Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp (Inc)

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am writing this report from my usual winter escape in Exmouth, reflecting on what has already been a meaningful and productive start to the year for the Friends of Woodman Point Recreation Camp.

On 23 February, the Friends Office Bearers met with Ben Croudace from The Model Shop in Jolimont to discuss the next stage of our long anticipated project: a scale model depicting the Woodman Point Quarantine Station as it appeared in 1942. This meeting brought us another step closer to realising a valuable interpretive asset for future tours and educational programs.

On 24 April we were pleased to welcome Ben to Woodman Point Recreation Camp for an onsite visit. This provided him with important context and detail to support the model's development.

Thanks to our Treasurer, Greg Ireland for all his hard work on the project.

On 18 March, we were delighted to host the Red Hatters, Scarlett Belles chapter, at the Isolation Hospital. Their unexpected donation was a wonderful surprise, and we extend our sincere thanks to these lovely ladies for their generosity.

On 15 April, Emily Tupou visited the grave of her uncle, Osea Tuqova, at the old military cemetery at Woodman Point. Osea was one of five seamen who passed away and were cremated at the Quarantine Station in 1943.

Emily's visit was a poignant reminder of the personal histories connected to this State heritage-listed place.

On 18 April, *The West Australian* published an article titled "Bravery of our nurses who faced a killer flu." We thank journalist Malcolm Quekett for helping bring wider attention to the courage and sacrifice of those who served at Woodman Point during times of crisis.

So far this year, we have conducted five tours of the Quarantine Station, with strong interest continuing. We have many more tours booked for the rest of the year. Thanks to Jenni Carder and her tour guides for their time and enthusiasm.

On 26 April, Friends welcomed our newest tour guide, Ian McDonald. After attending two tours, Ian chose to become a member and is now keen to contribute as a guide. We are delighted to have him join the team.

On 14 May, we had the pleasure of showing Josephine Jay – Theatre 180's Visual Designer – around Woodman Point Recreation Camp. Josephine will be working on a theatrical production to be staged at the Camp later this year, and we look forward to supporting this creative partnership.

National Volunteer Week commenced on 18 May, offering a timely opportunity to acknowledge the extraordinary dedication of our volunteers. Their time, energy, and passion shape the memorable experiences of everyone who visits Woodman Point. Friends' community thrives because of that commitment, and we are deeply grateful for the positive spirit they bring to our work.

Congratulations to Keith Dodd on his appointment as Interim Vice President of Friends and thank you for taking on this role.

Gary Marsh
President

VISIT BY NIECE HONOURS THE MEMORY OF OSEA TUQOVU

Emily Tupou, Woodman Point Regional Park
11 April 2026

On Saturday, 11 April 2026, Woodman Point Regional Park welcomed a personal visit. Emily Tupou, niece of the late Osea Tuqovu, travelled from Sydney to the cemetery to pay her respects on the anniversary of his passing.

Her visit marked 83 years since Osea's death at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station during one of the most tragic episodes in the site's history. Osea Tuqovu was one of five Allied Merchant Seamen from the *S.S. Suva* who died in at Woodman Point Quarantine Station during the smallpox outbreak of 1943. Four were Fijian crew members. The fifth was the ship's Chief Officer, Arthur David Waters who elected to care for the sick crew members, placing himself in grave danger. Their deaths occurred over a harrowing two-week period as the outbreak unfolded.

Those who lost their lives were:

† 30 March – Samuela Waledau, aged 23,
Ordinary Seaman
† 1 April – Arthur David Waters, aged 36,
Chief Officer
† 5 April – Eroni Builoto, aged 25,
Ship's Cook
† 9 April – Rasaca Cigilau, aged 20,
Ship's Steward
† 11 April – Osea Tuqovu, aged 20,
Crewman

Emily Tupou's visit serves as a powerful reminder that the stories of these young men continue to resonate across generations and across the Pacific. Her presence at the gravesite not only honoured her uncle's memory but also acknowledged the shared history between Fiji and Western Australia during a time of global conflict and disease.

RASACA CIGILAU'S GREAT NEPHEW

As if demonstrating Friends' global outreach, on 11 May, Friends also received a message from a gentleman writing from Suva. Ru'e Ven was 'Googling' his Great Uncle, Rasaca Cigilau who he thought had died in Melbourne.

All five *S.S Suva* crew were cremated and buried onsite. In later years, the remains of Chief Officer Waters were re-interred at Karrakatta Cemetery, while the four Fijians remain together in a grave at Woodman Point.

