

The history of Heffron Park, Maroubra



John W. Ross

Cover photograph:

- Bicycle racing in Heffron Park (photograph by Greg McCarthy)

Contents

Foreword	1
Botany Wetlands	3
Acknowledgement of country.....	3
Fresh water for a growing colony	3
The Tank Stream	3
Busby's Bore	3
Botany Wetlands.....	5
Labour Depot and Refuge	7
Boom and bust in the 1890s	7
New South Wales Labour Bureau	7
Bunnerong Labour Depot and Refuge.....	7
Residential subdivision	11
Selling the farm	11
The Parks and Playgrounds movement.....	12
Maroubra Speedway.....	15
Sandhills shape a concrete speedway	15
Niche motor racing finds a home.....	16
Subdivision for housing.....	18
Coral Sea Park	19
Naval wool stores	21
Randwick Rifle Range	21
Randwick Naval Stores	22
Bunnerong Wool Stores.....	23
Bunnerong Migrant Hostel	25
Displaced Persons Program	25
Assisted Passage Migration Scheme	25
Migrant hostels in New South Wales	26
Bunnerong Migrant Hostel.....	27
A temporary home in recycled buildings	27
Challenging conditions in the hostel	28
Endeavour Migrant Hostel	30
Heffron Park.....	33
Notes	35

Table of Figures.....	39
References	41
Index	43

Foreword

Heffron Park is located on a natural ecosystem known in Sydney's eastern suburbs as the Botany Wetlands. This is a series of aquifers that drain from Centennial Park to Botany Bay, and which became Sydney's fresh water supply from the 1850s. The terrain consists largely of sandy hills and swamplands.

The high unemployment that accompanied the severe economic depression of the 1890s prompted the Government to establish farms to provide work for the long-term unemployed and supply food to State institutions. A Labour Farm was opened in Heffron Park (then called Bunnerong Park) in 1901 and operated until the economy improved in the 1920s. After that, the northern part of the park was subdivided for housing.

Meanwhile a motor speedway track opened next to Bunnerong Park in 1925 but suffered a series of fatalities and operated sporadically from 1927 until finally closing in the 1930s. The surrounding land was subdivided for housing in the 1940s, leaving the former track as a park that commemorates the Battle of the Coral Sea.

The undeveloped part of Bunnerong Park was requisitioned by the Government near the end of World War II to construct a large number of sheds to store Australia's surplus wool clip before being exported to Britain after the war ended. These stores were built as an extension of the Randwick Naval Stores which were built in 1943 to supply the Australian and Allied navies operating in the Pacific.

After the war, the Government was determined to greatly expand the population through migration, initially of displaced persons from war-torn Europe, then assisted migrants from Britain. They were housed in hastily converted hostels around the country, including the Bunnerong wool stores from 1950. But these sheds were built for storage and not accommodation, were not insulated and families had little privacy or family life.

In 1970, the Bunnerong hostel was replaced by a purpose-built hostel at South Coogee that was more suited to the professionals and family reunions that were being attracted as migrants from the 1960s. After the Bunnerong Migrant Hostel closed in 1970, the old wool storage buildings were steadily demolished and Heffron Park was landscaped and developed as a centre for sports and recreation in the Maroubra area.

The sturdy wartime roads are used for popular bicycle racing events, and several other sports are practised in the park, such as netball, swimming, tennis, rugby league and soccer. The last naval store buildings were demolished in 2021 to make way for the large multisport Heffron Centre and the headquarters of the South Sydney Rabbitohs rugby league club.

John W. Ross

Surry Hills, Sydney

September, 2026

email: rossjw@ozemail.com.au

Botany Wetlands

Acknowledgement of country

The author acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples of the Eora nation who traditionally occupied the Sydney coast. He would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past, present and emerging, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

Fresh water for a growing colony

The Tank Stream

The first fresh water supply for the new colony of Sydney was the Tank Stream, which flowed between present-day George and Pitt Streets into Sydney Cove. Its name derives from three storage tanks cut out of sandstone beside the stream in order to store water. During the drought of 1792, one of the British Officers who had spent time in India had the idea of utilising the Indian method of cutting tanks into streams in a climate which alternated between times of heavy rain and drought, much like Sydney.

But the Tank Stream could not meet the needs of the growing colony for long and became increasingly polluted by runoff from the settlement, despite the best efforts of successive Governors to limit this. It was finally abandoned in 1826, leaving the inhabitants to rely on nearby springs and creeks for fresh water. A drought in 1820 required water carters to sell water carried in barrels from the ponds in Centennial Park to supplement the town water supply. These lakes, known at the time as the Lachlan Swamps, cover about 26 hectares and form the upper catchment of the Botany Wetlands. Today the Tank Stream is an underground stormwater drain carrying water from the city to the harbour¹.

Busby's Bore

In 1823, the Scottish civil engineer and mineral surveyor John Busby (1765-1857) was appointed "in the management of the Coal Mines, in supplying the Town of Sydney with water, and in objects of a similar nature". He arrived in Sydney in June 1825. He found that the water in the Lachlan Swamps was of excellent quality and sufficiency for the expected increase in Sydney's population.

His first report outlined a scheme to pump water through iron pipes up to South Head Road (now Oxford Street) to a reservoir in Hyde Park. But after conducting a survey of the route, he found that Hyde Park was about 570 mm lower than the nearest of the ponds, so pumping might be avoided. Based on this new information, in January 1826 he submitted a second report which proposed an underground bore for the whole distance of more than 3.2 km. Although a tunnel would cost much more than pipes and pumps to construct (£20,000 versus £12,000), he argued that being gravity-fed it would be much cheaper to run. The Surveyor-General John Oxley recommended the underground scheme, and tunnelling began in September 1827.

The work proceeded very slowly, arousing much public criticism. This was because it was carried out by (largely unskilled and unwilling) convict labour, and mostly through solid rock. Tunnelling started at the Hyde Park end and followed a fairly erratic course, initially along South Head Road, then making several turns on its way via Moore Park to the Lachlan Swamps².

Although well short of the Lachlan Swamps, by 1830 pure water started to flow through the tunnel, thanks to several springs that were crossed on the way. Busby also took advantage of other sources of ground water by drilling offcuts to the main tunnel³. When fully operating in 1837, the Bore could supply Sydney's population of 20,000 people with up to 1.5 million litres of water per day⁴. The water was piped across Hyde Park on trestles with a final distribution point near the corner of Elizabeth and Park Streets. From here it was distributed throughout the rapidly expanding city on horse-drawn carts.



Figure 1 Busby's Bore (Sydney Water brochure)

In view of the very limited workforce and technology available at the time, and the challenging terrain, Busby's achievement in successfully supplying Sydney city for several decades with fresh water was certainly outstanding. But a drought in 1837 reduced the water flow to a trickle, highlighting the need for an administration to control its use. This was one of the main motivations for the formation of the Sydney City Council, which took control of water management in 1842. It was the first time an essential service had been placed under public management and was an important step in the development of Sydney from a penal colony to a trading port.

The tunnel varied in size from 4 to 10 feet in height and from 2 to 3' 6" in width, and contained numerous wells tapped into the bore (28 have been located so far, including two inside Victoria Barracks). Despite official concern about dependence on one source of water, the Lachlan Swamps remained Sydney's only water supply until the Botany Wetlands Scheme became operational in 1859.

From this time, water was pumped from Botany to the Crown Street Reservoir in Surry Hills and later to Paddington⁵. This took over as the primary source of supply, although Busby's Bore continued to serve parts of the city and Woolloomooloo. However, pollution slowly began to infiltrate the system from nearby industries and eventually the Bore was only used to flush creeks and ponds in the Botanic Gardens until the 1890s⁶.

Botany Wetlands

The Botany Wetlands are the largest coastal freshwater wetlands in the Sydney region. They comprise eleven interconnected ponds that stretch over a 4 km corridor in Sydney's eastern suburbs, extending from Gardeners Road at Eastlakes to Foreshore Drive at Botany Bay, and include the future Heffron Park.

After European colonisation, the first substantial development in the area of the Botany Wetlands occurred in 1815 when the enterprising merchant Simeon Lord constructed a dam to the west of present-day Botany Road to establish the first woollen mill in the colony. A second dam was constructed near the later Engine House for a flour mill.

From July 1855, the Sydney City Council began to resume land around the Botany wetlands in preparation for the city's next water supply scheme. As part of this, about 75 acres of Lord's land was acquired, including his house, the mill sites, various cottages and the earthworks associated with his dams.



Figure 2 Botany Engine House (Sydney Water)

The first water supply scheme in the mid-1850s by City Engineer William Rider was abandoned when Edward Bell was appointed to the position after Rider's dismissal. Bell's system included a 30-inch iron water main to pipe water from the Engine House (a steam-powered water pumping station) at Botany Wetlands to the Crown Street reservoir in Surry Hills. This was completed in 1859.

