

City of Darebin Heritage Study

Volume 1

Draft Thematic Environmental History

Stage 2 Report

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CONTEXT

**Prepared for
City of Darebin**

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Report Register

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INTRODUCTION

The *Darebin Thematic Environmental History* comprises Volume 1 of the *Darebin Heritage Study 2007* (hereafter referred to as the study). This section provides an overview of the purpose, background and key outcomes of this study. A more detailed explanation of the background to the study and its purpose is provided in the *Darebin Heritage Study Volume 3: Key Findings & Recommendations*. Volume 1 of the study has been updated as part of the Stage 2 assessment work and will remain as a draft report able to be reviewed and updated until the completion of the Heritage Study.

Purpose

The *Darebin Thematic Environmental History* (the study) provides an explanation of the themes and activities that have been important in shaping the present day City of Darebin (the study area), which was created in 1994 and comprises the former City of Northcote (north of Heidelberg Road) and the City of Preston (including small portion of the former city of Heidelberg and Shire of Diamond Valley). The study area is shown in Figure 1.

It is important to understand that a Thematic Environmental History is not intended as a complete social or political history of the municipality, but rather as a summary of human use and impact upon the landscape in the years since the period of first contact between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous explorers and settlers during the middle of the nineteenth century (referred to as the ‘post-contact period’). It is not intended to be a chronological record and has not been written in this way. Rather, the history is organised according to themes so as to provide a context to assist with the identification of heritage places that illustrate the rich natural and cultural history of the study area.

These heritage places include buildings and structures, precincts, objects, ruins, trees and landscapes. The themes are also embodied in the historic or continuing use of places and people’s social and spiritual associations with them.

The themes used in this environmental history have been adapted from the *Australian Historic Themes* (AHT)¹ set down as guidelines by the former Australian Heritage Commission, now the Australian Heritage Council, and the *Thematic List of Post Contact Aboriginal Places/Sites*² prepared in 1999 for Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) and the Australian Heritage Commission. The introduction to the themes notes that:

The consistent organising principle for the Thematic Framework is activity. By emphasising the human activities that produced the places we value, and the human response to Australia’s natural environment, places are related to the processes and stories associated with them, rather than to the type or function of place.

Finally, it is important to understand that the history is not arranged as a hierarchy giving priority, weighting and privilege to some themes, nor is it simply a checklist. One place may have many themes reflecting the integrated, diverse and complex way that places evolve over time.

Each chapter includes:

- A brief introduction, which provides an overview and includes a list of the relevant AAV or AHT themes.
- An outline of the history of the study area associated with the particular theme.

¹ A full list of the *Australian Historic Themes* is provided in Appendix 1.

² A full list of the *Thematic List of Post Contact Aboriginal Places/Sites* is provided in Appendix 1.

- A summary of the historic or natural values and a preliminary list of the heritage places associated with the theme. The lists of heritage places are not exhaustive; rather they are representative of the many places that this study and previous studies have identified.

Background

The study is an outcome of Council's undertaking to prepare a comprehensive Heritage Study for the entire municipality. Specifically, *The City of Darebin 2005-2009 Council Plan* and supporting *Strategic Planning Business Case (November 2005)* states Council's commitment to heritage planning and identifies specific areas and places in the municipality of potential local heritage significance, focussing on the northern section of the municipality where heritage investigations have not yet been conducted. As well, specific work is required to assess natural heritage, eg. along creeks, and pre-European contact Koori Significance in Darebin. The Council's *Municipal Strategic Statement* further outlines Council's long term strategic directions and measures to protect the City's heritage places, including researching additional aspects of Darebin's history and heritage.

In addition, the project brief observed existing data shortfalls in the citations for individual places and the comparative analysis for heritage places.

The objectives of the study are therefore to:

- Identify the key themes and sub-themes in the historical development of the study area.
- Explain how these themes have influenced settlement and development patterns within the study area.
- Provide a clear context for the identification, assessment and on-going management of places of heritage significance in the study area, including filling gaps in existing studies.

Study outcomes

It is expected that this thematic environmental history for the study area will provide:

- An indication of places of potential Indigenous, natural and cultural significance within the study area including those identified by previous studies as well as new, previously unknown places.
- A context for the comparative assessment of places of Aboriginal, natural and cultural significance.
- A strategic base for establishing a future work program for the next stage of the Heritage Strategy to be undertaken for the study area.

Please note that the list of places provided as examples of the theme at the end of each chapter are indicative only and further heritage assessment will be undertaken as part Stage 2 of the City of Darebin Heritage Study.

PREFACE

As described in the Introduction, this environmental history provides an explanation of the themes and activities that have been important in shaping the City of Darebin so as to provide a context to assist with the identification of heritage places that illustrate its rich cultural history. It should be read in conjunction with the other local histories and heritage studies prepared for the study area, which are listed in the bibliography to this report.

The City of Darebin today

The land that is now known as the City of Darebin is the traditional country of the Woiwurrung people, and specifically the Wurundjeri willam clan that occupied the Yarra watershed which includes the study area. They belonged to a larger affiliation of tribes known as the Kulin Nation, who occupied the south-central portion of what would become Victoria. The tribes of the Kulin Nation spoke similar languages and shared the same spirit ancestors.

As shown in Map 1, in 2007 the City of Darebin covers an area of 53 square kilometres north of the Melbourne Central Activities District, bounded on two sides by the Darebin Creek and Merri Creek. The city's suburbs are Alphington, Bundoora, Fairfield, Kingsbury, Northcote, Preston, Reservoir, Thornbury and part of Macleod.

Darebin is close to central Melbourne and has a well developed transport network including trams, trains, buses and roads. Suburbs are mainly residential although there are pockets of light industry and commerce. The main industry in the city is manufacturing, though this is in decline, retailing, property and business services, with a small but rapidly expanding hospitality sector. The City of Darebin is the largest employer in the municipality.

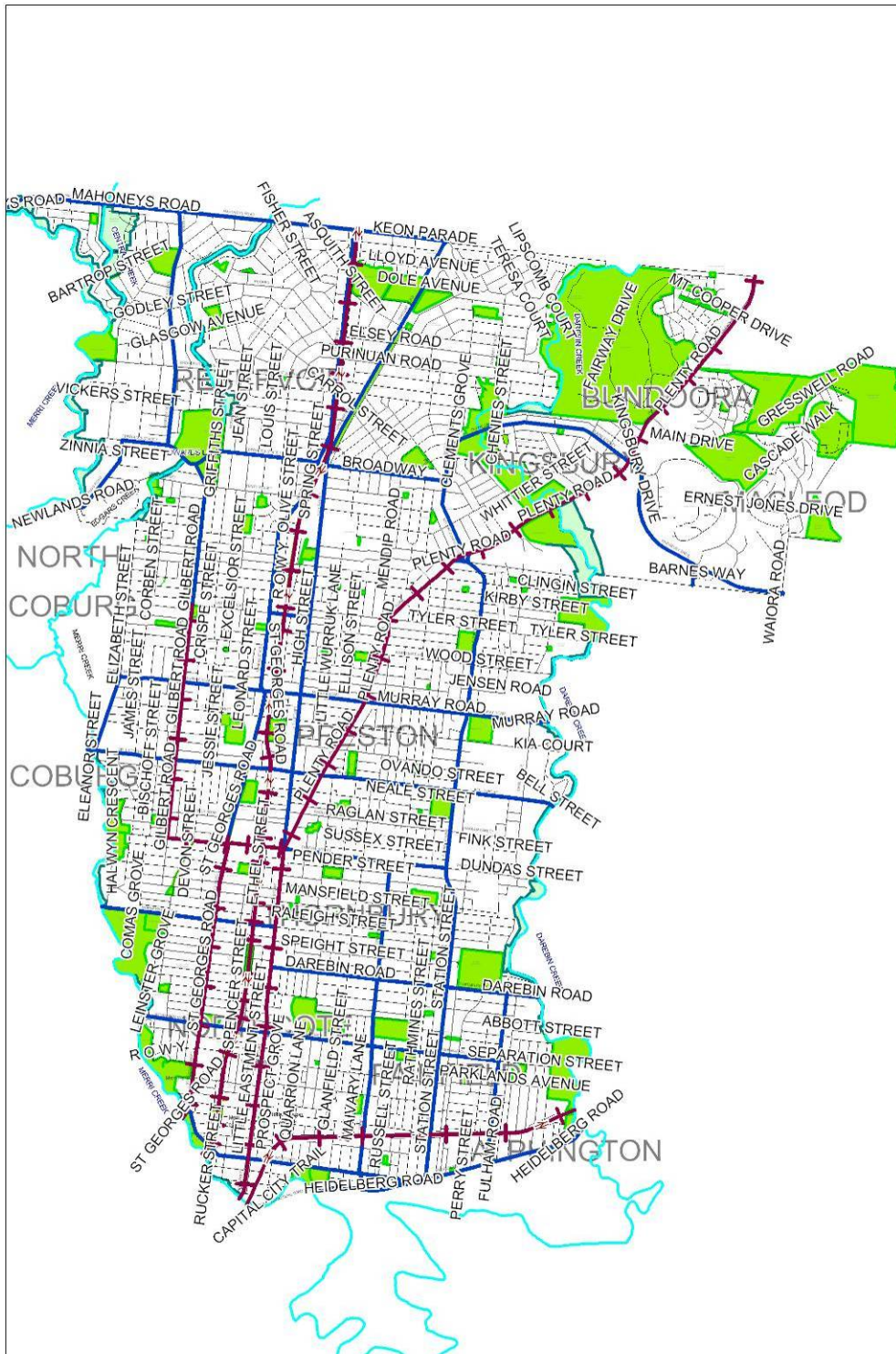
In 2007, there are over 128,000 people who call Darebin home, and they make up one of the most diverse communities anywhere in Australia. One in three Darebin residents was born in a non-English speaking country.

Historical overview

Before considering the content of this Thematic Environmental History it is important to remember that the City of Darebin is made up of two quite distinct municipalities which merged in 1994: the City of Preston and most of the City of Northcote. Small but significant areas from the former Cities of Coburg and Heidelberg were also included at the time of the formation of the City of Darebin. For this reason much of the Thematic Environmental History refers to the separate histories of these areas, and while they have some shared history, they also have some differences.

Interestingly, the early municipal history of the area shows that Preston and Northcote both belonged to the same shire until 1883, when issues over the effects of the area's noxious trades on Northcote's suburban development led to the split into the two municipalities. The split highlighted the different histories of the two areas, particularly in relation to the spread of suburban development, which occurred later in Preston. However there have been some significant aspects of shared history, particularly in relation to industries and the cultural backgrounds of Darebin's people.

Chapter 1 describes the creation of the physical landscape of the City of Darebin from both European scientific and Indigenous perspectives. It discusses the geomorphology, flora and fauna and the two waterways that form the area's natural boundaries on two sides. The Indigenous perspective is given in a Woiwurrung creation story.



Map 1: Study area

Chapter 2 discusses the rich diversity of Darebin's people, from the Woi-wurrung through waves of immigration from Britain and other parts of Europe, the settlement of a significant twentieth century Aboriginal community and more recent arrivals from the Middle East and Asia. The chapter also covers the various schemes, both private and government, which have attracted settlers to Darebin. A more detailed discussion of settlement patterns is given in Chapter 5.

Transport is the theme of Chapter 3, and it is closely linked with the themes of Peopling and Suburban Development in Chapters 2 and 5 respectively. A feature of Darebin's transport history is the inadequacy of transport systems well into the twentieth century, which accounts for its relative isolation, however the area has seen the development of all phases of Melbourne's tram system.

In Chapter 4 Darebin's economic development is explored, showing the diversity of rural, extractive and manufacturing industries, including the noxious trades that took advantage of the area's nineteenth century isolation, and the role of Darebin in Melbourne's water supply history. The Chapter includes a discussion of the impacts of economic activity on Darebin's physical landscape, linking back to Chapter 1. The economic theme concludes with an outline of Darebin's commercial and retail history.

Chapter 5 outlines the process of Darebin's development as a suburb of Melbourne, from a number of small village centres, moving out along transport routes in several waves of boom time growth. This process is still taking place. The discussion includes the variety of housing styles represented, public housing, the provision of urban services, and cultural landscapes and gardens.

Chapter 6 deals with Governing at all levels, from colonial, to the development of local government, to Darebin's contribution to Australia's war efforts in the two World Wars. Of particular significance is Darebin's place in the colonial administration of Aboriginal-European relations, and later the struggle for Aboriginal rights. Darebin's people have also made a significant contribution to Victoria's and Australia's left wing political history.

In Chapter 7 the many layers of community development in Darebin are explored, highlighting the way cultural institutions, especially churches and sporting clubs, both influence and reflect the character of the area. Schooling in Darebin has been predominantly public, and Melbourne's third university is sited in the area. Darebin has a significant history of large psychiatric institutions, which occupied the secluded rural parts of the area until recent years. There is also a strong community movement in appreciation and defence of the natural environment.

Chapter 8 concludes the Thematic Environmental History with a return to Darebin's natural history and a discussion of the natural values that contribute to the municipality's heritage.

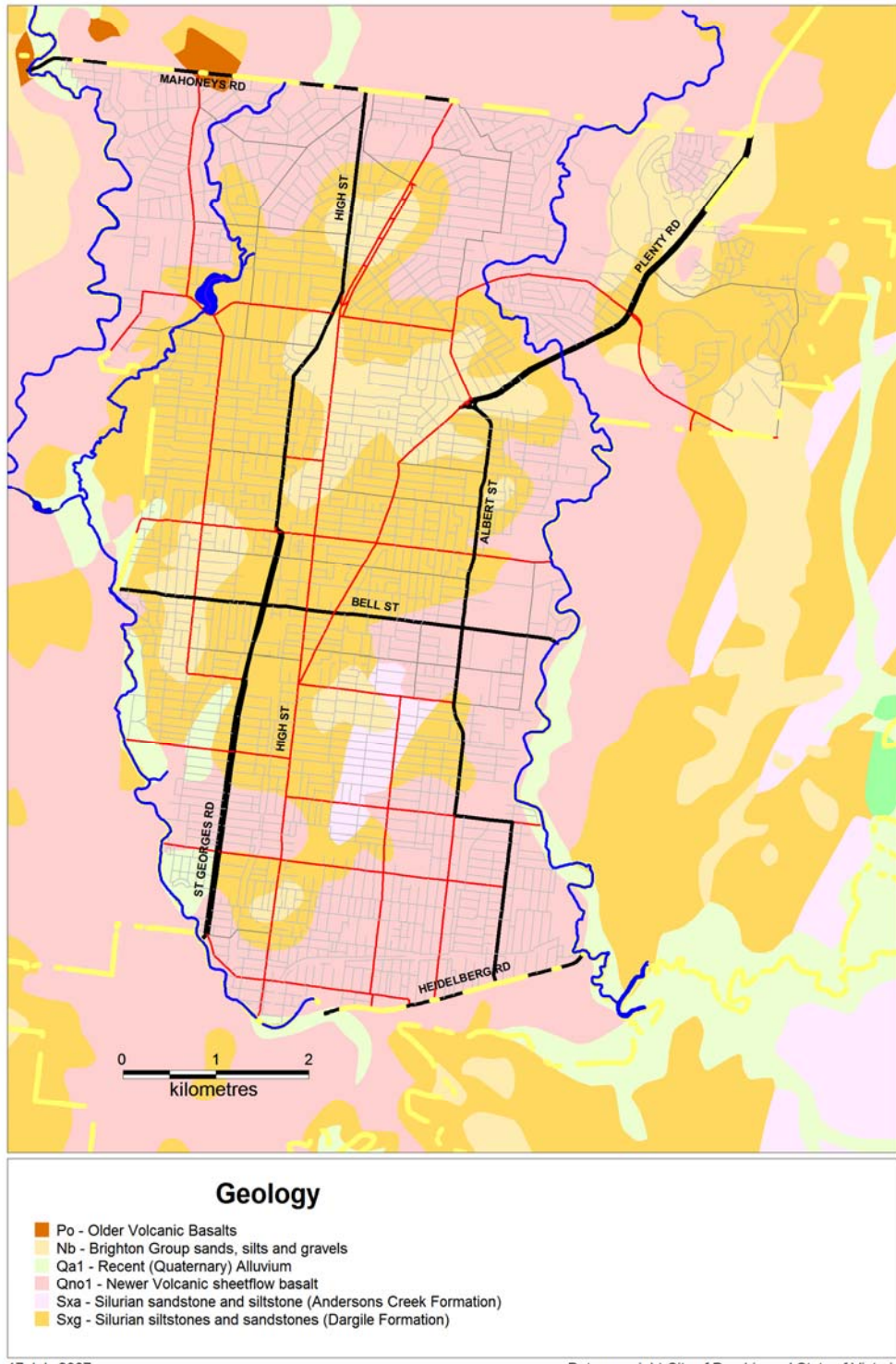
As described above, this thematic environmental history is set out in thematic, not chronological order. The following table is provided to assist in understanding how the historic themes set out in each chapter are associated with key dates in the historic development of the study area. Please note that this table is indicative only of broad timeframes associated with each theme and reference should be made to the appropriate chapter in this environmental history for more specific information about the actual periods of influence for each theme.

Theme	Period of Influence										
	Pre-1835	1835-60	1861-80	1881-1900	1901-20	1921-40	1941-60	1961-80s	1981-94-	1995-2007	2007-
Creating Darebin											
Peopling Darebin											
Transport and communications											
Developing Darebin's economies											
Building suburban Darebin											
Governing											
Community and culture											
Darebin's natural heritage											
	Primary period of influence										
	Secondary or continuing period of influence										

Terminology

The terms used throughout this report in relation to heritage conservation are consistent with *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Heritage Significance*. A glossary of some key terms and their meanings is provided at the end of the history section of this report. Otherwise, plain English has been used wherever possible.

Darebin Heritage Study: Underlying Geology



Map 2: Geology

1 CREATING DAREBIN

Introduction

Natural process over thousands of years created the study area as it was at the time of European invasion and settlement. Creation stories of the Woi wurrung also explain how the wider landscape was shaped by ancestor beings.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	12.3 Spiritual places
AHT	1. Tracing the evolution of the Australian environment

Natural History

1.1 Geomorphology

During the long period between earth's crust forming and life becoming abundant on Earth, little is known about the surface configuration of the planet. Most of eastern Australia was then under the sea, building up layers of mud and silt, and occasionally volcanic lavas (Cochrane et al. 1991). The sediments were squeezed and wrinkled, lifted up, and added on to the eastern edge of Australia. Melbourne was one of the last areas to be raised above sea level, at the end of the Silurian period some 400 million years ago and so is based on early and late Silurian siltstones and sandstones laid down just before then (today these are known as the Andersons Creek and Dargile formations). A volcanic eruption around 380 million years ago left a plug of Quartz-Feldspar which became Gresswell Hill.

Glaciers scoured off the wrinkles and flattened the land before dinosaurs appeared. Australia drifted away from Antarctica and New Zealand. A long period of volcanic eruptions started and lava from the volcanoes forms what is known today as the Older Basalts.

Around the time our ancestors started walking upright, the Melbourne area was again submerged on the eastern edge of a shallow sea and accumulated layers of sands (the Brighton Group sands), which in some areas formed sandstones. The sea level fell again, and erosion gradually cut valleys through the Brighton Sands and down into the Silurian siltstones and sandstones. Remnants of the sands were left on higher ground. Occasional volcanic eruptions continued, filling the eroded valleys and gradually covering much of the area north and west of Melbourne with lava flows (the Newer Basalts). Flows from Mount Cooper and Hayes Hill flowed down Darebin Creek, and other volcanoes north of Melbourne generated lava flows which flowed down the ancestral Merri and Darebin Creeks to the Yarra. As lava filled the valleys, the Creeks started to flow around the edges of the lava flows, cutting down into the softer Silurian sediments, often forming steep escarpments. In places the lava flows dammed the creeks, and the Creeks formed swamps which filled with sediment. Then when the creeks eventually eroded their way through the lava, wide alluvial plains were left.

At Mount Cooper (also referred to as Mt Prospect in Kenna 1988), near present-day Mt Cooper Drive in Bundoora Park, along with the lava, much volcanic ash was ejected, fusing the sands it covered into rocks still visible today, although the ash has long been washed away. These rocks, together with another type of rock formed when chemicals leached out of the lava and into the sand underneath (silcrete) were used by the Aborigines to make stone tools (Merv Lia, pers. comm.).

At the time of colonisation, the Silurian sandstones and mudstones underlaid all of the City of Darebin (today they are known as the Andersons Creek and Dargile formations). The Brighton Sands remained on higher ground where erosion, and the lava flows were unable to reach - like present-day Rucker's Hill, Pender's Grove, West Preston (from the Reservoir shops east to

Summerhill Village), Ruthven and the higher parts of Bundoora Park. These areas had deep sandy soils. The lower areas had been covered by flow after flow of lava, or by sediments deposited recently in the valleys. The soils which developed on the lava flows were heavy black cracking clays. The recent sediments formed the best soils, deep and well watered, suitable for market gardening. The mid slopes usually had soils built on Silurian siltstones and sandstones which tended to form thin poor soils. Refer to *Map 2: Geology*, for more detail.

1.2 Waterways

The topography of Melbourne's northern suburbs slopes generally downward from north to south, draining the southern slopes of the Great Dividing Range. Streams therefore generally flow southward, and in the 2 million years since the area was last under the sea, creeks cut valleys as they ran south to the sea.

After their valleys were filled with lava flows many times, the creeks flowed largely through and over the basalt, but sometimes were pushed up against the Silurian sides of the valleys by a lava flow, or blocked completely for a while by a lava flow. One flow from Hayes Hill near Donnybrook flowed down Darebin Creek all the way to the Yarra at present day Alphington where it dammed the Yarra, encouraging it to form a broad floodplain which extended up Darebin Creek. Merri Creek was blocked a number of times and formed a number of swamps which became floodplains - in what is now the Sumner Estate, the Northcote Golf Course and upstream to Goodwin Street, and in the vicinity of its tributary Edgars Creek.

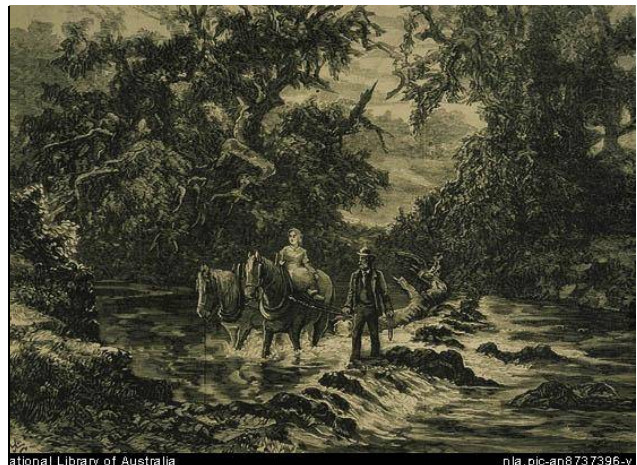
After having been pushed around by the lava flows, Merri and Darebin creeks as they now are have cut the valleys which define Darebin and controlled its early history. The valleys left a broad ridge running down the middle of the municipality through Reservoir, Preston, Thornbury and Northcote.

The Merri and Darebin creeks were fed by a network of smaller tributaries. The tributaries were sometimes fed by springs where rain water soaked through the porous Brighton sands or the heavily cracked basalts and accumulated on top of the impervious Silurian mudstones. Because of these springs both creeks retained pools of water even if they stopped flowing in the driest weather. The creeks formed reliable water sources for the Aborigines, and so acted as movement corridors north and south through the land.

Figure 1

Early engraving "On the Merri Creek near Craigieburn"

[National Library of Australia, an 8737396]



The basaltic nature of the Merri Creek meant that it was full of basalt boulders, and indeed the Aboriginal name is thought to have been "Merri Merri", meaning very rocky.

The Merri Creek was described by one early settler in these terms: "the flashing water, verdant trees...rocks, reeds and bushes all combine to produce a succession of scenes in the highest degree picturesque" (*Australian News* 27/12/1877, p 202 in "The Merri Creek Study" PIRG 1975).

1.3 Flora and natural resources

At the time of European settlement, most of the study area is thought to have been covered by grassy woodland (Oates & Taranto, 2001). Wedge's second 1835 map of Port Phillip annotates the Darebin Creek area "lightly wooded country good grass" (Harcourt, 2001:69).

On the soils derived from the Silurian siltstones and sandstones as well as the newer basalt which extends throughout most of Darebin, the grassy woodland was dominated by River Red Gums (Oates & Taranto, 2001), some over 2 metres in diameter and probably older than 500 years³. Their massive canopies and hollow branches provided habitat for possums, gliders, parrots, cockatoos, goannas, and a host of other wildlife, while the fallen branches sheltered wombats, echidnas, snakes, lizards and frogs. As described in the following section a huge range of insects and other invertebrates lived on their flowers, leaves and wood - or on other invertebrates, and themselves provided food for other wildlife.

Under the Red Gums, there was a very open scattered shrub layer of various wattles, Sweet Bursaria and Tree Violet. The ground storey was grassy, in the drier areas being dominated by Kangaroo Grass, and in the moister areas by Common Tussock-grass. Batman described the grass as being waist-high and so thick that it was difficult to make progress through it (Salter, George, "The Journeys of John Batman through the Port Phillip District", in Kenna, 1988:17). Wildflowers such as Common Everlasting, Scaly Buttons, Blue Devil, Chocolate Lily and Yam Daisy were abundant in the grassy understorey.

On the soils derived from the Tertiary Brighton Sands geology, which tend to be on the high ground, (refer to *Map 3: Vegetation in 1750*) a more diverse over-storey including a range of eucalypt species and sometimes Sheoaks and Banksias tended to occur⁴. Smaller trees included Black Wattle and Blackwood Wattle as well as Cherry Ballart. Shrubs would have been relatively sparse, but the grassy understorey would still have been full of wildflowers (Oates & Taranto, 2001).

The *Preston Leader* (8/5/1897, cited in Forster 1968) described Preston of the 1850s and 1860s as:

Preston with its beautiful gardens, its well-wooded paddocks of Wattle, honeysuckle (i.e. Banksia), lightwood and many other native flowering trees and shrubs, was a place of beauty admired by everyone.

To the northwest and west, much of the newer basalt soils supported no, or only very sparse, trees (Oates & Taranto, 2001). This grassland⁵ is thought to have just entered the northern edge of the municipality between Edgars and Merri Creeks, where it interweaved with the Red Gum grassy woodland. The grassland was dominated by Kangaroo Grass, but with a mixture of other wallaby grasses, tussock grasses, spear grasses etc. Twining amongst the grasses, and in gaps between the grasses and in areas cultivated and managed through burning by the Aborigines, was a huge diversity of wildflowers including many tuberous plants - lilies and orchids as well as the abundant Murnong or Yam Daisy. These tubers formed the staple foods of the local Aboriginal people. Many wildflowers enjoyed the spaces created by the regular burning, or thrived in areas where the Aboriginal women regularly dug. The grassland supported a somewhat different fauna from the woodlands, including animals like the Striped Legless Lizard, and the Fat-tailed Dunnart.

On the Devonian volcanic quartz-feldspar of what is now known as Gresswell Hill (referred to as Mt Sugarloaf by Kenna, 1988) an unusual pocket occurred of Box Woodland (Muylt, 2003:8)⁶. This had a mixture of box and gum eucalypts not found elsewhere, over a shrubby understorey of plants from the pea family.

³ Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) 55 Plains Grassy Woodland

⁴ EVC 175 Grassy Woodland

⁵ EVC 132 Plains Grassland

⁶ Oates & Taranto 2001 map shows EVC 22 Grassy Dry Forest on Gresswell Hill; Muylt 2003 argues that this was in error.

Merri Creek and the upper part of Darebin Creek would have carried Stream Bank Shrubland (Oates & Taranto, 2001), with a sparse over-storey of Red Gums, possibly with the occasional Manna Gum or Swamp Gum. But shrubs were dominant with Tea-trees and River Bottlebrush amongst the rocks on the stream bed and Sweet Bursaria, Tree Violet, Shiny Cassinia and Hop Goodenia on the stream banks⁷.

South of La Trobe University, the vegetation of Darebin Creek graded into Red Gum woodland over an understorey of Common Tussock-Grass, sometimes with Swamp Paperbark⁸ thickets in the dampest spots. On the higher escarpments surrounding the Creek there was a shrubland with Drooping Sheoak, wattles, Cassinias, Tree Violets, Tree Everlasting and Burgan commonly occurring⁹ (Oates & Taranto, 2001).

Edgars Creek and other small tributaries such as Strathallan Creek draining La Trobe University were lined by grassy woodland again dominated by Red Gums but with a scattered shrub layer and a ground layer dense with Common tussock Grass and Tall Sedge amongst other species.¹⁰ On Strathallan Creek a patch of grassy wetland occurred near the La Trobe University Wildlife Reserve¹¹ (Oates & Taranto, 2001).

1.4 Fauna

Eastern Grey Kangaroos were plentiful in the grassy spaces in the woodlands, and in the shrubbier thickets along the creeks Swamp Wallabies were also present. Dependent on the dense grassy habitat were Tasmanian Bettongs - miniature Kangaroos. Wombats and Echidnas were common (Museum of Victoria Bioinformatics website).

Platypus and the beaver-like Rakali (also known as the native Water Rat) were plentiful in both Merri and Darebin creeks, which also teemed with fish, and seasonally eels. Tortoises sunned themselves on rocks and fallen timber in the creeks, submerging to forage for tadpoles, fish and invertebrates. The Short-necked Tortoise and the Common Long-necked Tortoise occurred in the study area (McMahon & Schulz, 2003). Eight species of frogs bred in the creeks and wetlands and roamed across the study area hunting for insects.

In grassland areas the Eastern Barred Bandicoot nested during the day, coming out at night to dig for insects, tubers and fungi, and in the woodlands the Long-nosed Bandicoot occurred. Dingoes roamed wild and were the domesticated companions of the Aborigines, helping them hunt.

The Quolls (or "Native Cats") hunted at night for the smaller mammals, birds and reptiles as well as insects. They were common around the rocky escarpments of the creeks and in areas with good tree hollows or fallen hollow timber. Both the Eastern and Spot-tailed Quolls occurred in study area.

In the trees there were Koalas, but also the night-loving ringtail and brushtail possums, as well as Sugar Gliders, Squirrel-Gliders, the Brush-tailed Phascogale and the tiny Feathertail Glider. Living in burrows or hollows were a range of native rats, including in the grasslands the Swamp Rat, and in shrubbier understoreys the Bush Rat. Marsupial mice - probably the Agile Antechinus, Dusky Antechinus and Fat-tailed Dunnart hunted amongst the fallen logs and rocks and leaf litter for insects, spiders and cockroaches.

Around 10 species of bat sheltered during the day in tree hollows or in crevices in cliff-faces to come out at night and catch flying insects.