Friends' volunteer, Jenni Carder said, 'I cannot tell you how excited Ru'e was to know where his Great Uncle is buried and that his story is told on every tour Friends conducts.' Incidentally, our members have a particular connection to this incident. Jenni Carder and Greg Ireland's grandfather, Bertie Poore nursed these men and was isolated with them in what was the Station's longest period of quarantine lock-down, and Neil Wilson's grandfather, Roy McIntosh (the Station Officer-in-Charge) read Christian burial services and oversaw the cremations.

The Friends of Woodman Point remain committed to preserving these stories and ensuring that the individuals who lived, worked, and died at the Quarantine Station are never forgotten.

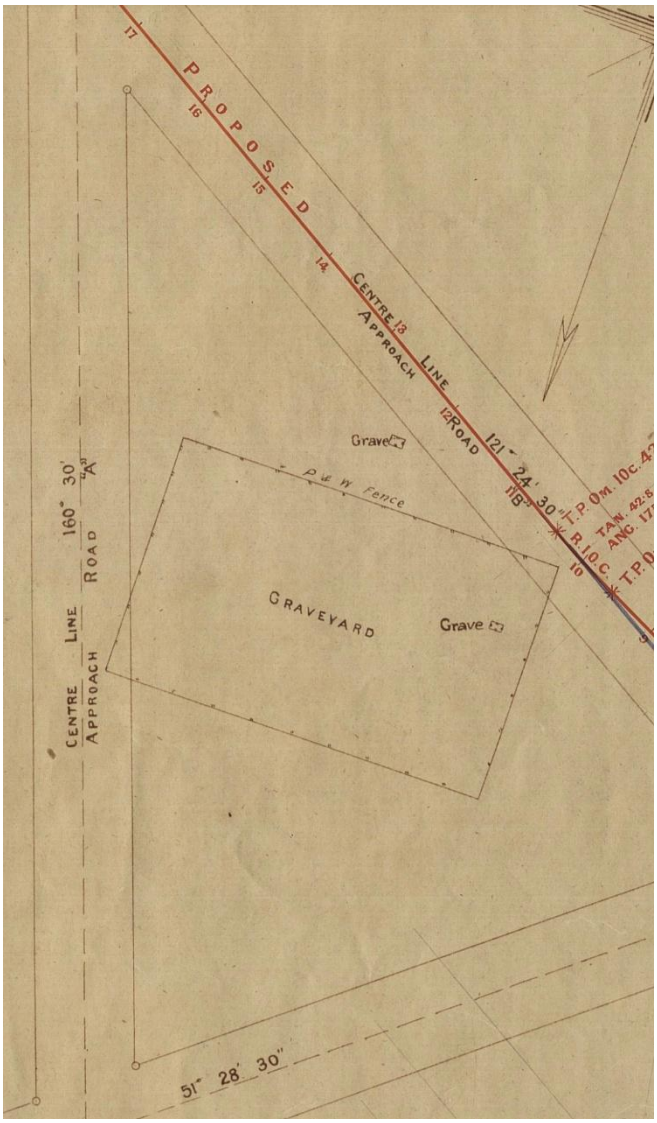
Mat and flowers laid by Emily Tupou
Woodman Point Regional Park, 11 April 2026

In Fijian culture, mats—specifically, handwoven pandanus mats (*ibe*)—are deeply significant items representing love, respect, and the connection between kin groups, often used in mortuary rites to honour the deceased. They are frequently laid on, under, or around graves to symbolize the care and comfort being offered to the departed.

WOODMAN POINT'S ORIGINAL CEMETERY

People are generally unaware that there are two remnant cemeteries at the former quarantine station at Woodman Point. One, in the bushland reserve was established in December 1918 and is identified easily by an impressive granite memorial to military nurse, Rosa O'Kane. The other, established in 1893, is covered in scrub and unidentified except for a sign erected by Friends in remembrance of earlier burials at Woodman Point. It is opposite the activity area where 'The Cube' is located.

Forty-five-year-old William Miller, a passenger onboard the ill-fated ship, *Saladin* died from smallpox on 21 April 1893, just two days after the government set aside Woodman Point's original cemetery as a smallpox burial ground. The part-plan image next shows that the graveyard had a post and wire fence, and a grave inside and outside its perimeter. Perhaps the external grave was an unknown earlier death, or that of ~30 year old Ah Kim, who died from smallpox in 1894.