Between 1866 and the mid-1870s, six dams were constructed from the Mill Pond to Gardeners Road. These waterworks were fed by the many springs in the area. This water supply system supported Sydney's expansion for most of the latter nineteenth century, and as with its predecessors, it relied on aquifers to supply water.

Sydney's rapid growth in the late nineteenth century outpaced its water supply, and by the early 1880s, the Upper Nepean Scheme was well underway as a replacement for the Botany Wetlands scheme. From 1886, Nepean-supplied water effectively ended the general supply of water from the Botany system. The old system was used for emergency water supply during shortages until 1893,

and the Engine House was finally decommissioned in 1896 and its equipment and boilers sold at auction⁷.

In 1928, The Lakes Golf Club began construction of a clubhouse near Gardeners Road, with the private course, on the west and north of the chain of ponds, opening in 1930. A requirement of the lease of the land was that an 18-hole public course be created on the eastern and southern side of the ponds. This became a separate course called the Eastlake Golf Club in 1958⁸. The neighbouring Australian Golf Club was established to the northeast in 1904.

Labour Depot and Refuge

Boom and bust in the 1890s

The 1880s saw a speculative boom in the Australian property market. The optimistic climate was fostered by the banks, which were operating in a free banking system with few legal restrictions and no central bank or government-backed deposit guarantees.

The banks lent money extravagantly, especially for property development. But after the collapse of the land boom in 1888, many companies that had borrowed money were unable to repay these debts. Banks came under increasing financial pressure, which became apparent with the collapse of the Federal Bank of Australia in 1893. By the middle of 1893, eleven banks had temporarily or permanently closed their doors.

The financial crisis triggered an economic depression which saw the real Gross Domestic Product fall by 17% during 1892-93. The overextension of the 1880s property boom and its unravelling led to an abrupt collapse of private investment in the pastoral industry and urban development, throwing large numbers of men out of work⁹.

New South Wales Labour Bureau

In response to the 1890s Depression, the New South Wales Government Labour Bureau was set up in 1892 to assist the unemployed to find work and to provide assistance to families impoverished by unemployment. In 1893, the Government established a co-operative farm for unemployed workers on the former Pitt Town Common, one of three commons established in the Hawkesbury District by Governor Philip King in 1804¹⁰. There were similar schemes at Bega, Wilberforce and Randwick (Bunnerong) that were established under the *Labour Settlements on Crown Lands Act*, 1893.

These settlements tended to be short-lived. For example, the experimental farm at Pitt Town closed in 1896. It was intended to provide work for unemployed city workers but failed because it was isolated from the city and there was no support for city workers unused to rural working conditions. The co-operative farm became the Casual Labour Farm to train unemployed city workers as farm labourers, which operated until 1910, and continued as Scheyville and then the Dreadnought Scheme on and off until 1939¹¹.

Bunnerong Labour Depot and Refuge

In April 1901, Minister for Works Edward O'Sullivan approved the development of a portion of land into a Labour Depot and Refuge¹². The area developed for this use was bounded by Bunnerong Road, Maroubra Road (formerly Maroubra Bay Road), Anzac Parade and Beauchamp Road. As the land was part of the Botany Wetlands, the New South Wales Government had the site drained to prepare it for agricultural purposes¹³.

The main buildings were constructed on the southern side of Maroubra Road and a farm extended south to Beauchamp Road¹⁴. The depot was designed to accommodate a hundred long-term unemployed men who would perform some work in return for food and shelter. The main work was the cultivation of vegetables.

The Depot and Refuge served the dual purpose of providing temporary shelter and employment for men at the height of the 1890s economic depression. It aimed to rescue men from unemployment,

rough sleeping, alcohol abuse, starvation, and other harms facing the wider Sydney population at the time, while also training young boys, teaching skills that would lead to employment opportunities¹⁵.



Figure 3 Labour Depot, c1917 (Department of Lands map)

In addition, the depot was available as a residence for elderly men classed as third-class labourers who could perform light work assigned to them¹⁶. By May 1902, despite the sandy soil, the centre was reportedly yielding excellent crops with manure from stables and regular watering. Gaols and other State institutions were being supplied with vegetables, and the Depot was expected to be self-supporting before long¹⁷.

In 1907, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that despite the ongoing dry weather, the Bunnerong Labour Farm was a financial success¹⁸. The farm's operations were then described in detail by the *Sunday Times* in 1910, which called it an interesting example of an experiment in small farming while at the same time dealing with the problem of long-term unemployment.

About twenty acres of the large area (267 acres of sand dunes and swamp land, originally covered with low scrub and coarse grasses typical of the coast) was being worked as a farm which was turning out £2,000 worth of produce per annum. The output included pigs, poultry, eggs, asparagus, vegetables, flowers, strawberries, milk and butter. There were usually 40 to 50 men on the farm, but as very few knew anything of farm work, they had to be instructed in everything they did. Most of the men were only at the farm temporarily (on average about three months), but a few men were permanents because they showed such aptitude for the work that they were retained at a modest salary.

The buildings on the farm were constructed of second-hand materials, and most were erected and painted by the men working on the farm. Some of them also undertook blacksmith, carpentry, plumbing and other trade work as required. The report concluded by noting that despite its valuable contribution in providing sustenance to gaols and other State institutions, this small institution on the edge of Sydney was almost unknown to the general public¹⁹.

As late as 1917, the Bunnerong Farm was still reported to be a success, while operating in conjunction with the Pitt Town farm. It was accommodating 90 to 100 men, who because of age, infirmity or other reasons, could not compete in the ordinary labour market. The value of their

labour in the previous year resulted in a revenue of over £11,000, which almost covered the expense of the upkeep of the farm²⁰.



Figure 4 Bunnerong Labour Farm, 1909 (Mitchell Library)

However, by 1924, after the economy had recovered from the difficulties of the 1890s Depression and World War I, the farm had fallen into a state of decay and ran at a loss of £300 the previous year. It was thought that by then it was not serving the purpose of helping many men climb back onto the path to permanent work. The Government decided to sell about 200 acres of the farm to provide good building land close to the city. Any useful equipment at the farm would be transferred to the Labour Farm at Pitt Town²¹.

The Daily Telegraph commented on the demise of the Labour Farm, suggesting that Government institutions were gradually disappearing and this was the latest to receive the axe. In its early days, the scheme expanded until about 100 men were employed, with a maximum income of £18,000 in one year. Modern equipment had been installed, and up to 50 cattle and 1,000 pigs were kept. But by 1924, only 26 men remained. Apart from providing useful work, it was doubtful that the farm had the expected reforming effect: over 90% of cases were there from drunkenness, and after a man recovered and left, he often returned at a later date from the same cause²².

After the depot closed, the Premier Sir George Fuller told Parliament in May 1924 that he hoped to place 400 unemployed men at work on the farm to get it into a marketable condition²³. Access roads were formed, and services such as electricity, gas and water installed in readiness for the sale of the land²⁴.

Residential subdivision

Selling the farm

The first subdivision of the area by the Department of Lands commenced in late 1925 after filling and levelling was completed and access roads were constructed. All sixty allotments were sold in a spirited auction in February 1926²⁵. Over the following four years another five subdivisions were offered for sale, and all sold their fifty to sixty allotments quickly enough until the sixth and final subdivision sale in April 1930. At this auction, only 16 of more than fifty blocks were sold²⁶, which probably reflected the effects of the Great Depression that followed the crash of the New York stock market in October 1929.



Figure 5 Bunnerong Farm 1st subdivision, 1926 (Randwick City Library)

A newspaper article in 1939 reported that the old Bunnerong Farm had been practically built out by then²⁷. However, a 1943 aerial photograph of the area²⁸ shows that most of the building development was to the north of Fitzgerald Street (which was extended through the site in late 1930²⁹) and along Anzac Parade and Beauchamp Road, leaving most of present-day Heffron Park still undeveloped.

While the site of the former Bunnerong Depot buildings between Maroubra Road and Fitzgerald Avenue were mostly sold by 1930, the sandy terrain south of Fitzgerald Avenue to Beauchamp Road (where the agricultural fields were located) failed to arouse any buyer interest. Eventually, the state Town Planning Advisory Board was advised by the Master Builders Association that the land wasn't ideal for building, and it was recommended to turn it into sports fields³⁰.

The Parks and Playgrounds movement

In response to the problems of unplanned industrial cities in the United Kingdom, the garden city movement emerged as a method of urban planning, begun in 1898 by Sir Ebenezer Howard. Garden cities were intended to be planned, self-contained communities surrounded by “green belts”, containing proportionate areas of residences, industry and agriculture.