⁷ EVC 851 Stream-bank Shrubland

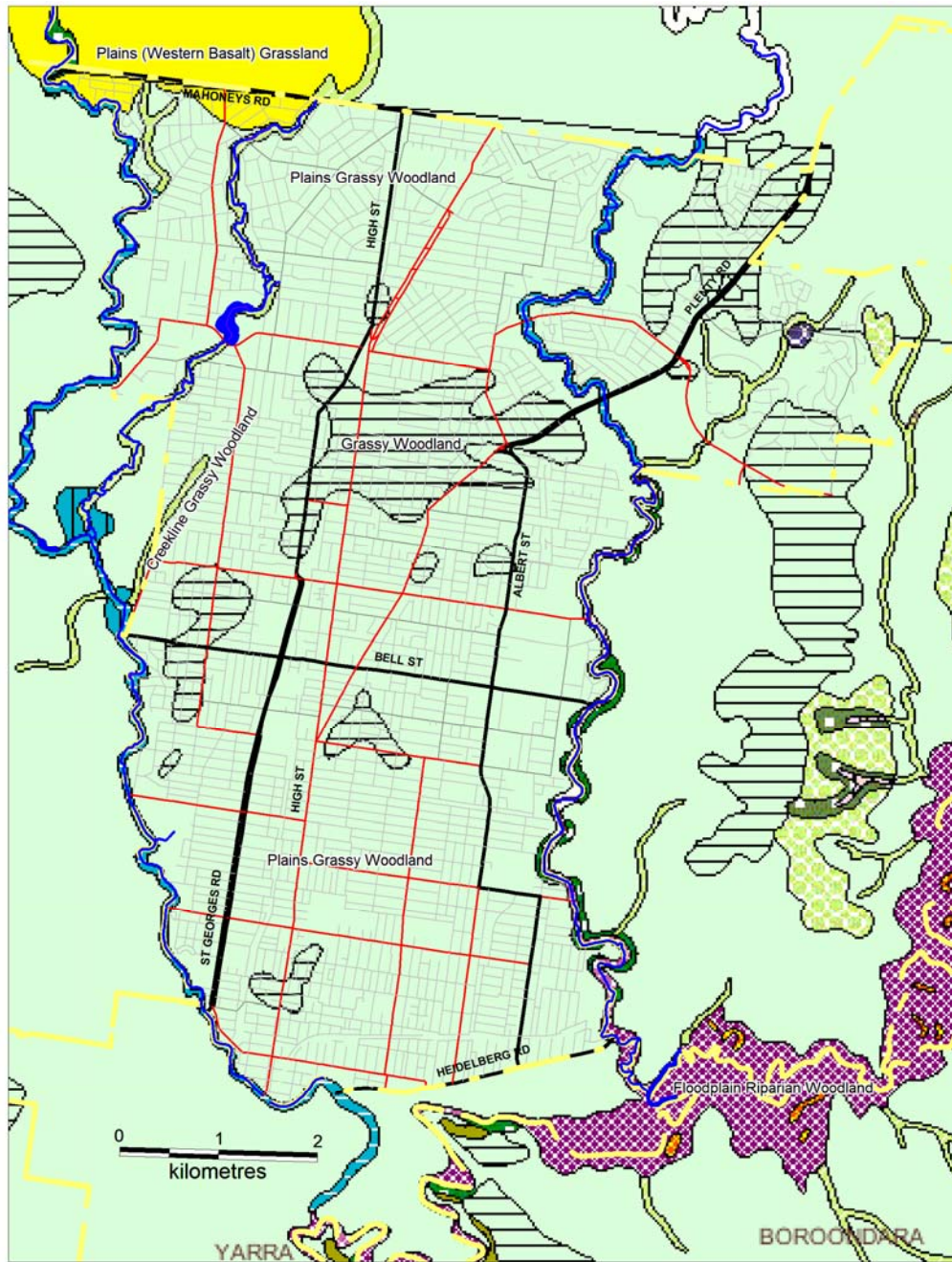
⁸ EVC's 928 Riparian Woodland/Stream-bank Shrubland Mosaic and 641 Riparian Woodland

⁹ EVC 895 Escarpment Shrubland

¹⁰ EVC 68 Creepline Grassy Woodland

¹¹ EVC 125 Plains Grassy Wetland

Darebin Heritage Study: Vegetation in 1750



17 July 2007. Based on Oates & Taranto (2001)

Data copyright City of Darebin and State of Victoria

Map 3: Vegetation in 1750

Around 200 bird species inhabited Darebin (Kenna, 1988), enjoying the variety of habitats from waterways and swamps, to woodlands and thickets, from ground-dwellers like Emus to species that rarely land like the Fork-tailed Swift. Thomas Wills of “Lucerne” compiled a bird list of 1850-1870 which comprised 72 species (Northcote Historical and Conservation Society, 1988:13).

Snakes were common including the Common Copperhead, Tiger Snake, Red-bellied Black Snake, and the Little Whip Snake.

The Marbled Gecko lived during the day under rocks and bark, and came out at night to hunt insects. The Striped Legless Lizard burrowed under grasslands hunting insects, and 10 species of skink ranging in size from the Blue-tongued Lizard down to the small Garden Skink came out to warm themselves in the sun and hunt insects or eat berries.

Innumerable invertebrates (insects, spiders, etc) lived in the study area. There were around 40 species of butterfly alone (Braby & Beardsell, 2006).

1.5 Woi wurrung creation stories

At the time of the first European settlement of Australia, the south-central portion of what would become Victoria was owned by clans with a common language and other social and economic ties who identified themselves as ‘Kulin’. Within the Kulin language area, several dialects were spoken including Woi wurrung, Boon wurrung, Daung wurrung, Wada wurrung and Djadja wurrung. The Woi wurrung clans occupied an area extending from the Werribee river east to Mt Baw Baw and from the Great Dividing Range to the Kooweerup swamp. Of the Woi wurrung clans, the Wurundjeri willam was the clan that occupied the Yarra watershed, including the area that is now the City of Darebin (Clark, 1990:364, 379-386).

The Kulin traced their ancestry to a creative being known as Bunjil, the Eaglehawk. Bunjil was a powerful headman of the Kulin who had two wives and a son known as Binbeal. Bunjil was also assisted by six young men or wirinuns, all of whom were powerful wizards - Djurt-djurt, the Nankeen Kestrel, Thara the Quail Hawk; Yukope, the Green Parakeet, Dantum, the Blue Mountain Parrot; Tadjeri, the Brush-tail Possum, and Turnung the Glider Possum. These men looked after the people for Bunjil and carried out his orders (Massola, 1968:40; Reed, 1982:51).

Bunjil made the mountains and rivers, man and all the animals, and passed on to men the knowledge of how to make weapons and how to behave amongst one another. Bunjil created man by breathing life into two figures he made from clay gathered from a riverbed. At the same time Bunjil’s brother Pallian created two women from water (Thomas, in Bride, 1898:86-87; Reed, 1982: 52; Ellender & Christiansen, 2001: 33). After creating men and women, Bunjil assigned to them their totems of either the Eaglehawk (Bunjil) or the Crow (Waa) and ordered that men and women of each totem could only marry a member of the other totem.

After completing his creation work Bunjil ordered Bellin-bellin the crow to release the winds which he had given him to keep safe, so that the trees could move, the clouds could be carried and the birds could grow strong. Bellin-bellin released the cold south wind and Bunjil and his family were blown out of the world and into their home in the sky where they look down on the world as stars. (Massol 1968: 40; Ree 1982: 55; Ellender & Christiansen 2001: 105). Some stories tell that Bunjil chose to live close to the Yarra River as it was a region he had much affection for (Ree 1982: 56-57).

The area that is now the Darebin municipality is not mentioned in any creation stories that have been published. However, one Woi wurrung story recounts the creation of the Yarra and Port Phillip Bay and also refers to the area between Darebin and Merri Creeks – noting the hard ground in this area; probably a specific reference to the basalt found through the region.

According to this story, as told by Billebellary, a headman of the Wurundjeri willam, the waters of the Yarra were once locked in the mountains and were referred to as ‘Moorool’ or great water. Moorool was so large that the Woi wurrung had limited hunting grounds, unlike

the adjoining Wada wurrung and Boon wurrung clans who hunted on the great plain that is now Port Phillip Bay. Mo-yarra, the headman of the Woi wurrung, decided to free his country of water and so cut a channel through the hills to Westernport. However, very little water followed him and the channel soon closed up.

At a later time, when Bar-wool was headman he remembered Mo-yarra's attempt and also resolved to free the water from Woi wurrung land. He cut a channel up the valley but was obliged to alter his course when he ran into Baw Baw the Mountain and then Donna Buang and his brothers, but went through the hills to Warr-an-dyte. There he met Yan-yan who was cutting a channel for the plenty River in order to drain his home Morang. The two joined forces and continued to Templestowe and Warringal, where they rested and the waters formed another Moorool.

Bar-wool and Yan-yan continued, but they had to go much slower as the ground was harder and they were using too many stone axes. As a result they cut a twisting course between the Darebin and Merri Creeks as they sought out softer ground. Eventually they reached Port Phillip and the waters of Moorool and Morang rushed out and inundated Port Phillip, and freed the land of the Woi wurrung from water (Massola, 1968: 58; Wiencke, 1984:99-100).

Figure 2

This 25m tall sculpture of jarrab, aluminium, polycarbonate resins created by artist Bruce Armstrong stands sentinel in Melbourne's Docklands, and is said to represent Bunjil.

[Context, 2006]



Heritage

Natural Heritage is discussed and listed at Chapter 8. Activities and processes that transformed the landscape are discussed at 4.5 Altering the environment. Protecting and managing natural features and landscapes is discussed at 5.5 Creating public landscapes and 7.6 Appreciating and defending the environment.

2 PEOPLING DAREBIN

Introduction

Darebin is the traditional country of the Wurundjeri willam, who were quickly displaced after Batman negotiated his 'treaty' with them. They did, however, maintain contact with the area for some time after their dispossession and until the present.

The first European settlers to arrive in the area were mainly English and Irish Protestants, who established small communities of farmers. There was a sprinkling of Germans and Chinese market gardeners in the early years. Also a significant Aboriginal population established itself in Northcote from the 1920s. The great wave of post-war immigration brought large numbers of Italians, Greeks, and Macedonians. These immigrants settled, mainly in the northern part of the study area. They were followed by people from the Middle East and Asia, to make Darebin one of Melbourne's most culturally diverse suburbs.

A key theme in the peopling of Darebin is land speculation, as many speculators bought land cheaply in the hope making large profits. Although some did profit, most of Darebin was too remote from Melbourne to attract much settlement in the nineteenth century. Many urban subdivisions were made, though much of the land remained rural, some even into the middle of the twentieth century.

Some government schemes such as Closer Settlement were attempted, with limited success. More successful was the Housing Commission of Victoria, which developed some of its earliest estates in Darebin.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	12 Attachment to places known to precede contact; 1 Associations with pastoralists; 2 Associations with settlements and towns; places related to self-determination
AHT	2.1 Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants; 2.4 Migrating; 2.5 Promoting settlement; 2.6 Fighting for land; 5 Working

History

2.1 Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants

The Woi wurrung, who occupied the area extending from the Werribee River east to Mt Baw Baw and along the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers from Port Phillip to the Dividing Range, were in turn divided into a number land owning groups, or clans. The clan that occupied the Darebin area at the time of European settlement was the Wurundjeri willam (literally 'white gum tree dwellers'), one of the patriline of the Wurundjeri balug clan that occupied the Yarra River catchment area (Clark, 1990:385). The Wurundjeri willam occupied the area immediately along the Yarra River. The Woi wurrung creation stories are told in Chapter 1.

Like other Kulin clans, the Wurundjeri willam were organized into moieties belonging to either Waa (crow) or Bunjil (eaglehawk), and used a marriage system which required individuals to marry outside the moiety. The Wurundjeri willam belonged to the Waa moiety (Clark, 1990:385). This marriage system promoted alliance with neighbouring clans, which in turn facilitated access to the resources of adjoining lands. As a result inter-clan gatherings would occur to facilitate marriages. The Wurundjeri willam frequently married people from the Goulburn River region (Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:36).

For the Wurundjeri willam, seasonal movements traditionally involved spending summer months on the banks of the Yarra and its tributaries, such as the Merri and Darebin Creeks, in open locations along the river valleys (Presland, 1994:73). These valleys were also important transport routes/pathways from the Yarra to the uplands and inlands. Confluences of rivers also

had an important place in Aboriginal societies and the Merri Creek, especially near the confluence of the Yarra River, and also at Northcote, was recorded as being a well known encampment for the Wurundjeri people since before the arrival of European settlers (e.g. Swift 1928:2, 11). During the colder months when the Yarra and tributaries were flooded, the Wurundjeri willam moved up into the higher lands, where shelter and firewood were more plentiful (Presland, 1994:73; Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:39).

Camp activities were centred on the hunting and gathering of readily available resources, but also included collection of suitable stone for tools. Camp movement was dependent on the availability of game (Presland, 1994:51-2). Hunting and gathering was generally divided along gender lines with the men hunting for animals such as kangaroos, emus, possums and fish, while the women gathered plant resources and collected shellfish. Techniques and materials employed in hunting and gathering depended on the environment. Men, generally equipped with spear, spear thrower, club, boomerang (wonguim) and stone axe, would hunt for animals with a combination of hides, lures, stealth and mimicry, or harvest fish and eels from stone traps built in rivers and swamps. Women, carrying a fire-hardened digging stick (Kannan) and woven bag or wooden container, would collect Murnong (Yam Daisy) tubers, fruits, seeds and rushes, or poke small animals from burrows, or harvest eels (Presland, 1994:51-83; Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:35-45).

Animals and plants were not only harvested for their food value, but also for a range of other uses. Animal, particularly possum, skins and fur were made into cloaks or spun by hand into yarn; bones were used to manufacture needles, awls, or spear points; sinew was used for binding, feathers for decoration, gum and resin for medicinal purposes or binding; bark for canoes, containers or shields; and rushes for weaving bags (Presland, 1994:51-83; Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:35-45).

Clan elders were responsible for passing on skills to younger generations and again senior men took responsibility for the younger men to teach hunting skills while women elders taught young women to weave and build miams (huts). Elders also took a leading role in ritual activities, such as the boy's initiation rite (Tibbut) and the girl's initiation rite (Murrum Turukuruk). (Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:51-3).

Corroborees were also crucial to the life of the clan. They served multiple functions and included men, women or both depending on the occasion. They could be used for welcoming other groups to clan lands, in sacred initiation ceremonies, or to mark the beginning of other longer ceremonies. Talented people who developed new dances or songs were also very much admired (Presland, 1994:83; Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:56-7).

For the Darebin area, the Merri and Darebin Creeks would have been a focus of resource gathering and settlement, as well as a landmark and pathway to other regions. The creeks provided fish, eels, mussels, waterbirds and roots and tubers. Murnong heaps were noted along the banks of both creeks in the nineteenth century (Clark & Heydon, 2004:10). A number of small ephemeral swamps were also present in the Fairfield area prior to drainage works in the early twentieth century (Swift, 1928:107), and these would also have attracted people. Mount Cooper has naturally occurring silcrete outcrops which were utilised as a source for raw materials for stone tools.

At the time of European settlement, the Wurundjeri willam comprised at least three sub-groups. These groups were headed by Ngurungaeta, the senior clan leaders. Bebejan's mob, whose territory included the area at Heidelberg and up the Yarra to Mt Baw Baw, may have used the area, but it is Billebellary's mob, who occupied the area north of the Yarra from the Maribyrnong River to the Merri and Darebin Creeks, that is most commonly associated with the region (Clark, 1990:385).

Although decisions affecting a clan would only be made after lengthy discussion amongst the whole clan, the Ngurungaeta generally had great influence and respect within the clan and beyond. Billebellary was one of the most influential Ngurungaeta and played a prominent role in the early history of Aboriginal-European relations in Victoria. He was a signatory to

Batman's Treaty and led his clan with strength and vision through the 1830s and early 1840s. Assistant Protector William Thomas drew frequently on Billibellary's knowledge and leadership throughout this time (Clark & Heydon, 2004:38-9).

Making contact

When John Batman arrived in the Melbourne area in June 1835, he came with a treaty to purchase land, and a number of Aboriginal men from Sydney to act as mediators in this proposed purchase. The treaty claimed to purchase around 600,000 acres of land for an initial payment of blankets, tomahawks, knives, scissors, looking glasses, handkerchiefs, shirts and flour, and a similar yearly tribute to the Kulin.

The treaty was the only one ever offered to Aboriginal people in the colonization of Australia, and thus represents the only serious attempt made to negotiate with Aboriginal people prior to settlement. In its wording and in the signing ceremony, which included the handing over of a handful of soil as 'livery of seisin', the treaty recognizes the ownership of the land by the Kulin people. However there is no doubt that the idea of presenting a treaty to the Aboriginal people was at least partly motivated by a desire to win favour in London, as Batman and the Port Phillip Association knew they were attempting the illegal settlement of the Port Phillip area (see also section 2.4 in Chapter 2).

In any case, whilst Batman thought that he was purchasing the land, a purchase of this type had no meaning to the Kulin signatories. In the understanding of these people, clan land - and particularly the religious, social and economic rights that it contained - could not be sold. However, the Kulin had a ceremony of welcome, known as a *Tanderrum* or 'freedom of the bush' ceremony. In this ceremony, the visiting clan are not allowed to do anything for themselves but are instead seated and attended to by the home clan, who bring the visitors gifts in the form of water and as great a variety of food from the home country as can be gathered (Thomas, in Bride, 1898:97-8). Certainly the treaty signing did not only involve payment of blankets and other goods by Batman to the Kulin people, but the Kulin also gave gifts of cloaks, stone axes and boomerangs to Batman's party (Campbell, 1987:102).

Importantly, while Batman was seeking out Aboriginal people to negotiate a land purchase, it was a group of Kulin people who made the ultimate approach. This group included several clan heads, including Billibellary. These Ngurungaeta would have been certain about their inviolable connection to their land and thus would not have been a knowing party to its sale, but their presence indicates that a decision had been reached among clanspeople to meet and deal with Batman on their own terms.

It is likely therefore that the deal was done with Batman by the Kulin as a traditional strategy of their own, one which offered a necessary hospitality to Batman's party and granted them temporary usage of the resources of the land (Broome, 2005a:10-1).

Figure 3

*Burt, John Wesley,
'Batman's treaty with the
aborigines at Merri Creek,
6th June 1835'*

[State Library of Victoria,
AN H92.196 IN
b28769]



Maintaining traditional life after European settlement

For many years after Europeans began arriving in Darebin the Wurundjeri and other Kulin continued to camp at their camping ground the Merri Creek near the confluence of the Yarra (Clark & Heydon, 1998:21-2). Assistant Protector William Thomas first recorded a large encampment near the confluence in 1841, when he noted the camp contained ‘most of the Woiwurrung, part of the Bunwurrung and about 100 Goulburns’ (Daung Wurrung) (In Clark & Heydon, 1998:57). The preference of the Kulin people for this area was in part based on the fact that government policy had forced their removal from encampments closer to Melbourne, but probably also on traditional preference. The presence of the Kulin people at the Merri Creek also influenced government policy in the selection of sites for a Protectorate station and a school for Aboriginal children at the confluence. The Establishment of the Native Police Corps HQ there in 1842 also further cemented the importance of the site as the families of Native Police corps members established themselves within the camp to be close to their relatives. Despite the removal of the police corps in 1844, people continued to camp at the Merri Creek. The Merri Creek School, Protectorate and Native Police Corps are discussed in further detail in chapters 6 and 7.

The location of the camp is generally recorded as being slightly upstream from the confluence of the Merri and the Yarra. However, it is clear that the number of people at the encampments fluctuated and also often included groups from other language groups such as the Daung Wurrung and Bun wurrung. (Kyle, in Clark & Heydon, 2004:31). William Thomas frequently referred to encampments around Heidelberg Road and North of Heidelberg Road along the Merri Creek. He also frequently referred to numbers of encampments within a mile of his hut at the Protectorate station. Given that Thomas’s hut was located at approximately the Olney or Cox ovals in Yarra Bend Park, this would place encampments well north of Westgarth Street in Westgarth (Clark & Heydon, 2004:7, 31).

In 1844 a great gathering occurred in what is now known as Westgarth where Thomas estimated 675 people “by far the greatest gathering of Indigenous people ever recorded in the colony.” (Ellender & Christianson, 2001:99-107). This gathering related to justice required by some people from the Loddon-Campaspe in relation to the murder of one of their own by Woiwurrung men. This was the last public exhibition of Aboriginal justice witnessed by Thomas in the Melbourne region.

Rucker’s Hill in Northcote is also frequently referred to several times in historical texts both as the location of the last corroboree in the Northcote area, which is recorded as having occurred in 1865 in the vicinity of the site of the Town Hall. This corroboree was recounted by residents of the time (Swift, 1928:41). Swift (1928:13-4) also recounts that it was commonly believed that two chiefs of the Merri Tribe (Wurundjeri) were buried on Rucker’s Hill in what became the grounds of the Presbyterian Church in James Street. A mound of earth formerly marked the spot.

2.2 Migrating to seek opportunity

John Batman and the Port Phillip Association

In June 1835 John Batman sailed across Bass Strait from Van Diemen’s Land (Tasmania) looking for new grazing land. After traversing a large area to the north and west of what is now Melbourne, Batman met with the group of Kulin as described above, and exchanged blankets, knives and other goods, and a promise of similar payments annually, for what he thought was the right to own 600,000 acres of land. The transaction took place near a tree “alongside of a beautiful stream of water” (John Batman’s Diary, cited in Harcourt, 2001:155).

The area was subsequently divided between the fifteen members of the Port Phillip Association, a syndicate formed in the hope of making a fortune from this newly claimed grazing land. However, Governor Bourke of New South Wales soon ruled the sale illegal and claimed the land for the British Crown. Nevertheless, Batman’s “treaty” was a catalyst for the

rush of immigrants from Van Diemen's Land, the proclamation of the Port Phillip settlement in September 1835 and the beginnings of Melbourne town.

The land Batman "purchased" included the present City of Darebin, and all of Melbourne's northern suburbs. The location of the site on which Batman's treaty was signed has been the subject of considerable discussion by historians for over a century. There are several different competing locations, including the banks of the Plenty River near Eltham, the junction of Merri and Edgars Creek, just outside Darebin's boundaries, Edgar's Creek at Thomastown, and the banks of the Merri Creek in Westgarth. The last possible site is in Darebin.

In his recent book, *Southern Invasion Northern Conquest* (2001), local historian Rex Harcourt puts a case for the Merri Creek site. Harcourt suggests that the transaction took place on the creek flat at West Bend, an area just to the north of Rushall Station near the southern end of Mc Lachlan Street. It was a favoured camping area, corroboree ground and battle ground. This site has a long tradition of folk-lore connecting it with Batman's treaty, and was even marked with a rockery and statue of Batman in a property called "Terracedale", as shown on a 1904 MMBW plan. There was a plaque on the bank of the Creek, but the plaque has been removed. A relic commemorating this story has been found in the form of a piece of red gum with a piece of flint-stone attached to a base, made in the 1950s. The wood is believed to have been part of an old tree on the site - possibly the tree referred to in Batman's diary - and the stone is similar to stone remaining on the site (Harcourt, 2001:195-201). This relic commemorates the story of the treaty and the belief that it occurred in Westgarth, however it is not conclusive evidence that the event took place on the site in question. It is unlikely that such evidence will ever be found. Nevertheless Westgarth's possible place in the history of Melbourne's founding is noted. The Jaga Jaga brothers, the headmen who agreed to Batman's treaty, are commemorated in the name given to the parish that encompasses Darebin - Jika Jika.

Early European settlers

The settlers who did come flocking to Port Phillip in the 1830s, firstly from Van Diemen's Land and then overland from Sydney and the Riverina were overwhelmingly of British and Irish origin, although many, like Batman, were colonial born. From 1839 migrant ships began to bring people directly from Britain to populate the new Port Phillip District (Broome, 2001:48). The people who came to Darebin in the early years included people with capital, who hoped to make their fortune buying and selling land. Few of them actually settled in the area. They will be discussed in more detail in the section Speculators below.

German-born William Rucker was perhaps typical of the European immigrants who dreamed of making their fortunes in the colonies. He established a business in Hobart, before moving to Melbourne in 1837, where he opened a store and one of Melbourne's first banks. Rucker bought extensive areas of land, including two prime allotments at the second land sale in the study area in 1840. Having prospered from his enterprises, Rucker built a large house in what is now Bayview Street Northcote in 1841. However, due to an unfortunate choice of business partner, Rucker became insolvent two years later. Although his house, *Sunnyside*, has long been demolished, his name endures in the geographic landmark known as Rucker's Hill.

Hugh Childers came to Port Phillip with family connections but little wealth, to become Auditor-General and Collector of Customs in the 1850s. He resided in Rucker's house for a time. Andrew Clarke, an army captain who briefly ran sheep at Fairfield, became Surveyor-General in 1853. He is remembered in the name of a street. Both Childers and Clarke were members of Victoria's first responsible government. However, most of the colonial immigrants were seeking more modest opportunities.

Forster has observed that most of the early immigrants who settled in Preston were "little men".

The members of both old and new establishments who first purchased Preston land, the soldiers, administrators, merchants and speculators, left little mark on the area... It was left to men who arrived in the colony almost penniless, but who obtained a little capital on the goldfields, in

carrying or in hired labour, and to some who arrived here with moderate capital, to set the pattern of small individually-owned farms and gardens that was to be noticed in Preston in the 1850s and 1860s ... (Forster, 1968:32).

Irishtown was an early name for Preston, indicating the origins of some of its early settlers, in particular Samuel Jeffrey, a farm labourer and bounty immigrant from County Tyrone, who was Preston's first permanent farmer. The Gowerville area was also popular with Irish immigrants (Forster, 1968: 20-1, 28-9).

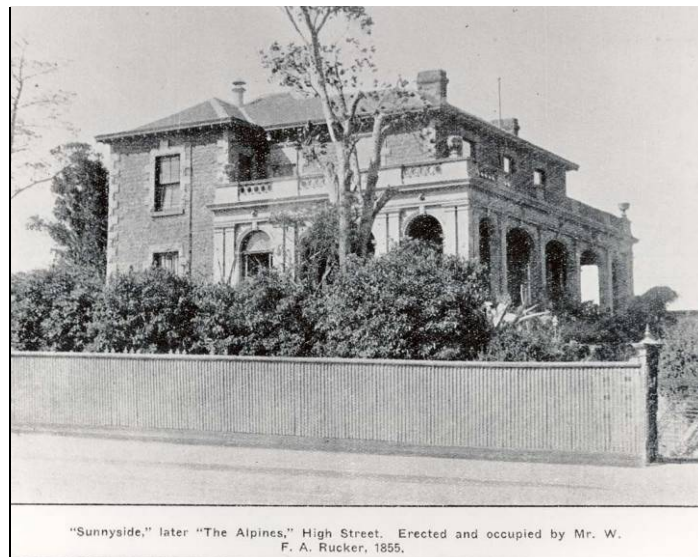
Another group of immigrants in Preston was a party of Particular Baptists from Sussex in England. Experiencing the difficult economic times of the 1840s, and probably the discrimination suffered by nonconformists at the time, they migrated in 1849, with the intention of forming a little Particular Baptist colony. Two of them, James Tyler and Edward Wood, bought land in Preston, and several other families settled around them. In 1851 a group of Preston Particular Baptists went to the Ballarat goldfields, where they experienced moderate success. They returned to Preston where they bought more land, set up small farms and other enterprises and built a church which has not survived. Edward Wood opened a store on the corner of High and Wood Streets. Michael Emery established St John's pottery in Wood Street (Forster, 1968:22-5).

Another early immigrant community was a group of German farmers who settled in Separation Street. They ran an annual New Year's picnic and established a small cemetery in the area known as Cawdortown (Lemon, 1983:39-49, 50, 63).

Figure 4

William Rucker residence, 'Sunnyside' 1855.

[DHE, ID 576]



Chinese market gardeners

In the 1880s some Cawdortown land previously farmed by the German settlers was taken over by Chinese market gardeners. W. Tong had several acres between Separation and Mitchell Streets opposite the little cemetery. There were Chinese gardens on the Darebin Creek flats near the Darebin Road bridge at Thornbury (Watson, 1974:32). Large areas of the Merri Creek flats between Bell Street and Arthurton Road were also taken up with Chinese market gardens into the 1920s and '30s, and some remained near Anderson Street in the 1950s. The swampy land between Scotia and Etnam Streets Preston was also cultivated by Chinese gardeners prior to the 1920s, and Yon Foon owned a brick house in Etnam Street (Yong, 2003:90-95).

Although no information about the arrival of these early Chinese in the study area is available, they were very likely former miners who turned to growing vegetables after the gold ran out. Prevailing attitudes in both European and Chinese cultures at the time kept the Chinese apart from Australian society. They tended to live in separate communities and congregate in a few industries, such as market gardening. Moving from the goldfields they found suitable land

close to city centres where they had markets for their produce (Jupp, 1988:304-5). The Merri Creek flats were ideal. Although the gold generation of immigrants were overwhelmingly male, some were able to bring wives to Australia and a few married European women and raised families (Yong, 2003:8). Northcote resident Gordon Murphy remembers that women as well as men worked in the Merri Creek gardens. He remembers the Lee family, a second generation Chinese Australian family, who also ran a greengrocer's shop in Northcote (Yong, 2003:94). Mrs Harris, who grew up in Ivanhoe in the 1930s remembers that the Chinese working the Darebin Creek flats were single men (Watson, 1974:33). Lexie Luly remembers seeing the gardeners on the west bank of the Merri Creek watering their vegetables with watering cans carried on long poles across their shoulders (personal communication 2007)

Much of the Merri Creek area formerly cultivated by Chinese gardeners is now public park, including Northcote Golf Links.

Twentieth century Aboriginal community

From the 1920s onwards, an Aboriginal population began migrate to Melbourne in search of opportunities, driven by closure and mismanagement of country reserves and also by the 1930s Depression and the Second World War. Whilst Fitzroy, where rents were cheap, was the focus of this migration, Aboriginal people settled in many other suburbs. Migration to Fitzroy generally originated in three areas, with an initial migration from the Cummeragunga area in New South Wales followed by others from Framlingham and Gippsland. At the same time, Wurundjeri people were migrating back to Melbourne from Coranderk and settling in areas such as North Melbourne and the Western suburbs. (Broome, 2005:287).

In 1927 a young Yorta Yorta man from Cummeragunja mission moved to Melbourne looking for opportunities as an Australian Rules footballer. The footballer, Doug Nicholls, was rejected by the Carlton Football Club, but recruited by the Northcote Club, where he was an immediate success. He was employed as a labourer by the Northcote Council, and played for Northcote for five years, before joining the Fitzroy team in 1932. Following a religious conversion at the Northcote Church of Christ, Nicholls was ordained a Pastor, and ministered to the Aboriginal community in Fitzroy.

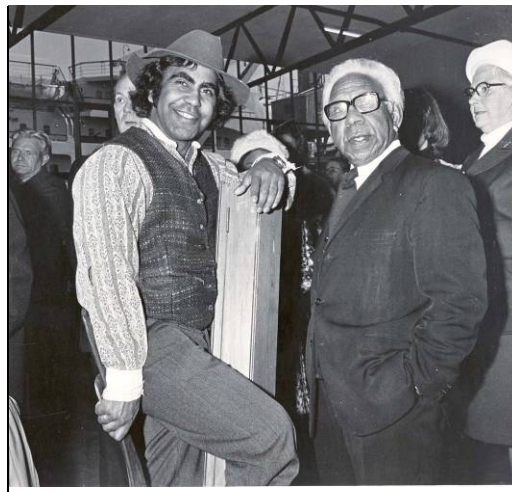
In 1947, Nicholls was appointed curator of Northcote Park, where he resided in a house that came with the job. Nicholls and his wife Gladys opened their home to young Aborigines moving to Melbourne. As the need for accommodation grew, the Nicholls were instrumental in establishing a girls' hostel in the former Anglican vicarage in Cunningham Street, opened 1958, and a boys' hostel in the same street in 1962. The Douglas Nicholls Centre was built next to the girls' hostel in 1967.

Nicholls received the support of the Northcote Council in his work amongst Aboriginal people (Lemon, 1983:271-2).

Figure 5

Pastor (Sir) Douglas Nicholls (right), 1976

[DHE: ID 723]



Nicholls became involved in the growing Aboriginal social justice movement, firstly in the Australian Aborigines League, and later with the Aborigines Advancement League (Lemon, 1983:270-1), and was thus influential in Northcote becoming a centre of Aboriginal activism in the 1950s (see section *Aboriginal Self Determination*, in Chapter 6 for the story of the AAL). By then Aboriginal people had begun moving out from Fitzroy, some to the new Housing Commission estates in Preston and Reservoir (Broome, 2005:299) and Darebin became home to one of the largest Aboriginal communities in Victoria. In 2007, one in 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians lives in Darebin. (www.darebin.vic.gov.au).

Nicholls was knighted in 1972 and appointed Governor of South Australia in 1976-77. On their retirement, Sir Doug and Lady Nicholls returned to live in Northcote.

A number of community initiatives have been established by and for Aboriginal people, including the Aboriginal Health Service in High Street Northcote. They provided Brother/sister service for issues of mental health and family health, in Nicholson St, Fitzroy. Ngala, a sobering up service in Separation Street, was also an off-shoot of the Aboriginal Health Service. Maya Healing Centre in Rossmoyne Street Thornbury was initiated by Reg Blow around 2002. The Centre's functions include a drop-in centre, facilities, lunches, women's centre. This is a stand-alone initiative for those who need to reconnect with their community.