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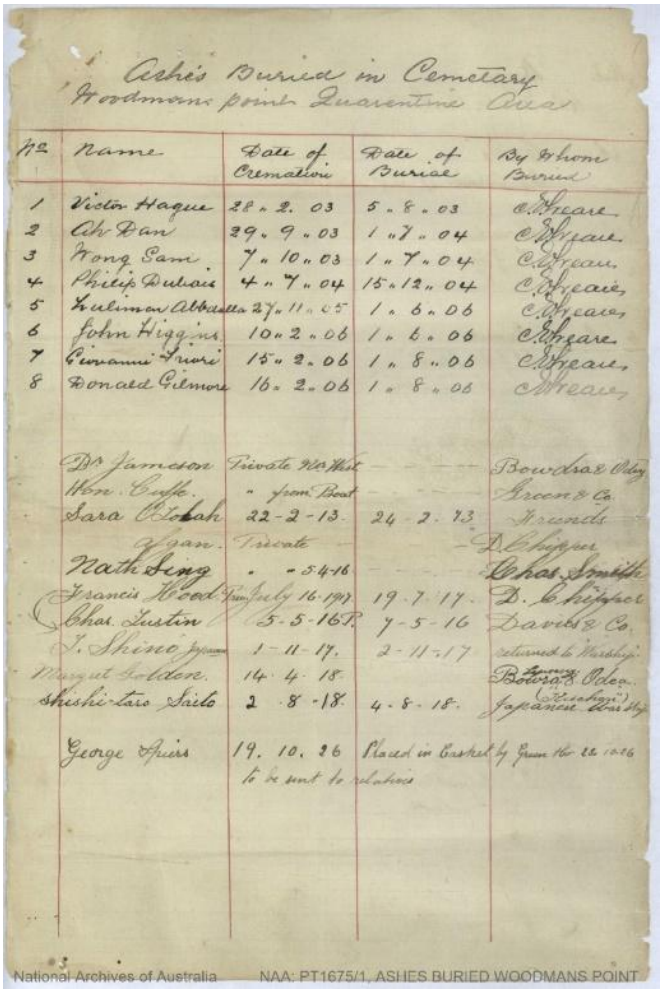
In 2008 Friends commissioned an archaeological investigation of both cemeteries using ground probing radar. Unfortunately, the original cemetery was too overgrown for that purpose.

The handwritten Station list next, titled 'Ashes Buried in Cemetery' provides a few clues on some of the early 20th century cremations, though the burial of ashes at Woodman Point in the second half appears to be mainly a list of ashes returned to grieving families.

Apart from cremating diseased bodies, Woodman Point was also used for private cremations through arrangement with the Central Board of Health.



Ashes Buried in Cemetary Woodmans point Quarentine Area

No	Name	Date of Cremation	Date of Burial	By Whom Buried
1	Victor Hague	28.2.03	5.8.03	C. Weare
2	Ah Dan	29.9.03	1.7.04	C. Weare
3	Wong Sam	7.10.03	1.7.04	C. Weare
4	Philip Dubois	4.7.04	15.12.04	C. Weare
5	Suliman Abbass	27.11.05	1.6.06	C. Weare
6	John Higgins	10.2.06	1.6.06	C. Weare
7	Benami Priori	15.2.06	1.8.06	C. Weare
8	Donald Gilmore	16.2.06	1.8.06	C. Weare
	Dr Jameson	Private Ward		Bowdrae Oldy
	Hon. Cuffe.	" from Boat		Green & Co.
	Sara Elijah	22-2-13.	24-2-13.	Friends
	Yoan.	Private		D. Chipper
	Nath Seng	" 5-4-16		Chas Smith
	Francis Wood	Jun July 16 1917	19-7-17.	D. & Chipper
	Chas. Lustin	3-5-16 R	7-5-16	Davies & Co.
	T. Shino	1-11-17.	2-11-17	returned to Yoshiji
	Margt Goldere.	14-4-18		Bowra & Odea.
	Shishi-taro Saito	2-8-18.	4-8-18.	Japanese Consulate
	George Spiers	19.10.16	Placed in Casket by Jun the 22 1916	
		to be sent to relations		

National Archives of Australia NAA: PT1675/1, ASHES BURIED WOODMANS POINT

NAA PT1675/1

The entry 'Chas Tustin' (initially read as Chas Lustin) was, in fact, John Edward Tustin. According to his official death registration, John was 49 years old when he died on 2 May 1916 at [Brown's] Melville Hospital South Fremantle. The cause of death was cirrhosis of the liver, dropsy and cardiac failure.[1]

A newspaper report revealed that John was a wealthy bachelor from London who, despite the war, was travelling frequently to Australia and staying at an illustrious men's club in Tasmania.