In Sydney, the estate agent Richard Stanton, who was influenced by the British garden city movement and the architect John Sulman’s town planning ideas, built the model garden suburb of Haberfield in 1901, followed by Rosebery from 1912 to the 1920s. The New South Wales Government established the model suburb Daceyville in 1912-1920 (although construction was interrupted by World War I and it never achieved its intended scope).

In 1930, the war correspondent and historian Charles Bean founded the New South Wales Parks and Playgrounds Association to promote the creation of green spaces in urban areas³¹. In October 1930, four representatives of the Association, including David Stead (marine biologist and environmentalist) and Arthur Small (president of the Town Planning Association), met with the Surveyor-General (Hamilton Matthews) on the question of securing sufficient parks and playing fields³².



Figure 6 Charles Bean (Portrait by George Lambert)

At its first annual general meeting in September 1931, the Association’s chief aim was adopted: “that every child shall have a chance to play and every citizen the opportunity for recreation”³³. By 1932, the Parks and Playgrounds Association reported that the New South Wales Government intended for the first time to have a reasoned policy to exploit the natural advantages of Sydney for recreation. The Surveyor-General and representatives from the Association were investigating the sufficiency or otherwise of existing recreation areas, the needs of the future and the means of meeting those needs³⁴.

In February 1934, Charles Bean wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* and pointed out that the old Bunnerong Farm was the only remaining large area in Sydney that could be reserved for playing fields³⁵. In April members of the Parks and Playgrounds Association asked the Randwick Council to

have the unsold portion of the Bunnerong Farm reserved for recreation purposes³⁶. To this end, a deputation from the Association, supported by the Randwick, Alexandria, Mascot, Waterloo and Botany councils, met the Minister for Lands, Ernest Buttenshaw, to put their case³⁷.

The Minister was sympathetic to the cause of creating green spaces in the metropolitan area and said that he would recommend to the New South Wales Cabinet that at least 100 acres of the unsold 250 acres of the old Bunnerong Farm should be made available for recreation³⁸. In October 1934, it was reported that Cabinet had agreed to set aside 106 acres of the area as playing fields³⁹.

The following month, the worthies of the Parks and Playgrounds Association committee conducted a lively discussion about naming the newly approved park. The chairman, Arthur Small, proposed adopting the name Prince Henry Park (the prince was visiting the antipodean colonies at about this time). However, David Stead strongly objected to this, saying firstly that the park already had a name, which was Bunnerong Park, and that in any case there was no such person and Prince Henry, only the Duke of Gloucester (strictly speaking, his title was "Prince Henry, the Duke of Gloucester", the third son of George V who narrowly missed out on a turn at being king in 1936).

Charles Bean then weighed in with his opinion, which was that the name Prince Henry Park would remove any possible association with the Bunnerong Power Station down the road. The chairman suggested (presciently, as it turned out) that it was customary to name parks after politicians, so how about Buttenshaw Park? But an unidentified voice piped up "that is ten times worse!". A decision was deferred until the next general meeting⁴⁰.

It should probably be pointed out that Ernest Buttenshaw had a commendable record of promoting the creation of urban green spaces during this time as Minister. For example, in 1939 he was publicly credited with persuading the State Cabinet to approve the creation of Shannon Reserve in Surry Hills⁴¹. So Buttenshaw Park may have been an appropriate name after all.

In the end, the Randwick Council suggested the name Bunnerong Park to the State Government, and in December 1937 the Lands Department gave its approval to the name. The Public Works Department had begun to level the site by this time⁴². However, there was no more mention of Bunnerong Park in the newspapers until it was requisitioned for military use in 1945⁴³, which suggested that not much happened to the park before non-essential development work came to a halt under the wartime conditions in Australia following the outbreak of World War II.

Maroubra Speedway

On the other side of Anzac Highway was a short-lived motor speedway track. As this site has a wartime connection to the adjacent Heffron Park, it has been included in this history.

Sandhills shape a concrete speedway

The Maroubra Speedway, officially called the Olympia Motor Speedway, was built on Crown land at the south-eastern corner of Anzac Parade and Fitzgerald Avenue. The circuit occupied part of a former swamp within the Botany Wetlands. One of the country's most ambitious motor racing projects, it was originally promoted as Australia's answer to the famous Brooklands motor racing circuit in England⁴⁴.

Plans for the speedway were announced by the entrepreneur Albert Hunting in March 1923⁴⁵. Although the Town Planning Advisory Board had intended to drain the swampy land for future housing, it agreed to lease part of the land for the project. By 1925, Olympia Speedway Ltd had raised sufficient capital and construction began. The work required thousands of tonnes of reinforced concrete to create the steeply banked track, along with access roads, grandstands and perimeter fencing. The surrounding marshland was also drained, despite being notorious for its snakes⁴⁶.

The speedway officially opened in early December 1925 before a crowd estimated by *The Herald* (Melbourne) at more than 68,000 spectators⁴⁷. The course, which was expensive to construct at £74,000, was 5/6 of a mile in length and at its narrowest had a width of 40 feet. The corners were much wider and in places were steep banks. The public enclosures around the track were set back fifteen feet from the concrete track and protected by heavy wire⁴⁸.

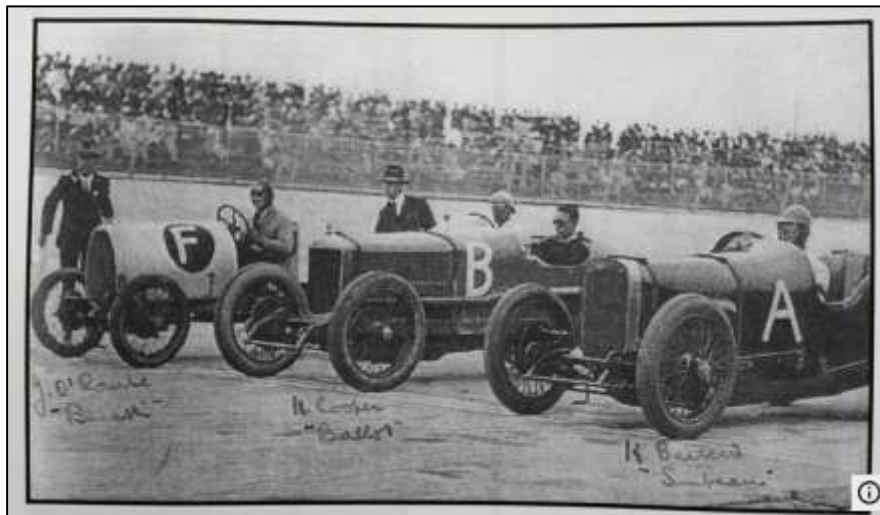


Figure 7 Maroubra Speedway opening day, 1925 (Queensland State Library)

A *Sydney Mail* report on the opening day noted that several thousand people obtained a free view of the racing by occupying the hills outside the barriers, prompting one of the drivers to ask an official in the marshalling area if that was the "Scottish grandstand". Sand had long been the common enemy at Maroubra, and the parking areas for the thousands of spectator cars were all sandy. It was necessary to lay down acres of netting wire to prevent cars becoming stuck in the sandhills.

The news report helpfully suggested that the speedway officials consult a competent botanist to plant Pig Face, a plant that thrived in sandy ground and would soon bind and overgrow the drifting sand. The banking on the sharper turns looked from underneath to be well-nigh vertical and one could not walk up the bank without an ice axe. The steepest part of the banking was 48 degrees. The course was constructed inside a natural basin and followed the contours of the hills which shaped the basin. As a result, the track formed an irregular ellipse, which had two sharp curves and one less so. The timing apparatus was developed by the engineer George Julius, inventor of the world's first automatic totalisator⁴⁹.



Figure 8 Maroubra Speedway's steep bank (National Library of Australia)

However, the excitement surrounding its opening was short-lived. Only three weeks afterwards, the driver Leo Salmon and his mechanic Harry Vaughan were killed during a practice session⁵⁰. Their deaths shocked the public and quickly earned the circuit the reputation of being the "killer track".

Tragically, the fatalities continued. Motorcycle rider Sydney Dutton died after being thrown from his machine in July 1926⁵¹, then in January 1927 the champion driver Phil Garlick was killed in almost the same location as Salmon and Vaughan⁵². Less than a month later, the driver Frederick Barlow also lost his life when his car went over the top and crashed into an electric pole⁵³. He passed away in the Coast Hospital the following day⁵⁴.

By July 1927, Maroubra Speedway Ltd applied to the Metropolitan Land Board to alter their Crown lease to delete a clause prohibiting horse and pony racing⁵⁵. The speedway company hoped to hold night trotting meetings at the ground to boost the flagging public support for motor racing at the track. But their request was refused, as the Board found that "deleting the clause in question would cause the residents of the locality great annoyance"⁵⁶.

