Pratique

Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp
The Isolation Hospital, 74 O'Kane Court, Coogee WA 6166
Email: friends@woodmanpointquarantinestation.com
http://www.woodmanpointquarantinestation.com
https://www.facebook.com/friendsofwoodmanpointrc/

SUMMER 2025

SHARING A LOVE OF HISTORY

Friends were recently honoured to be asked by another "like-minded" community group to share our experiences setting up tours at a historic site. The Edenvale Heritage Precinct is an award-winning cultural attraction in the Shire of Murray. They had heard great reports about our heritage tours and how we operated our site and were keen to see our heritage buildings and learn how Friends had grown our programs over more recent years.

The Edenvale Heritage Precinct is the remnants of a historic village and comprises historic and culturally significant buildings, such as homestead gardens, timber fences and barns in Pinjarra's town centre. The precinct is a living museum with tea rooms, artisan galleries and retail stores, as well as historic archives all housed in beautifully preserved heritage buildings.

Six representatives from the Shire of Murray and other history and cultural groups enjoyed a tour of the Quarantine Station, which was in full flight with school groups enjoying some of the many program activities offered by the Recreation Camp. Over an extended morning tea, they quizzed tour guides Jenni and Neil about our tour programs, and especially our newly introduced 'shortened' tours: how and why they were put in place; and the community reaction to these new offerings.

We also discussed various funding opportunities open to community groups and how Friends have successfully added to, and improved, our collection through these grants. They were particularly interested in how we promoted our tours and drew attention to our existence, and how modern technology, such as the use of trybooking and the Square reader for book sales had assisted in both the organisation and marketing of our tours.

Whilst the Edenvale Heritage Precinct is a much larger commercial concern, we share many similar issues and situations. Friends felt proud for other local history sites to learn the history of our site, recognising our growing success and feeling that they could indeed learn from our experiences.

It was a pleasure to share the Friends journey with our colleagues from the Edenvale Heritage Precinct and we wish them every success as they develop their historical tours and build on what is already a very successful and beautiful museum site. Check out their website at www.edenvaleheritageprecinct.com.au/ and, if you are passing through Pinjarra, drop in and support this great venture.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

Continuing a series of articles recalling some of the events that helped carve the history of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

Woodman Point during WWII

War-time brings many restrictions to the lives of ordinary citizens, some obvious, others not so. On 14 May 1949, the people of Western Australia were finally advised in their morning paper of the work undertaken by the doctors, nurses and quarantine officials at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station during the war years. In total, ten ships, contaminated with contagious diseases had been quarantined at the facility south of Fremantle between 1939 and 1945 and because the quarantine work had been undertaken in silence, there had been no knowledge of this in the local community.

The Quarantine Station, with a static staff of four persons, was always in a state of readiness to admit infectious patients. When the facility admitted patients and went into "lockdown", additional nurses, quarantine assistants, cooks and help were brought in to carry out the functions required during the mandatory quarantine period. It had on hand enough vaccine to inoculate 2000 people if required.

From the official Admissions Registers of the Station, a total of 63 patients from 10 separate vessels were placed in quarantine during the war years at Woodman Point, either as contacts or stricken with disease. The vast majority were inflicted with the deadly smallpox disease. By far, the largest number of patients had come from the Pacific trading vessel *Suva* which arrived from Bombay India in March 1943. With one crew member already dead, the Station was placed on high alert as a further 26 patients inflicted with the disease were placed in quarantine. Sadly five were to die during the first week of April that year, all cremated in the Woodman Point crematorium, their ashes interred in the small military cemetery to the north of the crematorium. These deaths marked the last time this cremation facility was used.

The vessel's remaining 21 crew members, including Capt. T Park, were placed in observation for the mandatory 3-week period of quarantine and survived their ordeal. They were released back to the *Suva* on 19 April 1943 and the vessel continued its journey east.

Nine other vessels were quarantined during the war years at Woodman Point. They were:

- *St Essyet* - March 1942: 1 patient
- *Clan McDonald* - July 1942: 7 patients
- *Maunganui* - May 1943: 8 patients
- *Empire Mist* - January 1944: 2 patients
- *Nellore* - February 1944: 6 patients
- *Tanda* - April 1944: 2 patients
- *Umgeni* - January 1945: 3 patients
- *Queda* - February 1945: 6 patients
- *City of Norwich* - March 1945: 1 patient

The infected patients from these ships, as well as the "contacts", all undertook their mandatory quarantine at Woodman Point and at its completion, were released to continue their journeys and their lives.

Throughout the war period, the Quarantine Station maintained its usual routine of preparedness for times when it would be required to protect the community from contagious disease. During this time, two above ground air-raid shelters were constructed to provide protection for staff and patients in the event of enemy attack from the skies. One was located within the grounds of the Isolation Hospital, the other near the laundry block. Today only the one near the laundry block remains. In 1942, within the grounds of the Station, an internment camp, complete with barbed wire and guard towers, was hastily prepared to hold Japanese aliens living in Western Australia. It was constructed on the site of the original 'Asiatic Quarters' to the east of the main facility and used for interment over a three-month period in early 1942. The buildings were demolished in the 1950s and only the concrete foundations of this facility remain today.