> A telegram was received from Perth on Tuesday announcing the death that morning of Mr. J. E. Tustin, who was a passenger returning to London by the R.M.S. Mooltan, and who, on account of illness, landed at Fremantle on the ship's arrival there a week ago. For many years past Mr. Tustin had made an annual trip to Australia by the P.&O. line and spent each summer at the Tasmanian Club, Hobart. When in London he resided at the Albany 4A Piccadilly and many Australians had been entertained in his artistic rooms there. Mr. Tustin had made many friends in Australia.
>
> *Register* (Adelaide, SA, Wednesday 3 May 1916, page 4)

Mr Tustin's apartment block in London still exists and is very grand! Dubbed the 'Paradise of Piccadilly' this Grade 1 listed building's occupants have included: Byron, Wordsworth, Gladstone, Lord Stanley, Sir Thomas Beecham, Isaiah Berlin, Dame Edith Evans, Sir Kenneth Clark, Bill Nighy, Aldous Huxley, JB Priestley, Terence Stamp and many English aristocrats.

John's cremation at Woodman Point was in a facility as used by the Cremation Society of England and it was designed by Sir Henry Thompson. This June is the 126th anniversary of the building of Woodman Point's crematorium (two years prior to the Adelaide facility, which is often wrongly credited as the first crematorium built in Australia). Karrakatta's crematorium was built in 1937.

SHARING OUR RESEARCH

Over 25 years, Friends has researched and shared the quarantine station's social history with others, most recently with the University of Western Australia (see: https://collected.uwa.edu.au/nodes/view/50563).

[1] This poorly kept Station record states that the body was cremated at Woodman Point on 5 May 1916 and that his ashes were buried on 7 May 1916 by Davies & Co. In fact, a funeral notice in *The West Australian* alerted Friends that John was buried at Karrakatta on 4 May 1916.

UWA's impressive resource titled 'Two Centuries of Chinese Heritage in Western Australia' is a vast online centre where users can discover the stories of Chinese communities' contributions to our State and Commonwealth from the 1830s to the 1920s.

At Woodman Point there are nine known Chinese victims of smallpox, leprosy, bubonic plague and Spanish flu, whose cremated remains are believed to be buried onsite.

Ah Chen (aka Ah Kiaou),
Ah Dan (aka Ah Din),
Ah Kim,
Ah Sam (aka Wong Sam),
Fong Yee (aka Ah Fong),
Ah Sin (aka Ah Sing),
Ah See Tan (aka Ah Tan See),
Charles Lowe (aka Charles Lai and Charles Lawe), and
Ah Keo Ung (aka Ah Keo).

But what is in a name?

As indicated by historian, Anne Atkinson, 'Chen,' 'Tan,' 'Dan' and 'Chan' are represented by the same written name character, but pronounced differently in Mandarin, Hokkien, Teo Chiu, Hailam, and Cantonese. Chinese names generally consist of three characters, the first of which is the family name. However, the Chinese often altered their names, dropping the first two names and placing an 'Ah' in front of the remaining name. Some Chinese in Western Australia also used as many as four aliases! Confusingly, there are many official records of Chinese men who identified themselves by the same first and last name combinations.

Our collaboration with Lucy Hair from UWA has yielded links to personal and community histories with broader historical narratives. Thank you, Lucy for voluntarily continuing our entries long past the project's conclusion. Friends hope that UWA's resource will also provide a connection between descendants and their Chinese ancestors whose memories are not forgotten at Woodman Point.

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

Next …Continuing a series of articles recalling some of the patients who were nursed and cared for at the Woodman Point Quarantine Station.