Another expression of local Aboriginal community is the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in St George's Road Thornbury. The Ministry was inspired by Pope Paul VI's visit to Australia in 1970. Indigenous Radio Station 3KND was established in Plenty Road Preston, later moved to Merri Street.

Post Second World War immigrants

At the end of the Second World War, the population of Darebin was, apart from the small groups noted above, almost entirely of British or Irish origin. This was to change dramatically as Australia embarked on its massive post-war immigration program. In 2007, over 35% of Darebin's residents were born overseas (www.darebin.vic.gov.au) and together with their Australian-born children they have made Darebin a suburb of rich cultural diversity.

From 1952 to 1971, the Department of Immigration ran a migrant hostel in Nissen huts on the present site of Northland Shopping Centre. Many of the residents moved out to settle in the study area. Northcote's factories and cheap housing attracted immigrants first. Preston, being further out and less developed, took a little longer to attract immigrants, however the public housing provided by the Housing Commission of Victoria became a major drawcard for newly arrived immigrants.

By 1981, more than one quarter of Preston's population and almost one third of Northcote's population were born overseas in places other than Britain and Ireland. The largest ethnic groups represented were the Italians followed by the Greeks, many of whom moved out from the inner suburbs, where they stayed after arriving in Australia. Achille and Rosa Di Guglielmo purchased their first house in Abbotsford in 1956. Rosa found work at Ensign Drycleaners in Croxton. In 1959, they moved into a newly built brick veneer house in Merrilands. It was the second house in their street (www.decc.org.au). Reservoir now has one of the largest Italian communities in Australia.

They changed the landscape of the Merrilands estate with concrete, brick veneer homes and mini farms in their backyards with chooks, fruit and vegetable gardens, homemade vino, salsa, pasta e salsicce. They recycled everything before it was fashionable. The agrarian foods they ate and still prepare today are now part of our gourmet food culture (www.decc.org.au).

The changes these groups brought to Darebin were also manifested in the area's shops, restaurants, churches and other community institutions. The Little Sisters of the Poor buildings in St George's Road became a Greek Orthodox monastery. The Northcote Theatre became the Italia Hall reception centre in the 1960s and the Westgarth Theatre began showing Greek films in the 1970s.

Darebin also has a significant Macedonian population, a group with a strong cultural identity, coming mostly from northern Greece and Vardar Macedonia in the former Yugoslavia (the area now known as the Macedonian Republic). One of the founders of Darebin's Macedonian community was Risto Altin, who came to Australia in 1937 and settled in East Preston in 1949, where he ran a fish and chip shop and various other businesses. Macedonians began migrating to Australia in large numbers in the 1950s and 60s and many settled in Melbourne's northern suburbs. The presence of a strong Macedonian community in Darebin is demonstrated in a number of churches, including the Macedonian - Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church in Northcote; the Preston Makedonia Soccer Club (now Preston Lions), the Macedonian Student Association founded at La Trobe University in the 1970s and the Makedonia Social Club, opened in Broadhurst Avenue Reservoir in 1980. The Macedonian language is the sixth most spoken language in Darebin. In the 1980s Reservoir High School began teaching the Macedonian language (Jupp, 1988:688-90; www.decc.org.au).

Darebin has a significant Muslim population, mostly immigrant families from the Middle East. In 2001 Reservoir had Melbourne's second largest Muslim population and Preston also has a strong Muslim presence. Each of these areas has a mosque. Amongst the most recent Muslim immigrants from the Middle East are a group of Kurdish refugees from Iraq, who have set up the Iraqi Kurdish Association in Preston. (*Encyclopedia of Melbourne*: 369, 372-2)

Amongst the immigrants from the Middle East are Assyrians who, since the 1960s, have left their homelands of Iraq, Syria and Lebanon to escape the civil and religious unrest. The Assyrians are a distinct group from the Arabs, and are mostly Christian. Their presence in Darebin is demonstrated by the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church in Broadhurst Avenue Reservoir (Jupp, 1988:275-6).

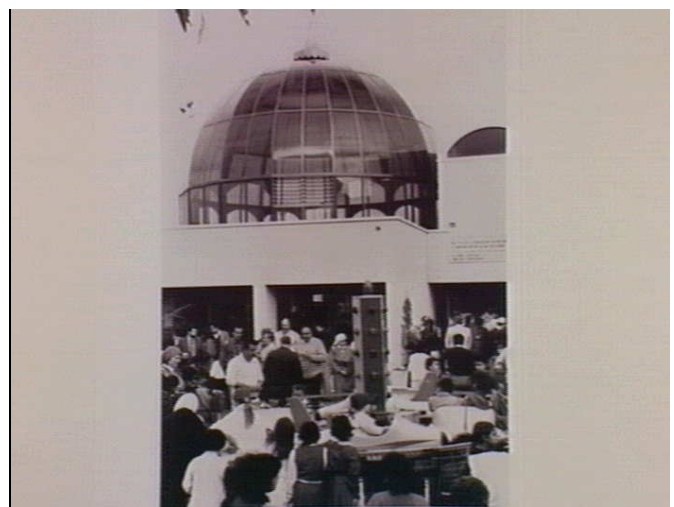
Since the 1980s, a strong community of newly arrived Chinese immigrants, many of them professional people, has been established in Darebin, particularly at the Northcote end. In 1995, they formed the Darebin Subcommittee of the North Eastern Melbourne Chinese Association (NEMCA) which had formed at Mill Park in 1994. The Association provides cultural activities for the Chinese community in the North East region, which includes the Cities of Darebin and Whittlesea and promotes Chinese culture in the community. Some of the Association's activities are held in the Preston Neighbourhood House.

Other recently arrived groups are from Sri Lanka, India, Egypt and the Philippines. The Northern Migrant Resource Centre opened its main office at 251 High Street Preston to assist newly arrived immigrants, particularly refugees (www.mrcne.org.au).

Figure 6

*The celebration of Id El Fitr at
Preston Mosque, 1987*

[State Library of Victoria, AN
H92.250/1338, INb34712]



2.3 Promoting settlement

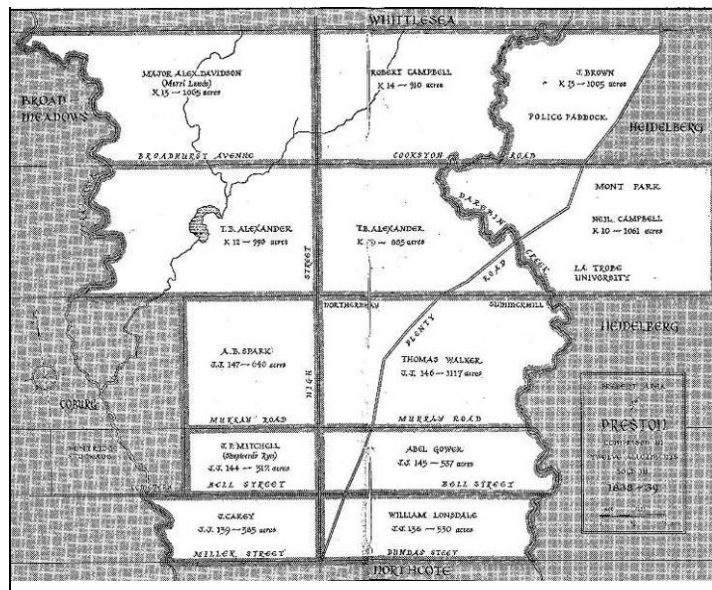
Crown land sales 1838-40

As noted above, Batman's 'purchase' of land from the Kulin was ruled illegal, and the colonial government in Sydney took control of the Port Phillip District and the village that was to become Melbourne. The first sales of Melbourne's township blocks took place in 1837. Sales of the country lands to Melbourne's north commenced in 1838, with one of the first being the large allotments of around 800 to 1000 acres in the Parish of Keelbundora. On 12 September the six large allotments - 10 to 15 Parish of Keelbundora - which comprise the northern end of the study area, were auctioned. The remainder of the study area is in the Parish of Jika Jika, where land sales took place in 1839 and 1840. The Jika Jika allotments ranged in size from around 1000 acres at the northern end of the parish (today's Northernhay Road) down to 92 acres in the south east (today's Alphington and Fairfield). By June 1840, all of the land in the study area had been sold (McIlroy, 1937 & 1939).

Figure 7

Preston land sales allotment map, 1838-39

[Forster, 1968:10]



Speculators and land boomers

Few of the first land buyers settled on their blocks, most were speculators looking for a quick profit by subdividing and selling their allotments. The purchasers included William Lonsdale the Police Magistrate sent to administer the Port Phillip District. Within a few months Lonsdale resold his allotment 138 Parish of Jika Jika for around five times his original outlay (Forster, 1968:9). Other purchasers, particularly in the northern reaches of the area, were not able to make a quick profit and held onto their land, leasing it out to farmers for many years. Major Alexander Davidson, who bought allotment 13 Keelbundora, tried to subdivide and sell his land, but it remained virtually intact and farmed by tenants into the twentieth century. Some purchasers, such as Abel Gower, a London investor who probably never saw his land, and George Urquhart are remembered by street names in Preston and Northcote respectively. By 1843, Melbourne's first land boom had ended and many speculators were left with land they could not sell. As noted earlier in this chapter Rucker, who had bought more land adjoining his first two blocks, was unable to trade his way out of his financial difficulties when the market collapsed.

Michael Pender was one of the few original grantees who remained to farm his allotment 137 Jika Jika, just south of Dundas Street. He built a homestead on the Darebin Creek in the early 1840s, and called his property Pender's Grove. However much of the land, especially the larger blocks in the north were used for grazing or occupied by tenant farmers leaving the landscape sparsely settled for decades.

The boom that accompanied Victoria’s gold rushes in the early 1850s brought new optimism and a demand for farm land close to Melbourne. Much of the Preston district was occupied for farming. Thomas Goodwin, who purchased Allotment 139 Parish of Jika Jika from the original grantee in the early 1840s, subdivided most of his 385 acres into 5 acre farms and more than quadrupled his original outlay. He built his 17 room house, *Oakover Hall*, designed by architect John Gill in 1857 (Carroll, 1985:214; Ward, 2000: db 10). Some of the landholders in the Northcote area made speculative subdivisions, but the blocks were too small for farming and too far from Melbourne for urban settlement. In 1853 the township reserve on the Merri Creek in the south of the area was surveyed for sale as the Northcote Township, but again, most of the purchasers were speculators and only a few houses were built prior to the 1880s. The area is now known as Westgarth.

Figure 8

Plan of Northcote, 1855, showing the area later known as ‘Lower Northcote’ and now Westgarth

[Darebin City Council]



During the 1870 and 80s, Melbourne experienced a period of unprecedented prosperity, growth and development, known as the land boom. The urban boundaries were pushed out as people sharing in the general prosperity sought new residential lands in which to build homes. Darebin had many acres of vacant land, held, as we have seen, by speculators waiting for the right time to sell, however, the area was disadvantaged by a lack of good transport facilities. Even so, the boom took hold in Darebin, where many estates were subdivided and offered for sale, using creative marketing techniques. In 1885 the St George’s Park Estate, between Charles and Union Streets Northcote, was advertised showing a yet to be built bridge across the Merri Creek at St George’s Road. The bridge had been proposed by a group of land-

holders formed in 1884, the Fitzroy, Northcote and St George's Road League. The League raised the funds to purchase private land needed for a new road into the area. They lobbied the Government and the Northcote and Fitzroy Councils to build the bridge and construct St George's Road. The promise of such road access encouraged subdivisions between St George's Road and High Street as far as Thornbury over the following few years.

Figure 9

c.1885 plans for boom era subdivision, St George's Park

[Lemon, 1983:91]



(La Trobe Library)

One of Darebin's most active boom-time land agents was Charles Henry James, who bought up large tracts of land in Fairfield, Alphington and Thornbury. His Fulham Grange and Fairfield Park estates straddled Heidelberg Road, stretching down to the Yarra River. James promoted the Strathallan estate, three miles beyond the Heidelberg rail terminus, on the promise that the railway would soon be extended to Eltham. In fact, the railway did not reach Eltham until 1902. James started the Dominion Bank to finance his dealings and built the Empire Buildings in Collins Street Melbourne as the headquarters of his empire. He also built the Toorak mansion, *Illawarra*, as his home, just before his empire collapsed in 1891 (Cannon, 1972:20).

Further out, developers were also busy. A subdivision plan was drawn up for Pender's Grove, but most of the land remained unsold. Only one purchaser, Frederick Harris, built on his allotment. His boom-style mansion *Barunah*, still stands on the corner of Dundas and Newcastle Streets. Pender's Grove had been acquired by Thomas Bent, one of Victoria's largest land speculators, and later Premier of Victoria. Local land owners and businessmen, such as George and James Story of Preston, turned to land speculation, with varying degrees of success. Some sales were made in the more accessible parts of Preston, but most of Preston was too distant and inaccessible for suburban settlers. Other prominent 'land boomers' such as the firm Munro and Baillieu had dealings in the area. Along with another infamous land boomer B.J. Fink, they were involved with the Heart of Preston Estate Company, which in 1888 subdivided land bounded by High and Gower Streets, Murray and Plenty Roads, excluding the town hall precinct. They sold about half of the allotments before the company collapsed in 1893.

All over Melbourne land companies were floated to buy land for quick resale at large profits, resulting in fortunes being made and lost. As land prices spiralled, banks and building societies over-reached their lending capacities and borrowers borrowed beyond their capacity to repay. Eventually, in December 1891 the whole structure began to collapse. People lost their savings, building stopped and housing estates remained vacant. The collapse resulted in a disastrous

depression that brought unemployment and misery to many thousands, and halted further development for a decade or more.

Closer settlement

Economic recovery came gradually to the study area, but by the turn of the century the beginnings of a revival were apparent. As transport services began to improve and industry recovered, some 1880s subdivisions began to sell, and a few new ones were developed. A new subdivision of this period was Plant's Paddock at Westgarth, subdivided by the Railway Department in 1903. The Railways agreed to fund the cost of street making on the estate and offered free rail passes to purchasers of the land (Lemon, 1983:141-2).

During the 1890s depression the Victorian government attempted to settle more people on the land by acquiring large estates and breaking them up into small farms for sale to people of limited means. The *Closer Settlement Act* 1904 established the Closer Settlement Board, with the power to acquire freehold land and subdivide it for sale to genuine settlers, thus cutting out speculators. Occupation was by 31½ year lease, with a £50 deposit, and a requirement to reside on the property. A Crown Grant could be issued after 12 years on full payment of the balance of purchase money. From 1906 the Board began creating smaller allotments to enable workers to supplement their wages by cultivating their own land. These consisted of Agricultural Labourers Allotments of a few acres, in the vicinity of larger holdings where the workers could be employed. The Board also aimed to settle low paid urban workers in their own homes, by making available Workmen's Homes Allotments to men engaged in manual or clerical work and not owning land in Victoria. Lessees were required to build a house valued at £50 (*Victorian Year Book 1913*: 632).

In 1906 the Closer Settlement Board purchased 233 acres of the Pender's Grove Estate and subdivided it into quarter acre Workmen's Homes Allotments, and Agricultural Labourers' Allotments of four and five acres, the latter blocks being in the area near the Darebin Creek. Northcote Council insisted that the Board pay for street construction and set aside an area for a park. By 1913, 140 Workmen's Homes Allotments and 37 Agricultural Labourers Allotments had been leased (*Victorian Year Book 1913*:632; Lemon, 1983:149). The two kinds of closer settlement allotments at Pender's Grove demonstrate Thornbury's urban rural interface at the time, where urban development was being encouraged in the more settled central area close to High Street, while the creek flats were still used for agriculture. However by the 1920s, only a few houses had been built in the area west of Victoria Road and the eastern part of the estate was open paddocks (Map drawn by Roy Keeble). Closer Settlement was not particularly successful in Darebin.

Further out a similar Closer Settlement Scheme at Bundoora and Thomastown (just outside the study area) is commemorated in the name of Settlement Road (Kenna, 1988:162).

2.4 Housing assistance schemes in the twentieth century

Housing Commission of Victoria estates

The Housing Commission of Victoria was established to improve the housing conditions of people living in poverty in the inner suburbs. Soon after it was constituted on 1 March 1938, the Commission embarked in a program of 'slum reclamation' and house construction. Although the vast majority of the Commission's work was carried out after the Second World War, some of its earliest estates were developed in the study area in the early 1940s.

Whilst 'slum reclamation' focussed on the inner suburbs such as Collingwood and Fitzroy, the residents displaced by 'slum clearance' needed to be re-housed. The Commission sought land in the outer suburbs 'connected by direct transport methods to areas in which reclamation operations will be carried out', with the intention of moving people from the inner suburban slums to new houses. The northern suburbs, where land was cheap and where local councils were keen for development, seemed ideal. Soon after the Commission was constituted, the

Preston Council, had written to the Commissioners 'bringing under notice suitable areas for housing', for 'workers in the expanding industries'.

The Commission's first contracts were let for the construction of houses in three estates in Preston - the Bell-Street Estate (Huttonham), Oakover-Road Estate and the Bailey-Avenue Estate - as well as estates in Brunswick and Fisherman's Bend. In March 1939 the Commission purchased 10 acres for the Bell-Street Estate. This was also known as the 'Huttonham' Estate as it was close to the Hutton's factory, a potential employer of the breadwinners of the families who would occupy the 84 houses planned. Building on the other estates in Preston - Murray-Road, David-Street, Raglan-Street and May-Street - soon followed as a part of the Commission's initiative to clear 1,178 houses identified by the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board in the inner suburbs before building activity was curtailed by wartime demands on resources. (Howe, 1983:40; Housing Commission of Victoria 2nd Annual Report). The Commission also purchased a small site off Basting Street Northcote, where it built a small estate in the early 1940s creating what is now Newmarket Street (Lemon, 1983:235, 256).

Figure 10

*Housing Commission of Victoria estate,
Newmarket Street, Northcote, 1949*

Photographer: Lyle Fowler

[State Library of Victoria, An H92.20/2723,
IN a39340]



These estates were amongst the first constructed by the Commission and were being developed at the same time as estates in Brunswick and Fisherman's Bend (Howe, 1983:40). Whilst the Fisherman's Bend estate remained the largest single venture, the Preston and Northcote estates accommodated a total of 416 new houses, being slightly more than the 412 at Fisherman's Bend.

The Commission preferred larger areas, but when it attempted to buy the old racecourse at Croxton Park it met with the opposition of property developers and local residents concerned that a Housing Commission estate would lower property values (Lemon, 1983:236). The Commission had more success with the Newlands Estate built in 1943-1953 at the western boundary of the former City of Preston. Newlands was one of the first large-scale estates developed by the Housing Commission as a precursor to the inner suburban high rise estates of the 1960s. It is one of the most extensive estates based on low to medium density housing promoted by the British and American garden suburb and new town theorists. One of the strongest elements of the scheme was the sense of community focus created by the shopping centre and primary school.

The Commission's activities were greatly accelerated after the war to meet housing shortages and to accommodate the huge influx of European immigrants. Again the northern suburbs were its major focus. Undeveloped areas of Darebin Creek valley were ideal and Housing Commission estates were built on both sides, including the Olympic Village in West Heidelberg (outside the study area) Large estates of houses and flats were built at Reservoir and East Preston, and Merrilands, accommodating 10,000 people by 1966 (Carroll & Rule, 1985:180) Although the Commission had plans to develop land further south along the Darebin valley in Northcote, for various reasons the plans were abandoned. The Housing

Commission did build a number of apartment blocks in other parts of Northcote, including a “slum reclamation” area between Walker Street, High Street and Merri Creek, and the Frank Wilkes Court for elderly tenants beside Northcote Park (Lemon, 1983:257, 266).

War Service Homes

After the First World War, due to the shortage of housing, the Commonwealth Government stepped in to assist returned soldiers and their families to buy affordable houses, through the War Service Homes Commission, established in 1919. War Service Homes were intended by the Government as “the counterpoint to the land settlement portion of the repatriation policy” (‘WSH Jubilee’, p.1), a policy commonly known as soldier settlement. Most of the assistance for War Service Homes was given through low interest rate loans, but the Commission also built houses (VYB 1973, p.360). Initially the Commission intended to buy large tracts of land and contract builders to erect the houses, however due to difficulty engaging contractors and finding sufficient material cheaply, the Commission was the builder for its first two years of operations. (‘WSH Jubilee’, p.4-7).

Australia’s first War Service Homes were completed in the Sydney suburb of Canterbury in September 1919 and Victoria’s first War Service Homes were constructed soon after in Preston (‘WSH Jubilee’, p.5). According to a report in the *Preston Leader* (11 October 1919), these were 60 houses on the Clifton Estate, just south of Bell Station. This area included Gertrude, Esther and Adeline Streets. The bricks used were from the nearby Clifton Brickworks, and the stone for the foundations came from the municipal quarry. These houses were commenced late in 1919 and were occupied in 1920 (Rate Books). Other War Service Homes were constructed in Arthur, Bruce and Herbert Streets, Preston in the early 1920s. Later estates were at Dwyer Avenue, West Preston and Leamington Street, Reservoir (Jones, 1994:106).

State Bank houses

The State Bank of Victoria was established by 1912 when the Savings Banks Act (No.2365) provided for all Banks then operating under the Savings Banks Acts to be collectively named The State Savings Bank of Victoria. Services offered by the Bank included savings bank facilities, special loans to discharged soldiers (from 1917), building homes for people of small means (from 1920s), including the Garden City estate at Fisherman’s Bend and credit foncier facilities including mortgage loans and sale of debentures. The credit foncier scheme was one of the first of many introduced in Australia over the first decades of the twentieth century and became known colloquially as the ‘cheap money’ scheme. By the 1920s the success of the credit foncier scheme led to the Bank adding other loans on special conditions for lower income workers and returned servicemen (Murray & White, 1992:207-17).

A history of the Bank notes that:

“One of the results of the new thrust into housing was that, to get the best combination of low prices and high standards, the Bank effectively became a builder in its own right, issuing standard designs and selecting building contractors for many of the houses it financed. A ‘Bank home’ became an affordable goal, a symbol of achievement and recognition that the house was solidly built. Such was the enthusiasm of Victorian workers for Bank-financed and built homes that by the mid-1920s the Bank was the largest home builder in Victoria.” (Murray & White, 1992:207-17)

Most State Bank homes were built in the metropolitan area, and few were built in groups. It is thought that up to 7,500 were built, principally between 1921-30, then less until 1939. All except 300 were in Melbourne and these mostly in the ring of suburbs: Brunswick, Coburg, Preston, Hawthorn, Kew, Ivanhoe, Heidelberg, Box Hill, Camberwell, Malvern, Oakleigh and Brighton (Murray & White, 1992:207-17).

Tannery worker Ralph Underhill, and his fiancée Ruby bought a block of land in Preston in the 1930s:

We went to the State Savings Bank and they had a book with about seven different types of home in it. ... We were hoping we might be able to get a brick veneer, however they advised us (in a nice sort of way) that we didn't earn enough, so we thought we'd better stick to a wooden home. They wouldn't give you the money if you didn't stick to the rules. (Jones, 1994:107)

Heritage

Some examples of places relating to *Peopling Darebin* are:

Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants, Making contact and Maintaining traditional life after European settlement

Rucker's Hill

Possible site of Batman's Treaty, Merri Creek, Westgarth

There are also 67 registered Aboriginal places including scarred trees, stone artefact scatters, quarries and earth features.

Migrating to seek opportunity

Sites of Chinese market gardens on banks of Merri Creek

Cawdortown (German) Cemetery, Separation Street. Northcote

Social clubs - Makedonian Social Club, 231 Broadhurst Street, Reservoir, Fogolar Furlan Club, Thornbury

Places of worship – Macedonian-Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church, Bayview Street, Northcote, Preston Mosque, Cramer Street, Preston, Linh Son Buddhist Temple, Reservoir (See also Chapter 7 *Community and Culture*)

Greek Orthodox Monastery (Former Little Sisters of the Poor), St Georges Road, Northcote

Gladys Nicholls Hostel and Doug Nicholls Hostel, Cunningham Street, Westgarth

Promoting settlement

Lower Northcote Township, now Westgarth (HO160 and HO161)

Pre-1870s houses that date from the era of the first township land sales such as 46 Bastings Street, Northcote (HO9) and *Beaumont*, 11 Bastings Street, Northcote (within HO97precinct)

Boom time subdivisions – examples include St George's Park Estate (1885 – successful, now included within HO100, HO163 and HO161) and Pender's Grove (1887 - unsuccessful, which was later an unsuccessful Closer Settlement estate)

Boom time mansions – examples include *Oakover Hall*, 12 Stafford Street, Preston (HO76), *Pleasant View*, 1-5 Pleasant View Drive, Preston (HO92), and *Barunah*, 82 Dundas Street (corner Newcastle Street), Thornbury (HO29)

Many early settlers are remembered in place and street names such as Rucker's Hill, Penders Street

Housing assistance schemes in the twentieth century

Housing Commission of Victoria estates - Newmarket Street, Northcote (HO173), Newlands Estate, Elizabeth Street, Preston (HO95), early estates in Bailey Avenue and Oakover Road (Kenwood Court), Preston and later estates such as West Preston Reservoir

WSHC estates – Bell Railway estate (HO170), also houses in Arthur, Bruce and Herbert streets in Preston

3 TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

Roads and transport services were crucial to the suburban development of the area, and transport routes influenced patterns of settlement. Indeed, the lack of efficient services was partly responsible for the delayed development of parts of Darebin. Train services, when they arrived in the late nineteenth century, followed a circuitous route until the early twentieth century. Darebin has seen each era of tram technology from horse-drawn to electric, and maintained Melbourne's last cable tram route. This theme is closely connected to the theme of *Building Suburban Darebin*, which is explored in Chapter 5 as the building of more efficient networks supported the development of Darebin, particularly during the 1920s boom. Darebin's location between two creeks means that bridges are also a vital part of its transport links.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	4.4 Historic travelling routes
AHT	3.8 Moving goods and people; 5 Working

History

3.1 Establishing road routes

Developing main roads

As Kenna notes, the earliest tracks through the area were made through the bush by the indigenous people (Kenna, 1988:61).

The Heidelberg district to the north-east of the study area, with its fertile river flats and pleasant mountain views, attracted wealthy settlers in the 1830s, necessitating a road between Melbourne and their estates. The track to these country estates was a busy road by 1841 when Heidelberg landowners formed the Heidelberg Road Trust to raise funds for road making and maintenance. The Trust put a toll gate on the Heidelberg side of the Merri Creek and formed Victoria's first section of macadamised¹² road between the Merri and Darebin Creeks. This section of Heidelberg Road now forms the southern boundary of the study area. Before the formation of the Trust, Heidelberg residents had subscribed to the cost of the first bridge over the Darebin Creek (Garden, 1973:53-61).

Plenty Road was an early stock route for bringing sheep and cattle from the north to Melbourne. It followed the Plenty River southwards, then westwards into the study area, fording the Darebin Creek to join up with what is now High Street. This route from its junction at the Heidelberg Road was known as Upper Plenty Road as it served the important agricultural district of the Plenty. The northern section of High Street, from the Plenty Road Junction was originally known as Epping Road, and was the main route to Kilmore (Lay, 2003:114-5).

St George's Road originated as the pipe track from the Yan Yean Reservoir. Construction of the Reservoir and pipe track commenced in 1853. The route was chosen to avoid Rucker's Hill on the Upper Plenty Road. To overcome the bad roads, or lack of roads in some places, 19 miles of tramway was built along the pipe track for the hauling of the pipes, but it was little better than the roads, and many horses were injured through plunging into the holes between the sleepers. A tubular girder bridge on bluestone piers carried the pipeline across the Merri

¹² Broken stone of even size bound with tar or bitumen, used for surfacing roads and paths.

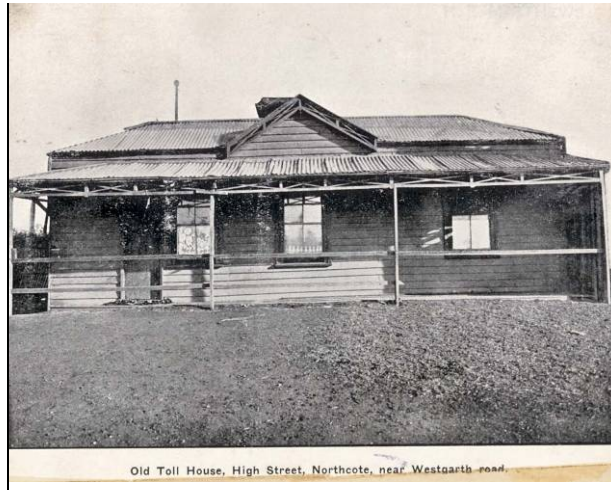
Creek (Dingle & Doyle, 2003). As noted in Chapter 2, it was not until the 1880s that the route became St George's Road.

The area's main north-south road, High Street, was part of Hoddle's 1842 north-south survey line through Melbourne, extending southwards along Hoddle Street and Punt Road. The surveyor's straight line ignored topography, crossing the over the top of Rucker's Hill, and the steep slope was very difficult for horses hauling large loads. The route was declared a main road from Alexandra Parade to Epping in 1854. In the same year the newly formed Central Road Board, which had the responsibility for main roads, constructed a cutting through the hill to ease the gradient. Toll gates were placed on the corner of High and Westgarth Streets and in Preston just north of Wood Street (Lemon, 1983:46, Forster, 1968: 27; Lay 2003:114).

Figure 11

Toll house, High Street - the gates were located near Westgarth Street

[DHE, ID 764]



Accommodating travellers

The earliest hotels were those serving the passing trade on the area's main roads. Just outside Darebin, the Darebin Bridge hotel opened in 1844 to cater for teamsters and other travellers. It is believed that another inn, the Traveller's Rest Hotel, later known as the Woodcock, was opened nearby in 1855, but it only lasted a couple of years. In 1860 Thomas Freeman opened the Alphington Hotel just west of the Darebin creek crossing. The licence was taken over by Joseph Foulkes in the following year. After his death, his widow Abigail ran the hotel until 1902. Hotel keeping was one of few respectable livings open to women in the nineteenth century, and it was common for widows, or deserted wives to take over their husbands' licences (Edge, 2004:6).

It was not uncommon for single women to be publicans. The Rose Shamrock and Thistle Hotel was opened in 1854 on Plenty Road by Charles Burrell. As the last hotel before South Morang, it was an important coach stop, and had eleven rooms. The opening of Charles Doolan's forge nearby in 1867 provided another service to travellers. From 1889, the hotel had a number of women publicans, including Miss Sarah Oliver, and Miss Jane Gordon. Although the Rose Shamrock and Thistle has been rebuilt, the original plan of two gables has been retained (Edge, 2004:50).

Figure 12 *Rose Shamrock and Thistle Hotel, Preston, c1900.*
[DHE, ID 349]



3.2 Travelling by train

Although train services were established in other parts of suburban Melbourne as early as the 1850s and extended to suburbs further out during the following decades, Darebin and other northern suburbs waited much longer for an efficient service. The lack of an efficient service retarded development at first, but the eventual construction of a direct route to the city and the electrification of the network by the 1920s played an important role in the development boom that swept much of Darebin during the inter-war period.