Niche motor racing finds a home

The track was effectively closed to professional racing from this time but was still used intermittently by motoring enthusiasts for a variety of activities, such as club days, vehicle testing and some experimental events. However, the course was sadly neglected, and it was reported in August 1929 to be the "watery grave of speedway" when the centre of the track was under six feet of water,

inundating the judges' building and the scoreboard⁵⁷. That month, the Austin Club held a handicap track acceleration and rolling test at the track⁵⁸.

In March 1930, Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club held a meeting which attracted a large fleet of cars to the long-forgotten events of a slow running championship and a speed judging test. In the latter event, each driver was given a different speed to average over a few laps (the speed for each driver was drawn by ballot) without the assistance of speedometers or other instruments, and the winner was the nearest to the nominated speed.

The other niche event of the day, called slow running, was apparently a thing at the time and required a competitor to drive about 20 yards to get their car into top gear before driving a further 220 yards as slowly as possible in the finishing straight without using the brake or clutch (or stalling). The winner of this bizarre event would typically complete the distance at just over 1 mile per hour⁵⁹. It is hard to see what the point of this event was meant to be, and what prize the winner might receive (the Tortoise Trophy, the Snail Stakes or the Glacial Gift come to mind)

The report on this particular day's entertainment found that many people lamented that the very expensive track was virtually abandoned by then. It was steadily becoming less usable due to the deterioration of the track and the encroachment of pond water in the arena, rendering most of the officials' and competitors' enclosures unusable. It was regrettable that this fate should have overtaken the track after so brief a career.

But there were still supporters of motor sport who believed it could at least be made to pay its own way. One idea was to clear out the reeds from the pond and hold outboard motorboat racing in conjunction with motor car and motorcycle racing⁶⁰. In the event, non-aquatic racing prevailed, and in July 1930 the New South Wales Light Car Club held a series of car races at the course⁶¹.

In an attempt to rejuvenate the crumbling and little-used Maroubra Speedway, an ambitious project called the Australian Sports Arena was announced in June 1934. A multi-sports venue was planned, four hardcourt tennis courts were already operating with a total of twenty to be built, along with a nine-hole golf course in the surrounding grounds and a large Olympic athletic track to be installed in the centre of the course⁶². However, this grand project struggled during the Great Depression of the 1930s and was last reported the following year when the arena's management company was taken to court by the Randwick Council⁶³.

The only crash involving spectators at the Maroubra Speedway occurred in November 1934 when a motor car driven by Murray Maxwell and the mechanic James Margot left the track, jumped the fence and careered into the crowd. Ten people were injured, some seriously, including the driver and mechanic⁶⁴.

It was reported in the days afterwards that Margot was not expected to survive the accident, but there was no evidence (in newspapers or the New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland death registers) that he succumbed to his injuries. The final fatality at the track was in June 1936 when the motorcycle rider Bobby Blake (real name Robert Coombes) was killed when his bike crashed during a solo training ride⁶⁵.

Subdivision for housing

In August 1939, workmen were pictured in the *Sydney Morning Herald* breaking up the old track and preparing it for housing⁶⁶. Then in July 1947, the Minister for Lands, William Sheahan, announced that the New South Wales Housing Commission would take over the old speedway and its surroundings and establish a major housing estate there. This would provide ideal accommodation for many workers employed in the Botany and Mascot industrial areas⁶⁷.



Figure 9 Demolishing the speedway, 1939 (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1939)

Then in September the new Lands Minister, Clive Evatt, announced that the State Government had taken over the area of about 70 acres, which would hold more than 500 homes to accommodate about 3,000 people with plenty of space for recreation areas⁶⁸. By May 1954, the number of planned dwellings had grown to over 1,000 with a mixture of 374 flats, 662 maisonettes, detached and semi-detached cottages and twelve shops.

The project would then accommodate about 4,000 people and create an entirely new residential district⁶⁹. A staggering quantity of sand had to be removed by the Housing Commission in developing the area, estimated at about 500,000 cubic tons⁷⁰.

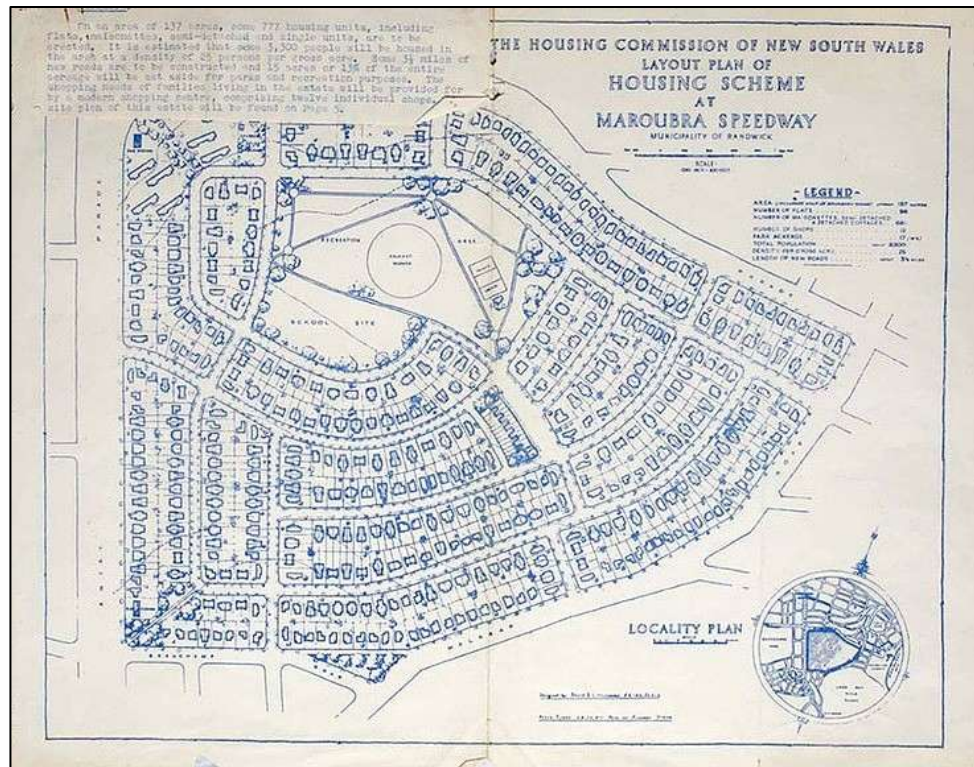


Figure 10 Maroubra Speedway subdivision, c1947 (Randwick City Council)

Coral Sea Park

The former speedway track was not included in the housing subdivision (only the surrounding grounds), and in August 1950 Randwick Council decided to convert it into a park. It would be named Coral Sea Park in commemoration of the World War II naval battle that helped to save Australia from invasion by the Japanese military⁷¹.

The Battle of the Coral Sea raged for several days in May 1942 and was the first time the advancing Japanese forces were halted. It was the first action in which aircraft carriers engaged each other, as well as the first in which neither side's ships sighted or fired directly on each other. It was followed closely by the Battle of Midway and the Battle of Guadalcanal, also key battles of the war. The subsequent New Guinea campaign eventually broke the Japanese defences in the South Pacific and contributed significantly to Japan's ultimate defeat in 1945.

Many of the streets in the new housing estate were named after American ships from the Battle of the Coral Sea: the *USS New Orleans*, the *USS Yorktown*, the *USS Minneapolis* and the *USS Chicago*, for example. Coral Sea Park was dedicated in a ceremony in May 1960, involving visiting naval dignitaries, State Government politicians and Randwick Council officials. The war memorial unveiled at this ceremony has since been relocated with other memorials in the middle of Anzac Parade close to the Maroubra RSL Club⁷².

Naval wool stores

Randwick Rifle Range

The history of the World War II usage of Heffron Park begins in 1890 when the Paddington Rifle Range in Moore Park was closed after Centennial Park was constructed. Part of the new park extended behind the target end of the range, making it dangerous for park users. A replacement site in Randwick was chosen, which was originally part of the Church and School Estate, and by 1892 a new rifle range was in operation in a large area of 348 acres.