The war years brought challenges to the Woodman Point Quarantine Station, but its staff excelled in managing the facility and ensuring that contagious disease was maintained and did not escape into the community. Their efforts, often under extremely trying personal circumstances, drew the admiration and compliment of the Commonwealth Department of Health and their record of safely containing infectious disease stands as their legacy to this day.

NB The number of patients and deaths reported in *The West Australian* on 14 May 1949 differs from the official registers of the Woodman Point Quarantine Station. The numbers quoted in this article reflect those recorded in the official records and have been extracted from the source document: *Woodmans Point Quarantine Station - Admission and Discharges Book 1* Series Number PT1675/1, Item ID 670825, held in the National Archives of Australia, Perth.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

President's Annual AGM Report 2025

As we close another successful year at the former Woodman Point Quarantine Station, I am pleased to reflect on the many achievements and milestones that have defined the activities of Friends. It has been a year of collaboration, progress, and continued dedication from our volunteers and we were delighted to welcome four new members to our group, all joining following their participation in one of our incredible tours.

In January, we launched Friends Wednesday Mornings, a regular opportunity for members to connect, share ideas, and contribute to ongoing projects over a coffee and a chat.

Save the Date

Sunday 9 August 2026

Join us next year at the Isolation Hospital for celebrations to mark the 25th anniversary of the formation of Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp Inc.

More details to come as plans for the celebration are finalised.

Although the concept has started slowly due to the many outside commitments of our members, it has nevertheless been a successful new opportunity for members to connect in an informal setting and to further tasks such as our archiving projects, the reading of resources, doing odd jobs around the Isolation Hospital or just chatting about our mutual interests at Woodman Point. I hope that the concept continues to grow in the coming years.

During the course of the year, Sara Dryden and Keith Dodd began the mammoth task of compiling a computerised item inventory of display items throughout the Isolation Hospital, an important task for historic purposes as well as for insurance reasons. The project and their efforts have greatly enhanced our record-keeping and management of the historical items in our care and we thank them most sincerely for their commitment to this important task.

Much work has been undertaken around the Isolation Hospital and its surrounds during 2025, some of which has enhanced the structural integrity of this historic site whilst other work has improved the aesthetics. Several key maintenance and restoration projects were completed during the year, including the complete replacement of all tek screws in the COLORBOND® cladding on the exterior walls of the Isolation Hospital. This has been a major job over many months, overseen by Graeme Jeisman and his team, and in the latter stages, involved work at height to remove rusted screws and replace these with stainless steel ones to combat the harsh maritime environment of the area. During this phase of the work, the higher tek screws on the building walls were replaced under contract by IFM, one of our ongoing local sponsors. Graeme has also worked to replace skirting boards around the decking of the Isolation Hospital and also undertook to renovate the old W/C in the main passage. This room will now be used as another storage area. A busy bee conducted during the year attracted many members and helped enhance the overall ambience of the Isolation Hospital.

Outside, the lawns around the building were showing the signs of years of increasing salt damage. Thanks to the efforts of Greg and Kath Ireland and Keith Dodd, the surrounding lawns have been revitalised through dethatching, spiking, and the application of wetting agents and fertiliser. Excellent horticultural advice was obtained from Greenacres Turf Farm, and combined with an improved watering regime implemented by the Camp management, the lawns are now showing promising signs of recovery.

Thanks to the newly formed Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS), wi-fi was installed at the Isolation Hospital as part of an upgrade and installation of this facility across the Recreation Camp site. It will be a useful service to support the activities of Friends and our tour visitors, and we thank CITS for this provision.

Friends has seen a healthy increase in its financial status over the past year, largely the result of the many tours conducted by the group. Friends has fully financed the considerable maintenance undertaken on the site this year, the purchase of a new television to display historic photos, as well as meeting ongoing expenses such as website maintenance and insurance charges. Significant time and effort has been spent this year by Treasurer Greg

Ireland to investigate enhancing our insurances and taxation situation, especially our commitment to contents insurance, and the need for an ABN, and I thank Greg for managing this complex, but essential work.

Throughout the year, Friends continued to honour the memory of those who passed away at the Quarantine Station. Ongoing maintenance continued at the military cemetery and a range of commemorative ceremonies were held over the course of the year. In addition to Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, services were held to honour the Fijian sailors and to remember Sr. Barbara with the laying of flowers on her anniversary in the Crematorium.

Tour bookings throughout the year have been strong and we have enjoyed increasingly larger numbers of tour groups coming through the site. Word of mouth and advertising has enhanced attendance rates and as a result, more than 30 tours involving around 450 people, have been successfully conducted by our tour guides. Two portable amplifier systems were purchased during the year to enhance the clarity and delivery of tours by our tour guides and the implementation of administrative structures such as an incident report has ensured that our group meet the statutory requirements of the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport.