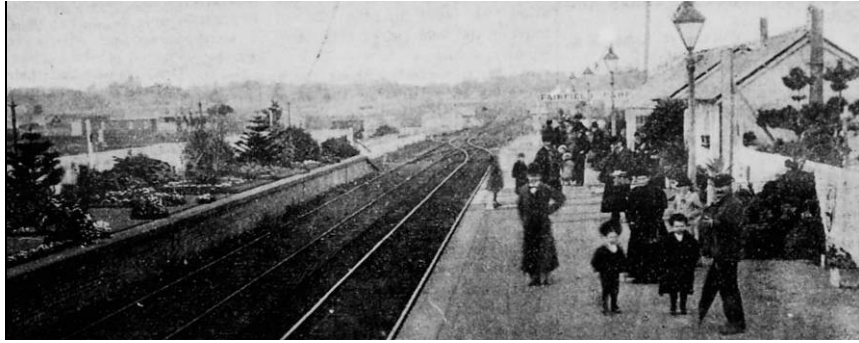
Establishing the railway network

The land boom was accompanied by a grand government plan to extend Victoria's railway network, authorised by a series of *Railway Construction Acts* in the 1880s, nicknamed the 'Octopus Act'. Although some of the new railways were successful, others were unjustified and uneconomic. The most notorious of these was the Outer Circle Line, first proposed in the 1870s, to connect the Gippsland line from Oakleigh with Melbourne by circling the eastern suburbs and sweeping across the north to connect with Spencer Street. The proposal was strongly supported by the northern municipalities including Heidelberg, Northcote and Brunswick as a way of bringing rail services to their communities. One of the first sections of the Outer Circle to be built was the Clifton Hill to Alphington line, opened in 1883. This was the first railway in the area, but it consisted of only two miles of track, and was not connected to Melbourne. A planned line from Flinders Street to Heidelberg via Richmond, Collingwood and Northcote did not eventuate, so the Clifton Hill to Alphington line, was of limited use to Darebin residents, and was known as the 'nowhere to nowhere line'. However local residents organised a service using a gas engine fitted to a carriage, which operated briefly (Garden, 1984:219-21; Lemon 1983:84-8).

Part of the delay over the construction of railways for the northern suburbs was the disagreement over the routes through the inner suburbs. Eventually the line to Heidelberg, using the 'nowhere to nowhere line' was opened in 1888, but took such a zig-zag route from the terminus at Spencer Street through Fitzroy and Collingwood, that the trip to Heidelberg took an hour and a half. Furthermore it only served the southern part of Darebin. At last, in 1889, the line to Whittlesea via Preston was opened giving a railway right through Darebin, but it also took a round about route from Spencer Street station via Royal Park and North Fitzroy. In 1891 the Outer Circle line from Oakleigh to Fairfield was completed, crossing the Yarra on a steel truss bridge to Fulham Grange station. The bridge is now part of the Chandler Highway. The Outer Circle Railway was an instant failure and by 1895 it was closed (Garden, 1984:219-21). A short length of the line was later used as a still siding for the Australian Paper Mill. The embankment for the Fulham Grange station can still be seen.

Figure 13

Fairfield Train Station, looking east towards Ivanhoe, c1910
[DHE, ID 635]



Eventually Darebin's train travellers got their direct link with the city. The Heidelberg line was taken through Collingwood to Princes Bridge Station in 1901. In 1904 a small section of track known as the Northcote loop was constructed to directly connect the Preston and Whittlesea line to Clifton Hill, taking the line to Princes Bridge. Subsequently, Northcote Station was renamed Merri Station, while Middle Northcote Station became Northcote Station. A new station, Rushall, was built on the Fitzroy side of the Northcote loop, with a footbridge giving access from Westgarth.

Twentieth century improvements

As noted above, the lack of a railway had retarded suburban development in Darebin during the 1880s boom, but improved facilities began to bring new development into the area. As the population in Darebin increased new buildings were erected during the first decades of the twentieth century at the busiest stations including Fairfield, Merri, Northcote, Thornbury and Bell.

At the start of World War One the Victorian Railways embarked on a massive program to electrify the suburban railway network but the program was delayed by the onset of war and did not get underway in earnest until after 1918. In 1921 the Whittlesea line was electrified as far as Reservoir while the Hurstbridge line was electrified to Heidelberg in the same year. The electrified railways sped up the journey to the city considerably and ran at more frequent intervals thus encouraging a new wave of suburban development in areas such as Alphington and Reservoir which had remained undeveloped up to that time.

The electric service on the Whittlesea line was extended to Thomastown (outside Darebin) via a single track in 1929 and a new station was added at Keon Park on Preston's northern border. Thomastown was the limit of the suburban system until 1959 when the line was electrified as far as Lalor and the country section to Whittlesea beyond was closed – the line between Reservoir and Keon Park was also duplicated at that time. In 1963 a new station was added at Ruthven between Reservoir and Keon Park.

3.3 Travelling by tram and bus

Horse drawn trams

The earliest tramway through Darebin, and possibly Victoria's earliest, was built in 1853 to transport materials for the building of the Yan Yean reservoir, but it was a temporary line only. In 1884 land developer, C.H. James, built a horse tramway along Station Street, Fairfield and ran it on sale days to help promote his Rossmoyne Park other estates. The *Collingwood Mercury* proclaimed it as Victoria's first tram, but there had been horse trams operating in Melbourne as early as 1873 (Lemon, 1983:87; *Victorian Year Book 1973:1135*).

Cable trams

In the mid 1880s, the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Co. began running cable trams in Melbourne and inner suburbs. The trams were pulled along by a constantly moving

underground cable, powered by a steam-driven winding engine at one end of the system. In 1887, the Company opened a tramway to Clifton Hill, but had no plans to extend it across the Merri Creek. In 1888, George Clausen, former Mayor of Fitzroy, together with several local land speculators, formed the Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tram Co. A tramline would encourage the sale of their subdivisions in the area, and the Company set about constructing a cable tramway from the terminus at Clifton Hill to Dundas Street. The works included the widening of the High Street bridge over the Merri Creek, the construction of the bluestone embankment at Rucker's Hill, and a cable house on the corner of Martin and High Streets. The first tram ran in 1890, but the service ceased when the company got into financial difficulties in 1893. It was run intermittently during the 1890s, but the tram service had missed the height of the boom and there were too few Northcote and Preston settlers to make the trams pay. The system fell into disrepair until 1901, when Northcote Council took it over, put it back into working order and ran a regular service. The High Street cable tram continued in operation until 1940, and was the last of Melbourne's cable trams still running. Their replacement with electric trams had to wait until after the Second World War (Forster, 1968:56-7, Lemon, 1983:118-9, 234, 240).

Figure 14

Northcote Cable Tram (image date unknown)

[DHE, ID 774]



Electric trams

Early in the twentieth century, electric trams were introduced to Melbourne when a private company began running trams to Essendon. In 1907, two local councils formed the Prahran-Malvern Tramways Trust and established a large and successful network in the eastern suburbs. In 1912, agitation began for more tramlines in Darebin, and in 1915 the Fitzroy-Northcote-Preston Tramway Trust was formed to construct two new lines from the North Fitzroy cable tram terminus along St George's Road, one to Tyler Street East Preston and the other to Regent Street West Preston. After construction was delayed by the First World War, both lines were opened in 1920, however by then all of Melbourne's trams had been taken over by the recently formed Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (Carroll & Rule, 1985:137-42). The East Preston line was one of the few Melbourne tramlines to be extended in the late twentieth century. It was extended along Plenty Road Bundoora to La Trobe University and RMIT University. The old High Street cable tram was eventually converted to the electric system in 1955 (Carroll & Rule, 1985:142).

Figure 15

Electric tram at Preston Depot (image date unknown)

[DHE, ID 779]



Like the electrification of the railway network, the new electric tramways encouraged suburban development along their routes. New shopping strips emerged in Plenty Road and Gilbert Road and at the northern end of High Street in Thornbury and housing spread out along the cross streets leading to them. As Carrolll & Rule (1985:141) note:

Even today we can .. see how the coming of the trams cause a further stage of settlement. In Preston's earliest days, most settlement had been near High Street, and this shos in those houses that have survived from earliest times. The next phase came with the railways and most houses within walking distance of the station show an 1890-1920 style. Then spreading out further west from of Gilbert Road and east of Plenty Road, for walking distances from the tramlines are 1920-1950 houses. Further afield, most of the houses are post-1950, when most Preston people could hope to have a car.

Tram depots and workshop

Each of the three enterprises that provided trams to Darebin had its own workshop. The Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tram Co. had its depot and engine house on the corner of High and Martin Streets, as noted above, and the building is still in existence. In 1919, the Fitzroy-Northcote-Preston Tramway Trust built its depot on the corner of St Georges Road and Miller Street. In 1924, the MMTB opened its Tramway Workshops opposite, on the corner of Dundas Street. This was to be the workshop for the repair and construction of the MMTB's entire tram fleet. Clive Boxer, who worked at the workshops from 1925 to 1974, remembered that all accident damage was repaired at Preston:

You could have some bad smashes. ... It was said that autumn leaves on tram lines could cause close following trams to skid into one another. You would get some rear end sometimes. ... If a tram was over a certain age - five or six years, then they brought them in for a general overhaul. They were overhauled in the bodyshop taken to the paintshop to be repainted, came back to the bodyshop to be fitted up, or sometimes we would fit them up in the paintshop. The air for the brakes and electrical gear was all checked, wheels fixed up, so it was a general repair overall.
(Jones, 1994:26)

In the 1930s the Preston Workshop commenced building the W Class trams, which have since become a Melbourne icon. In 1955, the MMTB opened a new depot in Plenty Road, which took over the role of the Miller Street depot (Summerton, 1997:67).

Buses

The lack or inadequacies of rail and tram services in some parts of Darebin was partly compensated for by buses. In the 1880s the Melbourne Omnibus Company ran a horse bus from Melbourne as far as Clifton Hill, but only after Northcote residents agreed to subsidise the Company. The Company also provided a horse-drawn bus as far as Separation Street before it opened its Clifton Hill cable tram service. In the 1920s, a few private companies commenced motor bus services to transport people across Darebin, as most of the rail and tram services were on a north south-axis. Buses were particularly important for bringing people to the High Street shopping centre. Smith's buses ran between Fairfield station and High Street. Another bus route connected Ivanhoe with High Street Northcote along Darebin Road. After

the demise of the High Street cable tram in 1940 double-decker buses were substituted. When it was found they would not fit under the railway bridge (now just outside Darebin), the road under the bridge had to be lowered (Lemon, 1983:80, 99, 191, 228-30).

In 1952 Laurie Dyson took over a small local bus company and ran services between Regent Station and Janefield via Plenty Road. Since then, the L.C. Dysons Bus Services has expanded to provide a network of services for the northern suburbs, including school buses, charter and touring services. In 2003, Dyson's took over another of the local companies, the Bell Street Bus Company. For many years the Dyson Bus depot was in Plenty Road on the site of Doolan's old forge (www.dysonsbuses.com.au; information supplied by Paul Michell, Darebin Libraries; www.busaustralia.com/fleetlists/bellstreet).

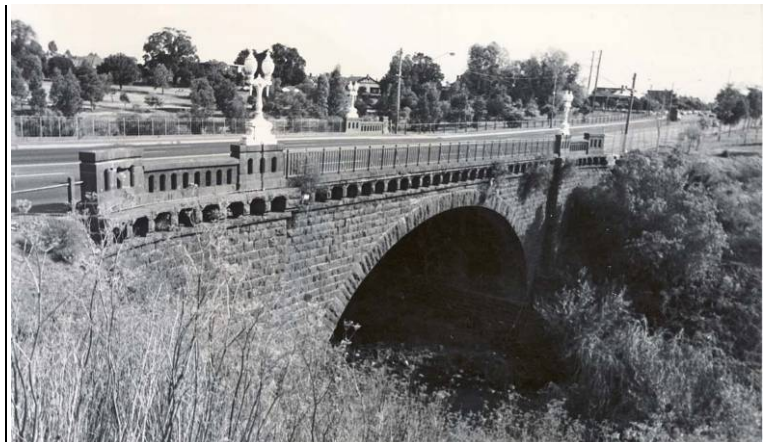
3.4 Developing bridge technology

Darebin is bounded on two sides by streams, and until municipal boundaries were changed in the 1990s, by the Yarra River, therefore bridges became vital components of the transport systems. Early stream crossings were fords. Although Heidelberg Road and the bridge over the Darebin Creek were constructed in the 1840s, only a causeway was provided across the Merri Creek until a laminated girder bridge on stone piers was built in 1854. That bridge was washed away in the 1864 flood. It was rebuilt, as the present single stone arch bridge, in 1867-8. In 1936, the Country Roads board widened the bridge to carry increased traffic, using a reinforced concrete arch, but with the stonework on the spandrel to match the original (Butler, 1982: vol.1 f.147).

Figure 16

Merri Creek Bridge over Heidelberg Road (image date unknown)

[DHE, ID 64]



Until the construction of the St George's Road bridge in 1886, the only bridge actually giving direct access into Darebin from Melbourne was the bridge across the Merri Creek at High Street. The first bridge at this spot had been a small temporary one, built in 1850. This was replaced in 1857 by a three span timber and stone bridge, possibly similar to the first one on Heidelberg Road (Lemon, 1983:41, 47). Being on a main road, the bridge was supplied by the Central Road Board. By 1870, this bridge was in dilapidated state and the Jifka Shire replaced it with the present two arch bridge of brick and Malmsbury stone. In 1889, it was widened to take the cable trams, as noted above (Lemon, 1983:59).

At the western side of Darebin, an interesting bridge carries Bell Street cross the Merri Creek. This bridge shows three eras of technology. A timber footbridge was built by prisoners from the nearby Pentridge stockade in 1853, but was destroyed by a flood in 1863. A wooden and stone road bridge was built in 1858. This was probably a laminated timber arch on bluestone abutments. By 1877 it was in a dilapidated condition and Coburg Council opened negotiations with Jifka Shire for a replacement, but Jifka was reluctant to contribute much of the cost. Coburg Council built the new bridge in 1880. It was a wrought iron girder bridge, possibly using the same bluestone abutments. In 1947-50 the CRB widened the bridge using second-hand lattice girders from the demolished Cremorne Railway Bridge, which had been

built in 1859 to take the Melbourne Brighton Railway across the Yarra River (Broome, 2001:88; Vines, 2005).

For a long time the only access between Northcote and Brunswick was Sumner's weir, which was used as a pedestrian crossing. After Arthurton Road was extended to Merri Creek in 1890, the Council built a bridge across to Brunswick (Lemon 1983:57, 113, 115). Over the years, Darebin was progressively connected with its neighbouring suburbs to the east and west by more bridges, reducing Darebin's isolation. Most of these bridges are now modern reinforced concrete structures. The construction of the John Curtin Bridge carrying Murray Road over the Darebin Creek accompanied the establishment of the Northland Shopping Centre in the 1960s. The bridge was partly funded by Myer, Northland's owner (Carroll & Rule, 1985:197), highlighting the importance of bringing shoppers, thus establishing Northland as a regional shopping centre.

3.5 Providing postal and telecommunication services

Darebin's postal services, like those in many new towns in Victoria, were first provided by local general stores. Northcote's first post office was in Bastings' store in High Street. The mail service from Melbourne commenced in 1854, with the mail brought on horseback. At the time there was some confusion over the name of the district, as Northcote was the official name of the township laid out on the Merri Creek, and a number of names were in use for the settlement on Rucker's Hill, such as Cawdortown and Upper Northcote. The name was decided when the Bastings brothers called their post office Northcote (Lemon, 1983:45, 50). At Preston the Wood family had opened their store in High Street and ran the post office from 1856. The locality was known as Irishtown, but the Woods named their post office after Preston, a Sussex village near their birthplace. Marshall's store on the corner of Bell Street and Plenty Road served as a post office for the residents at South Preston (Carroll, 1985:26, 31).

Although only situated a few miles from Melbourne, Darebin was isolated as far as telecommunications were concerned. Melbourne was in telegraph communication with Sydney and Adelaide by 1858, but it was 1876 before the electric telegraph came to Preston and the telephone was not connected until 1910, when the Northcote exchange opened (Lemon, 1983:162; Carroll, 1985:98).

Figure 17

*Post Office, built in 1908, Preston
(image date unknown)*

[DHE, ID 783]



By this time both Northcote and Preston had official post offices. Northcote's was incorporated within the Town Hall and Court House complex, built in 1890. The Post Offices moved to its own premises in High Street in 1926, presumably because Council needed the space in the Town Hall. Preston's Post Office was built at 350 High Street, next to the Town Hall in 1908, and was rebuilt on the same site in 1971 (Lemon, 1983:104, 204; Carroll & Rule, 1985:99).

After the Federation of the Australian States in 1901, the Federal Government took over responsibility for the design and construction of post offices. An example of this process at work in the study area is the Fairfield Post Office.

Heritage

Some examples of places relating to Transport and Communications are:

Establishing road routes

Rose Shamrock and Thistle Hotel

The route of Heidelberg Road, High Street and St George's Road

Travelling by train

Outer Circle Line (1883-91) – Remnants of APM branch line east of Fairfield Station and remains of Fulham Grange Station

Heidelberg Line (1888) – Fairfield Station and signal box (HO106), Westgarth and Alphington stations

Whittlesea Line (1889) – Merri Creek Bridge, and Merri, Northcote, Thornbury and Bell railway stations

Travelling by tram and bus

Cable tram depot and engine house 626 High Street (corner Martin Street), Thornbury (HO45), and bluestone embankment on High Street at Rucker's Hill.

Preston Tram Workshops, cnr. Miller Street and St Georges Road, Preston (HO144)

Miller Street overpass, tram bridge over railway line

Preston East Tram Depot, Plenty Road, Preston

MMTB substation, Martin Street, Thornbury

Developing bridge technology

Merri Creek bridges at High Street (HO127), Heidelberg Road (HO125), St George's Road and Bell Street

Darebin Creek bridge - John Curtin Bridge, Murray Road

Providing postal and telecommunication services

Northcote Town Hall and municipal offices

Fairfield Post Office (former), 92-96 Arthur Street (HO112)

4 DEVELOPING DAREBIN'S ECONOMIES

Introduction

Many of the early European settlers in Darebin were small farmers, who made their living by dairying, cropping and to a lesser extent grazing. Although parts of the area gave way to suburban and industrial development in the latter part of the nineteenth century, farming persisted in the northern parts for longer. One of the larger properties, Bundoora Park, was used for breeding race horses well into the twentieth century.

The area's natural deposits of clay attracted significant industries. At its peak, Darebin was Melbourne's second largest producer of bricks. The area's isolation and the availability of water from the creeks and the Yan Yean pipeline attracted two industries in the 1860s - bacon curing and tanning - which became Darebin's principal nineteenth century industries. The side effects of these industries were pollution of the air and waterways. Other industries followed, including shoe, glue, soap, clothing and hat manufacture, dye works and food processing. The expansion of the tramway network in the twentieth century as described in the previous chapter was underscored by the largest employer being the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramway Board workshops in Preston.

Darebin has a special place in the history of Melbourne's water supply. The pipeline from Yan Yean, built 1853-57, traversed the whole length of the study area, and the suburb of Reservoir takes its name from the three service reservoirs built to assist in the distribution of the water supply.

As each small settlement took shape commercial enterprises, including shops, opened to service the local residents and passers-by. Large shopping centres developed, drawing shoppers from further afield, particularly the High Street shopping strip and later Northland. Hotels served a variety of functions as centres of local entertainment and meeting places for the local community. One hotel also provided a significant sporting venue. The new entertainment medium of cinema took hold of Darebin in the 1920s. Westgarth Theatre is Melbourne's oldest purpose-built cinema still operating.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	4.5 Places where people procured food or raw materials; 1 Associations with rural industry
AHT	3 Developing local, regional and national economies; 3.11 Altering the environment; 5 Working.

History

4.1 Utilising natural resources

Farming and grazing

Although Darebin was blessed with some fine grasslands, created by Aboriginal burning and land management, it was not to be the realm of a few wealthy pastoralists as the Port Phillip Association envisaged. Nevertheless its pasture was used for grazing, mostly in the short term while awaiting suburban development. A remnant of the brief squatting era in the districts close to Melbourne is the bluestone stables from *Oakhill* homestead, built by pastoralist Alexander Brock. Brock's sheep station was at Janefield, just to the north of Darebin's boundary. The homestead was demolished in the 1960s (Summerton, 1997:19).

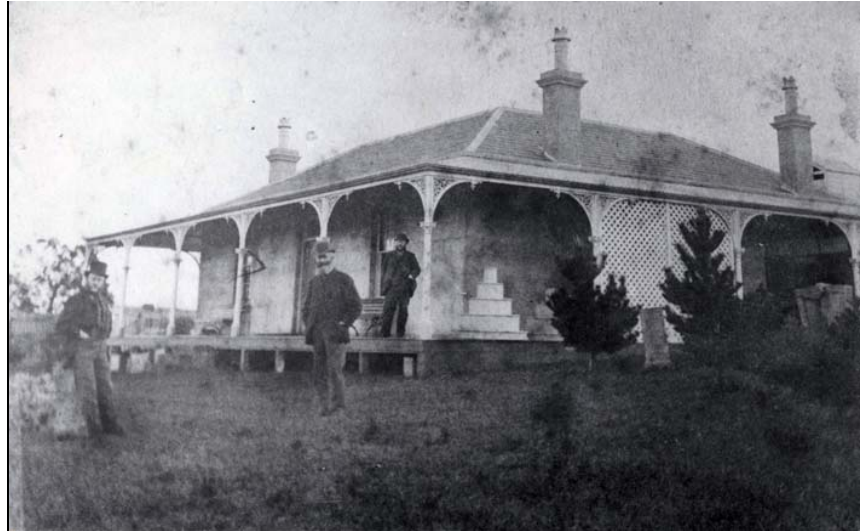
One of Darebin's few large properties to remain intact was the 1005 acre property comprising part of Allotment 15 Parish of Keelbundora, purchased by John Brown at the first Preston land sale. Brown leased it to Jonathon Boadle, who named the property Prospect Hill. Boadle

imported the first shorthorn cattle into Victoria and established a dairy farm. He built a small farmhouse and dry-stone walls around his stockyards and paddocks. At the time of his death in 1870 Boadle had a dairy herd of 138, a number of pedigreed cattle, 54 horses, including Clydesdales, saddle and harness horses, a trots stallion, and some pure-bred sheep and goats. Samuel Gardiner, who purchased the property, renamed it Bundoora Park and established a shorthorn cattle stud and a horse stud. He built a new brick and stone homestead and outbuildings, including extensive stables. In the early 1890s Gardiner succumbed to the temptation of the land boom and risked Bundoora Park Estate in an investment with C. H. James and his Dominion Bank, losing the property when the venture failed in the economic collapse (Carroll 1985:207-11; Cannon 1972: 20; Heathcote).

Figure 18

Samual Gardiner's Bundoora Park Homestead, (image date unknown)

[Preston Historical Society Collection]



The Smith family era at Bundoora Park began in 1889 when John Matthew Vincent Smith purchased the property from the State Savings Bank of Victoria as a site for his horse stud and home for his family. Smith organised a public architectural competition for the design of his new house and Sydney Herbert Wilson was chosen as the architect for the project. The Bundoora Park residence (now known as Bundoora Homestead Art Centre) is one of Wilson's most distinguished works, and a prominent example of the English Queen Anne style as adapted to the Australian milieu.

Figure 19

John Matthew Vincent Smith Homestead, showing Helen Smith, Dudley Smith, Jean Smith and Mrs McGregor walking up the drive, 1914.

[Smith Family Collection]



Smith's most famous sire, Wallace, was son of the great Carbine. Douglas Barrie has correctly described Wallace as:

Undoubtedly one of the greatest sires – whether colonial bred or imported – that has ever stood at stud in Australia. In his twenty-two years at stud Wallace begot sons and daughters who between them won 949 races worth £ 246 145 in stakes.

Wallace's grave is next to the stables at Bundoora Park (Healy 2007:29-37).

In 1920 the Commonwealth Government acquired the property for use as Bundoora Convalescent Farm, one of the first repatriation facilities in Australia. In 1930, the Bundoora Park estate was sub-divided in an agreement signed by the Commonwealth and State Governments. 456 acres of the former horse stud, which included the thoroughbred stables, manager's brick cottage, a small timber hut and other outbuildings, were allocated for use as a Remount Depot by the mounted police. The hut was used as accommodation for Aboriginal trackers (see Policing, 6.2 below). Some of these buildings are still part of Cooper's Settlement at Bundoora Park. The Police stud occupied part of Bundoora Park until it moved to Broadmeadows in 1953 (Carroll, 1985:211-13; Heathcote; Healy, 2007:38-55).

At the southern end of Preston, allotment 144 Parish of Jika Jika, a 320 acre (130 ha) property between present-day Bell Street and Murray Road, was purchased from the Crown by James Mitchell, a London speculator. During the 1850s, and probably earlier, the property was leased to Timothy Shepherd for grazing sheep, and it became known as Shepherd's Run. Shepherd built a house of timber cut from the property for his family. In the 1870s the property went through two phases of subdivision, and in 1894 107 small farming blocks were offered for sale. This was a typical pattern of subdivision that established Preston as a district of small farmers and market gardeners in the 1860s and 70s. In 1865 the Sands and McDougall Directory listed 63% of Preston's residents as farmers or (market) gardeners. Most of them farmed small allotments of 10 to 40 acres (4-16 ha) and built small cottages (Carroll & Rule, 1985:27).

Dairying

Dairying was a principal industry and Preston was a major supplier of Melbourne's fresh milk. H. Bamfield ran a large herd of 260 cows in 1897 on the Strathallan Estate, which later became part of the farm run by the Mont Park Mental Hospital. It is now part of La Trobe University (Forster, 1968:47; Carroll & Rule, 1985:201). Another large dairy herd was Stott's at Merrilands.

Suppliers of town milk were required to be registered cow-keepers under the *Milk and Dairy Supervision Act 1905*, and their farms had to be correctly run. While some farmers sent their milk twice a day to dairies such as Thompson's in Thornbury for cooling and distribution, others had their own cooling plants and distributed their milk directly to customers. From 1911, some suburban farm dairies had brine coolers, which kept milk fresh for longer than a water cooler. Rosehill Dairy in Wood Street Preston is recorded as having a cooling plant in the 1920s. At that stage Preston had over 60 dairies. Preston dairymen were proud of the pure quality of their milk and they distributed it throughout the neighbouring suburbs (Priestley 1984:155, Jones 1994:1-28; www.dhe.darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au).

In 1933, a new Milk Board raised standards in dairies and about half of Melbourne's local dairies were de-licensed. Those remaining improved their technology and became bigger. The Tomkins family, who started a dairy in Thornbury in 1924, expanded into a 'New Model Dairy' on the corner of Shaftsbury Parade and St George's Road in 1933. The dairy had milking machines and the latest refrigeration and bottling equipment. George and Agnes Cutts built the Centenary Dairy and Milk Bar in Heidelberg Road Alphington in 1934. It continued in business until 1980 (Priestley, 1984:262; 'Jubilee Celebrations' 1933:8).

Pasteurisation began during the 1940s, however as late as 1949 there were still farmers in the area distributing milk directly from their farms. In 1949, Keon Park residents visited Jack O'Rourke's farm to buy their milk, presumably taking their own billies for filling (Jones, 1994:93).

Victoria's best known milk processor, Pura Milk, commenced in Preston in 1934, when Albert Siebel purchased Kruger's small dairy in Murray Road, Preston, and re-named it Pura Dairy. In 1935 the Milk Producers Association, of which Siebel was a committee member, formed a company named Pura Dairy Products Ltd, with Siebel as director and dairy manager. The milk was sourced mainly from nearby Epping and Thomastown. The Pura Dairy expanded by taking over dairies in Preston and elsewhere. In 1948 the firm was listed on the stock exchange as Metropolitan Dairies Pty Ltd. In 1949 the company merged with Cayley Brother's Ivy Bank Dairy in Preston, and subsequently established their Ivy Bank pasteurising and bottling plant at 18-22 Jessie Street, Preston. The company continued to acquire dairies and milk rounds, and until 1964 Metropolitan Dairies were handling 32% of Melbourne's milk supply, and its Reservoir dairy was one of six metropolitan milk depots (Wuchatsch, 2000:101-2; www.pura.com.au/about_history). The Pura Milk brand is now owned by National Foods Limited, and has a new facility in East Preston.

Figure 20

Pura Milk truck fleet outside the Ivy Bank Dairy building, 1956

Photographer: Wolfgang Sievers

[National Library of Australia, vn3356377]



Market and flower gardens

Darebin, particularly Preston, also had many market gardens, orchards and flower farms. The market gardens of the Chinese on the creek flats have been noted in Chapter 2, and some of them continued to be cultivated well into the twentieth century. During the nineteenth century there were market gardens in central Preston, including Robb's on the corner of David and High Streets (Bartlett b). Another was J.C. Clinche's four acre market garden and orchard in Eastwood Street, where his house still remains (Summerton, 1995: ch.6)

In 1875, Samuel and Anna Bartlett, originally from Taunton in Somerset, England, purchased seven acres and a cottage in Spring Street, in the area now known as Reservoir. The Bartletts had spent eleven years in New Zealand, where Samuel was head gardener at Government House (Bartlett a) At Spring Street Samuel established a flower garden, the first of several in the area serving Melbourne's florist industry. The Bartletts had a large family and according to Bartlett descendant, Lexie Luly:

The flower growing was a quite a family business, with the father and the three sons. They cultivated, picked the flowers and took them to market. Some of the girls, particularly Annie had florist shops in Brunswick. The boys used to take the flowers in a covered dray, it was typical of the ones that went to markets from all over Melbourne. They would pick the flowers during the day. Then they would get up at about four o'clock in the morning and drive the dray, down Spring St, stop at the railway gate which was at that time Murray Station. It was changed later to Preston because Murray got mixed up with Merri Station. They would go to the gate house, get the key, unlock the gate, go through, lock the gate up and continue on down High St. They would go to the Brunswick Market down in Johnston St, which was the first one they went to.

Then they eventually went on to the Eastern and Victoria Market to sell their flowers. (Jones 1994: 5-6)

James Railton had a nursery in Raglan Street in the 1860s, which was still operating in the 1920s (Carroll 1985:27; Summerton, 1997).

Aboriginal associations with rural industry

Despite a number of Aboriginal people working as labourers for pastoralists in the Melbourne area in the late 1830s, the documented history of Aboriginal-early European settler relations in Darebin is characterised by mistrust, at least on the part of the settlers. Indeed, one of the main reasons that the Native Police Corps established their headquarters at the confluence of the Yarra and Merri Creek in 1842 was in response to a number of alleged 'outrages' by Aboriginal people, reported by settlers on the Darebin Creek (Lemon, 1983:16).

In the 1850s, Aboriginal people were frequenting Shepherd's Run, a large grazing area between High, Bell, James and Murray Roads, asking the Shepherd family for food. A former soldier living on the run threatened them with a sword, and they did not return. Obviously some of the early settlers were nervous about the presence of Aboriginal people nearby, and they regarded Shepherd's Run as a safe place because of this incident. Men of the local district would pitch tents near the house on Shepherd's Run for their families when they had to go away from the district (Carroll, 1985:23).

Aboriginal people are also recorded as having frequently camped near a spring on a property near what is now the corner of McColl Street and Plenty Road in Preston. Although the original recording is by a woman whose parents owned the property around 1900, it is claimed that these people camped in this area up to around the 1920s (Weaver, 1992:8).

Brickmaking

Darebin's natural deposits of clay provided the raw materials for one of the area's most significant industries. As Carroll has pointed out, 'making bricks was a natural industry for Preston' (Carroll, 1985:59). This statement applies equally to Northcote. According to Swift, in the 1840s builders would sometimes dig a clay-pit on the site and make bricks by hand on the spot for their new buildings (Swift, 1928:7).

Darebin's first recorded brickmaker, Gottleib Arndt, had two clay pits on the corner of Raglan and Collier Streets, South Preston in the late 1850s. Stott's brickworks near the corner of Plenty Road and Dundas Street, produced Preston's first machine-made bricks, using horse powered machinery in 1878. During the 1870s and '80s more brickworks opened at Preston, including the South Preston Brick and Tile Company works opposite Penders Grove, which produced hand-made bricks from 1883; and the Clifton Brickworks in St Georges Road, which opened in 1890 (Carroll, 1985:59-60; Vines & Churchward, 1992:88, 95, 98).

However, the larger brickworks were in Northcote, the first being the Northcote Patent Brick Company, established by the Groom brothers in the corner of Separation and High Streets in 1873. The firm was the first in the area to use steam powered machinery. The firm was floated as a public company in 1882, to become the Northcote Brick Company. A Hoffman kiln was installed, and four more kilns were added over the next few years. The company was Northcote's largest employer in the 1880s and its output rivalled that of Melbourne's largest brickmaker, the Hoffman Patent Steam Brick Company in Brunswick. The two companies entered into a price fixing agreement, and at one stage contemplated amalgamation. In 1886, the New Northcote Brick Company opened next to the first Northcote brickworks. The two companies eventually amalgamated in the twentieth century. Northcote's production of bricks peaked at over 58 million bricks in 1889-90, the height of Melbourne's land boom, but the industry suffered when the boom collapsed, and some of the works closed (Vines & Churchward, 1992:77-80), putting many local people out of work. The revival in the early twentieth century was slow, followed by a new, but smaller boom in the 1920s. Clifton Bricks continued to operate until 1963 and the Northcote brickworks closed in 1977. Their huge

clay-pits usually became rubbish tips, and when filled were made into parks. The Ray Bramham Gardens is on the site of the Clifton brickworks and All Nations Park is on the site of the Northcote brickworks.