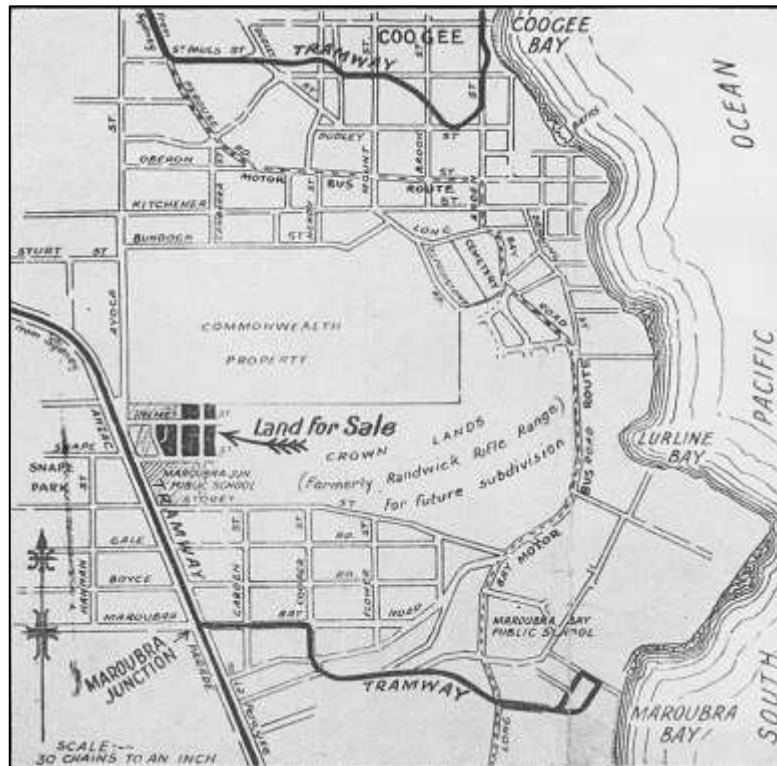


Figure 11 Randwick Rifle Range, 1930 (Randwick City Council)

But by 1899 a similar situation had arisen at Randwick when numerous complaints were made by nearby residents of stray bullets whizzing around and lodging in fences, water tanks and bush houses⁷³. However, the Army was determined to keep this site because it was thought there was nowhere else available near Sydney. Safety barriers were installed around the range and extended over time.

In 1926, The Commonwealth Government agreed to transfer 249 acres of the range to the State Government. Further changes were interrupted by World War II, and half of the site was requisitioned for Naval Stores from 1943. This comprised the entire eastern section and required the removal of various military buildings. The Army continued to occupy the whole site in the postwar years, and in the early 1980s recovered some of the land lost to the Naval Stores⁷⁴.

Randwick Naval Stores

As the war in the Pacific progressed during the 1940s, Australia assumed an important role as a supply and repair base for the several naval fleets engaged in the conflict. The Americans and British required large areas for supply depots and many of the facilities around Sydney were either established or greatly expanded at this time, including the Newington Armament Depot and Garden Island. Many racecourses, parks and air terminals were handed over for wartime needs.

In May 1943, Command Headquarters in Melbourne requested a site close to Sydney to be used for two naval stores of about 100,000 square feet each for the Royal Australian Navy and the United States Marines⁷⁵. Randwick Rifle Range was considered to be a suitable alternative to other possible locations near the city.



Figure 12 Randwick Naval Stores (Randwick Historical Society)

The site proposed was at the south-western corner of the rifle range at the intersection of Holmes and Avoca Streets⁷⁶. A very large swamp occupied the south-eastern part of the area. The proposal was for twelve stores of a standard igloo type. Eight of the storehouses were for Naval Stores – two used by the Royal Australian Navy and the rest by the United States Marine Corp (which would hold stores intended for the British Royal Navy).

The program expanded rapidly and by August 1944, eighteen sheds had been built. By the following month, up to 29 stores were planned, requiring demolition of several Army buildings using explosives. The Royal Navy wanted even more land, but the Army would not cede any more of the Artillery School site⁷⁷. By February 1945, insufficient space at Randwick for further expansion led to the requisition of Bunnerong Park for the construction of more storage sheds⁷⁸.

Bunnerong Wool Stores

In June 1943, the Central Wool Committee reported that three million bales of wool were being stored in Australia, to quickly supply Europe with wool for the production of urgently needed woollen clothing when the war ended. European countries had not been able to import wool since 1940⁷⁹, and the British Government arranged to purchase all surplus Australian wool for the duration of the war⁸⁰.

By January 1944, production was exceeding the demand for wool, so extra storage buildings had to be built and managed by the Royal Navy. The Australian Government's Allied Works Council engaged a large workforce to provide the Australian and Allied military forces with facilities to carry on the war in the Pacific. This included the erection of storage sheds such as those in Bunnerong Park⁸¹.



Figure 13 Bunnerong Naval Stores (Randwick City Council)

At a meeting with Randwick Council in June 1944, Justice Sir William Owen of the Wool Committee notified the councillors that the British Government required the use of about twenty acres of Bunnerong Park to erect buildings for the storage of wool⁸². In 1945, the Bunnerong Naval Stores were constructed in the undeveloped part of the former Labour Farm, to the south of Fitzgerald Avenue. They were an extension of the large stores already erected at Randwick for the American and Australian navies.

Approval to construct the Bunnerong stores was given in March 1945 and five large buildings a month were erected until August⁸³. An aerial photograph of Maroubra taken in 1961 shows 27 large sheds and three smaller sheds that covered most of the park⁸⁴.

To connect the buildings, three miles of concrete road were installed. The roads were designed for intensive use by 1,000 heavy vehicles a day. Other statistics illustrate the huge scale of this enterprise: over two miles of fencing, 3,500,000 super feet of timber, 47 acres of asbestos cement roofing, 11 acres of asbestos cement wall sheeting, eight miles of reinforced concrete drains and six miles of water mains⁸⁵.

In March 1946, the Minister for the Navy notified Randwick Council that because of the lack of available cargo ships and the slow rehabilitation of the ports of Hong Kong and Singapore, the Naval authorities would need to retain some storage at Bunnerong Park until the end of the year⁸⁶. As the Royal Navy gradually removed the wool for export to Britain, the Commonwealth Disposals Commission used the vacated buildings to auction surplus equipment in January 1947⁸⁷. The Department of Supply held an auction sale of surplus motor vehicles from the sheds in Fitzgerald Avenue in April 1952⁸⁸.



Figure 14 Bunnerong Park, 1953 (Historical Imagery website)

Most of the naval storage buildings were demolished by the early 1970s when Heffron Park was constructed⁸⁹ and Randwick Council demolished the last remaining buildings fronting Bunnerong Road in 2021 to make way for the Heffron Centre⁹⁰.

Bunnerong Migrant Hostel

Displaced Persons Program

By the end of World War II, around one million Europeans had been displaced from their countries of origin. This included people from countries invaded by the Nazis and transported to Germany for labour, civilians fleeing from the advancing Soviet Army and soldiers released from German prisoner of war camps. They had little or no money, few belongings and faced a bleak future in a Europe ravaged by six years of war⁹¹.

In response, the United Nations established the International Refugee Organisation in 1946. In July 1947, the Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell signed an agreement to accept 170,000 displaced persons over five years under the Displaced Persons Program⁹². He said Australia was not seeking highly skilled workers, and anyone of good character and health who was prepared to work hard was welcome⁹³.

This was the largest number of non-British migrants in that time frame in Australia's history. The program was part of Immigration Minister Athur Calwell's push to "populate or perish", encouraging immigration to rebuild the nation's agricultural and industrial sectors after World War II and as a way of building up the population against possible future attack.

While the intake of refugees was large, selection was based on the candidate's fitness to work as well as medical and security checks. In line with the prevailing White Australia Policy, the initial intakes comprised people from Baltic countries, as they were thought to be similar to British in appearance⁹⁴.

At first, the Australian selection teams were only interested in unmarried displaced persons who managed to escape from countries occupied by the Soviet Army, but families were admitted in 1948 and all European nationalities in 1949. Limitations on numbers were soon abandoned, and 75,500 displaced persons arrived in 1949 and 70,000 in 1950.

The massive influx imposed an enormous challenge for the Department of Immigration and the Commonwealth Employment Service in establishing reception centres and hostels, devising educational programs, providing training and allocating migrants to employment, mainly in public works projects, the building, timber and sugar industries.

To some extent, the Government's success in bringing about large-scale immigration in 1945-49 was overshadowed by its rigid adherence to the *Immigration Restriction Act* (commonly called the White Australia policy). The Federal Cabinet did not consider a relaxation of the policy, and Arthur Calwell always held it was sacrosanct⁹⁵.

Assisted Passage Migration Scheme

Between 1947 and 1981, over a million Britons emigrated to Australia, the majority of whom travelled under the Assisted Passage Migration Scheme, funded by the British and Australian governments. The scheme enabled affordable travel to Australia, with the cost of an adult ticket a mere £10, and all children traveling for free by the 1960s⁹⁶.

Whilst a great number of migrants from other cultural backgrounds also emigrated to Australia during this period, an emphasis was placed on the need to attract the British. This was because they

were seen to be culturally close to Australians, and in theory were more likely than other immigrants to adapt to life in Australia.



Figure 15 Immigration poster, 1950s (Randwick City Council)

The ten pound assisted passage scheme proved extremely popular, with two clear waves of migration occurring, firstly in the immediate post-war period, and then peaking in the 1960s. At the beginning of the period there was a focus on assisting migrants who had certain skill sets, such as building tradesmen or nurses, but by the 1960s there was less emphasis placed on these requirements. A preference for married migrants to be under the age of 51 and for single migrants to be under 46 remained, and health checks were conducted to ensure applicants suffering from infectious diseases such as tuberculosis were not accepted⁹⁷.

