in the area when completing urban plans and designs for the future.

In an urban context, residents had to overcome the more complex constraints of a delicately balanced natural environment, established industries and access to recreational space. The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct has undergone several changes in uses and developments throughout urbanisation. Although some of its previous uses can still be seen today, the infill of the area means the infilled swamp (under Dixon Reserve) it is no longer visible. The infilled area prone to flooding after heavy winter rain is located behind Wally Hagan Basketball Stadium in Dixon Reserve (see aerial image showing infilled swamp, and site plan comparing infilled swamp with current area prone to flooding).







## THE FREMANTLE EASTERN BYPASS

In the 1950's a road reserve was set aside to accommodate a transit route from the Fremantle Port known as the Fremantle Eastern Bypass. The Bypass was included in the Perth Metropolitan Region Scheme in 1973 but was removed by the Gallop government in 2003. The first section was a 5.2 km extension of Roe Highway from Kwinana Freeway to just west of Coolbellup Avenue. The second section included upgrades to Stock Road, Leach Highway, High Street and Stirling Highway, spanning 8.2 km. The alternative route was to extend Roe Highway west of Stock Road, along the Roe Highway road reserve in Hamilton Hill, then heading north as a tunnel starting just before the base of Clontarf Hill.

The Fremantle Eastern Bypass has been at the forefront of many community campaigns against its construction and with an emphasis on preserving Clontarf Hill. Construction of the Bypass would have involved either an open excavation or a 'cut and cover' tunnel through the hill. Either option was deemed to have unacceptable, social, cultural and environmental impacts on Clontarf Hill and to the Hamilton Hill community. Since the late 1970s many battles objecting the Bypass have been lost and won and the Transport Action Coalition (TRAC) group of local citizens opposed and ran a highly successful (and visible) campaign against the construction of the Fremantle Eastern Bypass (Chinna 2015, 44).

Since the deletion of the Bypass in 2003 much of the land reserved for the Bypass has been sold and residential developments have commenced. The majority of the land still resides in the possession of Main Roads and LandCorp, which is also the case for parts of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct. Further propositions made by the Barnett government, proposed the Bypass be reinstated but as a tunnel beneath Clontarf Hill and Fremantle, which was met with much objection yet again. The future of Clontarf Hill remains uncertain as decisions regarding road constructions are being made. The Fremantle Eastern Bypass demonstrates the community and public resistance to developing and disturbing the area and their want for protection of the Clontarf Hill area.



## FRIENDS OF CLONTARF HILL AND NANDI CHINNA

Friends of Clontarf Hill is a group established in 1992 and currently still functioning today who are fighting for the protection and preservation of Clontarf Hill and community open space. Members from Friends of Clontarf Hill come from many neighbouring areas including Hamilton Hill, Spearwood, Coogee, Fremantle, South Fremantle, Hilton, White Gum Valley and Beaconsfield. The group has been involved in a number of community and environmental development projects pertaining to the benefits of the area including, planting, weeding, litter collection, guided walks, media awareness, social events, land care, information packages and studies such as the Clontarf Hill History Study supported by Lotterywest. Since the group's formation in 1992 they have contributed significantly to the health and well-being of Clontarf Hill, its surrounds and its community, whilst also ensuring the areas historical and cultural values have remained intact. It has been noted in the 'City of Cockburn Hamilton Hill Revitalisation Strategy', that friends of Dixon Park have offered to rehabilitate the 'undeveloped' western portion of the park, which coincides with the wishes of various stakeholders, including community members and Traditional Owners who would like to see the Precinct returned to its original state.

Dr. Nandi Chinna is a writer, poet, environmental activist and researcher based in Perth. She currently works as a consultant specialising in social and ecological histories. Her poetry book 'Swamp; Walking the Wetlands of the Swan Coastal Plain' published in 2014 includes poetry of Dixon Reserve and Clontarf Hill. Chinna has been involved with the preservation of the area around the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct and through writing the study for Friends of Clontarf Hill. Chinna has played a role in the preservation and protection of the environment in the Hamilton Hill area and promotion of green spaces and wildlife corridors to support the variety of flora and fauna already existing in the area to attract more visitors. Chinna has contributed to the information existing in relation to the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct through her historical study, which has been referenced here.