The South Preston Brick and Tile Company and the Northcote Brick Company provided cottages for their workers. The Northcote Company's cottages in Robb's Parade and Langwill's Parade, were built from second quality and broken bricks, but the houses are still standing (Forster, 1968:48; Lemon, 1983:93).

Figure 21 *Clifton Brickworks, 1970s*
[DHE: ID 873]



Potteries

Michael Emery was the first to use Preston's clay deposits when he established St John's pottery in Wood Street in 1853. He made earthenware flower pots for the local flower gardens, and his business continued until late in the nineteenth century (Sutherland, p. 734; Vines & Churchward, 1992:88). Emery's house, St John's Villa, is still standing in Wood Street. In 1898 Westmorland's Northcote Tile and Pottery Company commenced in Clyde Street. The factory produced roof tiles, chimney pots and drain pipes for the building trade and flower pots ('Glimpses of Our Past': 23). This factory, built to replace the original factory destroyed by fire in the 1930s, remains as the only built evidence of one of Darebin's most significant industries.

Premier Potteries produced earthenware of a different kind, becoming market leader of a category of decorative ceramics now commonly referred to as the 'gumnut style'. Premier Pottery was established by the traditionally trained potters David Dee and Reg Hawkins in 1929. Premier Pottery created a line of art wares they branded 'Remued' – now acknowledged as unique, and highly prized by collectors and art museums. Earlier brands for the pottery were 'PPP' and 'Pamela'.

In 1931, the pottery moved into the former McFarlane bacon factory at 52 Oakover Road. A clay pit was on the corner of Oakover and St Georges Road. There was a constant procession of women with prams filled with newspapers arriving at the pottery. They would exchange the papers for pottery seconds. Premier used the paper to package its pottery for transport. The wares were sold through outlets such as the Primrose Pottery Shop in Melbourne.

The Premier Pottery's particular style of art pottery is characterised by colourful, free-flowing and overlapping glazed, and applied hand-modelled decoration – typically gumnut and gum leaves and prominent skewed *Art Nouveau* branch handles, or with faunal motifs such as koalas or reptiles. The pottery employed up to 19 potters and crafts –peoples, including sculptor and potter Margaret Kerr and artist potter John Castle-Harris. After the pottery closed in 1955 Alan James bought the business, and it was renamed 'Kerryl' and located at 53 Banbury Road,

Reservoir. It closed in 1980 (Carroll, 1985:147; Graham, 1979: 145-7; Webb, 2005: 4-5, 6, 13-23).

Figure 22

Northcote Pottery
(image date unknown)

[DHE, ID 343]



Quarrying

Quarrying was a major activity in Darebin because of plentiful and varied natural resources and a strong demand for materials to build roads and paths, including the distinctive use of bluestone. The long term effects of quarrying on the natural environment are discussed at section 4.5 *Altering the environment*.

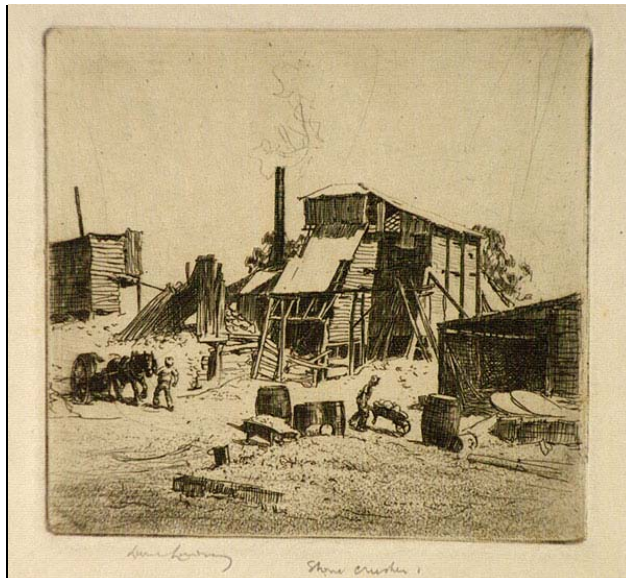
Preston Council's main quarry for road metal was beside the Darebin Creek at Princess Street near Bell Street. After it was filled in it became a Council depot. There was also a bluestone quarry near Edwardes Lake on the site of the Reservoir Bowling Club, and another one at Merrilands (Forster, 1968:49, Jones, 1994:85).

Figure 23

Stone crusher, near Alphington, Victoria, 1925

Artist: Lionel Lindsay

[National Gallery of Australia, an 83.725, IRN 92605]



Jean James told the story of her father finding a multi-layered deposit in Plenty Road, when he dug a hole to bury a dead cow:

... as he was digging he came across sand which was a bit unusual. He kept going and then found gravel and then in later years, clay. He thought he was onto something, not the usual, so he took a load into Ruuvolt's, the iron foundry. They fell in love with it and kept him going. Payne's iron foundry used to take it too. ... The gravel was used for paths in the city, especially in the

Botanical Gardens (sic) and also around homes in Toorak. It was really red and it used to make beautiful paths. The clay was used by Fowlers. The sand was used for castings in iron foundries.
(Jones, 1994:21-2)

4.2 Noxious industries

Noxious trades or industries were those that caused unpleasant odours and water pollution, such as tanning, wool scouring, meat processing and boiling down works. They were concentrated along the Yarra banks in Richmond and Collingwood polluting the water in Melbourne's early years. By the 1860s, various attempts to have them removed were unsuccessful, however they did discourage new operations from commencing close to the city (Vines & Churchward, 1995:23-24, 76-78). Darebin's relative isolation, with few residents to complain about the odours together with the availability of water from the creeks and the Yan Yean pipeline, attracted some of these noxious industries in the 1860s.

A number of noxious industries were operating in Northcote in the 1870s, including several piggeries and boiling down works in Clarke Street, Herne's bacon curing works, and also the manufacture of oil cloth at Lawrence's dye works. In 1880, Northcote residents formed the Northcote Health League to campaign for the removal of these noxious trades from their area. The League had limited success because some Jika Shire councillors had interests in the industries and were reluctant to impose restrictions. Nevertheless, the campaign was a major factor in the severance movement of the southern part of the shire to form the Borough of Northcote in 1883, and the subsequent removal of noxious trades from Northcote (Lemon, 1983:71-76). Preston, still sparsely populated, already had two thriving noxious industries - bacon curing and tanning, which contributed to Preston's local economy and character for many years.

Bacon curing

Victoria's first bacon factory was established in 1862 by William Watson and William Paterson, who had both worked as bacon curers in their native Scotland. They chose the site on the corner of Plenty Road and Dundas Street because the land was relatively cheap and far enough from Melbourne to avoid complaints of pollution, but not too far from the Melbourne market. An important consideration was also the availability of water from the Yan Yean pipeline that had been completed five years earlier. Although water was not yet connected to Preston's buildings, it was available from local standpipes. Watson and Paterson built a weatherboard factory and adopted the tradename 'Pioneer' for their hams and bacon. Their products won prizes at Exhibitions in Europe and USA. The firm trained many men in the bacon trade, two of whom set up their own factories. After Watson retired from the firm the business was carried on by the Paterson family until 1958, when it was taken over by Otto Wurth Pty Ltd (Carroll 1985:43-5).

In 1872 one of Watson and Paterson's employees, James Hutton commenced his own bacon curing works in Preston. He moved to Coburg for a few years, then because of complaints from the local council, moved back to Preston (Vines & Churchward, 1995:24). He built a three-storey factory in Oakover Road in 1880, and brand his products 'Pineapple'. Another factory was later added on the corner of High and Raglan Streets. The firm diversified into sausages and other smallgoods, and had interests in Queensland. In 1903, Huttons was the largest firm of its kind in Australia. Most of the pigs were bought from a pig market and sent by rail to Bell Station, where there were pig pens on the eastern side. Local residents remember the squeals of the pigs as they were prodded along the road to the High Street factory for slaughtering. Huttons closed their abattoirs in the early 1970s because of complaints about the noise and smells, and moved the slaughtering operations to Kyneton. They subsequently moved all their Preston operations to Oakover Road (Carroll, 1985:47-9; Jones, 1994:30-1)

Meanwhile, several bacon curers had also set up in Preston and one or two in Northcote, including Smith & Kenihan, later William Smith and Sons in Bastings Street. By 1930, only

the two large factories, Watson and Paterson, and Huttons, were still operating. Huttons closed in 1970.

Tanning

Like bacon curing, tanning was a smelly business that required a lot of water, so Preston was an ideal location for Yorkshire immigrant William Braithwaite to start a tannery. In 1865, he bought six acres on the corner of High Street and Murray Road, not far from the Yan Yean pipetrack in St George's Road, and set up Preston's first tannery. William was killed in an accident in 1874, however his son continued the business, continually expanding and introducing new techniques. In 1937 Braithwaite's was taken over by Geo Pizzey & Son Ltd.

One of Braithwaite's employees, Thomas Broadhurst opened another tannery nearby in 1880. The Parkside Tannery was opened in 1898, and taken over by Henry P. Zwar in 1902. John Howe started his tannery in 1911. These were Preston's four largest and best known tanneries, but there were nineteen altogether over the years since 1865, according to Jones (Jones 1994: 9). Each of the four large tanneries had its own specialty. Broadhurst's made a variety of leathers, while Braithwaite's concentrated on sole leathers, Zwar's made patent leather and Howe's made high quality leather for shoes and upholstery. Howe's provided the leather upholstery for Canberra's first Parliament House.

Figure 24

Zwar's Tannery, c1900
[DHE: ID 442]



Tanneries involved a huge variety of work, much of it dirty, smelly and heavy. Ralph Underhill worked at Howe's before he moved to Braithwaite's during the Second World War, and found it:

Quite different because it was all heavy, wet stuff. Howe's leather was lighter having been through a shaving machine, reduced in thickness for shoe uppers and leather used for furniture. On the other hand, Braithwaite's had to be the thickness of heavy sole leather for military boots and horse harnesses. That was pulled out wet, from the pits and then you let it drain. You had big rubber boots and rubber aprons so you didn't get wet through. Braithwaite's leather was hung on four foot poles over little racks, under a line of peppercorn trees along Clinch Ave. There was a little narrow train line with a little platform. The leather would be pulled into the factory, on the trolleys right up to the machines, and that's how you got your truckload of leather. (Jones 1995:13)

The industry employed many young boys in the nineteenth century. In 1903, Braithwaite took part in a deputation to the government seeking exemption from restrictions on juvenile labour in the leather industry. He claimed that cheap 'boy labour' was essential to the viability of the

industry, and the boys' families benefited from their few shillings a week. Later Howe's took on boys at the age of fourteen, and many of them spent their whole working lives progressing through the firm.

The tanning industry pervaded everyday life in Preston. According to Pamela Murphy:

The tannery whistles used to go all the time. You didn't need a clock in Preston, didn't need a clock at all. The whistles would start about 7.25 in the morning, then there would be another one at 7.30 and this was to start the workers for the day. Then there would be more through the day. For lunch time, and the end of lunch time, and then knock off time. You'd be walking down the street, you'd hear the whistles and you'd know what time it was. But the odour of the tanneries was the thing Preston was known for. It was a definite odour, leather odour, you could smell it anywhere. It was quite a harsh sort of smell (Jones, 1995:15).

In the mid twentieth century most of Preston's tanneries had either changed hands or closed down completely, and by the end of the century, only Howe's was still in operation, although it has since closed. Howe's 1920s building in High Street is one of the few remaining sites of Preston's most important industry. Preston Market covers much of the other parts of 'Tantown'.

4.3 Other manufacturing industries

In addition to its three main industries of brick-making and potteries, bacon curing and tanning outlined above, Darebin has seen a variety of industries develop within its borders. One of Northcote's earliest and most enduring factories was William Lawrence's dye works established in Cunningham Street Westgarth in 1874. Although the oil cloth section of the firm was discontinued following complaints regarding its noxious nature, a new dye works was built in Westgarth Street in 1902. Lawrence's expanded to become one of Melbourne's largest dyeing and dry-cleaning businesses (Lemon, 1983:71, 140).

In 1814 Angus and Co. moved their glue factory from North Fitzroy to Arthurton Road Northcote. The company manufactured inks and various glues for the office, including the well-known Clag, used by every school child. The firm expanded into New South Wales in the 1930s, and became Australia's largest manufacturer of its kind ('Jubilee Celebrations', 1933:12).

With the proximity of the leather industry, the manufacture of leather goods was an important industry for Darebin. Northcote had at least two footwear manufacturers. The Exhibition Boot Company commenced in 1902. The Northcote Shoe Company commenced in Eastment Street and transferred to a large building in Arthurton Road in the 1930s (Lemon, 1983:140; 'Jubilee Celebrations', 1933:30) By the 1930s, there were four footwear factories in Preston, however Darebin's footwear industry was small compared to that of Collingwood (Vines & Churchward, 1995:58, 99). Darebin also had a few textile clothing and hat manufacturers, but not on the scale of Brunswick and Coburg.

Other industries that proliferated in twentieth century Northcote were furniture manufacturing and engineering. Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing commenced in Northcote in 1917, and its founder William Sutton played a leading role in developing precision toolmaking in Australia. His first factory was a converted stable, and the large High Street factory was built in 1933. By 1970, Suttons had outgrown the Northcote premises, and moved to Thomastown (Vines & Churchward, 1995:85).

A number of small engineering and metal work factories also developed in Preston, some of them supporting the larger local industries. Matthew Drolz had a workshop on the corner of Bell and Mary Streets, where he made machinery for tanneries and bacon factories. By far the largest Preston factory in the early to mid twentieth century was the MMTB workshop, mentioned in Chapter 3, which made the W Class trams and employed 500 workers in the 1920s.

One of the first post Second World War factories to open in Darebin was the MMBW's Pipe Depot near Chifley Drive Preston in 1945. Here large water pipes were coated with enamel to protect them from corrosion. This required the construction of a long shed that could accommodate 40 foot (12.2 m) pipes. The Depot made the fittings and branch bends for the Upper Yarra pipeline. The factory closed in the 1980s (Jones, 1995:38).

The Pipe Depot was in the vanguard of the move of industry away from the central parts of Darebin to the outskirts, where previously little development had occurred. In the 1940s the local councils began defining zones for industrial development. Preston Council designated one industrial zone on the Darebin Creek flats in the south east and another at Reservoir in the north west. Both were vacant areas, flat rocky land that was difficult to drain, but considered more suitable for industry than housing.

Figure 25

*Sutton Tool and Gauge Manufacturing
High Street, Northcote*

[DHE: ID 850]



4.4 Melbourne's water supply

Darebin has a special place in the history of Melbourne's water supply because it is situated on the gently sloping plain that enabled the water to flow directly down to Melbourne from the Yan Yean Reservoir, without the aid of pumps. In 1853, the Victorian Water Supply Commissioners acquired a long strip of land from Darebin landowners for the pipeline, which was constructed along what later became St Georges Road. The Yan Yean Reservoir and pipeline were completed in 1857. Problems with water quality and pressure led to the construction of a service reservoir near the pipeline's half-way mark at Preston in 1864. This was Melbourne's first service reservoir, hence the name of the suburb Reservoir. The reservoir was constructed by excavation and embankment, using the same construction techniques as for Yan Yean, and was lined with bluestone pitchers, presumably quarried from nearby basalt deposits. The reservoir's capacity was 16 million gallons (72.8 megalitres) - sufficient to supply Melbourne for three days at that time (Dingle and Doyle, 2003).

Figure 26

Constructing Preston Reservoir

[DHE: ID 880]



Figure 27*Valve house at Preston Reservoir*

[Context, 2007]



A caretaker's cottage was built at Preston Reservoir in 1865 and the Preston office of the MMBW was opened in 1900. When the Maroondah system was opened in 1891 the aqueduct terminated at the Junction Basin in Cheddar Road Preston, and the water was then piped to Preston Reservoir. As Melbourne's demand for water increased in the twentieth century two new concrete service reservoirs were added on the east side of High Street in 1909 and 1913. The second reservoir was constructed by John Monash's Reinforced Concrete & Monier Pipe Construction Company, using the relatively new reinforced concrete technology. The Preston reservoirs were for many years a vital link in the distribution of Melbourne's water supply (Dingle and Doyle, 2003; Ritchie 1922).

Although the pipeline traversed Darebin from end to end, it was of little benefit to most of Darebin's population for many years. Darebin's local water supply will be outlined in Chapter 5.

4.5 Altering the environment

The cost of developing Darebin's resources and establishing its industries was the exploitation and transformation of its natural resources, landforms and streams. The results of these activities on the natural environment and heritage are discussed in Chapter 8.

Grazing

As noted in Chapter 1, most of Darebin is thought to have been covered by grassy woodland (Oates & Taranto, 2001). In the first few years of the European settlement of Melbourne, large numbers of sheep were imported from Tasmania¹³, and the good grazing lands in Darebin hardly could have escaped being used as a staging ground for livestock. Sheep grazing very quickly altered the composition of the grassland understorey. The sheep preferentially grazed the softest most nutritious feed - the yam daisies, lilies and orchids. There are reports of sheep scraping with their hooves to get to eat yam daisy tubers.

Most of the land in Northcote was only sporadically grazed by the landowners as land speculation and urban development set in, although others took advantage of the free pasturage available. Richard Howitt, who farmed at Alphington in the 1840s, noted that Melbourne's cattle were herded out to unoccupied lands every day to graze, and then herded back at night, and saw of his neighbours graze dairy cows for free on unoccupied private lands (Howitt, 1945). One property that was continuously grazed was Pender's Grove, the unsuccessful boom subdivision and closer settlement that was still largely undeveloped in the 1920s.

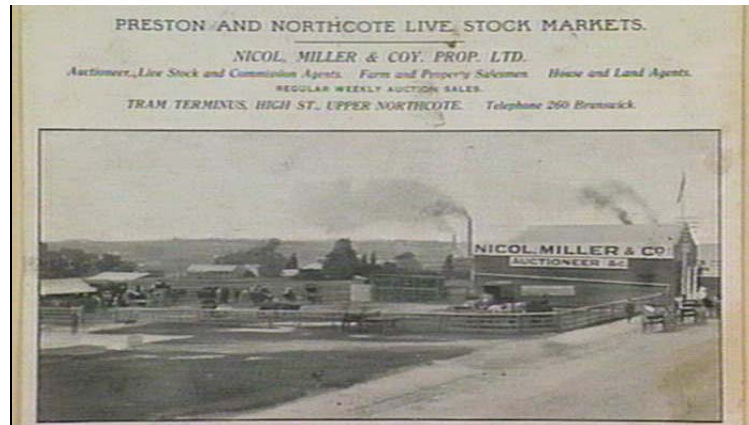
The grazing history of Darebin means that remnants of the grassy native understorey vegetation are very rarely anything near intact.

¹³ 41,332 head of sheep were in the Melbourne settlement by Nov 1836

Figure 28

Preston and Northcote live stock markets. Nicol, Miller & Coy. Prop. Ltd c 1906

[State Library of Victoria,
AN:H89.187/5
IN: a04738



Timber clearing/harvesting

The woodlands of Darebin, being mainly River Red Gum, weren't thought to have much value as building timber. Initially most building timber was imported. What timber was harvested from the Melbourne area was prepared by splitting rather than sawing for use as fencing rails. The wood of River Red Gum is impossible to split into useful lengths, and hard to cut. The only use of the timber was where the branches were straight and a suitable diameter, for fence posts. So initially, settlers had to pay for clearing their land, or resort to clearing it themselves. Lemon notes that:

The trees were giants, 'some of unconscionable girth', six or eight yards around. To grub out the stumps they had to dig to lay bare the roots, and then burn out the last grasp on the soil (Lemon, 1983:11).

Richard Howitt, who in the first land sales bought a block which spanned from the Yarra River north to Darebin Creek, described the impact of his own clearing operations:

Then what curious and novel creatures, bandicoots, flying squirrels (Sugar and Feathertail Gliders), opossums, bats, snakes, iguanas and lizards - we disturbed, bringing down with dust and thunder their old domiciles around their ears. Sometimes also we found nests of young birds and of young wild cats; pretty black creatures, spotted with white. (Howitt, 1945:92)

More was cleared for firewood sale (Lemon, 1983:12), especially as brickworks and boiling down works were set up. Presumably these industries at least initially were wood-fired.

Quarrying

The study area became pockmarked by large quarry holes dug for the raw materials of building brick-making and pottery. Basalt quarries lined the creek banks, clay holes were spread throughout Northcote and southern Preston. Sand and gravel quarries were located in Northcote and Reservoir East. Most of these holes, after they had served their purpose in supplying materials, were used for the disposal of waste, or filled for other uses.

Many outcrops of Darebin's underlying geology were removed by quarrying, not only destroying their geological value, but their habitat values also, as basalt outcrops provided habitat for lizards, snakes, quolls, dunnarts, native rats etc. Quarrying did expose many fascinating sections through Darebin's geology, although these have almost all now been lost through filling.

Pollution of waterways

In the 1860s and 70s, noxious trades like piggeries and boiling-down works were located in Northcote, as noted above. Apart from generating noxious smells, their liquid and often solid wastes ended up in the waterways, along with run-off from legal and illegal nightsoil depots. As the problem became worse Northcote was known for its stink. The Merri Creek tributary

known at the time as Bullen's Drain was notorious. Community concern about the health impacts led to the formation of the Northcote Health League in 1880, which got local councillors elected and argued for control of noxious industries. As noted above they also argued successfully for the separation of Northcote from the rest of the Shire of Jika (Lemon, 1983:73-4). Pressures to clean up the creeks led to the removal of rocks from the Merri Creek and the tipping of large quantities of disinfectant into the creek to "clean it up". Ultimately the construction of a reticulated sewerage system in Melbourne began to divert noxious wastes from the waterways, and their water quality began to improve.

Polluted waters, rubbish, weeds and plain old mud also led to many of the tributaries of the Merri and Darebin Creeks being put into underground pipes. Concerns about flooding led to the containment in channels of sections of Edgars Creek, and the straightening and de-snagging and de-rocking of other waterways in a misguided attempt to get floodwaters away as quickly as possible.

Besides the use of quarries for the disposal of rubbish, swampy areas and creek margins were also filled. Excavation to create the retarding basin in Merri Park Northcote in 1990 spanned an old section of creek-bed which had been filled, revealing a large quantity of glassware and other domestic rubbish.

Even today the creeks are still used in some cases as water supplies. For example, the Northcote Golf Course extracts water under licence from Melbourne Water from Merri Creek.

Hunting and eradication

Apart from habitat removal by grazing, clearing and urban development, wildlife was also directly targeted. Bob Stuart built a hut on the bank of the Yarra somewhere between Fairfield and Darebin Creek in the 1870s. He made his living from trapping animals for the fur trade, and shooting birds, ducks bitterns and bustards, which were displayed on the hooks of city butcher shops.

The more colourful birds such as parrots, kingfishers and egrets supplied feathers to trim the women's hats. Stuart also supplied birds to taxidermists, as it was fashionable to have a glass case of stuffed birds.

Stuart's main source of income came from the trapping of native cats and rats, which were plentiful up both creek valleys. These animals were used for dog baiting. Native cats were most sought after because they fought back, to the great enjoyment of the people who came to watch this barbaric sport.

By 1900 nearly all of Northcote's native animals had vanished, although the native cat survived by raiding chicken coops along the creek valleys, but it was subjected to more modern methods of trapping and by the 1930s disappeared from Northcote (Northcote Historical and Conservation Society, 1988:13).

4.6 Retailing

Local shopping centres had their genesis in early general stores such as Wood's, opened in 1850 on the corner of High and Wood Streets Preston; and Bastings' store in High Street Northcote. While the development of transport networks as described in Chapter 3, particularly the tram along High Street, boosted the development of some centres, they also lured shoppers away to the City and places further afield. After the Second World War car-based centres were developed to serve the new suburbs emerging in the northern parts of the study area.

High Street

Edward Bastings' hay and corn store was a two storey bluestone building constructed in 1854. It served as the district's post office for many years. Across the road, his brother Horace built the Peacock Inn. By the early 1860s Bastings was joined by a saddler, a baker, a chemist, a blacksmith, three hotels and a barber. By 1881 High Street Northcote was well established as

Figure 29

*High Street, Northcote,
(image date unknown)*

[State Library of
Victoria, AN
H32492/1585, IN:
a34210]



Figure 30

*High Street, Thornbury,
1940*

[State Library of
Victoria, AN
H32492/4694, IN:
b01054]



Figure 31

*View of south Preston,
c1910*

[State Library of
Victoria, AN:
H90.160/1043
IN: a04738]

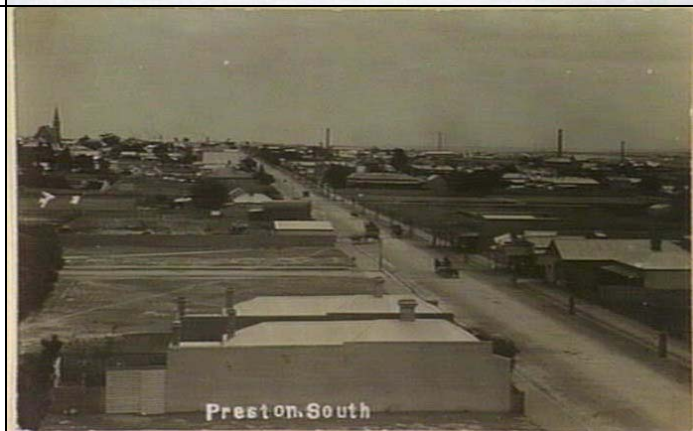
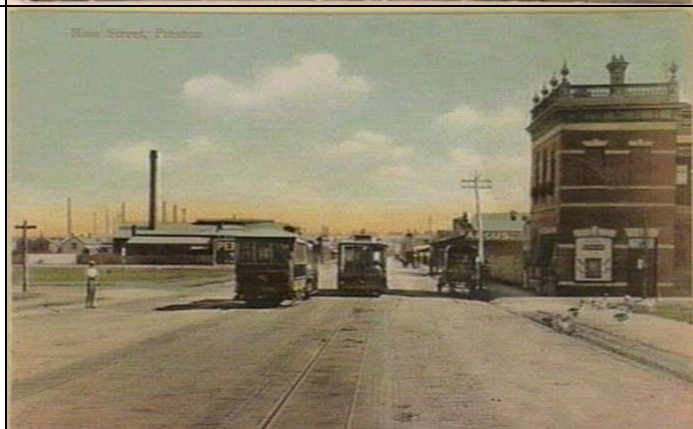


Figure 32

*Postcard showing Main
Street, Preston, 1909*

[State Library of
Victoria, AN
H33673/63, IN:
a03419]



the main shopping centre for the district with three grocers, two ironmongers a watchmaker, draper and a bank. High Street's status as Darebin's main commercial and retail centre was confirmed during the boom of the late 1880s and early 1890s. In these years William Wallis built ten two storey shops in High Street, two banks - the National and the London Chartered - constructed elaborate buildings, and the cable tram began bringing in shoppers. The economic collapse halted development until the turn of the century, when new shops began appearing again. Hattam's opened a large drapery store, and shops began spreading down the hill towards Westgarth. By 1927 over five hundred shops lined High Street, stretching in an almost unbroken line the length of Northcote. By this time another separate centre had developed at the Thornbury end of High Street – this was served by Thornbury Railway Station and the electric tram service along Plenty road.

High Street's main competitor at this time was Smith Street in Collingwood, but despite some local pretensions, it never achieved the fame of that centre or of Chapel Street in Prahran. In 1926, the Northcote Traders Association was formed. It ran free buses from West and East Preston, Fairfield and Reservoir. However, by this time improved train and tram services enabled shoppers to be lured further afield to city shops. After the Second World War High Street was showing signs of decline. In an attempt to modernise, the old shop verandas and their supporting posts were removed, part of a Melbourne-wide phenomenon in the 1950s. Although in decline, High Street remained a regional shopping centre, bringing shoppers from as far as Heidelberg, until the opening of Northland in 1966. The gentrification of Northcote in recent years has brought new life to High Street, where specialty shops and cafés have become the main businesses (Lemon 1983: 44-5, 50-52, 79, 111, 142, 198-200, 253-4; darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia).

Preston

Preston's shopping districts were more fragmented. According to Carroll & Rule (1985:105) Preston in the first decade of the twentieth century did not have 'centre'. With a scattered rural population and no tram services to bring people into a central retailing district until the 1920s, early shops clustered around three main locations - Wood's store in High Street extending to Regent Street; the junction of Plenty Road and High Street, and largest group which extended south from the corner of Bell Street along Plenty Road, where Marshall's store had the post office for South Preston.

In the 1920s the massive growth in population and the improvements to transport services saw the development of new local centres to serve the emerging new suburbs. By the 1930s, the new electric tram services encouraged the development of a ribbon of shops along Plenty Road, mainly on the west side, extending to the Tyler Street tram terminus, while small centres also emerged along Gilbert Road. There was also a small produce market on the corner of Miller Street, which was accessible via the East Preston tram. Along the Whittlesea Railway new centres developed close to stations at Regent, in High Street just to the north of the site of the old Wood's store, and at Reservoir extending east and west of the Station along Edwardes Street and Broadway. (Carroll & Rule, 1985:128; Jones, 1994:56).

Meanwhile, small groups of shops formed at intervals along High Street, between Bell Street and the Town Hall gradually joining up, and by the 1930s Preston's main commercial centre had become concentrated along each side of High Street close to the civic precinct at the Gower Street intersection. The opening of the Preston Market on the old Braithwaite tannery site nearby in 1970 further enhanced the appeal of this centre for shoppers.

Northland

In 1966, Melbourne's second large drive-in shopping centre opened in Preston. Six years earlier Chadstone had been established by retailing giant, Myer, and was a great success in the southern suburbs. Northland, also a Myer project, was an improvement on Chadstone, as all the shops opened off an indoor mall, and it had more parking space. Although Northland was advertised as being in proximity to several railway stations and tram routes, it was not within

walking distance of any. Bus services were provided, however Northland introduced shopping in the car age to Darebin. The development involved the construction of new roads and the John Curtin bridge to link it with Heidelberg, bringing shoppers from further afield to make it a regional shopping centre for the northern suburbs (Carroll, 1985: 193-99). In its first years of trading Northland included a produce market, which was superseded by the Preston Market opened in 1970. Northland has undergone several changes and enlargements in the forty years since it opened.

Figure 33

Northlands shopping centre

[State Library of Victoria, AN H88.40/1018, IN: pi002539]



Providing local shopping and services

Although there was a significant increase in car ownership during the inter-war period, many households did not have access to a car until after the Second War World. As a result, many services had to be provided within walking distance of households and every neighbourhood had its own local shopping centre providing essential items. One staple of daily life was milk, which was delivered to households on a daily basis by small dairies that were established throughout Darebin as noted earlier in this chapter. The establishment of a dairy was one sign of the progress of suburban development during the inter-war period. The daily delivery of milk ceased by the late 1960s and many dairies were closed or converted to corner shops or 'milk bars'.

4.7 Hospitality and entertainment

Hotels

Hotels served a variety of functions, providing accommodation for travellers, entertainment and a meeting place for the local community and refreshments after a day's work. Gowerville Hotel, opened in 1878 was relatively quiet until the 1920s when the Tramways Workshop

commenced nearby, providing hundreds of customers for the traditional after-work drink. The hotel expanded its bar to accommodate them (Edge, 2004: 30).