Migrant hostels in New South Wales

For those who were lucky enough to have existing family in Australia or for those who were nominated by an Australian company or citizen, accommodation was usually sorted before they arrived. However, for the majority emigrating with no connections and often little funding, they found themselves destined to stay in migrant hostels on arriving in Australia. Hostel conditions left much to be desired from most accounts, providing only basic living arrangements, usually set up inside Nissan huts used during the War⁹⁸.

The largest hostels were established in former Army camps at Bonegilla, just over the Victorian border and at Bathurst. There were 37 other hostels in New South Wales, including the southern Sydney suburbs of Matraville, Mascot and Randwick. Migrants and their dependents were permitted to stay in hostels for three to twelve months and were given training to assist with resettlement. The early accommodation of disused army huts and other converted buildings were gradually replaced with purpose-built structures with improved facilities.

The Department of Labour and National Service administered the hostels until 1948 when the Migrant Workers Accommodation Division was established within the Department to take over control. From 1952, administration was handed over to Commonwealth Hostels Limited, a Commonwealth-owned company, which operated until 1978⁹⁹.



Figure 16 Matraville Migrant Hostel (Photo: Jo Mulholland)

The Matraville Migrant Hostel was constructed for non-English speaking migrants in about 1950 at the intersection of Daunt Ave, Pozieres Avenue and Knowles Ave¹⁰⁰, with a capacity for 500 migrants¹⁰¹. Little is known about this hostel, but from July 1950 advertisements appeared in Sydney newspapers from residents at the hostel seeking work¹⁰². In 1950, English classes for migrants (or “new Australians” as they were often called) were advertised at the hostel¹⁰³.

After a few years, the large number of migrants began to exceed the number of jobs available, and in November 1952 thousands of Italians who migrated to Australia expecting to find work were still unemployed. Five Italian migrants were charged with taking part in an unauthorised procession in Oxford Street Darlinghurst to protest the lack of employment. Three were from the Villawood Migrant Hostel, two from the Matraville Migrant Hostel and all were in their early 20s¹⁰⁴.

Bunnerong Migrant Hostel

A temporary home in recycled buildings

For a few years from 1947, the Federal Government was focused on receiving and settling displaced persons from war-ravaged countries in Europe. But in July 1950, the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, announced that as the inflow of displaced persons was petering out, the Government was looking to certain other countries for migrants. The initial migration target was 200,000 a year for the next ten years¹⁰⁵. Migrant hostels would be conducted by the Commonwealth Employment Service, who would employ migrants in essential jobs allocated by the Service¹⁰⁶.

In November 1949, the Federal Government called for tenders to install electric lighting and power services in eight of the Naval wool store buildings in Bunnerong Park¹⁰⁷. By 1950, the buildings were converted for emergency use as a migrant hostel¹⁰⁸, officially known as the Bunnerong British Migrants’ Hostel¹⁰⁹. Like the rest of the world, Australia faced postwar shortages of building materials and labour, so existing facilities were converted into migrant hostels.

In June 1950, the first 44 British migrants arrived at the Bunnerong Migrant Hostel under the Government's nomination scheme. Most of the migrants were skilled workers who were anxious to work in industry, particularly the building trade. Mr. R. Marsh of the Department of Labour and National Service said that until then, British migrants had to be sponsored by people living in Australia, but the Government now accepted all responsibility for accommodating the migrants it sponsored.

All the Government asked in return was that the migrants agree to work in the essential industries listed by the Government. Once a migrant was settled in his new home, he was free to work wherever he wished¹¹⁰, provided he stayed within the range of nominated jobs. If a man took a job outside his qualifications, he would forfeit his concession to live at the hostel¹¹¹.



Figure 17 Bunnerong Migrant Hostel, 1962 (Randwick City Council)

Unfortunately, the first batch of migrants arrived at a time when the eastern seaboard was being lashed by gales, and phenomenal rain resulted in the wettest month on record in Sydney. Officials who met the ship were quick to assure the new arrivals that this was not typical of Australian weather. One of the migrants replied that you must expect rain in winter, and in any case, it was just like a wet summer's day in Britain¹¹².

Challenging conditions in the hostel

The Bunnerong Migrant Hostel had an official capacity of 1,200 residents. The facilities and living conditions at the hostel were considered among the worst in Australia. Built for wool storage and not accommodation, the huts were not properly insulated. It was hot in summer and cold in winter. Migrants had no private bathing facilities and had to eat in cafeteria mode. The migrants complained that this prevented normal family life, privacy and individual food preparation.

The Commonwealth government committee which investigated the facilities in 1964-65 were also dissatisfied with what they uncovered during inspections. Most migrants felt their life there was substandard compared to what they left behind, after being convinced of a better life by slick marketing campaign posters. Even the plagues of Christmas beetles, familiar to Australians, tested the resolve of the migrants.

At about the same time as the Commonwealth Government decided to accommodate families together from the outset of the assisted migrant scheme in 1950, the National Service Training Scheme was introduced, and resources allotted to the migrant program were diverted to the preparation of army camps for trainees. By the mid-1960s, a Parliamentary Standing Committee clearly identified the need for a replacement for the substandard facilities at Bunnerong and Matraville. National migration levels were to be maintained or increased from 1966 levels.



Figure 18 Bunnerong Hostel canteen (Randwick City Council)

The poor accommodation at Bunnerong after thirteen years of band-aid solutions was directly blamed on the diversion of funding away from subsidising the British migration program to bolster the Australian National Service Scheme. This is not surprising, given the fear that communism would sweep the world during the Cold War following the end of World War II. The Standing Committee recognised the need to replace the Bunnerong and Matraville hostels with a purpose-built migrant hostel at South Coogee on naval land.

Many of the families that arrived at Bunnerong found work at local industries such as the Bunnerong Power Station, Australian Paper Mills, Qantas, the General Motors plant at Pagewood and the British Tobacco manufacturing complex at Kensington. The national target of 70,000 British migrants for 1964-65 was easily met, of which 25,000 qualified for subsidised hostel accommodation (those without family sponsors already in Australia). Migrants contributed to their accommodation and food costs while staying at the hostel through a tariff scheme of payment that aimed to treat various family circumstances equitably.

The communal lifestyle and lack of privacy at the hostels fuelled an environment of hostility and resentment that created a very public dispute by the early 1950s. Some twenty families received eviction notices at Bunnerong over unpaid tariffs, resulting in calls by some agitators for British migrants across the country to walk out of the hostels and demand immediate repatriation to Britain.

Activism reached a climax in the winter of 1953 with the evictions at Bunnerong, including pregnant women and small children. Migrants at Bunnerong were not alone in their discontent at the tariff system, combined with high hostel rates, poor food and leaky roofs. Evicted migrants then lived in

tents and caravans in the local municipality, bringing Randwick Council into the dispute with the Commonwealth Government. The Council expressed solidarity with the evicted migrants.

The occupation of Bunnerong Park for immigration purposes by the Commonwealth Government was under an agreement that was a relic of wartime necessity, and which expired in June 1967. The slowness of the Commonwealth to vacate the area then led to a legal dispute with State and municipal governments¹¹³.

Endeavour Migrant Hostel

The Endeavour Migrant Hostel was opened in 1970 to replace the ageing and outdated Bunnerong Migrant Hostel. It was built on unused land that was previously part of Sydney's main naval storage site with the main entrance on Moverley Road, South Coogee. By the 1960s, migrants to Australia were no longer refugees from war but tended to be skilled workers and their families who were needed for the nation's growing industrial base.



Figure 19 Endeavour Migrant Hostel, c1970 (National Library of Australia)

They would only be attracted here (rather than Canada or New Zealand) if they were offered a higher standard of accommodation than the recycled army huts and wool sheds of the 1950s. It was a huge complex that could accommodate around 1,000 people and more. With its own commercial kitchens, laundries, playgrounds, kindergartens, recreation rooms and post office, it was reportedly the size of a small country town.

By the time it opened, the emphasis for migration had shifted in favour of European family groups and the design of the buildings attempted to give more privacy to families. Many people had self-contained accommodation units with bathrooms and bedrooms. They had small kitchens to prepare snacks and only needed to go to the communal dining halls for main meals. Schooling for the children was at the nearby South Coogee Public School.

Refugees from Cyclone Tracy in December 1974 were housed at the hostel, as were some refugees from the conflict in East Timor in 1975. The hostel was designed to be an open institution where

residents were expected to use outside shops, schools and other facilities. Some residents bought cars and 120 parking places were provided for their use.