### Dixon Reserve

I am a magpie in the mornings,  
winding my tracks into the dawn spoor  
where seagulls, doves and ravens  
have pressed their braille into the sand.

I'm here for the glint, the sharp edge, the stand out  
of colour splashed against limestone and dune.  
My treasures are shards of king brown, the thick skin  
of pickaxe bottles, riffled violet of perfume jars,  
the ragged necks and glinting smiles of corona.

With my bag and my gloves  
I collect blue flowers and windmills  
embedded with the slip of tea, the pattern of a voyage  
rising up through its history, reaching the surface  
jostling for a place with red bull and coke.

The breaking takes place between visits.  
Wings heaving, I rise above the tuarts  
the dunes, the stony track, the small figure hunched over,  
intent on smashing the sun into a kindle of sharp reflections.





# CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

## PRECINCT USES AND VALUES

The Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct has undergone many changes which coincide with a variety of uses over the years. It has been subjected to urban infill and other forms of development such as residential housing, shops and recreational facilities. This has characterised the contemporary uses of the Precinct including its use as a recreational area for the public and residents.

The Precinct is now known in the east as Dixon Reserve, named after the Dixon family who acquired the land in the early years of settlement around Hamilton Hill. Dixon Reserve now consists of an oval, Wally Hagan Recreation Centre and basketball stadium, a BMX track, and the Dixon Park adventure playground.

The area has become a hub for local residents and the public who use it for recreation, lifestyle and as a community engagement space, including use of 'The Hub' building, which brings people for day-care, craft classes and is hired out for other community uses. Although there are many contemporary uses for the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, some of its historical uses are still present, including a small community garden to the far west of the park and the presence of Randwick stables which leaves some of the history and associated heritage values of the Precinct intact.

The western portion of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct has remained largely 'undeveloped' with minimal infrastructure. For this reason, Traditional Owners have expressed a desire for the western part of the Precinct contained in the Aboriginal site to remain free of major infrastructure, and for the continued use of the area as a public open space. It should also be noted that the western portion of the precinct has commonly been used as a location for traveling circus' such as The Great Moscow Circus for many years and traveling circus' have become inherently linked to the identity of the precinct.

Clontarf Hill, included in the site complex, has been a focus of heritage and historical concern over the years and many groups and the public have been fighting for its protection as it also contributes to the significance of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct.



# NON- ABORIGINAL SIGNIFICANCE

## ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PRECINCT

Of the stakeholders who responded to the online survey, 74% indicated they were local residents, 9% indicated they were local organisations and 17% identified as 'other'. Of these stakeholders, 100% indicated the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct was important to them and their community, with 65% indicating they engaged with the Precinct daily, 13% twice weekly, 13% weekly and 9% monthly. High levels of engagement contribute to the significance that the Hamilton Swamp holds for the current residents, organisations and other stakeholders.

All stakeholders indicated the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is a pleasant place to visit and indicated various ways in which they engage with the Precinct. The most popular activity was dog walking and other uses both at 26.5%. The next most common use was for recreation at 22%, then horse riding at 12%, ceremony and healing events at 9% and connecting to country at 4%.

Stakeholders indicated several elements that they would like to see more of at the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, with the need for wetland rehabilitation being the most popular, followed by sporting facilities. Public amenities such as park benches, cultural and historical signage, bird watching areas, native gardens, Nyoongar place names and cultural trails were also identified as being needed within the Precinct. Stakeholders indicated many reasons why they engage with the space including:

- The natural open space and bushland;
- The open, accessible public space;
- The dog walking community;
- Connection with the Hamilton Hill community;
- Access to community garden space; and
- A space for reflection and healing







## ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNIFICANCE

Most stakeholders held environmental concerns for the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, with the majority mentioning a request for rehabilitation of the original wetland environment as a whole, with Traditional Owners requesting specific interest in rehabilitation of the undeveloped portion of land to the west of Dixon Reserve. Approximately 65% of respondents indicated they were involved in environmental sustainability related activities at the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct and many stated that the Precinct held ecological values to them. The unique environment of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct was emphasised including, wetland habitats which attract several bird species including the ibis, whose numbers have been declining and therefore prompting the need for habitat restoration. Community Members have requested the preservation of bird life as they enjoy the regular flocks of birds visiting and some which permanently nest in the area. The black, white and red cockatoos were also mentioned as being unique visitors to the area, as well as the blue tongue lizard and several different spider species. Suggestions that a wildlife corridor be improved through rehabilitation and for the wetland environment to be re-established comes from the need to enhance the biodiversity of the Precinct and allow natural species to return, along with also being for the community's enjoyment. Specific tree species including the tuart and banksia were requested to be properly managed and conserved. Stormwater management as well as weed control were also suggested as effective environmental management strategies for the area.

**"I would like to see more trees and natural areas including reinstatement of the original swamp"**

– Stakeholder



Some stakeholders mentioned that the Precinct was one of the only natural 'undeveloped' environments left in the area and that the open space and rugged atmosphere is not present as you move closer to Fremantle.

**“The swamp needs to be regenerated and turned back into a wild space for community and natural use. I am concerned by the threat of housing and roads destroying the area”**

– Stakeholder

Many stakeholders made mention of the wildlife corridor which needs to be protected and enhanced, as it attracts many species (mentioned previously) that require the biodiversity not found elsewhere, in order to sustain the plants and animals native to the area.







# FUTURE

## TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Traditional Owners agreed that the entirety of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct is significant and holds contemporary cultural values.

Although some of the precinct has been subjected to development, the intangible cultural values of the Waugal are still connected to the area and lie beneath the Precinct. The Waugal travels through the water ways, keeping them clean and healthy and is the giver of life to the water, plants and animals in and around the waterways and underground water sources. In return, Traditional Owners are required to look after the land and be the custodians for it, for this reason protection of the Swamp is viewed as vital to looking after the land.

**“Prior to councils building, this area was always a high ceremonial area and all that energy still runs beneath the park”**

- Traditional Owner, Nick Abraham.



Traditional owners expressed high concern for the western undeveloped portion of the Precinct and would like to see it rehabilitated to its original wetland state. Traditional Owner Kay Walley expressed how she would like to see the area rehabilitated and revegetated, including appropriate cultural cleansing.

**“The area is an altar for us, but it hasn’t been cleaned properly. There is intergenerational trauma here”.**

– Traditional Owner, Kay Walley

All the Traditional Owners explained that, until the area is cleaned properly, Nyoongar people will always be sick. Darryl discussed how he wanted to see real action come out of this consultation and for it not to be “an exercise authorities go through to have a yarn with Nyoongar people, but very little substance comes out of it” he said they have the opportunity to acknowledge what happened in the past and it should be done.

A smoking and healing ceremony took place in early 2019 as a continuation of this traditional practice and the area's traditional uses. This ceremony demonstrates an ongoing connection to culture and country and contributes to the contemporary cultural significance and values of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct for Traditional Owners.







Traditional Owners expressed that they would like the area to become a healing place and bring community to the area. The group suggested having an opportunity to bring the old people back here:

**“It’s about feeling [culturally] safe, if they want to come down here and have a yarn”**

They suggested a big healing ceremony with ochre to take place with an open-door policy for all Nyoongar people in order to bring them together.

They emphasised their concern over recognition of intangible values which now have even greater significance as much of the tangible values have been disturbed by previous development.

**“Due to all the infill, the physical evidence of Aboriginal sites is gone, so it’s important to identify the intangible values and for councils and developers to give appropriate consideration to those values”.**

Traditional Owner, Karen Jacobs.









## NON-ABORIGINAL STAKEHOLDERS

All stakeholders showed concern for the future of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct and the importance of its historical and cultural significance being captured in order to impose effective management strategies for the future. Respondents to the online survey expressed concerns regarding the encroachment of new buildings, housing and developments around the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct, as a future threat to the area. Other stakeholders showed a strong interest in maintaining publicly open green space, to engage with for various uses as previously discussed. They expressed that the western portion of the Precinct needs ecological and cultural development which are in keeping with the current community uses and historical significance.