Roadside inns have been discussed in Chapter 3, however some of these inns took on a new life as the community grew up around them. The Pilgrim Inn, opened on High Street in 1844 by Robert Duff, became the Red House in the 1860s and was run, in conjunction with a horse racing track, by J. Goyder. The race track had a grandstand, and hosted many sporting events including athletics and such 'sports' as pigeon shooting and deer hunting. The hotel was rebuilt and renamed the Croxton Park Hotel, but it continued its sporting associations under publican James Randall. Randall added new grandstands and a training room, and the hotel became the home of the Northcote Football Club. Early in the twentieth century activities at the hotel sportsground attracted the criticism of the local Protestant churches, concerned about drunkenness amongst the young men who frequented the place. They persuaded the Council to refuse registration of the sports ground, but even though Council's decision was upheld in court, the licence was eventually restored (Edge, 2004:22; Lemon, 1983:155-6). Croxton Park Hotel has been rebuilt several times and it now hosts the 'sport' of gambling with its gaming rooms.

Since it opened in 1854, Northcote's Peacock Inn Hotel has played a major role in the community, changing over time to accommodate the community's requirements. Its second owner, George Plant, was a local Councillor and Mayor of Northcote. In many parts of Victoria early municipal bodies held their meetings in hotels before they acquired their own council premises. At Northcote, early Council meetings were held in a room adjoining the Peacock Inn. Plant was also the local contractor who built the Rucker's Hill ramp. On Plant's death in 1891, his wife Catherine took over the licence, and several other women publicans followed. The hotel was rebuilt and remodelled in the *art deco* style in the 1930s, and now includes a bistro and beer garden (Edge, 2004:42).

Figure 34 *Peacock Inn Hotel, c1980*
[DHE, ID 47]



The influence of the Protestant churches through the temperance movement in the early part of the twentieth century led to the closure of many of Melbourne's hotels and also reduced opening hours. From 1906 a formal process of licensing production began to reduce the statutory numbers of Hotels (Butler et al, 1987:viii). One of Darebin hotels to be closed was the Prince Alfred Hotel, on the corner of High and Showers Streets Preston, which traded from 1865 to 1922. The building is now used for retail premises (Edge, 2004:46-7). Another consequence was that in the decade from 1923-1933 many hotels invested in upgrading or replacement of buildings so as to retain their licenses (Butler et al, 1987:viii). The Junction Hotel at 2-4 High Street, Preston is an example of a hotel that was demolished and replaced during that time.

In the sparsely populated northern reaches of Darebin, it was not until the mid twentieth century that hotels appeared. The Reservoir Hotel opened in 1962 to serve the growing community. The Summerhill Hotel was built in 1967 on the site of the Plenty Road sandpits,

and served the new Housing Commission estate population. It included one of the new drive-in bottle shops. After the hotel was destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt in the 1990s to include a gaming room and bistro (Edge, 2004: 48, 52).

Cinemas

Darebin's first experience of moving pictures was at a concert at the Primitive Methodist Church in 1897. By 1910 Northcote people could attend regular films in the town hall, or at a hall in Thornbury known as the Thornbury Picture Palace. Darebin's first purpose-built picture theatre was the Northcote Theatre, in the heart of Northcote on the corner of High and Bastings Streets. Although no longer used as such, it is believed to be Victoria's oldest surviving picture theatre (Lemon, 1983:131, 155, 160-1).

The years following the First World War saw the proliferation of cinemas in the suburbs and some grand picture palaces such as the Capitol Theatre in the city. Several theatres were built during the 1920s in Darebin, including the Regent in Thornbury, the Star, later St James, in Preston, and the Plaza in Northcote (Lemon, 1983:200. 213-4, 225, 259; Carroll & rule, 1985: 150-1).

In 1921, the lavish Westgarth Theatre opened. It was designed and built by local builder John Secull, who was at the start of his career as one of Melbourne's large building firms. The Westgarth has weathered many changes of taste in entertainment, dismissing its orchestra and introducing the talkies in the late 1920s, as the other theatres did. Following the arrival of television many suburban theatres closed. The Westgarth switched to showing Greek films in the 1970s, and in 1987 re-invented itself as Valhalla, showing 'art-house, nostalgic, foreign and at times quirky films' to fill a niche market. The theatre was renovated and restored in the 1990s and reverted to a regular suburban cinema. More recently it has been divided into several small theatres to attract patrons through a choice of program. The Westgarth is Melbourne's oldest cinema still in operation (Lemon, 1983: 200, 266; 'Westgarth Theatre 80th Anniversary': 4).

In the 1950s the new drive-in theatres made their appearance in Melbourne. In 1955 the second Skyline drive-in opened in Plenty Road, Reservoir (Carroll 1985:150). A night at the drive-in was a family outing, which saved on baby sitters. There were playgrounds for the children, who were usually in their pyjamas, so that they were ready for bed when the family arrived home. The drive-in was also popular with courting couples. The Reservoir Skyline site is now a retirement home.

The introduction of television in 1956 sounded the death knell for suburban cinemas in Melbourne. Most of Darebin's cinemas were closed by 1959 and were either converted to other uses or demolished. Only the Westgarth continued operation as a cinema as noted above.

Figure 35

Westgarth Cinema, 2004

Photographer: Rohan Storey

[National Trust (Victoria)
FN: b6619]



Figure 36

Circle Theatre, Plenty Road
1985

[DHE, ID 424]



Café's and restaurants

Cafés and restaurants were rare in Darebin in the 1930s and 40s, apart from hotel dining rooms. In 1934, Jean James commenced the Oakhill Tea Rooms in Plenty Road at the East Preston tram terminus and the end of the suburban part of Darebin. She served sandwiches and Devonshire teas and made cream ice blocks, which were very popular. She sold the business but returned a few years later. During the Second World War, Jean made it into a 'real restaurant with grills and all that type of food':

This was mainly for the Air Force training depot out at Larundel. Mine was the only eating place north, south, east, and west of the services. They used to come from Watsonia [Army barracks] to me, and also from the Heidelberg Hospital. It was a little bit hard at times because they'd get drunk in them, and they'd fight, because the Army hated the Air Force and vice versa. ... I used to have a lot of dealings with soldiers from the First World War that were out at the Repatriation Hospital. They used to come in and some of them were very sad. ...

I used to open at six o'clock in the morning and close at approximately twelve o'clock at night. During the summer I was known to sometimes not close at all because there used to be traffic on the road all the time, with people bringing goods into the market

Jean believed she was one of the first to have an espresso machine, after Pellegrini's in Bourke Street and a café in St Kilda, which 'drew a lot of customers' (Jones 1994:57-9).

The post-Second World War era saw the opening of new cafes, restaurants and social clubs, which catered to particular migrant groups.

Heritage

Some examples of places relating to *Developing Darebin's economies* are:

Utilising natural resources

Farmhouses and outbuildings – examples include *Oakhill* stables, 12 Oakhill Avenue, Preston (within HO precinct), the stables, farm buildings, homestead at Bundoora Park (HO74), bluestone farmhouse, 339 Plenty Road, Preston (HO73), *Bransgroves*, 172 Albert Street, Preston, the former Bartlett 1850s cottage, 66 Spring Street, Preston, Houses at 685, 687 & 689 Gilbert Road associated with small farms that predated later subdivision, Taunton Avenue, named after the Bartlett family's place of origin.¹⁴

Sites of former brickworks or quarries such as All Nations Park and Ray Bramham Gardens

¹⁴ Paul Michel to provide examples of farm houses in Reservoir.

Worker's housing in Langwells Parade (HO98) and Robbs Parade (HO105), both in Northcote, erected by the Patent Brick Co. The streets are named after directors of the company.

Northcote Pottery, 85a Clyde Street, Thornbury (HO176)

Dairies - Centenary Dairy, Heidelberg Road Alphington (HO35), S.G. Tompkins Pty Ltd Dairy and House, 40 Shaftesbury Parade, Thornbury (HO152), and the house and former dairy, 71 Queen Street, Preston

Noxious industries

Former bacon curing factory, cnr. Dundas Street and Plenty Road, Preston (HO30)

Howe Leather Factory, 99-103 High Street, Preston (HO128)

Site of tanning industry at Preston Market

Other manufacturing industries

MMTB workshops, St George's Road, Preston (HO144)

Former Joshua Pitt Pty Ltd, Gadd Street, Northcote

Ensign (now Spotless) Drycleaning, 24 Leinster Grove, Northcote

East Preston (Bell Street) industrial precinct - Boc Gases, Pura Milk, Tuftmaster Carpets

Other factories including, Murray Road, Preston, Sutton Tools factory, Westgarth, the former Tip Top Bakery, cnr High & Regent Streets (further research required) and site of MMBW Pipe Factory, Chifley Drive (further research required)

Melbourne's water supply

Preston Reservoir complex, High Street, Reservoir

Junction Basin, and Maroondah Aqueduct, Cheddar Road

Yan Yean pipetrack and valve houses, St George's Road

Altering the environment

Filled quarries and old rubbish dumps, especially unofficial ones, which could provide archaeological opportunities in the future

Early examples of sewerage/drainage infrastructure

Examples of alterations to waterways, including filling, vegetation removal, rock removal, straightening, channels and piping

Retailing

High Street shopping centres in Northcote, Thornbury, Preston and Reservoir

The nineteenth century shops in Plenty Road, South Preston

Shopping strips in Gilbert Road and Plenty Road along tramway routes

Neighbourhood shops and corner stores, former neighbourhood dairies such as 71 Queen Street, Reservoir and Grandview Dairy, 16 Young Street, Preston

Northland Shopping Centre

Hospitality and entertainment

Hotels – Grandview Hotel (429 Heidelberg Road, Fairfield - HO36), Peacock Inn Hotel (210 High Street), Croxton Park Hotel (607-17 High Street – HO133), Albion Family Hotel (2-10

Charles Street, Northcote – within HO100 precinct) and former Prince Alfred Hotel, 113 High Street, Preston.

Site of Croxton Park Racetrack

Cinemas - Northcote Cinema, Westgarth Cinema, Regent Theatre (Thornbury), Planet Theatre (High Street, Preston), and Rivoli Theatre (71-5 Gilbert Road, Preston)

5 BUILDING SUBURBAN DAREBIN

Introduction

The pattern of Darebin's suburban development was set firstly by its topography, which determined where the most desirable residential sites were located; secondly, by Hoddle's subdivisional grid lines, which ignored the topography but determined the location of the main streets; and thirdly by the subdivision lines made by land agents and speculators. Within this framework was overlaid a transport network as we have seen in Chapter 3, which largely determined the order in which settlement occurred. Some of Darebin's early settlers were wealthy merchants or local businessmen who built large houses in prime locations while others were farmers. Few of these early houses have survived. The majority of permanent settlers in Darebin were working people seeking modest dwellings away from the crowded inner suburbs.

Initial subdivisions of the area left little space for parks, and so Council acquired sites for parks, usually land no longer needed for other purposes, or unsuitable for development. In later years, there have been strong community efforts to restore the natural environment, especially the remaining open spaces along the Merri, Edgars and Darebin Creeks. This theme is also explored further in Chapter 7 in the section entitled *Appreciating and Defending the Environment*.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	2 Associations with towns and settlements
AHT	4 Building settlements, towns and cities; 7.6 Administering Australia

History

5.1 Patterns of settlement

As noted in Chapter 2, many of the early initiatives aimed at settling people in Darebin were not very effective, because much of the land was purchased by speculators who had no intention of settling the land. However, some of the early subdivisions ultimately determined the shape of suburban Darebin.

The original grid survey of the Parishes of Jika Jika and Keelbundora was designed to give each allotment access to water, where possible, with almost all blocks having access to either the Merri or Darebin Creeks. In the area south of today's Murray Road the smaller acreages resulted in long narrow blocks running east west, with short creek frontages at one end. The blocks created a distinctive pattern that is reflected in today's urban layout. The main east-west streets - Westgarth, Darebin, Dundas, Bell Streets and Murray Road - followed the latitudinal allotment boundaries. In the south-east corner the blocks ran north-south, extending to the River Yarra and forming a different pattern from the rest of the area. The Heidelberg Road cut diagonally through the blocks in this corner, which further altered the pattern. Although the area to the south of Heidelberg Road is not in the City of Darebin, it has a shared history with the study area as part of the former City of Northcote.

The development of Darebin's suburbs of Alphington, Fairfield, Northcote, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir, Westgarth, Bundoora, and Keon Park are traced in the following sections. The following sections provide an overview of the development of each municipality.

Northcote

Northcote's remoteness from Melbourne attracted early noxious industries such as piggeries and meat-works, and its natural deposits of clay were exploited for brickmaking. The noxious industries were banished from the central residential area in the 1870s, but Northcote's

brickworks endured for another century. Most of the former clay holes were eventually turned into parks.

Much of central Northcote was built on during the boom years of the 1880s, when middle-class settlers built Victorian terraces and villas, and speculators built rows of workers houses in the lower, less salubrious, areas. However, although most of Alphington was subdivided for sale during the 1880s boom, much of it remained unsold, apart from a few large blocks in the choicest parts, mainly near the Yarra River outside the City of Darebin. In 1900 Alphington was still fairly rural, but some residential development took place following the opening of the railway line to Heidelberg in 1902, with most housing clustered near the station.

Thornbury takes its name from Job Smith's farm, established near the Merri Creek in the 1850s, and subdivided for housing in the 1880s. The opening of the Whittlesea railway in 1889, and the making of St George's Road encouraged other rural landholders in the area to subdivide during the land boom. By 1888 most of the land between High Street and St George's Road was sold. However little development in Thornbury ensued before the boom collapsed. One successful boom-time development was the Prince of Wales Park to the east of High Street, where a community with a school and a couple of churches was established by the early 1890s.

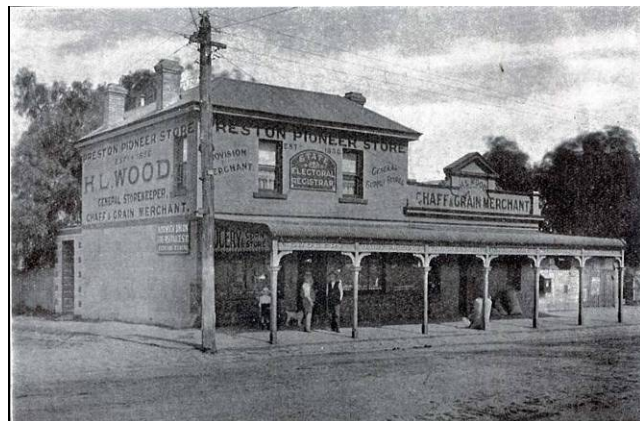
Further urban development took place in Northcote and Thornbury during the early years of the twentieth century and the post-war boom of the 1920s, by which time the suburb was almost fully built over, apart from the poorly drained land along the creek flats, most of which eventually became parklands. Most of Alphington's residential development took place during this time, which followed the electrification of the railway in 1921 when the north running streets filling up from the southern or railway end, and extending across Separation Street. By 1930 Alphington was almost fully settled.

Preston

Preston's early European settlers clustered around two centres. The first cluster was on the corner High and Wood Streets - where Wood's store opened in 1850 - and extended northwards to Tyler Street and the area known as Irishtown, later Regent. The second focal point was at the junction of High Street and Plenty Road, South Preston where some of Darebin earliest industries, including brickworks and bacon factories, were established in the 1860s and 1870s.

Entrepreneurs took advantage of Preston's isolation to set up industries that were classed as noxious - industries, such as tanning, wool scouring, meat processing and boiling down works. The availability of water along the pipeline from the Yan Yean Reservoir from 1857 was also an important incentive for these industries coming into the area. By the end of the nineteenth century a large number of tanneries and bacon factories occupied south central Preston. These industries attracted workers and the beginnings of an urban population amongst the small farms in South Preston.

Figure 37 *Woods General Store, Preston
c1900*
[DHE, ID 411]



As noted in Chapter 3 the Whittlesea railway through Northcote and Preston, opened in 1889, and the cable tram system to the Preston border at Dundas Street, also encouraged a little suburban development. Although Preston, like the rest of Melbourne, was swept up in the land boom of the 1880s, few of Preston's boom subdivisions were successful and many estates remained as open paddocks for two or three decades more. Preston continued to be an important agricultural district, particularly for dairying, market gardening and flower growing, supplying produce to Melbourne well into the twentieth century.

Preston Shire Hall, later known as the Town Hall, was built in 1895 on a site that was central to the two early settlement clusters and close to the Preston railway station. As the economy recovered in the early twentieth century, commercial and residential development gradually began to fill in the gap between the two early clusters. Preston experienced much more rapid suburban growth during the post First World War boom era of the 1920s. In this decade Preston experienced phenomenal growth, with the highest birth rate in Victoria in 1927 and a large amount of migration, both from the inner suburbs of Melbourne and, to a lesser extent, from overseas, mainly Britain.

Reservoir takes its name from the three service reservoirs that were built in the area in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth century, as part of Melbourne's Yan Yean water supply system. The area does not seem to have been referred to as Reservoir until the end of the 1920s. Before that it was considered part of Preston, and it shared the same development history as Preston — as a district of dairy farms, market gardens and flower gardens, supplying the Melbourne market well into the twentieth century.

Reservoir experienced two key periods of suburban expansion. The first was in the 1920s when like the rest of Preston, Reservoir shared in the post-First World War boom particularly in the central area along the axis of High Street that had access to the railway, which in 1921 was electrified as far as Reservoir station as noted in Chapter 3. In that era small shopping strips took shape along High Street and in the area surrounding Reservoir railway station. The first suburban development of weatherboard bungalows occurred along Edwardes Street and in adjoining streets to the north and south. However at that stage Reservoir still lacked the secondary and extractive industries that characterised Preston.

After a cessation in activity due to the 1930s depression and the Second World War, Reservoir's second major period of urban expansion occurred began in the late 1940s, when most of the remaining farmland was converted into housing estates, including some large Housing Commission of Victoria estates in the east and north. In this period an industrial precinct was also commenced in the north west of Reservoir, and the Broadway shopping centre developed. In the northern part of Reservoir new residential development is still taking place on land formerly used for psychiatric institutions.

By the end of the inter-war period the two old hubs - South Preston at the junction of High Street and Plenty Road, and Preston at the corner of Wood and High Streets - were lost, as Preston's main centre focused on the area bounded by Murray Road, Gower Street, Plenty Road and the railway. This area included the civic centre and the growing High Street shopping centre (Carroll & Rule, 1985:173). There was still little urban settlement north of Broadhurst Avenue in Reservoir, where cows still roamed the paddocks, or to the east along the Darebin Creek valley.

5.2 Creating early village settlements

Alphington

Alphington village was a private village subdivision made by William Manning in 1854. The village straddled Heidelberg Road, near the Darebin Creek crossing, and was a stopping place for travellers. By the early 1860s, Alphington had a few shops, two hotels, including Freeman's Alphington Hotel, and a Wesleyan Church. Apart from its main road location, Alphington Village was isolated from the centre of Darebin's development for many years. The only shop

remaining from the early village is King's butcher shop, on the south side of Heidelberg Road, outside the City of Darebin (Lemon, 1983:48).

Lower Northcote (Westgarth)

Hoddle surveyed the village reserve for the Parish of Jika Jika to the west of the Merri Creek, so that Pentridge village was in present day Coburg, outside Darebin. At the southern end of Darebin, land in a bend of the Merri Creek was reserved for a future township. Here, in 1853, the Town of Northcote was laid out. Its northernmost street was named after William Westgarth, a prominent Melbourne merchant. A small temporary bridge across the creek at High Street gave access to the town. However, few of the purchasers actually settled in the township, and by 1861 only 37 houses had been built (Lemon, 1983:41).

One purchaser who did settle in the Town of Northcote was Collingwood builder John Grinrod, who built *West Bend* in McLachlan Street facing the Merri Creek. *West Bend*, although much altered, is believed to be the township's oldest surviving residence. Grinrod died relatively young, but his wife Ann lived in the house until her death in 1910. By this time the house had been rebuilt in brick. John and Ann's grand-daughter Dorothea married John Cain, a Northcote resident who was Victoria's premier in the 1940s and 50s. (Lemon, 1983:41; Butler 1992). Their son John Cain also served as premier in the 1980s. Northcote thus had a very early connection with Labor politics, a theme that will be explored in Chapter 6.

John May of Fitzroy purchased an allotment in Cunningham Street but did not build his house, *Mayville*, there until about 1872. However, he took an early interest in Northcote, because in 1857 he was elected to a committee to decide on a site for an Anglican Church (Butler 1992). The committee chose a government reserve in the Township, and All Saints Church was opened in 1860. A bluestone police station was opened on the police reserve in Walker Street in 1861, although there had been temporary police quarters on the site since 1854. The location of the Anglican Church and police station confirmed 'Lower Northcote' as the official township, however most settlement was taking place at 'Upper Northcote' on Rucker's Hill. Lower Northcote is now known as Westgarth.

Other surviving houses from early Lower Northcote include Ball's house at 47 Cunningham Street and William Dennis' house at 34 Walker Street, both built in the 1860s, Frederick Kelson's 1873 house at 7 Walker Street, and *Terracedale*, William Brown's house at 3 McLachlan Street (Butler, 1992).

Figure 38

77 Cunningham St.
Northcote, 1983

Photographer: John T.
Collins

[State Library of Victoria,
AN H98.250/1292,
INjc012984]



Upper Northcote (Northcote)

Northcote was first known as Upper Northcote, as distinct from Lower Northcote (Westgarth) where the government township was laid out. It is believed that Northcote was named after British parliamentarian Sir Stafford Northcote, by Surveyor-General Andrew Clarke, who was an early Northcote resident. The heights of Northcote attracted residents of high standing in colonial Victoria, such as Clarke, and wealthy businessmen, such as William Rucker as noted below.

Settlers moving into the area tended to prefer the higher ground of Rucker's Hill, or Upper Northcote, where private subdivision were made in the 1850s the nucleus of Northcote took shape in the 1850s. By the end of the decade there were 170 houses in the district, many of them small cottages and shops. Some of these can still be seen on the south slope of Rucker's Hill. Upper Northcote attracted a number of wealthy business and professional people besides William Rucker, whose mansion *Sunnyside* crowned the top of the hill. Nehemiah Wimble, a senior civil servant, built *St Neots*, and merchant Norman Guthridge built *Turret House*. Another merchant John Gull Johnson constructed the Italian Renaissance style *Beaumont* at 11 Bastings Street in 1867. It was later the home of tannery owner Joshua Pitt for twenty years and is the only surviving mansion of the era (Lemon, 1983:43; Summerton, 1997:17; Butler 1992).

Figure 39

St Neots
(image date unknown)
[DHE, ID 481]



Upper Northcote also attracted up-and-coming professional men, such as carpenter Edward Twentyman, who bought the four-room cottage at 46 Bastings Street in 1867. He enlarged the house, clad it with brick and added a verandah. Twentyman joined David Askew to form a prominent Melbourne firm of architects. They designed a number of Darebin's buildings, including the former Northcote Library and Northcote Theatre, and probably the engine house for the cable tram system (Butler, 1992).

Irishtown/Preston

Preston did not have a planned village or township. For its first two decades, it was a scattered district of small farmers, with a few larger grazing properties in the north as noted in Chapter 4. In the 1860s, the area between Dundas Street and Murray Road was occupied as small farms of up to 16 hectares and north of Murray Road the country was still closely wooded with red gum. North of Tyler Street Samuel Jeffrey, the Irishman for whom the district was named, was the first to buy land and commence farming. He also started a Methodist Church in his barn in 1852. Jeffrey was joined in the 1850s by James Tyler and some of the group of Particular

Baptists who had briefly occupied the district before trying their luck on the goldfields. Tyler was said to have been the first to build a substantial house in the district. Edward Wood also purchased land and commenced farming, as well as opening his store on the corner of Wood and High Streets. His bluestone store became the centre of the local community.

Another early centre of farming was the Goodwin subdivision of small farms in the area bounded by Dundas, High and Bell Streets and the Merri Creek. Goodwin's house *Oakover Hall* is the only one left of the few large houses built in the district in this era. The small farmers built modest cottages, usually of timber, and a few remain in Plenty Road near Gower Street (Carroll & Rule, 1985:25-7; Forster 1968:20-4; Summerton, 1997:15).

Figure 40

Oakover Hall, 1975

Photographer:
John T. Collins

[National Trust (Victoria),
FN: b3716]



5.3 Developing the suburban ideal

Nineteenth century 'boom time'

As noted in Chapter 2, much of the land within Darebin was subdivided and offered for sale during Melbourne's land boom in the late nineteenth century. Although Darebin was poorly served by transport systems in the 1880s, much of central Northcote was built on during these years. Preston also joined in the land boom with enthusiasm, with 25 estates on offer, mostly in the central area south of Tyler Street. The arrival of the railway in 1889 stimulated sales, and by 1891 Preston's population had risen from 2054 to 3568. According to Carroll, new residents were mainly newly-weds moving out from Fitzroy, Collingwood and Northcote. They rented, built or bought simple timber double-fronted Victorian villas or single-fronted cottages. However, by the end of the boom many of the blocks in the estates remained unoccupied, and only the south central part of Preston had begun to take on a suburban character (Carroll, 1985:69-71).

Mansions and middle class villas

Bellevue Park Estate bounded by James Street in the south and Westbourne Grove was sold in 1884, and the part facing High Street was acquired for the new Northcote Borough's civic precinct. Bellevue Park Estate and the higher parts of Northcote nearby attracted people in the skilled trades, professional and business classes and civil servants. They built or purchased Victorian terraces and villa houses. *Grandview* in Prospect Grove was built by butcher William Smith, who established one of Northcote's leading bacon factories. In the same street, *Olinda*, was built by William Swift, the town clerk of Northcote Borough. Frederick Harris, who owned one of Northcote's brick and pottery works, built *Barunah*, the Italianate mansion on the corner of Dundas and Newcastle streets. When the boom collapsed the demand for building materials ended and Harris' company, the Builders Brick and Tile Supply Co. went into liquidation. Their brickworks site in South Preston was only redeveloped

for residential use after the great Depression of the 1930s. MacPherson Robertson the confectioner, built *Carmalea* in Station Street, Fairfield, moving there from Fitzroy where he had commenced his MacRobertson's Confectionary Company (Butler, 1992). Sales of sweets did not decline as much as the sales of bricks during the depression, and MacRobertson's became a highly successful firm, with its founder recognised as a great Melbourne benefactor, particularly during the depression of the 1930s.

To the east, Fairfield also experienced development. Barnet Glass, who established a large rubber manufacturing business in Melbourne, built his mansion *Hills View*, at 849 Heidelberg Road in 1890. Charles Henry James' Fulham Grange and Fairfield Park estates straddled Heidelberg Road, stretching down to the Yarra River. The one acre lots with river frontages were sold for 'gentlemen's residences' or 'family mansions'. They are now outside Darebin's boundaries. The smaller lots in the northern parts of the estates were promoted to 'the Working Man'. James's 'working men's' subdivisions were characterised by long narrow streets, such as Rathmines, Gillies, Mansfield, Rossmoyne and Gooch, with no reserves for recreation. Lemon points out that Northcote escaped the very cramped urban settlement of the neighbouring inner suburbs, because its 1880s subdivisions featured blocks that were relatively generous but not large enough for further subdivision (Lemon, 1983:141-2).

At Preston some boom time speculators built houses on their estates to encourage development. Two such houses were built in May Street in 1890, and one was occupied by one of the developers, but no further development occurred until the 1920s.

By the turn of the twentieth century wealthier middle class people, and people on the road to success, were taking up residence in Northcote, as highlighted by the larger Federation and Queen Anne villas such as *Lugano* and *Mandalay* in Clarke Street. *Nyora* in Normanby Street was built in 1905 by Oliver Gilpin, who had just commenced his soft-goods and drapery business that eventually expanded to a chain of stores throughout Victoria and neighbouring states (Butler, 1992). As he prospered Gilpin moved to a large house in Malvern, and later built a mansion in Balwyn.

Figure 41

'Lugano', 215 Clarke Street, 1984

Photographer:
John T. Collins

[State Library of Victoria,
A N: H98.250/1284, IN:
jc012976]



Working class housing

Speculators in the nineteenth century built many rows of workers houses, and although they were mostly of better standard than those in the cramped inner industrial suburbs such as Collingwood, there were still some local concerns about their quality, especially the fire-prone timber terraces. With no building regulations before 1887, developers crammed as many houses as possible into their estates. By this time over 1500 new houses had been built in Northcote and Fairfield, and many more were to follow over the next few years.

Figure 42

*Workers cottages,
Northcote Place
(image date
unknown)*

[DHE, ID 468]



On the lower slopes of Rucker's hill pairs of brick cottages and terraces, such as at 5-11 Clarke Street, housed trades people and clerical workers. (Lemon, 1983:80; Butler 1992) Workers' houses also provided investment income to local businessmen, such as the dye-works owner William Lawrence, who built five timber workers cottages in Westgarth Street and rented them out. Four of them still exist (Butler, 1992).

In Preston small groups of worker's cottages were built in streets running off Plenty Road and High Street close to the brickworking and tanning industries that established there in the late nineteenth century. In 1890, the South Preston Brick and Tile Co. built houses for its workers in Raglan Street adjacent to the brick kilns.

Twentieth century recovery

Economic recovery and the provision of improved transport facilities brought a new era of suburban development to Darebin in the new century. Once again people started moving out from the crowded inner northern suburbs and a new wave of suburban development began. By 1914, Northcote's growth was sufficient for the municipality to be raised in status, and the City of Northcote was proclaimed in April.

Figure 43

*Celebrations in High
Street, Northcote for the
proclamation of the City of
Northcote, 27 May 1914*

[DHE, ID 805]



As previously noted, Preston experienced phenomenal growth during the 1920s and within the four years from 1922 to 1926, Preston was raised from a shire, through the stages of Borough and Town to the City of Preston, proclaimed on 14 July 1926.

Developing working class suburbs

The improvements to transport systems by the early twentieth century encouraged the development of new estates in Northcote in the early decades of the twentieth century. On the Railway Department's new subdivision at Westgarth, William Lawrence built four workers

cottages for investment (Lemon 1983: 141-2; Butler 1992). These houses display the new Federation style that characterises the house in this estate and surrounding area, and housing that spread through Northcote, Fairfield and parts of Thornbury prior to the First World War.

As noted above Preston waited until Australia's post-war industrial expansion of the 1920s for its boom. The 1920s was a time of population increase, as servicemen returned from war and settled down to have families, and a new wave British immigrants arrived. Preston then attracted more than its share of population growth and also attracted industries moving out from inner suburbs, and new factories starting up - the largest being the Tramway Workshop opened in 1925 - which were settling on vacant land away from the centre. Some of Preston's existing industries, such as Hutton's bacon factory and the Clifton Brickworks were also expanding. The industries needed workers, and the workers needed houses. In 1925, the Preston Tramway Corner Estate to the west of St George's Road was sold and a year later all the houses in Stephen and Gillingham Streets and part of Davies Street had been built and occupied, many of them by workers in the Workshops. The predominant housing style there was the Californian bungalow (Ward 2000:127-30).

As noted in Chapter 3 improved transport links - the electrification of the railway as far as Reservoir in 1921 and the two new electric tram routes east and west from High Street - drew new housing development to the outer areas along the train and tram lines. An 1880s subdivision known as the Preston Railway Estate - which was further from the railway than the name suggests and consequently had only ten houses by 1918 - began to fill with houses when the Gilbert Road tram line commenced. Near the Regent Street terminus at Reservoir, new streets were given names commemorating the war, such as Monash and Birdwood. By 1929, there were a number of shops in Spring and Edwardes streets. East of Plenty Road 120 new houses were built in Madeline, Malpas and Rene Streets near the East Preston tram terminus in Plenty Road (Carroll, 1985:130-1).

Developing garden suburbs

Preston Council, in order to prevent Preston becoming like Collingwood, imposed minimum allotment sizes of 40 foot (12.2 m) and 50 foot (15.2m) frontages. The Preston Tramway Corner Estate, with its deep front gardens and nature strips highlighted this new approach to town planning and the ideal of the Garden Suburb. Merrilands and Leslie Estates in Reservoir were designed by the eminent town planner and surveyor, Saxil Tuxen, who had previously worked on 'model' garden suburb estates such as Ranelagh at Mount Eliza. They were planned on model garden suburb principles, with curving streets and sites for civic buildings, parks and a railway station, but they were too far out, and remained vacant for many years. The Housing Commission eventually built on Merrilands Estate after World War Two (Forster, 1968: 90; Carroll, 1985:127, Summerton, 1997:36-7, 44). However large areas of Preston were covered with modest timber or brick houses on quarter acre blocks during the 1920s and, to a lesser extent, the 1930s, so that Preston came to epitomise the 'Australian dream' of honest suburban working-class values (Summerton, 1997:49-50).