In the 1980s, immigration shifted from attracting labour for industry shortages to attracting highly skilled professionals and family reunions. The former usually preferred to find their own housing while the latter tended to stay with families and by 1987 the Endeavour hostel was empty and unused¹¹⁴. The hostel was demolished in the 1990s and the Department of Defence developed the land for housing. The hostel site has now been replaced by a large residential development. Some of the streets and a park are named after immigrant ships, such as *MV Asturias*, *MV Fairsky* and *MV Georgic*¹¹⁵.

Heffron Park

In 1972, most of the Naval stores buildings were demolished and present-day Heffron Park was created, with some of the military roads utilised to form a 4.2 km concrete criterium bicycle track. The park was named after Robert Heffron (1890-1978), former local Member of Parliament (1930-1968) and New South Wales Premier (1959-1964). The park now contains many sporting facilities: the Des Renford Leisure Centre (a swimming pool and fitness centre), netball courts, playground, synthetic soccer field, pedal park, sports fields and a tennis centre¹¹⁶.



Figure 20 Heffron Park criterium course (B grade Cyclist website)

The Randwick Cycling Club, founded in 1903, conducts races on the criterium track most Saturdays¹¹⁷. The B Grade Cyclist website summarises the track as “always windy with a challenging surface and is a complete test of criterium skills”. Cyclists who have experienced the track both on and after coming off the bike report that the concrete surface is “a cross between goat track and low-grit sandpaper, with numerous bumps and grooves”¹¹⁸.



Figure 21 Heffron Park bicycle race (B Grade Cyclist website)

East's Cycling Club conducts Tuesday night handicap racing at Heffron Park during the daylight-saving months of October to March¹¹⁹. Other groups to use the track are the Sydney University Velo Club

and Waratah Masters Cycle Club, which run graded scratch races on Sunday mornings about once a month¹²⁰.

Recent additions to Heffron Park are:

Randwick Council demolished the last of the naval stores buildings in 2021 to construct the Heffron Centre, which opened in May 2023. The centre features two indoor courts which can be used for basketball, netball, gymnastics, futsal, volleyball, pickleball and table tennis. Community social events are also welcomed at the Centre¹²¹.

The South Sydney Rabbitohs rugby league club opened a Centre of Excellence next to the Heffron Centre in 2023, featuring high-performance training and administration facilities as well as community facilities to support the club's community programs¹²².



Figure 22 Heffron Centre (Randwick City Council)

Notes

-
- ¹ Tank Stream, Dictionary of Sydney.
- ² Sydney Water brochure.
- ³ Busby's Bore, Heritage Register, New South Wales Department of Environment.
- ⁴ Busby's Bore, Dictionary of Sydney.
- ⁵ *ibid.*
- ⁶ Sydney Water brochure.
- ⁷ Botany Water Reserves, NSW State Heritage Register, Department of Heritage and Environment.
- ⁸ History, Eastlake Golf Club website.
- ⁹ Bryan Fitz-Gibbon and Marianne Gizycki, The 1890s Depression, Reserve Bank of Australia website, 2001.
- ¹⁰ Pitt Town Common, Hawkesbury People and Places website.
- ¹¹ History and timelines of industrial relations in New South Wales, Premier's Department, NSW Government.
- ¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1901.
- ¹³ The history of Heffron Park, Randwick City Council website.
- ¹⁴ Ministry of Lands Maroubra map, c1917.
- ¹⁵ The history of Heffron Park, Randwick City Council website.
- ¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 April 1901.
- ¹⁷ *Maitland Weekly Mercury*, 10 May 1902.
- ¹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 1907.
- ¹⁹ *Sunday Times*, 9 October 1910.
- ²⁰ *The Sun*, 5 January 1917.
- ²¹ *Evening News*, 2 February 1924.
- ²² *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 February 1924.
- ²³ *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 May 1924.
- ²⁴ *Molong Express*, 17 May 1924.
- ²⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 1926.
- ²⁶ *The Sun*, 13 April 1930.
- ²⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 February 1939.
- ²⁸ 1943 SIX maps of Sydney, NSW Department of Customer Service.
- ²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 September 1930.
- ³⁰ The history of Heffron Park, Randwick City Council website.
- ³¹ Peggy James, *Cosmopolitan Conservationists: Greening Modern Sydney*.
- ³² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 October 1930.
- ³³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 September 1931.
- ³⁴ *Yass Tribune Courier*, 11 July 1932.
- ³⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 1934.
- ³⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 April 1934.
- ³⁷ *The Sun*, 10 May 1934.
- ³⁸ *The Sun*, 16 May 1934.
- ³⁹ *Newcastle Morning Herald*, 2 October 1934.
- ⁴⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1934.
- ⁴¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 August 1939.
- ⁴² *The Sun*, 17 December 1937.
- ⁴³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1945.
- ⁴⁴ Maroubra Speedway, Randwick Council website.
- ⁴⁵ *The Maitland Daily Standard*, 13 March 1923.
- ⁴⁶ Maroubra Speedway, Randwick Council website.
- ⁴⁷ *Herald* (Melbourne), 7 December 1935.
- ⁴⁸ *Singleton Argus*, 10 December 1925.
- ⁴⁹ *Sydney Mail*, 16 December 1925.
- ⁵⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 December 1925.
- ⁵¹ *The Sun*, 17 July 1926.
- ⁵² *Sunday Times*, 9 January 1927.
- ⁵³ *The Sun*, 6 February 1927.
- ⁵⁴ *Evening News*, 7 February 1927.

-
- ⁵⁵ *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 18 July 1927.
- ⁵⁶ *The Sun*, 27 July 1927.
- ⁵⁷ *Evening News*, 20 August 1929.
- ⁵⁸ *The Sun*, 23 August 1929.
- ⁵⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 March 1930.
- ⁶⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 March 1930.
- ⁶¹ *The Farmer and Settler*, 18 January 1934.
- ⁶² *The Sun*, 16 June 1934.
- ⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 October 1935.
- ⁶⁴ *The Sun*, 24 November 1934.
- ⁶⁵ *The Labor Daily*, 15 June 1936.
- ⁶⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 August 1939.
- ⁶⁷ *The Daily Telegraph*, 15 July 1947.
- ⁶⁸ *National Advocate* (Bathurst), 16 September 1947.
- ⁶⁹ *The Sun*, 5 May 1954.
- ⁷⁰ *Daily Mirror*, 19 July 1954.
- ⁷¹ *Daily Mirror*, 1 August 1950.
- ⁷² Georgina Keep, Sand, snakes, speedway and ships: Maroubra's Coral Sea Park, Randwick City Council, 2017.
- ⁷³ Complaints correspondence Commonwealth Archives (NSW) Series SP 394 Item 02/920.
- ⁷⁴ Wendy Thorp, *Randwick naval stores and small arms factory archival analysis*.
- ⁷⁵ W. B. Lynch and F.A. Larcombe, *Randwick 1859 -1959*, 1980.
- ⁷⁶ Survey of proposed rifle range 21 September 1887. SAONSW 4/965.1.
- ⁷⁷ Wendy Thorp, *Randwick naval stores and small arms factory archival analysis*.
- ⁷⁸ Memo of Eastern Military Command 14 September 1950. Comm. Archives (NSW), Series SP 857/3/0 Item 1943/454 Part 1.
- ⁷⁹ *Barrier Daily Truth*, 10 January 1944.
- ⁸⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 August 1945.
- ⁸¹ *Construction* (Sydney), 5 January 1944.
- ⁸² Minutes of Council January to December 1944, Randwick Council website.
- ⁸³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1945.
- ⁸⁴ Historical imagery, New South Wales Department of Customer Services.
- ⁸⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1945.
- ⁸⁶ Minutes of Council January to December 1946, Randwick Council website.
- ⁸⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 January 1947.
- ⁸⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1952.
- ⁸⁹ Heffron Park, Randwick City Council website.
- ⁹⁰ Maroubra's migrant past remembered at special community event, Randwick City Council, 10 September 2025.
- ⁹¹ Refugees displaced by World War II, National Archives of Australia website.
- ⁹² *Border Morning Mail*, 22 July 1947.
- ⁹³ *Daily Mirror*, 23 July 1947.
- ⁹⁴ Refugees displaced by World War II, National Archives of Australia website.
- ⁹⁵ Graeme Powell and Stuart Macintyre, Land of opportunity, Australia's post-war reconstruction, National Archives of Australia, 2015.
- ⁹⁶ J. Hammerton and A. Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants*.
- ⁹⁷ J. Jupp, *The English in Australia*.
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ Migrant hostels in New South Wales 1946-78, National Archives of Australia.
- ¹⁰⁰ St Agnes Conference of the St Vincent de Paul Society, St Agnes' Matraville website.
- ¹⁰¹ "It's just not cricket", Recorded History, Randwick City Council website.
- ¹⁰² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 July 1950.
- ¹⁰³ *The Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 29 May 1952.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Daily Mirror*, 4 November 1952.
- ¹⁰⁵ *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 July 1950.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Greek National Tribune*, 13 September 1950.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Construction* (Sydney), 16 November 1949.