FONG YEE

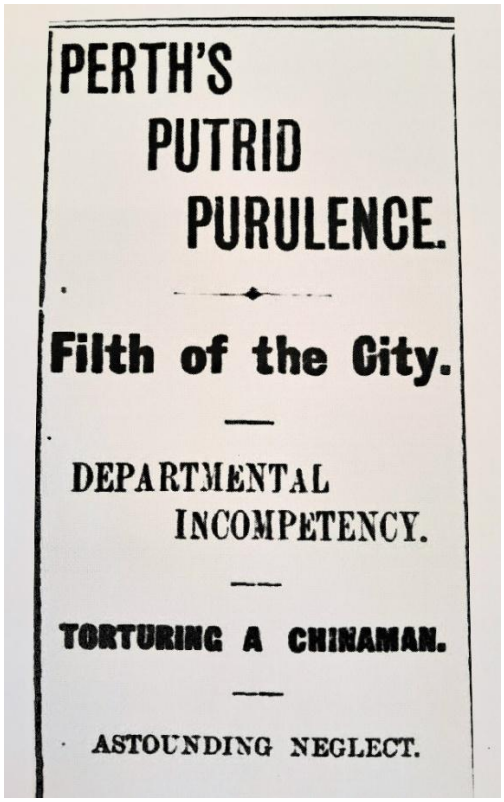
Finding colonial photographs of 19th century Chinese emigrants to WA is occasionally possible through a search of State Records Office files. After 1897, when Chinese people wished to travel overseas and then return, they needed a 'Certificate to return to the colony'. These files contain many photos as they were needed for identification purposes.

Fong Yee. Source: State Records Office, S675, Cons 527, 1899/1048. Source: UWA Collected.

Fong Yee (aka Ah Fong) was born in about 1873 in China. The photograph above accompanied his certificate to return to the colony and shows him at the age of about 25. He is described as 5'9" (175 cm) tall, that he had been vaccinated in Singapore, and that he was permitted to stay in Western Australia for 24 months.

Fong Yee worked as a greengrocer at Perth, possibly at 165 William Street (Ah Key & Co.). Greengrocers, along with other urban workers, were highly susceptible to the bubonic plague primarily because their workspaces and products attracted plague-carrying rodents and fleas. The disease, caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*,

was spread by fleas that lived on rats which thrived near humans.



PERTH'S
PUTRID
PURULENCE.

Filth of the City.

DEPARTMENTAL
INCOMPETENCY.

TORTURING A CHINAMAN.

ASTOUNDING NEGLECT.

West Australian Sunday Times, 10 Mar 1901, p6

On 1 March 1901 Fong Yee contracted bubonic plague and was removed by force to Woodman Point Quarantine Station. Several newspapers (including the one above) described the event.

> The case of the unfortunate Chinese Ah Fong deserves a word or two of comment. He was treated injudiciously and with unnecessary brute force and cruelty. Hunted like a wild animal he twice escaped his pursuers, and on Tuesday evening ensconced himself with his mate in his room in a lane off the Federal Buildings. We are told it was in that room he had caught the infection. Nothing of the kind. He caught it in a store not even now quarantined. During Tuesday night and up to noon on Wednesday he had no nourishment, 'but' said the young constable, 'the doctor said he would send him some milk and soda during the day.' And, worse still, no sanitary provision whatever was devised for the two men. The constable told our reporter this and something still more disgusting. No wonder the poor wretches smashed the ventilators. Blood stains were visible on the windowsill. No instructions were given to the police to keep the public from staring in at the window. Vegetable and other carts passed within a few inches of the building right underneath the exhalations through the broken glass. This was quarantine with a vengeance.

The newspaper described Perth's living conditions for the poor as hellish.

> In the block between Barrack-street and a suspicious looking lane dignified with the name of Station-street, there are scores of ramshackle tenements which should be condemned as unfit for human habitation. In a sandy area of about a quarter of an acre between the Central Horse Bazaar (Wellington street) and Perry's Buildings (Murray street) is a row of seven or eight hovels, DOG KENNELS on a large scale and filthy at that.

Fong Yee refused to leave his shop in the Federal Buildings but was eventually forced into a special covered-in vehicle and sent to the purpose-built Plague Isolation Hospital (Friends' headquarters and museum).

Dr Black ordered Fong Yee's shop and house to be quarantined under police guard and six of his contacts were also quarantined at Woodman Point.

Nurse Sadler, who was in charge of plague patients at Woodman Point in 1900, returned from her duties as Matron at Albany Hospital to assist at Woodman Point.

The progression of bubonic plague was gruesome, attacking the body in several painful stages: high fever, severe headaches, chills and extreme tiredness followed by the appearance of buboes – painfully swollen lymph nodes in the groin, armpits or neck. These could grow to the size of an apple, turning black and sometimes bursting to expel foul-smelling pus and blood. Next came tissue death as the infection spread. Fingers, toes, and the tip of the nose would turn black and die while the person was still alive. Finally, the bacteria caused massive internal bleeding, leading to black spots scattered over the body and the vomiting of blood.

Fong Yee died at Woodman Point on 8 March 1901. He was cremated the following day and buried in the north-east corner of the first cemetery by T.L. Anderson (Plague Officer). His clothes were burned in a newly erected incinerator.