This period of growth and prosperity also saw the emergence of some middle-class housing estates in Preston, particularly on elevated land close to transport such as the Oakhill Estate.

Figure 44

Preston settlement patterns – 1890s
 [Carroll, 1985:65]

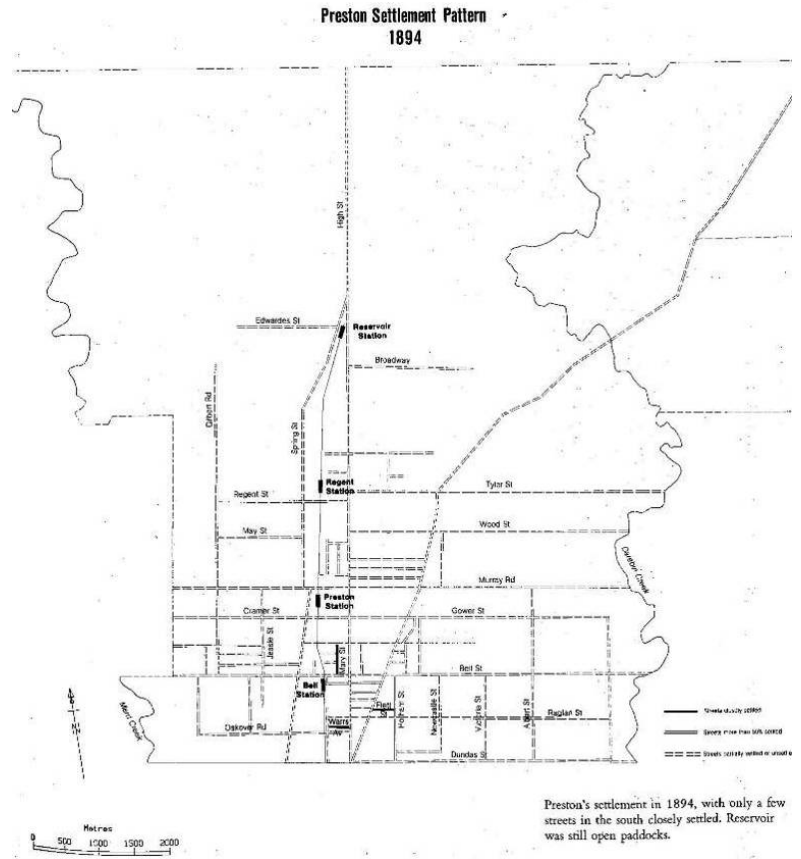


Figure 45

1930s
 [Carroll, 1985:135]

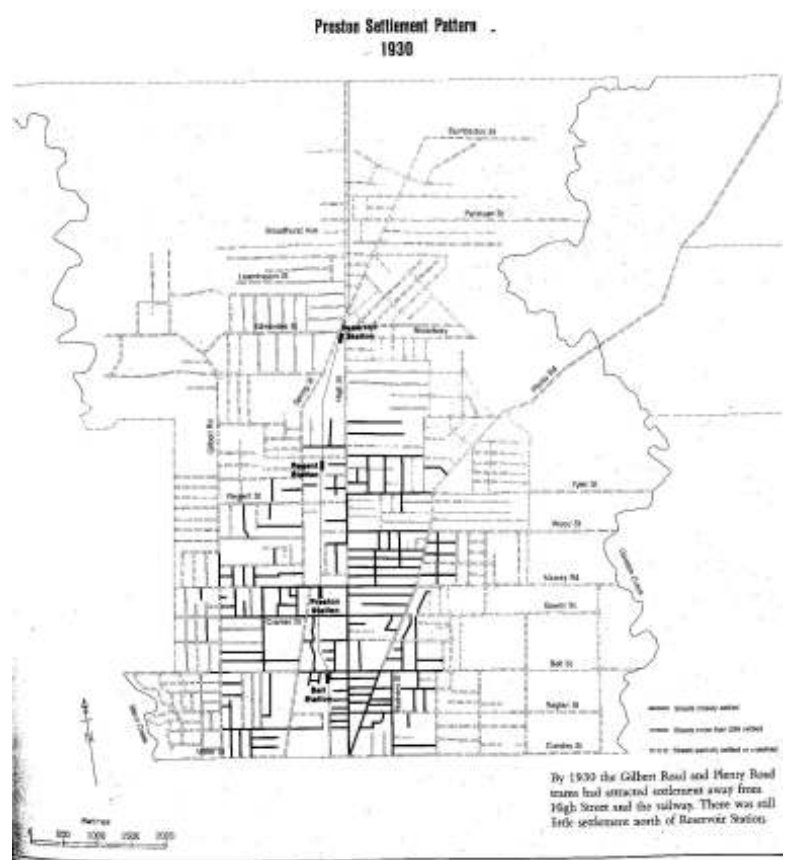


Figure 46

Preston settlement - 1945
[Carroll, 1985:174]

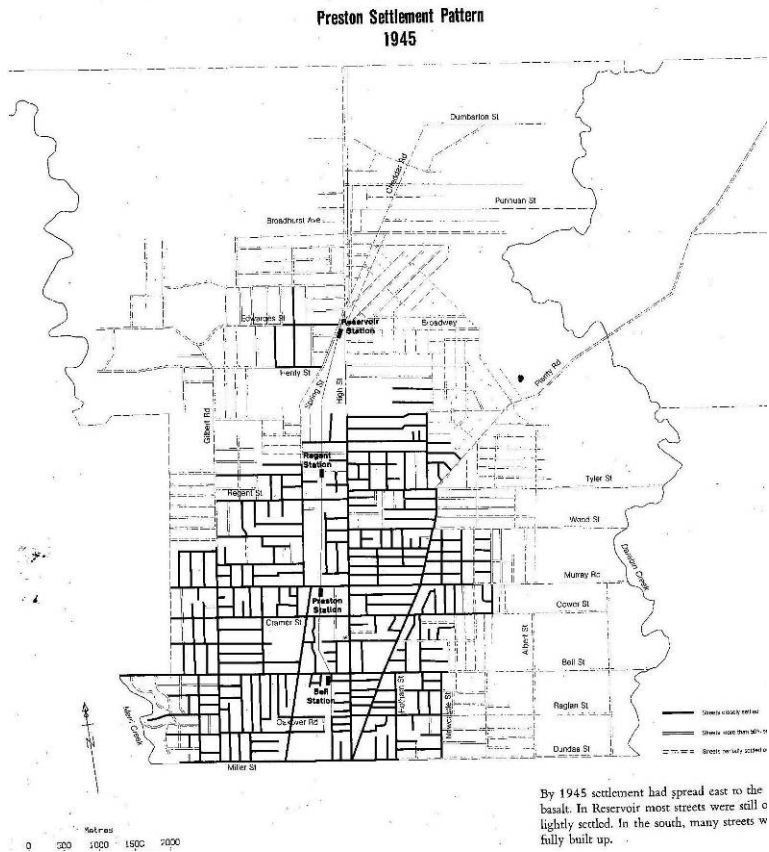


Figure 47

Preston settlement - 1963
[Carroll, 1985:182]



Many of the houses in the inter-war subdivisions throughout Darebin were constructed with the assistance of the State Savings Bank of Victoria as noted in section 2.4. George Burrigge Leith, chief architect of the Bank Building Department from 1921 until his retirement in 1953 was one of the most influential men in the Bank and by the mid-1920 presided over one of the fastest growing and most prestigious departments. He designed a series of 'Bank homes' - plans for standard homes, which sub-contractors built under the supervision of the Bank's Building Department. Up to 30 designs were produced by the Department (Murray & White, 1992:207-17).

Credit foncier borrowers from the SSBV could choose one of the bank's own house designs, or choose their own design. Whatever the design, the bank required a high standard of construction/supervision, which seems to have been the basis for the very high reputation of a 'State Bank house' for many years.

The model of garden suburbs was also adopted by the Housing Commission of Victoria and the War Service Homes Commission in their approaches to estate planning and layout. The HCV estates were designed by the Commission's Architects Panel, and were laid out along modern town planning lines, wherever possible (HCV 2nd Annual Report). One of the first estates was the 3.1 acre site on Oakover Road that was acquired by the Housing Commission in 1939 and was partly completed by mid 1940. In creating Kenwood Court the designers aimed to apply the 'garden city' principles espoused by the houses that faced onto a garden area 'somewhat reminiscent of the village square'. (HCV 2nd Annual Report, p.9) However, the Commission's architects were constrained by the small size of many of the early estates, which often had to conform to pre-existing subdivision patterns. A smaller Housing Commission estate at Newmarket Street, Northcote completed in 1942 has 34 brick houses and features Garden Suburb ideas in the planning of the landscape (Ward, 2000:22-3).

The West Preston estate, developed from 1946, was much larger than those estates previously purchased by the Commission in Preston, and was an unsubdivided area. This gave the architects the opportunity to create a true 'garden city' estate. The subsequent layout of the West Preston-Reservoir Estate, with its curving crescents and cul-de-sacs, contrasted markedly with the surrounding patterns of straight parallel streets. Garden city principles were also evident in another post-World War Two estate developed in 1948 by the Commission in Paywit Street where the houses were situated around a centrally located park containing a playground.

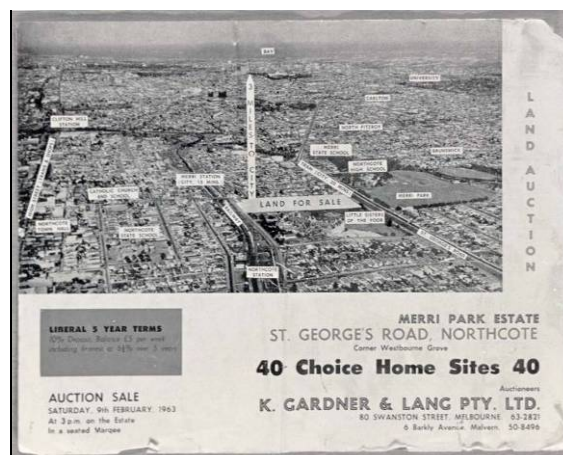
Suburban expansion in the post-war era

Another depression and another war slowed any further development for over a decade, before a new boom commenced in the late 1940s and changed the pattern of Darebin's settlement and the cultural make-up of its population. The northern and eastern extremities of Preston remained rural or semi-rural until the second half of the twentieth century, when they were filled up by post Second World War housing and industrial development.

Figure 48

Post WW2 land sales in Northcote: Merri Park Estate advertisement, 1963

[DHE, ID 497]



This was the major period of urban expansion for Reservoir when most of the remaining farmland was converted into housing estates, including some large Housing Commission of Victoria estates in the east and north. Between 1949 and 1954, 2,500 new private houses were built in Preston (Carroll & Rule, 1985:189) in addition to the thousands of Housing Commission houses outlined below. In this period an industrial precinct was also commenced in the north west of Reservoir, and the Broadway shopping centre developed. In the northern part of Reservoir new residential development is still taking place on land formerly used for psychiatric institutions.

As mentioned in Chapter 2 a large number of immigrants from Britain and continental Europe settled in the area, to take up the plentiful jobs in the local factories. They were followed by people from the Middle East and Asia, who established new places of worship and cultural institutions.

Desmond Jervis moved to Keon Park in 1946, when it was 'a fully country area, with dairy farming'.

They were just starting to build houses when we came here. ... It was pretty constant from about 1949, and started to fill in. All those original neighbours they've gone now, most of them, but they all started to come in around the same time after the war. The nearest shop was in Epping Rd, or High St, two-thirds of the way to Reservoir. There was a grocer's shop, a hairdresser's and a milk bar. (Jones 1994: 93-6)

As noted in Chapter 3 train travel was made more convenient in 1959 with the duplication of the line between Reservoir to Lalor and in 1963 when the long stretch of line between Reservoir and Keon Park was broken by the new Ruthven Station (Carroll & Rule, 1985:143). However, as people began purchasing cars they were no longer tied to public transport routes and suburban development moved out beyond the tramlines into northern Reservoir around Edwardes Lake and along Cheddar Road. Here the brick veneer houses set in neat gardens on quarter acre blocks continue to express the 'Australian dream' already encapsulated in Preston's streets.

Meeting post-war housing shortages

Howe (1988:69) notes that there was an acute housing shortage in Victoria at the end of World War Two and well into the 1950s. This shortage was caused by a number of factors that extended back to the 1920s and included the curtailment of housing construction during the 1930s depression, the failure of the building industry to make up the shortfall of the late 1930s, and the restrictions on housing construction enforced by the Commonwealth during World War Two. Victoria's high rate of post-World War Two population growth, the largest of all Australian states and a shortage of building materials compounded the problem (Howe, 1988:70).

Faced with this dilemma the Commission and other government agencies involved in the provision of housing sought solutions to the crisis. For the Commission this involved concentrating on providing low-cost housing for 'as many families in as many centres as funds and materials would allow' (Howe, 1988:69). The Commission restricted its slum reclamation programs and for the decade after the war the Commission devoted all available funds to the construction of houses and flats. During 1945-60 the Commission constructed approximately 15% of all units completed in Victoria.

To meet the housing shortage the Commission developed methods for producing low-cost pre-fabricated housing. One project involved the importation of 2,700 prefabricated timber houses in an attempt to accelerate the rate of construction. An estate of houses provided by Thermo Insulated Units London was erected at East Reservoir in the late 1940s.

Figure 49 *HCV pre-fabricated timber housing, Reservoir*
[Context 2008]



Another method, which gained more widespread application by the Commission was prefabricated concrete houses using a system originally devised by T.W. Fowler of Werribee. As early as 1939 the Commission had built 60 concrete houses at its first estate at Fishermen's Bend to test its application to low-cost housing. In 1946 the Fowler process was adapted by Commission to production line procedures at a factory at Holmesglen and the enterprise became known as the Concrete House Project. During 1948-49 the Concrete House Project had completed 503 concrete houses and in 1951 the number had almost doubled to 962. These concrete houses were chosen for working-class housing because of their low production cost, far below that of either brick or timber houses (Howe, 1988:129-30, HCV Annual Report, 1953-54:11). The Commission built large estates in Preston including the Summerhill Estate using prefabricated concrete construction from the Commission's Holmesglen factory.

Another Government agency that struggled with the post-Second World War housing shortage was the Victorian Railways. In the 1950s the Victorian Railways sought to improve the railway network to cope with the demands the post-war boom and to alleviate the shortage of labour, they recruited tradesmen and other railway workers from overseas, mainly Britain. Victorian Railways sought 1200 men at first, but were forced to revise the number to 750 because of Victoria's housing shortage. Part of the enticement was the assurance of employee housing (Banner & Rigg; *Annual Report 1951-52*).

In what has been described as a 'unique program in Australia', the solution to the housing shortage was the importation from England of kit houses, known as 'pre-cut' houses, for assembly on site. The program was nicknamed 'Operation Snail' not to imply slowness - the whole program seems to have been carried out quite quickly - but rather because the immigrants were coming with their own houses. In 1949 1500 pre-cut houses were ordered from W.V. Simms, Sons & Cooke Ltd of Nottingham and by late 1951 392 of the new pre-cut houses were erected and occupied, mostly by the immigrant railwaymen and their families, but some by existing railway staff (Banner & Rigg).

These pre-cut Railway houses were erected throughout metropolitan and country Victoria, with the largest concentration by far being at Sunshine, where several hundred were erected. In Darebin a small group was erected at Farnan Avenue in Westgarth, there was another small group of four houses in Wingrove Street, Fairfield. (Banner & Rigg)

Developing higher density housing

The Housing Commission of Victoria had included single persons flats on its Raglan Street estate in 1940 and in the post-World War Two era built large complexes of walk up flats in Carole-Joy Avenue as part of the West Preston estate in Merrilands in Strathmerton Street and McMahon Road. The Commission also built apartment blocks for elderly tenants including

the Frank Wilkes Court beside Northcote Park, and Roberts Street Northcote and Agg Street Thornbury (Lemon, 1983:257, 266).

In the 1960s and 70s Darebin began to experience the new phenomenon of flat building. This was a growing trend in Melbourne's middle suburbs, aimed at young baby boomers leaving home. Flats were also a response to a high level of migration. Between 1966 and 1971 private developers demolished 270 houses and replaced them with 3000 flats in Northcote. Prior to 1971 there were few Council limits to the nature and density of flat developments, and like the working class developers of the nineteenth century, twentieth century flat developers tried to maximise profits by squeezing as many units onto a site as possible. This approach was also used by the Housing Commission for Frank Wilkes Court. By 1976 35% of Northcote's dwellings were flats, well above the average for metropolitan Melbourne, but not as high as St Kilda and Prahran (Lemon, 1983:264-6; *Encyclopedia of Melbourne*: 271).

Rediscovery, new beginnings and gentrification

From the mid twentieth century Northcote and Preston's old working-class housing stock also attracted post-war European immigrants, particularly Greeks, who also took over some of the old churches for Orthodox worship as described in Chapter 7.

Towards the end of the twentieth century middle class suburban dwellers began moving into Melbourne's inner suburbs in the process known as gentrification. They took over many of the workers' cottages in Carlton, Richmond and Brunswick and renovated them to capture a romanticised notion of the Victorian cottage. By the end of the century, gentrification had spilled out to Northcote, re-introducing a middle class element to what had become a strongly working class suburb (*Encyclopedia of Melbourne*: 300, 512).

A new phenomenon of the twenty-first century is the filling up of the large areas of land in the Darebin Valley previously occupied by the large psychiatric institutions in MacLeod and Bundoora with middle class housing estates such as Mount Cooper Estate and Springthorpe, advertised as 'an exclusive master planned community in a beautiful environment' (www.springthorpe.com.au) and Lancaster Gate.

5.4 Supplying urban services

Local water supplies

Darebin's first water supplies were taken from the Merri and Darebin Creeks. In 1864 Brunswick resident, Theodotus Sumner built a weir on the Merri Creek in Northcote, and local people carted their water from there (Lemon 1983: 57). Since then the waterways have lost their significance as a general water supply, but are still used for irrigation to this day.

Springs were also used as water supplies. Spring Street got its name from a spring in a slight dip in Regent Street, just west of Spring Street. It used to percolate down to Bayliss Street and Spring Street (Jones, 1994:81). Water from Rucker's Hill would seep through to the exposed layers at the south face, and the fresh water bubbled out of the cliff face in natural springs on to the basaltic rock plain at Westgarth and then make its way down towards the Merri Creek. Along the way natural rock wells were formed, the most notable of which was near the alluvial plain at West Bend, opposite where Rushall Station is now. This well was renowned for its crystal-clear water, which was in plentiful supply even in times of severe drought (Harcourt, 2001:195).

Although the Yan Yean pipeline ran right through the length of Darebin, there was no reticulated water to residents until 1869, and then only if the consumer guaranteed to Council payment of interest on the outlay made by the water supplier. It was not until after the turn of the century that the built-up parts of Darebin were all connected to the supply. Meanwhile standpipes were provided at various points, including Murray Road - then known as Water Road - and at the Junction Hotel, from where water could be carted to consumers at one shilling a load (Forster, 1968:41; Carroll, 1985:30).

Gas and electricity

Gas lighting came to Northcote after the Merri Creek bridge was built at High Street in 1875. The bridge carried the Metropolitan Gas Company's pipes across from Fitzroy. In the 1880s the Metropolitan Gas Company was reluctant to extend its mains to the less populated parts of Darebin, so a local group of speculators formed the Northern Gas Company. The Company proposed to build their own gasworks, but instead, purchased the gas from Metropolitan and extended its mains along St George's Road to Preston, supplying Metropolitan gas at a higher price to Preston consumers. Northcote Council refused to participate at first, so Preston was about a year ahead of parts of Northcote in receiving gas (Lemon, 1983:98-9). The gas did not reach the northern parts of Preston, however. According to Sydney Bartlett, the streets of Preston had kerosene lamps, then acetylene gas, before the gas mains arrived at the turn of the century (Bartlett b).

Electricity supplies were late coming to Darebin. The Northcote and Clifton Brick Companies generated their own supplies. In 1913, Northcote Council agreed to buy electricity from the Melbourne Electric Supply Company and built the necessary substation near the Merri Creek bridge and poles along St George's Road. Preston Council continued the poles, and built three substations, one of them on the corner of Oakover and St George's Road. The power was switched on in Northcote and Preston in May 1914, however it only served the built-up areas, and was extended as development took place. The electricity was not connected beyond Purinuan Road Reservoir until about 1946 (Lemon, pp. 162-3; Jones, 1994:87). In 1920, the State Electricity Commission took over the supply of electricity from all local companies, but both Northcote and Preston Councils continued to buy the current in bulk and distribute it to consumers. This proved to be a lucrative venture for both councils. A substation on the corner of Murray and St George's Roads enabled the transmission of power to Reservoir. The development of Darebin's industries in the twentieth century made it necessary to increase the supply to three phase voltage, but the required terminals were constructed just outside Darebin (Carroll, 1985:97-9; Lemon, 1983:207; Jones, 1994:44-5).

5.5 Creating public landscapes

The provision of open space for fresh air and recreation was a response to the overcrowded industrial towns of nineteenth century Britain, and the concept was established early in the European settlement of Victoria. Parks, gardens and recreational grounds were considered essential to public health and social harmony.

Apart from Northcote Park in the original Northcote Township, no land was reserved for recreation in nineteenth century Darebin. However large areas of open space were left along the Merri, Edgars and Darebin Creeks well into the twentieth century, which were used as parkland and were subsequently designated as parks in the twentieth century. Yarra Bend (formerly in the City of Northcote, but not in the City of Darebin) remained as an area of open space, becoming a park in 1926. There were also some early privately owned sportsgrounds in the nineteenth century, such as Croxton Park, that have succumbed to suburban development. Preston Council acquired some sites for parks in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century several former clay pits, and other swampy areas unsuitable for other development were converted into parks. In later years there have been strong community efforts to restore the natural environment, especially the remaining open spaces along the creeks. This theme is linked with the theme, *Appreciating and Defending the Environment*.

Providing for public recreation

In the land boom of the 1880s large areas of land were subdivided and offered for sale, with little attention paid to providing open space and parkland. By the early years of the twentieth century, Darebin was under-provided with open space particularly when compared with neighbouring municipalities. The situation was particularly critical in the built-up central parts of the Northcote municipality where Northcote Park was still the only public park in 1906. In

Preston provision of open space became an important issue after the development boom of the 1920s.

Northcote

Northcote Park was reserved on the Township of Northcote plan, and it was Northcote's only public recreation reserve set aside in the nineteenth century. The Northcote Park Cricket Club used it from the 1880s. In the 1880s the Northcote Borough's parks and gardens committee provided pathways and a pavilion, 'well laid out flower plots, sparkling fountains and other accessories', and planted exotic trees such as elms, poplars, pepper trees and willows. In 1903, after J. Ahern was appointed gardener, further plantings were made of oaks, sugar gums and blue Atlantic cedars. Ahern also improved the playing ground and upgraded the Park Lodge, which had been a former Toll House.

As noted above, by 1906 Northcote Park remained the only open space in Northcote and towards the end of that year the pressure to create more parks and reserves emerged in the local press. The importance of the issue led to the Mayor calling a public meeting on the 7th December 1906 in the Town Hall, which was attended by between 70 and 100 people (ALM, 2002:8). Mr. Beard, M.L.A., moved the first resolution:

That in the interests of the health and recreation of present and future citizens of Northcote it is essential that reserves should be obtained, and that the council be urged to use its utmost endeavours to secure such spaces, more especially as the opportunities for doing so are rapidly becoming less (ALM, 2002:8, cites *Leader* 15 December 1906).

The resolution, supported by such people as the Vice-President of the National Council of Women in Victoria, Mrs. Strong, led the Council to acquire in 1907 the sites of two new reserves; what would become Batman Park, and Penders Park. As the population of Northcote grew in the inter-war period additional reserves were needed and by 1933 the Northcote Council had spent £18,760 acquiring areas for parks. As well as Batman Park and Pender's Park, this included Johnson Park (Bastings Street), Merri Park (St. George's Road), Henderson Park (Murray Street), McDonell Park (Victoria Road), Mayer Park (Leinster Grove), Hayes Park (Flinders Street), Pearl Reserve (Shaftesbury Parade). In addition, there were children's playgrounds on small reserves in Separation, Smith, Rathmines and Rennie Streets (ALM, 2002).

In the 1930s, Northcote Park was developed further. - rockeries were built and exotic palm trees planted. The park was renamed the Oldis Gardens, in honour of the late Cr Albert Oldis, a local builder ('Glimpses of our Past', 1988:17). The park became the home ground of the Northcote Football Club in the 1920s. In 1947, Northcote's former star player, Doug Nicholls became the curator of the park and resided in a house provided at the park, combining the job with his work in the Aboriginal community (Lemon, 1983:202, 271). As noted in Chapter 4, the Croxton Park race track and sports ground was run in conjunction with the Croxton Park Hotel, and was home to the Northcote Football Club before it moved to the Northcote Park. The sports ground, which covered the area from Woolton Avenue to Kemp Street was sold for residential development during the First World War.

Parklands in Preston

As most of the municipality of Preston was open farmland, little thought was given to the need for parks until the suburban boom of the 1920s saw the vast open spaces succumbing to housing estates. When Preston became a city in 1926 it had only 110 acres of parks, almost half of which consisted of Edwardes Park in the northern reaches of the municipality. The oval in Cramer Street was a sporting venue for central Preston, and there were a few other areas reserved as parks, mainly on the creek flats (Forster, 1968:90).

Cramer Street Oval, now known as Preston Oval, was acquired by the Shire in 1876 and has been in continuous use for sport ever since, including the home ground of the Preston Football Club (Forster, 1968:90, 108).

In 1914, Thomas Dyer Edwardes donated 34 acres of land - the remnants of a large holding of land purchased by his father in 1843 - to the citizens of Preston. The land may have been part of the Leamington Estate, a failed 1890s subdivision. A lake had already been made by constructing a weir across Edgar's Creek in the 1890s and it was used for rowing and pleasure boats. The gift of the lake had several conditions, including the requirement that it be accessible to the general public, and the prohibition of the sale of 'intoxicating liquid on the land'. The Preston Council hired a Mr Catani, presumably Carlo Catani Chief Engineer of the Victorian Public Works Department, to lay out the park, and the Edwardes Lake Park was officially opened in 1920. The Park has been the centre of many sporting and community activities ever since, including annual Easter sporting carnivals during the 1920s and '30s. Over the years various programs of beautification have been carried out ('Edwardes Lake', 2002).

Following the 1920s development boom Preston had insufficient open space to satisfy the interests of public health, and the Council set about acquiring vacant land for parks – this was the decade that Preston officially became a city and the provision of appropriate reserves was also seen as a matter of civic pride. These acquisitions included the H.L.T Oulton Reserve, T.W. Andrews Park, and T.W. Blake Park in Preston. Another was the Pike Reserve. This reserve, in Mason Street, Reservoir, was created after Council purchased three lots on 20 June 1927 from R. Richardson. In 1929-30 the park, was developed for public pleasure and recreation with the establishment of garden beds and a children's playground. One report in a local newspaper referred to the park as the 'Mason Street Gardenette' and described the landscaping, with garden beds fronting the streets and other beds 'tapering towards the east'. Mr Eagles, the curator, planted shrubs and palms. A children's playground with swings and a sandbox were provided on the eastern side. (*Reporter*, 14 January 1930, p.14) The second report, in the same issue, notes that Regents Park had, in recent months, been changed from 'a wilderness into a landscape of entrancing beauty'. It was 'hailed as an ideal children's playground' and a 'popular rendezvous for Sunday evening strollers'.

Darebin's largest park is Bundoora Park, John Matthew Smith's former stud farm and later Repatriation Hospital and Police Paddock. In 1967, 101 hectares of the property, including the Bundoora Homestead were granted to Preston Council for a park to serve the northern suburbs. A golf course and picnic facilities were developed, and the park became a very popular venue for weekend family picnics.

Figure 50

*Blossom Park Gateway,
Plenty Road, Bundoora Park,
1974.*

Photographer:
John T. Collins

[State Library of Victoria,
AN: H90.100/2799,
INjc002824]



Transforming quarries and swamps into parks

Many of Darebin's parks were former quarries and clay holes, which were filled with rubbish as council rubbish tips. Cain Memorial Park was a quarry in the 1940s, then was used as rubbish tip before it became a park named in honour of a prominent Northcote Labor politician and Premier of Victoria. All Nations Park had similar origins as the clay hole for the Northcote

Brickworks then a council tip. The Ray Bramham Gardens are on the site of the Clifton Brickworks.

Darebin Parklands was formerly the large bluestone quarry worked by John Sharp Adams of Alphington from 1906. The site became the Alphington tip in 1966, and the surrounding land was used for horse agistment. After the tip closed in 1975 local residents campaigned for the land to be made into a park. Northcote Council purchased the site and revegetation works were undertaken by park rangers and local residents to restore the natural bushland. In 1979 local volunteers assisted Sidney Clifton to construct a pedestrian bridge over Darebin Creek to link the park with Rockbeare Park on the opposite side. Darebin Park is regarded as a pioneer of urban land reclamation and revegetation (“Darebin Parklands”).

Darebin Creek Reserve where it interrupts Rathcrown Road at Reservoir was mostly a swamp, which used to pose a hazard to people walking along Purinuan Road, especially in the dark (Jones, 1994:87). It is now parkland.

Rescuing creeks

By the 1960s, creeks were the unsafe and ugly backs to lesser valued properties, but the potential for their rehabilitation began to be recognised. Community interest in linear parklands and habitat creation led to acquisitions of parkland and development of trails and, Creek Management Committees formed.

Merri Merri Park in Northcote, was a Melbourne Water Depot. When Melbourne Water decided to build a concrete flood levee there, the community and the Merri Creek Coordination Committee persuaded them to create an earthen levee in a parkland landscaped setting with indigenous species instead. The park is now a popular area for walking and relaxing.

Another levee project on the north side of Normanby Avenue to Strettle Reserve on Merri Creek led to the conversion of industrial land to parkland along the Creek. Groves’ land, off Merri Parade in Northcote, held the Groves timber latticework factory up until the early 1990s, on flood-prone land adjacent to Merri Creek. The area was converted to semi-natural parkland with funding from Council and Melbourne Water.

Street plantings

Street beautification was an expression of civic pride. In 1885, around the same time as the Northcote Park was planted, a row of elm trees was planted at Northcote’s High Street entrance. As Northcote began to be re-discovered by people looking for suburban land, the Northcote South Ratepayers Association, formed in 1901, did some further beautification work to ‘greatly impress visitors, and cause many to settle amongst us’. The plantings of lawns and flower beds were completed in 1905. In 1913, the Northcote South Ratepayers Association installed two cannons, which had formerly protected the South Channel in Port Phillip Bay, at the garden entrance. According to the writer of ‘Glimpses of our Past’ (p.5) the rockeries were constructed in the 1930s at the same time as those at Northcote Park, however a much earlier photograph, possibly taken at the time the cannons were installed, shows the rockeries already in place (Lemon, 1983:142, 160-61).

Figure 51

Cannon on High Street, Northcote, 1975

Photographer:
John T. Collins

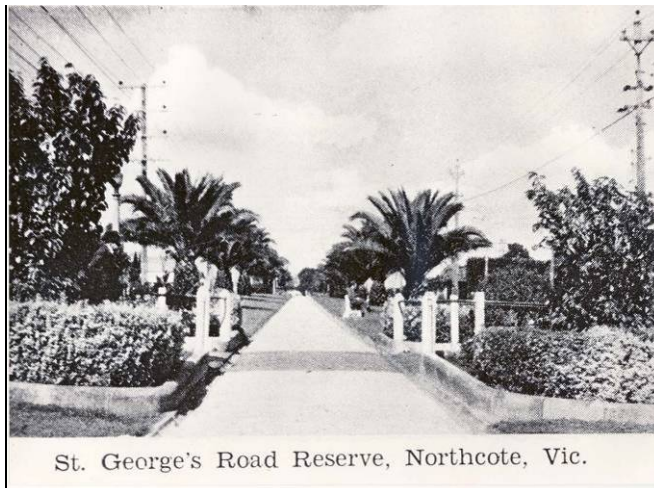
[State Library of
Victoria, AN:
H98.250/1311,
INjc013003]



During the early 1930s, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) and the Cities of Preston and Northcote councils co-operated to beautify the Yan Yean pipe track along St George's Road. Some of the funds were provided as sustenance work for unemployed workers during the Depression. The beautification program included planting Canary Island palms and sowing lawns along two miles of foot-path in the centre of St George's Road running through Preston and Northcote. Flower and shrub beds were created as borders at each foot crossing or road (MMBW *Annual Reports* 1929 - 1932). In 1953, Northcote Council removed the palm trees because they were getting too close to the power lines, and planted small trees. In 1958, the MMBW dug up the lawns and path to lay new water mains, and the whole garden effect was lost. Eventually the area was tidied up by Council with a contribution from the MMBW, but St George's Road was no longer 'one of the most beautiful streets in Melbourne', that the local press had claimed it to be (Lemon, 1983:56).