-
- ¹⁰⁸ *The Dubbo Liberal*, 10 August 1950.
- ¹⁰⁹ *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 February 1952.
- ¹¹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 June 1950.
- ¹¹¹ *Greek National Tribune*, 13 September 1950.
- ¹¹² Ibid.
- ¹¹³ "It's just not cricket", Recorded History, Randwick City Council website.
- ¹¹⁴ *The Eastern Herald*, 8 August 1987.
- ¹¹⁵ Endeavour Migrant Hostel Coogee, Coogee Media website.
- ¹¹⁶ Heffron Park, Randwick City Council website.
- ¹¹⁷ About us, Randwick Cycling Club website.
- ¹¹⁸ Heffron Park Criterium Track, B Grade Cyclist website.
- ¹¹⁹ Easts Cycling website.
- ¹²⁰ Heffron Park Criterium Track, B Grade Cyclist website.
- ¹²¹ Welcome to Heffron Centre, Heffron Centre website.
- ¹²² Rabbitohs Centre of Excellence officially opened, Rabbitohs website.

Table of Figures

Figure 1	Busby's Bore (Sydney Water brochure).....	4
Figure 2	Botany Engine House (Sydney Water).....	5
Figure 3	Labour Depot, c1917 (Department of Lands map)	8
Figure 4	Bunnerong Labour Farm, 1909 (Mitchell Library).....	9
Figure 5	Bunnerong Farm 1st subdivision, 1926 (Randwick City Library)	11
Figure 6	Charles Bean (Portrait by George Lambert).....	12
Figure 7	Maroubra Speedway opening day, 1925 (Queensland State Library)	15
Figure 8	Maroubra Speedway's steep bank (National Library of Australia)	16
Figure 9	Demolishing the speedway, 1939 (<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 22 August 1939)	18
Figure 10	Maroubra Speedway subdivision, c1947 (Randwick City Council).....	19
Figure 11	Randwick Rifle Range, 1930 (Randwick City Council)	21
Figure 12	Randwick Naval Stores (Randwick Historical Society)	22
Figure 13	Bunnerong Naval Stores (Randwick City Council).....	23
Figure 14	Bunnerong Park, 1953 (Historical Imagery website)	24
Figure 15	Immigration poster, 1950s (Randwick City Council)	26
Figure 16	Matraville Migrant Hostel (Photo: Jo Mulholland)	27
Figure 17	Bunnerong Migrant Hostel, 1962 (Randwick City Council)	28
Figure 18	Bunnerong Hostel canteen (Randwick City Council).....	29
Figure 19	Endeavour Migrant Hostel, c1970 (National Library of Australia)	30
Figure 20	Heffron Park criterium course (B grade Cyclist website)	33
Figure 21	Heffron Park bicycle race (B Grade Cyclist website)	33
Figure 22	Heffron Centre (Randwick City Council)	34

References

National Library of Australia – Trove digitised newspaper archive, 1803 to 1955.

Archives, City of Sydney website <http://archives.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>

National Archives of Australia website <https://www.naa.gov.au/>.

Peggy James, *Cosmopolitan Conservationists: Greening Modern Sydney*, Melbourne, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2013.

Wendy Thorp, *Randwick naval stores and small arms factory archival analysis*, 1988.

J. Hammerton and A. Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants*, 2005.

J. Jupp, *The English in Australia*, 2004.

Index

- Allied Works Council, 23
- Assisted Passage Migration Scheme, 25
- Austin Club, 17
- Australian Golf Club, 6
- Australian Paper Mills, 29
- Australian Sports Arena, 17
- Barlow, Frederick, racing driver, 16
- Bathurst migrant hostel, 26
- Battle of Guadalcanal, 19
- Battle of Midway, 19
- Battle of the Coral Sea, 19
- Bean, Charles, historian, 12
- Bell, Edward, engineer, 5
- Blake, Bobby, motorcyclist, 17
- Bonegilla migrant hostel, 26
- Botany Wetlands, 3, 5, 7
- Botany Wetlands Scheme, 4
- British Tobacco Ltd, 29
- Bunnerong British Migrants' Hostel, 27
- Bunnerong Labour Farm, 8, 12, 23
- Bunnerong Migrant Hostel, 28, 30
- Bunnerong Naval Stores, 23
- Bunnerong Park, 22, 27
- Bunnerong Power Station, 13, 29
- Busby, John, engineer, 3, 4
- Busby's Bore, 3
- Buttenshaw, Ernest, politician, 13
- Caldwell, Arthur, politician, 25
- Casual Labour Farm, 7
- Centennial Park, 21
- Central Wool Committee, 23
- Church and School Estate, Randwick, 21
- Coast Hospital, 16
- Cold War, 29
- Commonwealth Disposals Commission, 24
- Commonwealth Employment Service, 25, 27
- Commonwealth Hostels Limited, 27
- Coombes, Robert, motorcyclist, 17
- Coral Sea Park, 19
- Crown Street Reservoir, 4
- Cyclone Tracey, 1974, 30
- Daceyville, model suburb, 12
- Department of Labour and National Service, 27
- Department of Supply, 24
- Des Renford Leisure Centre, 33
- Displaced Persons Program, 25
- Dreadnought Scheme, 7
- Duke of Gloucester, 13
- Dutton, Sydney, motorcyclist, 16
- East Timor conflict, 1975, 30
- Eastlake Golf Club, 6
- Easts Cycling Club, 33
- Endeavour Migrant Hostel, South Coogee, 30
- Evatt, Clive, politician, 18
- Federal Bank of Australia, 7
- Fuller, Sir George, politician, 9
- garden city movement, 12
- Garden Island, 22
- Garlick, Phil, racing driver, 16
- General Motors, car manufacturer, 29
- George V, King, 13
- Great Depression, 1890s, 7
- Great Depression, 1930s, 11, 17
- Haberfield, model suburb, 12
- Heffron Centre, 24, 34
- Heffron, Robert, politician, 33
- Henry, Prince, 13
- Holt, Harold, politician, 27
- Howard, Sir Ebenezer, planner, 12
- Hunting, Albert, entrepreneur, 15
- Immigration Restriction Act, 1901*, 25
- International Refugee Organisation, 25
- Julius, George, engineer, 16
- King, Governor Philip, 7
- Labour Depot and Refuge, 7
- Labour Settlements on Crown Lands Act, 1893*, 7
- Lakes Golf Club, 6
- Lord, Simeon, merchant, 5
- Margot, James, mechanic, 17
- Maroubra Speedway, 15, 17
- Marsh, R., public servant, 28
- Master Builders Association, 11
- Matrville Migrant Hostel, 27, 29
- Matthews, Hamilton, Surveyor-General, 12
- Maxwell, Murray, racing driver, 17
- Metropolitan Land Board, 16
- migrant hostels, 26
- Migrant Workers Accommodation Division, 27
- MV Asturias*, 31
- MV Fairsky*, 31
- MV Georgic*, 31
- National Service Training Scheme, 29
- Naval Stores, Randwick, 21
- New Guinea campaign, 19

New South Wales Housing Commission, 18
 New South Wales Labour Bureau, 7
 New South Wales Light Car Club, 17
 New South Wales Parks and Playgrounds
 Association, 12
 New York stock market crash, 1929, 11
 Newington Armament Depot, 22
 O'Sullivan, Edward, politician, 7
 Olympia Motor Speedway, 15
 Owen, Sir William, judge, 23
 Oxley, John, Surveyor-General, 3
 Paddington Reservoir, 4
 Paddington Rifle Range, 21
 Pitt Town Labour Farm, 7, 9
 populate or perish, 25
 Qantas, airline, 29
 Randwick Cycling Club, 33
 Randwick Rifle Range, 22
 Rider, William, engineer, 5
 Rosebery, model suburb, 12
 Salmon, Leo, racing driver, 16
 Scheyville labour farm, 7
 Sheahan, William, politician, 18

Small, Arthur, town planner, 12
 South Coogee Public School, 30
 South Sydney Rabbitohs football club, 34
 Stanton, Richard, estate agent, 12
 Stead, David, environmentalist, 12
 Sulman, Sir John, town planner, 12
 Sydney Bicycle and Motor Club, 17
 Sydney University Velo Club, 33
 Tank Stream, 3
 Town Planning Advisory Board, 11, 15
 United Nations, 25
 Upper Nepean Scheme, 5
USS Chicago, 19
USS Minneapolis, 19
USS New Orleans, 19
USS Yorktown, 19
 Vaughan, Harry, mechanic, 16
 Victoria Barracks, 4
 Villawood Migrant Hostel, 27
 Waratah Masters Cycle Club, 34
 White Australia Policy, 25
 World War I, 9, 12
 World War II, 21, 25, 29