CHARLES LOWE

Charles Lowe: Source WA State Archives, CSO 1900/1079. Source UWA Collected.

Charles Lowe (also known as Charles Lai and Charles Lawe) was born in about 1868 in China. He was the son of William Yee Lowe, a shopkeeper. He married L. Lowe in China in about 1890 and they had son, who was born about 1893.

Restrictive immigration policies actively discouraged Chinese men settling with their families and tight controls determined that mainly men of a certain age entered Australia. They were often only allowed to stay for a fixed period and were then forced to return to China. Like Charles, Chinese men who worked in Western Australia often had a wife and children living in China.

Charles worked as a shop assistant and merchant, probably at C. H. Warley & Co., Market Street, Fremantle, where he lived above the premises. It was a drapery and clothing store.

From June 1900 until September 1901, Charles travelled home to China but on 8 July 1902 died of bubonic plague at his Fremantle lodging. His body was immediately taken, cremated and buried at Woodman Point. Fourteen people living with him were also quarantined.

At the time of his death, Charles was stated to be 32 years old with a wife in China.

In her PHD research, Dr Michelle McKeough found that 'there was only one area in Perth where the plague came, it was a big plague hotspot, and it was the area bounded by Wellington Street, Hay Street, Pier Street and William Street. 'Every [Perth] plague victim from 1900 to 1906 came out of there. 'In Fremantle, it was the West End and the same environment, with lots of overcrowding. We'd had the gold rush, and they just hobbled together in ramshackle tenements and people were living in terrible conditions, there wasn't proper sewerage, and there was no fresh water,' she said.

CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteers are needed to help with our storytelling and care of this fascinating heritage site. If you can contribute time or information to our continuing research on anything related to quarantine at Woodman Point, please get in touch.

SPECIAL THANKS TO FIND A GRAVE VOLUNTEERS

Find a Grave is an online database that helps people from all over the world work together to find, record and present information as a virtual cemetery experience. Their volunteers at Karrakatta and Fremantle Cemeteries have assisted Friends over the past months with locations and uploading photographs of quarantine patient and staff gravesites on https://www.findagrave.com/.

At Fremantle, most of the Woodman Point identities do not have headstones, but 'SuNic' (aka Sue) decided to dig under the sand to get a good photograph of one ornate grave. Thank you, Sue. 'Q,' (aka Quentin) from Karrakatta has been scanning and digitising Books of Remembrance which help identify early grave locations that are not on the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board's searchable database. Another volunteer code-named 'Hez,' with her sister, determined that John Edward Tustin (from the story earlier) was interred at Karrakatta, Anglican KA Section Gravesite 0602. No headstone remains. 'Hez' and 'Q' have also photographed numerous Karrakatta gravesites for Friends and added explanatory text to assist future researchers. Laying flowers as a mark of respect at the gravesite of Arthur Waters from the *S.S. Suva*, Hez remarked that 'he sounds like he was a very caring soul.' As are these very giving Find A Grave volunteers.

HERITAGE TOURS

Friends of Woodman Point Recreational Camp operate regular heritage tours of the former Quarantine Station and the Isolation Hospital Museum, mostly on weekdays 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 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 its collection at their leisure.

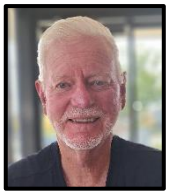
We acknowledge the contribution of our valued volunteer tour guides.

Jenni

Chris

Jo

Gary


Keith

Ian

UPCOMING HERITAGE TOURS

The following heritage tours are currently planned:

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
14 June: Friends Forever Group	19 July: Public Tour	9 August: Morning tea celebrating Friends' Silver Anniversary
8 June: Silverchain Seniors 21 June: Public Tour		16 August: Public Tour 23 August: Department of Fire & Emergency Services volunteers

https://www.woodmanpointquarantinestation.com/heritage-tours

COMMITTEE 2025 - 2026

The Committee Members are:

President

Gary Marsh

Vice President
(Interim)

Keith Dodd

Treasurer

Greg Ireland

Secretary/ Membership

Ainslie Poore

Committee Member

Jenni Carder

Ex-Officio Committee Member

Ben Walton

MEMBER SERVICES

Key member services are provided as follows:

Heritage Tour Bookings

Jenni Carder

Pratique

Gail Dodd

Pratique online
https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2903522259
https://www.woodmanpointquarantinestation.com/pratique-newsletters