The local community wish to see the area protected and preserved and the unique cultural and historical values of the Precinct to be sustained for future generations.

**“It is one of the only natural undeveloped environments left. Please, please leave the people with something.. it is an incredibly special place for people’s mental and physical health”.**

- Community Stakeholder



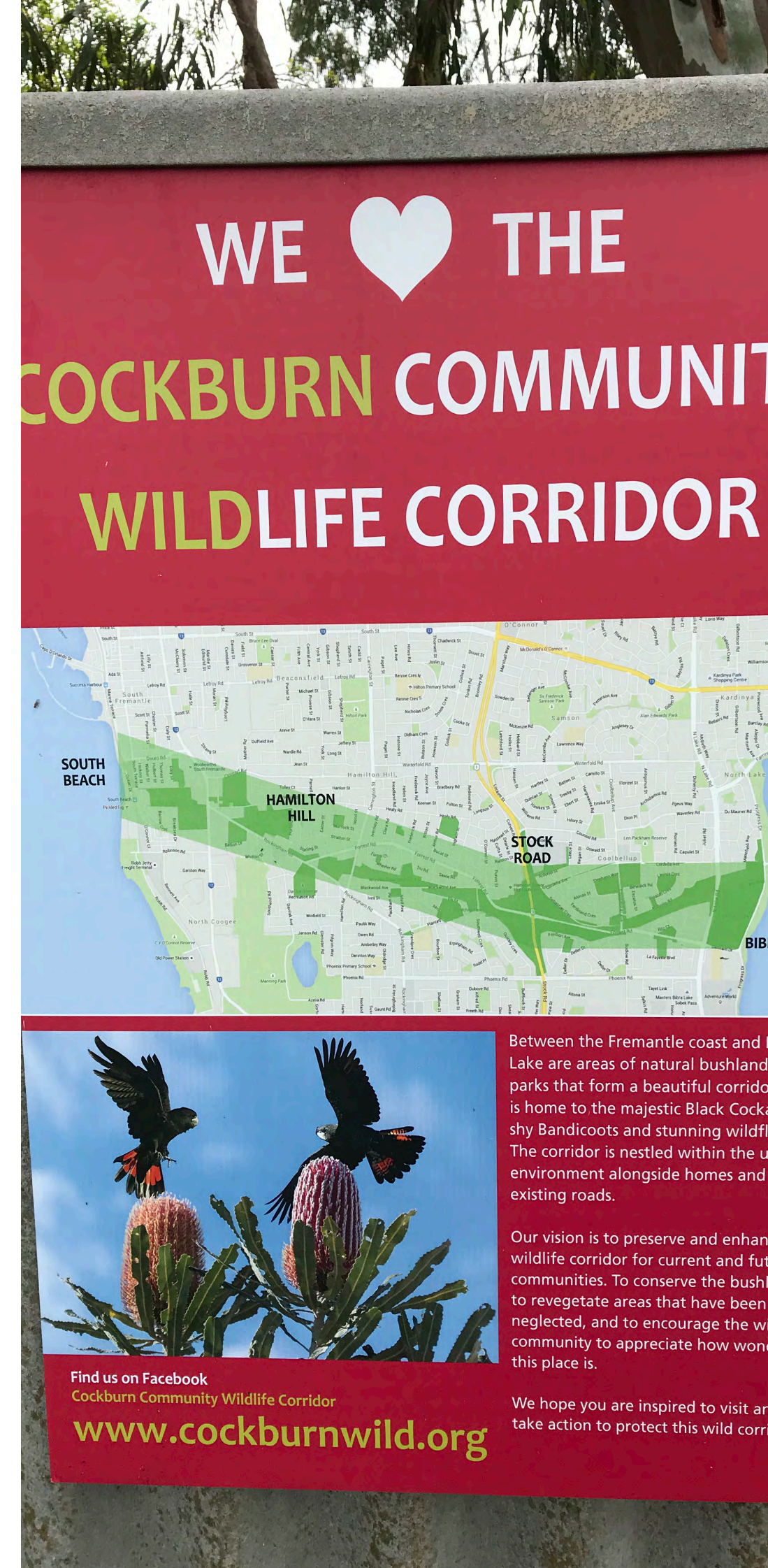
Stakeholders expressed what they would like to see at the Precinct and how it should be managed. The majority of respondents stated they wished to see revegetation which returns the area to its natural wetland environment. This appears to be the key vision for the majority when considering the future of the Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct that stakeholders would like to see.