This year Friends introduced two Isolation Hospital Open Days, one in February and one in August, in response to public requests for the opportunity to spend longer time viewing artefacts and reading stories in the hospital wards. These events are growing slowly and have been appreciated by the 30 odd people who have returned to further their knowledge and understanding of the site. The sales of the history books by Ian Darroch, *The Boonah Tragedy* and *Western Sentinel*, have continued to boom to the extent that a further reprint run of 200 copies of *Western Sentinel* was commissioned during the course of the year. This decision will ensure the cost of these books remain competitive to our visitors in the years to come.

2025 has marked the 25th anniversary of the founding of Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp and to commemorate the event, an anniversary sub-committee, headed by Vice President Neil Wilson, has been convened. The sub -committee, comprising Jenni Carder, Suzy Carder, Chris Harwood and Ainslie Poore, is in the throes of planning an Open Day to be held on 9 August 2026, the 25th anniversary of the first AGM of the group. The event will bring together current members as well as those who had a pivotal role in the founding of the group back in 2000 and is being seen as an opportunity to gather further history and stories about the early days of what has become our very dynamic group. Applications for grants to support aspects of this event have been made to the City of Cockburn, the remainder of the costs to be borne by Friends.

I sincerely thank the Friends Executive: Vice President Neil Wilson, Treasurer Greg Ireland and Secretary Ainslie Poore for their contributions to the management and running of the group throughout the year. This thanks is also extended to all members who have actively contributed to the success of Friends in 2024/2025. Without your support and contribution, this small community group could not flourish and grow the way it has.

As we look ahead to 2026, I am confident that Friends will continue to thrive. Our shared commitment, camaraderie, and respect for Woodman Point's history ensure that we remain a vibrant and dedicated group.

Thank you all once again for your continued support and contribution.

Gary Marsh
President

UPDATE FROM THE CAMP

This has been a truly rewarding year at Woodman Point, hosting around 440 events which have highlighted the Camp's continued importance to the community. We welcomed more than 50,000 program participants, who all took part in the diverse range of activities offered at Woodman Point, supported by our qualified team of instructors.

Several capital works projects were successfully completed, including refurbishments to the ablution facilities in the Spinifex and Grevillea dormitories in July. These upgrades significantly enhanced the standard of accommodation we provide to our clients. We're currently scoping more capital works initiatives for 2026.

Looking ahead to the new year, we will welcome Daniel Price into the Program Coordinator role and Keilin Fagan as Camp Event Coordinator until March. In addition, James Olton will be acting as Quality Operations Manager at our Leederville Head Office throughout January, with Lachlan Thompson stepping into the Senior Program Coordinator position during this time. These movements highlight the strength of staff development at Woodman Point and the calibre of personnel the Camp continues to deliver.

For 2026, our priorities will include the implementation of the revitalised Ultimate Sports program, some further upgrades to our facilities and improving accessibility at our site and, as always, a focus on outstanding customer service.

From all at Woodman Point, we wish you a safe and happy Christmas and look forward to working with you in 2026.

Ryan Austin
Operations Manager

LATEST NEWS FROM FRIENDS

- It is with sadness that Friends acknowledge the passing of our member Colin Ralston on 24 November 2025. Colin joined Friends in 2022 following his participation in one of our public tours and joined us at numerous meetings and busy bees since then.

  We extend our sincere condolences to Colin's family in their loss.

- The next meeting of Friends will be held at the Isolation Hospital on Wednesday 21 January 2026 commencing at 6.30pm. All members are welcome to attend.

NEW MEMBERS

Friends welcome the following people who have recently joined our group.

- Annie Quartermaine from Spearwood
- Stephen Quartermaine from Spearwood

HERITAGE TOURS

Friends of Woodman Point Recreational Camp operate regular heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station and the Isolation Hospital Museum on week days for community groups. Morning tea is included in all tours.

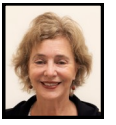
Regular Sunday heritage tours, conducted on the third Sunday of each month, provide tours for members of the public to visit the former Quarantine Station and to learn about this important Western Australian heritage site.

The Isolation Hospital Museum is also open twice a year, on the third Sunday in February and in August, for members of the public to browse the Isolation Hospital's historical collection at their leisure.

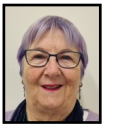
We acknowledge the contribution of our valued volunteer tour guides who lead heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station.

Jenni

Bernadette



Chris



Jo

Gary

Keith

Neil

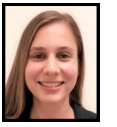
UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

December 2025		January/February 2026	
7 Dec	Monthly public tour	15 Feb	IH Open Day

COMMITTEE 2025 – 2026

PRESIDENT
Gary Marsh

SECRETARY/ MEMBERSHIP
Ainslie Poore



VICE PRESIDENT
Neil Wilson

COMMITTEE MEMBER
Jenni Carder

TREASURER
Greg Ireland

EX-OFFICIO COMMITTEE MEMBER
Ben Walton

MEMBER SERVICES

HERITAGE TOUR BOOKINGS
Jenni Carder

PRATIQUE
Neil Wilson

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN

mantaray
Design and Technology