**“Turn it back into a wetland – it floods every winter. Integrate the natural environment with an Aboriginal cultural trail. Create a natural space, not a contrived, shiny, fake one”.**

– Community Stakeholder

Stakeholders further advised, the grass needs improving, the wildlife corridor needs protecting and enhancing, there needs to be more native plants, the wetland needs restoring, the space for dogs, horses and market gardens needs to be maintained, more trees need to be planted and local healing events should happen in the future. These are all suggestions provided by stakeholders, which aim to enhance the cultural and historic values of the Precinct.

It was also noted that there had been previous insensitive development to the Precinct, without respectful and realistic (timewise) consultations with Aboriginal people, local community and residents. These issues should be addressed and mitigated going forward and need to include transparent, holistic, collaborative and achievable (timewise) consultation for future works.





## COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Traditional Owners and non-Aboriginal community members recommended the Precinct be preserved, protected and dealt with in a sensitive manner including environmental improvement and rehabilitation.
- 2** Traditional Owners specifically requested rehabilitation of areas to the west of Dixon Reserve (see area of remaining vegetation on Aboriginal site plan map).
- 3** Non-Aboriginal community members advised that they wished for the infilled swamp within Dixon Reserve to be re-vegetated and re-instated to its original wetland environment.
- 4** Traditional Owners and non-Aboriginal community members wished to highlight the Aboriginal and environmental significance of the Precinct and suggested that it is recognised through information and interpretative signage, native plants, cultural trails, place names, use of language and protection of intangible values.
- 5** Traditional Owners recommended that the Precinct be registered as an Aboriginal site with Department of Planning Lands and Heritage due to the significant cultural values present. Two site boundary options were submitted for assessment at the request of the Traditional Owners.
- 6** Traditional Owners recommended that any ground disturbing works in the area should require Aboriginal Heritage Monitors.



**7** Traditional Owners advised that Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct cannot be spoken about in isolation, as its values contribute to a wider cultural landscape and a holistic approach needs to be taken towards the area.

**8** Traditional Owners advised that the limestone hills contained within the Aboriginal site boundary, and the women's 'high ceremonial grounds' on the south side of Rockingham Road, should not be interfered with.

**9** Traditional Owners advised there are other Elders and Aboriginal groups (Ballardong, Yued and Binjareb) who may wish to comment on the massacre site in the future and therefore suggested an inclusive far-reaching consultation in order to give other Traditional Owners the opportunity to visit Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct or to be provided with aerial photographs, and have their say about the area.

**10** Traditional Owners and non-Aboriginal community members recommended that any proposed developments at Hamilton Hill Swamp Precinct should involve further consultation.

**11** Traditional Owners and non-Aboriginal community members recommend cultural history information sessions be held at the Precinct as well as health, wellbeing, healing and environmental workshops.





**12** Non-Aboriginal community members recommended that Randwick Stables and its curtilage is preserved as it holds considerable historical significance to the Precinct, the Hamilton Hill region and the wider state racing industry. As the stable is still in operation community members request that it be preserved as it adds to the European cultural significance of the Precinct.

**13** Non-Aboriginal community members requested that the current community gardens near Randwick Stables be expanded.

**14** Non-Aboriginal community members requested that the Precinct be subject to a vegetation assessment as the Tuart and Banksia trees hold cultural and environmental values including their contribution to the 'Wildlife Corridor'.

**15** Non-Aboriginal community members recommended that interpretative signage be installed nearby the original location of Sydney Smith's dwelling. This was the first known address in Hamilton Hill and therefore holds considerable historical significance.

**16** Non-Aboriginal community members recommended that bird life and their habitat in the Precinct should be preserved.







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## LEGISLATION

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## DPLH REGISTERED ABORIGINAL SITE AND OHP FILES

- DPLH ID – 18332 – Clontarf Hill
- DPLH ID – 3707 – Robbs Jetty





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