Figure 52

St Georges Road Reserve, Northcote, c1930s
[DHE, ID 791]



An unusual landscape for Darebin is the row of Monterey pines lining the Maroondah aqueduct along Cheddar Road to its terminus at the Junction Basin. These trees were most likely planted soon after the aqueduct was built, and are the traditional trees used for such purpose. The reservoir in High Street is also surrounded by the same species of tree, which appear to be from the same era.

The row of Canary Island palms along part of the original pipe-track at Robinson Road reflects the popularity of palm trees in the early part of the twentieth century.

Heritage

Some examples of places relating to *Building Suburban Darebin* are:

Developing the suburban ideal

Boom-style mansions and villas – examples include *Oakover Hall* (HO76), *Beaumont* (HO97), *Barunah* (HO29) and *Pleasant View* (formerly *Lyonsville*) (HO92)

Boom era (1880s & '90s) residential subdivisions in Westgarth and Northcote (HO100, HO161, HO163 etc.) and worker's terraces in Langwells Parade (HO98) and Robbs Parade (HO105) in Northcote

Houses, 16-20 Candy Street, Northcote built by William Lawrence on Railways Department subdivision (HO12)

Interwar estates – Northcote Sumner Estate (HO165), Preston Tramway precinct (HO168) and Preston State School (HO169) - may include examples of State Savings Bank houses - and the War Service Homes Commission (Bell Railway) precinct, Thornbury (HO170)

Housing Commission of Victoria estates - Newmarket Street (HO173), Newlands (HO95)

Mid twentieth century brick veneer streetscapes – examples include Bird and Bradley streets in Thornbury.

Supplying urban services

c.1930s electricity substation, Penders Street, Thornbury

Sumner's Weir, Merri Creek

Creating public landscapes

Early twentieth century reserves - Oldis Park, Johnson Park, Edwardes Park, Batman Park,

Late twentieth century reserves - Darebin Parklands, All Nations Park, Central Creek
Grassland Reserve, Merri Merri Park Northcote , Merri Creek Coordinating Committee
footbridge at Merri Park, and Bundoora Park

6 GOVERNING

Introduction

Darebin has important associations with the early government administration of Aboriginal people, and with some aspects of policing in Victoria.

This chapter also covers the establishment the institutions of law and order in the local community and the development of local government in Darebin from Road Boards to Cities.

Darebin has had a distinctly left-wing political character for much of its history, and has produced some leading Labor politicians. It has also had a significant place in the struggle for Aboriginal rights.

Before, during and after both World Wars, Darebin has been the location of a number of military institutions, and Darebin's people and factories also contributed to the war efforts.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	5 Governing administration of resources for Aboriginal people
AHT	7 Governing; 7.6 Administering Australia; 7.7 Defending Australia

History

6.1 Government administration of Aboriginal people

Protectorate

The Assistant Protectors Quarters was established near to the site of the confluence of the Merri Creek with the Yarra River (just outside the present City of Darebin) by William Thomas in 1843. He had been visiting the Aboriginal encampment at the site since 1841 and built a hut there in 1842. In the following year the hut became his official quarters.

The protectorate system was established as a response to the humanitarian movement developing in London. People of social conscience wanted to avoid the outrages that had occurred against the Aborigines in Tasmania and NSW. So in 1837, a Village Mission Settlement was formed by a Church of England missionary George Langhorne at the present site of the Royal Botanic Gardens. In 1838, the government established the Aboriginal Protectorate of the Port Phillip District and appointed George Augustus Robinson as the Chief Protector. He was instructed to establish reserves for Aborigines. To assist him in his work he appointed four assistant protectors one of whom was William Thomas (Clark & Heydon 2004:16-7).

Thomas had been instructed to set up a Protectorate station at some distance from Melbourne and had chosen a site at Narre Narre Warren, at what is now known as the Dandenong Police Paddocks. But he was frustrated in his attempts to get Aboriginal people to settle there and soon found it was easier for him to locate himself at the site they had chosen - the Merri Creek encampment. This settlement was not legally a Protectorate 'reserve', no employment or housing was provided as it was in other reserves (Clark & Heydon, 2004:18-36).

Thomas developed a good relationship with Billibellary, the headman of the Wurundjeri. The strength of this relationship is evidenced by the fact Billibellary assisted Thomas and allowed him to stay with him in his mia mia on several occasions. In return, Thomas entrusted Billibellary with the key to the government stores at Merri Creek, a responsibility he took seriously (Clark & Heydon, 2004:38-9).

After 1847, the encampment numbers declined dramatically and the need for Thomas to occupy the Protectorate Quarters was no longer there. Indeed in 1848 the whole protectorate system was dismantled and eventually replaced with the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. Thomas was, however, retained until 1860. Thomas and the Board lobbied for land to be reserved on the Merri Creek for Aboriginal people to use as a gathering place when they visited Melbourne, but the proposal was rejected due to it being too close to a township (Clark & Heydon, 2004:58, 74).

Wurundjeri headmen Wonga (Billibellary's eldest son) and Barak lobbied by petition and deputation for a reservation of land. Finally in 1863, a station was established at Corranderk and many people of the Woiwurrung language group moved there with the hope that this place would be their promised land (Ellender & Christiansen, 2001:112; Attwood & Markus, 1999:41-5).

6.2 Policing

Aboriginal policing in Victoria

Darebin has seen two periods in which Aboriginal people contributed directly to policing in Victoria. The first was during the 1840s when the Native Police Corps Headquarters was located at the confluence of the Yarra and Merri Creek. While this location is outside the present boundaries of the Darebin municipality, the reason it was sited here was because at the time the area contained an established series of Aboriginal encampments that extended well into present-day Westgarth. The second period was in the early and mid twentieth century when Murri trackers from Queensland were employed by Victoria Police and based at Bundoora.

Native Police Corps

The Native Police Corps was established in 1837, partly as a response to the need for law and order in the fledgling colony, there being no European Police force, and also as an attempt by the government to 'civilise' the men who joined the corps. The Aborigines viewed the Corps as a vehicle through which they could share in the power and authority of the European colonisers and perhaps through which they could extend their influence within Aboriginal society. This is evidenced by the fact that all the headmen of the tribes around Melbourne served with the force at some stage (Fels, 1988:3).

The Native Police Corps was initially based at Narre Narre Warren with Charles de Villiers as commandant. With the help of the *Wurundjeri* clan headman, Billibellary, a small force of men was recruited. However, due to a number of reasons, especially the distance of the site from Melbourne, the scheme failed. In 1842, it was re-established with Henry Dana as the commanding officer. A location for the Corps headquarters near Melbourne was desired due to the fears of European settlers along the Darebin Creek and Plenty River (Lemon, 1983:16). The confluence of the Merri Creek and Yarra River was chosen, and as mentioned above this site was also occupied by an Aboriginal encampment and William Thomas' Protectorate hut.

The reason for locating the Corps at the Merri Creek was probably due as much to the presence of the Native encampment as it was to the proximity of Melbourne, but this relationship seems to have flowed both ways. The size of the encampment dramatically increased when the Corps arrived (Clark & Heydon, 1998:63), perhaps because of the additional rations that were available, but also because of the increased proximity between family members that could be enjoyed. However, the more the numbers grew at the encampment the more the government wanted to disperse them and so the encampment size and extension northwards into the Darebin area was directly influenced by the presence of the Corps.

It was during the Native Police Corps occupation at Merri Creek that Billibellary enlisted as an officer. His position as a headman was accommodated and as such he was not required to undertake any duties. He didn't participate in drills and did not have to travel outside his

country. He did, however, dress in the uniform in the evenings and perform his own drill, marching between his mia mia and Thomas' tent. In 1844, the Corps relocated to Narre Narre Warren. At this time Barak enlisted as an officer, probably the most well known member of the Corps (Fels, 1988:235).

In 1853, the Native Police Corps was disbanded. However, Aboriginal involvement with the Police continued in the later nineteenth century.

Aboriginal Trackers

During the hunt for the Kelly gang following the Stringybark Creek murders in 1878, the Victoria police employed local Aboriginal men to help track the gang. Many of these men came from Coranderrk and William Barak was among these. Six trackers were also brought from Queensland to assist in the chase and this began a lengthy period of Victoria Police contracting Queensland trackers (Presland, 1998:27). This formally began in 1881 and lasted until the 1960s.

After originally being sited at Dandenong, the Victoria Police Stud Depot was moved to Bundoora Park in 1931. The Trackers were accommodated at the stud farm in a two roomed dwelling, a former railway fettlers hut that still stands at the site today. The first two trackers who stayed there were Norman Brown and Billy Roma (Presland, 1998:72).

From that time to 1953, when the stud facilities were moved to Westmeadows, around 15 Aboriginal trackers lived and worked at the Bundoora depot, including Tim 'Tippo' Powder, George Rigby, Bowman Johnson and Charles Williams (Presland, 1998:163-4). Their main task was tracking criminals or lost people, however, they were also required to distribute forage to the horses, clean stables and perform livestock handling tasks as well as some domestic labour with the stud master (Presland, 1998:96).

The role was an isolated one, and became increasingly lonely as the Victorian Police complement of Trackers was dropped from two to one. The personal activities of the Trackers were generally heavily circumscribed by the force. The men generally lived by themselves as requests for wives or family to move to Victoria were generally denied by Victoria Police, although Charlie Williams' wife and daughter lived with him at the Bundoora depot for a brief period, but this was an exception (Presland, 1998:121).

It is not known whether any of the trackers had connections within the broader Fitzroy Aboriginal community, but it is known that trackers such as Tim Powder would often spend their off-duty day at favourite hotels in Fitzroy (Presland, 1998:121). Trackers also regularly hiked into Reservoir for their shopping. Jeanne Primmer, who grew up in nearby Reservoir remembered:

Also when we swam in the creek, the black trackers from the Police Paddock in Bundoora used to come across on the stepping stones as we called them. They'd be all dressed in their best clothes to go to Reservoir for their shopping. They didn't speak to us and always crossed quietly on the stones as we were swimming (Jones, 1994:89).

Maintaining law and order in Darebin

Darebin's first police station was opened in 1854 in temporary quarters on the Police Reserve in Walker Street in the Township of Northcote. A bluestone police station and residence was built in Walker Street in 1861. It was designed under the Public Works Department's Chief Architect, William Wardell. The police station highlights the government's attempt to make the township, now Westgarth, the centre of the Northcote district. However by this stage the main settlement was already at Rucker's Hill. The police station remained in use for thirty years and continued as a police residence until 1938. In 1891, a new red brick police station was built in the centre of Northcote, in James Street, just around the corner from the Court House (Lemon, 1983:50, 96, 104, 112; Butler, 1992).

Many years later, a former army drill hall in Green Street Westgarth became the headquarters of Victoria's Police Bands.

The Court House, like the Post Office, was built as part of the Northcote Town Hall complex. It was common in the nineteenth century for municipalities to incorporate court houses as way of gaining government funding to construct impressive civic buildings. Before that the first Court of Petty Sessions had sat in the Wesleyan school house, across the road in High Street. In 1929 the court moved out of the Town Hall into a new Court House built next door in Westbourne Grove (Lemon, 1983:46). The building is now used as the Namalaata Koorie Education Centre.

Preston's first court cases were heard in the Court of Petty Sessions, which, like the Shire Council, used a room in the Junction Hotel (no longer standing). There was a link between the court system and local government, as many Councillors served as magistrates and Justices of the Peace.

Figure 53

Northcote Police Station

[Context Pty Ltd, 2007]



6.3 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy

Developing local government authorities

The *Road Act* 1853 established the Central Road Board with the authority to build main roads, and gave local communities the power to elect district road boards which would be responsible for the provision of local roads. The creation of road districts, with their elected road boards allowed land holders and householders a role in the development of their districts. This was the earliest form of local government, which evolved into the local councils of Preston and Northcote, which were eventually merged to become the City of Darebin in 1994.

Shire of Jika

The residents of Northcote saw no urgent need to form a road board, as the two roads that most concerned them - Heidelberg Road and Upper Plenty Road (High Street) were main roads made and maintained by the Central Road Board (Lemon, 1983:46-7).

Further to the north, residents did see the need to form a road board. Edward Wood, the storekeeper at Preston, started a petition to form one, and in 1854 the Epping Road District was proclaimed. This was one of the first road boards ever formed in Victoria. The District included Thomastown and Epping as well as the Preston area north of Bell Street. According to Edge, the meeting that formed the Epping Road Board was held in the Darebin Bridge Hotel (just outside the study area), but Board meetings were held in the Belmont Hotel, Thomastown (again outside the area) and the Merrilands Hotel, on Epping Road (High Street) north of the site of the Reservoir station. Around the same time Morang Road Board was also formed to take responsibility for Plenty Road. The Epping Road District expanded to take in the rest of Preston, and in 1864 the residents of Northcote decided to join the District, which

was subsequently divided into three ridings - North, Epping and Preston. The Preston riding included Northcote.

Legislation in 1863 enabled rural road districts to become shires and those in more populated areas to become boroughs. In 1870 the road districts of Epping, Merriang, Whittlesea, Woodstock and Morang were amalgamated to form the Shire of Darebin. This 320 square kilometre area was too large to administer effectively by the Road Board, and the councillors from Preston and Northcote petitioned to separate from it. On 8 November 1871, the Shire of Jika was proclaimed. Edwin Bastings, one of the Northcote councillors who had instigated the separation, became the first Shire President. Council meetings were held in the Foresters Hall in High Street Preston, before they were moved to the Junction Hotel (Carroll, 1985:36-7; Lemon, 1983:58-9).

Municipality of Northcote

By the 1880s, the southern end of the Shire was becoming more populated than the north and Northcote residents were concerned about the effects on public health of the noxious industries in the district - mainly boiling down works and meat works. It was then believed that bad odours caused disease, and besides, the meat works were polluting the streams with blood and offal. Approaches to the Jika Shire Council to ban the industries were unsuccessful, because Northcote did not have sufficient representation on Council. The Northcote Health League campaigned for separation to form a new municipality that would represent the interests of the more urbanised part of the Shire, and were successful. On 25 May 1883, the Borough of Northcote was proclaimed. The Northcote Health League, with its mission accomplished, subsequently dissolved. Council banished the meat works from the settled parts of Northcote. King Smith and Kenihan moved their operations to the bottom of Bastings Street, and the others left Northcote altogether.

Council offices were set up in the Wesleyan Sunday School, and a group of Councillors formed a syndicate to buy a choice site on the top of Rucker's Hill for a Town Hall. The foundation stone of the grand boom-style building was laid in 1888, and the Town Hall was completed in 1890, in time for the proclamation of Northcote as a town on 9 September (*Victorian Municipal Directory*; Lemon, 1983:104, 107).

By 1914, Northcote had 20,000 people, the requisite population for city status, and the City of Northcote was proclaimed in March 1914. A feature of the celebrations at the Town Hall was the ceremony to switch on the electricity supply (Lemon, 1983:163).

A Town Hall was not only the focal point of civic life and centre of municipal administration, it was also a centre of the community's social, cultural and political life. During the First World War, Northcote Town Hall was both a recruiting centre and the venue for a peace rally. In 1915, a public meeting of the Australia Peace Alliance drew a crowd to hear the English peace activist Adela Pankhurst oppose conscription and accuse the forces of capitalism of benefiting from the war. Her views were unpopular in Northcote, and there were no more Peace Alliance meetings in the Town Hall. However, there were a few people who spoke up for Miss Pankhurst's right to express her views. One was the new Councillor John Cain, who was gaining political experience for the bigger stage of Victoria parliament, one of several prominent Labor politicians produced in Darebin. Three years later, in November 1918 a crowd gathered outside the Town Hall to await official news of the declaration of peace. But the message did not come through to the Mayor until after midnight, when the crowd had gone home (Lemon, 1983:174-6,182).

The traditional role of councils was the provision and maintenance of roads, streets, bridges and drains, although many other responsibilities, such as community welfare were added over the years. From 1925 to 1947, Northcote Council was fortunate in having an energetic and innovative City Engineer, Victor Bradley, who set up the Frederick Street Council depot. Under Bradley, the Engineering Department ran a quarry, produced its own road-making materials, constructed roads, serviced its own trucks and made street sweepers, and was able to make and maintain Northcote's roads economically. Bradley was seconded to the American

Army during the Second World War, but he suggested that his workshop contribute to the war effort by making cranes and other equipment. After the war Bradley was 'head-hunted' by Brunswick Council. He eventually became Director of the Housing Commission (Lemon, 1983:231, 239-40, 251-2).

In 1962, following a petition by Fairfield and Alphington ratepayers dissatisfied with the service provided by Heidelberg Council, the South Ward of the City of Heidelberg was annexed to Northcote. This area included the Yarra Bend Park (Lemon, 1983:260-2).

Figure 54

Northcote Town Hall, 1908

Artist: Keith Martin

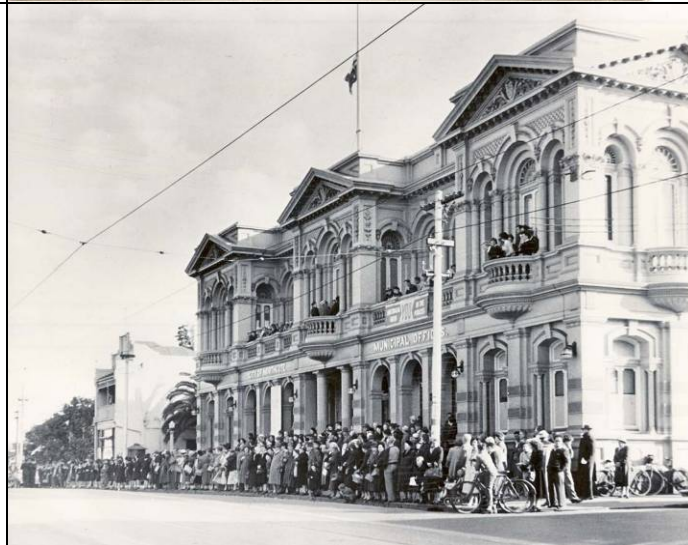
Oil on canvas on board, 67 x 87 cm

[DHE, ID 627]

**Figure 55**

*Northcote Town Hall –
photographed on the funeral of
John Cain (Senior) c1957*

[DHE, ID 627]



The Municipality of Preston

After the severance of Northcote from the Shire of Jika in 1883, the old shire was renamed the Shire of Preston. Like Northcote, Preston built a large Shire Hall (later known as the Town Hall) on High Street, completed in 1895. However Preston took much longer to attain the status of Town. Although Preston had sufficient population and revenue to become a borough in 1921, its area was too large, and it needed a special Act of Parliament to upgrade its status. The Borough of Preston was proclaimed in March 1922 and just a couple of months, later on 24 May 1922, it became the Town of Preston. Four years later on 14 July 1926 Preston became a City. A new City Hall was built next to the Town Hall in Gower Street in 1929, to increase the accommodation for Council and its various functions. (Carroll 1985:37, 144-6).

Like the Northcote Town Hall the halls were the civic focal point. They drew commercial activity to the locality, eventually establishing it as Preston's central business district. One of the roles of local government was welfare, especially during times of hardship. During the

depressions of the 1890s and 1930s local councils had the job of distributing relief and finding work for their unemployed residents. One of the unemployment work schemes during the 1930s was the beautification of the St Georges Road pipe track, funded jointly by Preston and Northcote Councils and the MMBW. Unemployment relief work was also done on Edwardes Lake. Most of the funds for unemployment relief was raised by the Mayor's Unemployment Relief Fund, gathered from donations from the community. People looked to Council for help. When a family was evicted from their home in 1932, a group of unemployed men took the family's furniture and left it inside the front entrance of the Town Hall. The Mayor found a house for the family (Carroll, 1985:155-8).

Figure 56

*Preston Town Hall,
c1930s.*

[DHE, ID 90-252-2]



The City of Darebin

In 1994, following the Kennett Government's state-wide municipal restructure, the Cities of Northcote and Preston amalgamated to form the City of Darebin. The area south of Heidelberg Road formerly in the City of Northcote became part of the City of Yarra. Darebin also acquired a small strip of territory from the former City of Coburg and the Mont Park Bundoora Health precinct of the former City of Heidelberg and Shire of Diamond Valley.

Forming political associations

As Northcote's industries developed, a strong working class identity and political awareness emerged amongst working people. When the boom of the 1880s slid into the depression of the 1890s, Northcote's working people, like workers in many parts of Australia, began to look for representation in parliament. In June 1891 the Northcote Workingmen's Democratic Association was formed in the Commercial Hotel in High Street. The Association became the founding branch of the Melbourne Trades Hall's Progressive Political League and forerunner of the Australian Labor Party. During the 1890s, the Northcote branch supported labour candidates in elections to the Victorian Parliament, including a Preston Councillor, J. McKenzie, but without success. Preston also had a branch of the League, which in 1904 supported socialist Harry Baird. Baird won the state seat of Jika Jika, which included Northcote and Preston at that time (Lemon, 1983:112, 157; Carroll 1985:76).

Before that, in 1902, the Labor Party's Frank Anstey had won the State seat of East Bourke Boroughs, which covered northern suburbs such as Northcote, Brunswick and Coburg, but not Preston (the electorate was divided to form Jika Jika in 1904). Anstey went on to become one of Victoria's leading Labor politicians in Federal Parliament, representing the seat of Bourke, which included Northcote and Preston, but not Preston after 1922. According to Preston's Historian Harley Forster:

Anstey was a shining light in the Labor Party in the northern suburbs, and is one of the reasons why the people in many of these suburbs have in this century turned traditionally to that party to represent them (Forster, 1968:78).

A station on the Upfield line, within the neighbouring municipality of Moreland, is named in Anstey's honour.

In 1915, the local branch of the ALP endorsed their first candidate for Northcote Council, the young Westgarth greengrocer John Cain, who served as a Councillor until 1927. Cain also won the state seat of Jika Jika in 1917. Cain represented the area in parliament for 40 years, serving three terms as Victoria's Premier -1945-47, 1952-55. His last term was from March to June 1955, when Labor lost office, remaining in opposition until 1982. In that year Cain's son John formed a new Labor government and held office as Premier until 1991. John Cain Senior lived in Northcote throughout his whole political career. His family home was in James Street. The John Cain Memorial Park was named in his honour after his death in 1957. Cain was succeeded in the seat by another Northcote Councillor, Frank Wilkes, who became Leader of the Victorian Labor Party in the Victorian Parliament in 1977, but was replaced as leader by John Cain Junior in 1981 (Lemon, 1983:173, 179, 204, 266-70).

Aboriginal Self Determination

As noted in Chapter 2, Aboriginal people began to migrate to metropolitan Melbourne from country areas in the 1920s. Two of these people, William Cooper and Douglas Nicholls, who would go on to become leading Aboriginal political figures, moved to Footscray and Northcote respectively. The organisations founded by Cooper and Nicholls - the Australian Aborigines League and the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League - are closely connected, as were the men themselves, and both are intimately connected with the City of Darebin.

William Cooper arrived in Melbourne in 1932 and soon after founded the Australian Aborigines League -an entirely Aboriginal organisation whose foundation members also included Douglas Nicholls. Cooper instigated a petition to the King for Aboriginal representation within the Federal Parliament. As a further step in this cause, Cooper led a deputation in 1935, which again included Doug Nicholls, to the Federal Minister for the Interior with clear demands including direct Aboriginal representation in Federal and State Parliaments, the establishment of a Federal Department of Native Affairs, and the establishment of an advisory council in each State to assist the protectors of Aborigines. In many ways Cooper's methods - of petition, deputation and correspondence - were following well established methods of protest which had been employed by Aboriginal people since the early and mid nineteenth Century in areas such as Flinders Island and by the residents of Coranderrk in both the 1860s and the 1880s.

All of these demands were ignored but Cooper and AAL continued to collect signatures for the petition and strove to direct public attention to Aboriginal issues, with initiatives such as the first Aboriginal Day of Mourning in 1938, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first fleet.

After the death of William Cooper in 1942, the AAL's activities were slowed by the diversion of the Second World War. However, Doug Nicholls continued mission work with the Church of Christ Missions in Fitzroy, and political lobbying, alternating direct protest and great subtlety, on issues such as the Rocket Range Protest Committee (protesting the governments plans to establish a rocket range in Central Australia which would impact on the Great Central Reserve and the Warburton Ranges Mission), formally writing to Prime Ministers seeking Aboriginal Parliamentary representation, and personally driving a move to have Aboriginal involvement in Celebrations of Victoria's Centenary of self-government in 1951.

The Victorian Aborigines Advancement League formed in 1957 after Doug Nicholls renewed his involvement with the Warburton Ranges Mission, bringing back to Melbourne films of the appalling conditions of Aborigines on the mission after rocket and atomic testing had begun ten years prior. The formation of the League was also prompted by the tabling in Victorian

parliament of a report by Charles McLean, which, amongst other things led to the creation in 1958 of a new Aborigines Welfare Board (thereby replacing the Aborigines Protection Board). Following this, Doug Nicholls and a number of prominent politicians and church leaders including Doris Blackburn, Gordon Bryant and Stan Davey formed the League. Aboriginal leaders such as Margaret Tucker, Geraldine Briggs and William and Eric Onus were also involved with the VAAL from the beginning. The formation of the League was a response to the threat posed by the assimilation policies set out in the McLean report, which 'heightened the need for a broad-based umbrella organisation that could deal with Aboriginal needs on many fronts' (Landon, 2006:26-7).

The League's major aim was integration rather than assimilation and it aimed to establish a general policy of advancement of Aboriginal people. Doug Nicholls worked as the full time field officer, seeking employment, legal advice, assistance and other practical support for Aboriginal people. One of the most important early initiatives of the VAAL was the formation of the Federal Council of Aboriginal Advancement. The FCAA objectives included the granting of equal citizenship rights to Aboriginal people, and the Council was instrumental in lobbying for the 1967 referendum on Aboriginal civil rights and Federal control of Aboriginal affairs.

Just prior to the formation of the League, Doug Nicholls and his wife Gladys had been involved in the establishment of an Aboriginal girls' hostel. A Hostel Committee was formed in 1956 to raise funds for the purchase of a former Anglican vicarage at 56 Cunningham Street, Northcote. Work was well underway on converting the building into a hostel when the VAAL formed, and the Hostel committee and VAAL merged in 1957. A boys' hostel was opened nearby in 1963, another at Nathalia and a Holiday house at Queenscliff. The League built its own headquarters, the Doug Nicholls Centre, next door to the hostel at 58 Cunningham Street in 1966, and this building became a focus of Aboriginal community and political life.

In 1962, the Australian Aborigines League was reformed as the Aboriginal branch of the VAAL, with all Aboriginal membership. Initially the AAL acted in the same capacity as most other VAAL branches - and in particular arranged socials and dances at the Doug Nicholls Centre and an annual Aboriginal Ball at the Northcote Town Hall. The Aboriginal branch became more vocal through the 1960s, and the era of broader social and political changes worldwide of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Changes in the VAAL were marked by increased Aboriginal management, and an increasingly strident position on issues of Aboriginal self-determination such as land rights, compensation for lost land, culture and language, Aboriginal management of all organizations associated with Aboriginal welfare, and full consultation with Aborigines on Aboriginal issues. However, throughout this period and to the present, the VAAL continued to focus heavily on Aboriginal welfare and social needs.

By the early 1980s, with the construction of the VAAL's new headquarters in Watt Street, Thornbury, an important symbol of land rights in Victoria emerged. The title to the land on which the building stands was transferred to the League by the State Government under the *Aboriginal Lands (Aborigines Advancement League) (Watt Street Northcote) Act 1982* and the *Aboriginal Land (Northcote Land) Act 1989* (Broome, 2005a:300-2, 330-346; VAAL, 1985:27-68, 85-112; Attwood & Markus, 1999:30-5).

Figure 57

*Recreation Centre for the
Aborigines Advancement
League, Cunningham Street,
Northcote, c1966*

Photographer: Peter Wille

[State Library of Victoria, AN:
H91.244/3989, INa22673]



6.4 Defending Australia

In 1909, concern over the threat of war with Germany resulted in the requirement for all young Australian men to undergo military training (*Victorian Year Book*, 1973:459). Compulsory universal training for men between the ages of 14 and 18 was introduced in 1911. An outcome of this was the construction of new drill halls in many towns and suburbs throughout Australia for use by local volunteer units. Drill halls were built in Northcote and Preston in 1913 and 1915 respectively.

Darebin's people played their part in the two World Wars, as military personnel and by providing moral support for the troops and manufacturing armaments and equipment. Darebin also had a special role in training servicemen and women and in their repatriation after war, and as the secret site of an Anti-aircraft Operations Room in the Preston Town Hall.

Local war effort

At the outbreak of the First World War both the Northcote Town Hall and Preston Shire Hall became recruiting centres, as did town halls all over Australia. The Northcote Town Hall became the workroom for Red Cross fundraising activities for the war effort. The halls were also the venues for farewelling the soldiers as they left for service and for welcoming home those who returned. For those who did not return an elaborate memorial arch was built in front of the Preston Town Hall.

Figure 58a

*Goods made by the Northcote
Red Cross
(Image date unknown)*

[Australian War Memorials
Collection, ID H11735]



Able Seaman C.V. Williams, a police officer from Northcote, had the unfortunate distinction of being the first Australian casualty of the First World War. In September 1914, he was mortally wounded during successful operations involving the Royal Australian Navy, which resulted in the capture of Rabaul and other German possessions in the Pacific. Williams is commemorated in a plaque at the old Northcote Police Station.¹⁵ During the Second World War Darebin's industries manufactured all kinds of military equipment, ranging from the mobile cranes made in Victor Bradley's Northcote Council depot to the pontoon bridges made at the Tramways Workshop, and sole leather for military boots produced by Braithwaite's tannery to insulators for explosives made at the Premier Pottery. Again the civilian community supported the war effort with fundraising for comforts for the troops. The Preston community contributed a mobile canteen (Lemon, 1983:239-40; Carroll, 1985:166-9).

Carroll describes the range of defence activities carried out by the Preston community during the Second World War, when Australia feared invasion by Japan. Air raid wardens were appointed and Preston Council provided a control room in Kelvin Grove staffed by 70 telephonists with boy scouts as messengers. Preston Girls' School became a first aid post, ready to be turned into a casualty station if necessary and people were trained in first aid. Air raid shelters were dug in backyards and at schools, and the Preston City Hall became the headquarters of the Volunteer Defence Corps. People were encouraged to invest in war loans to assist the government to finance the supply of arms, and streets where residents responded by buying War Savings Certificates, became War Savings Streets. Similar activities were occurring in communities all over Australia (Carroll, 1985:163-9).

Most importantly, Preston Town Hall was, for a few months in 1941-2, the secret location of RAAF Air Defence Headquarters. An Anti-aircraft Operations Room was set up in the hall and it was manned by specially trained civilians of the Volunteer Air Observers Corps, releasing Service personnel for other work. The Operations Room accounted for all aircraft approaching the defended area. It received reports directly from the coastal radar stations, enabling aircraft to be sent to investigate unidentified aircraft, ships and submarines. After the Battle of the Coral Sea, the Air Defence Headquarters moved on, however Signals¹⁶ stayed at the Town Hall till the War's end.

Figure 58b

Members of the Volunteer Air Observers Corps manning the big operations table at the RAAF Air Defence Headquarters at Preston Town Hall, November 1944.

[Australian War Memorial, ID: VIC1731]



Preston honoured two of its war heroes, both Victoria Cross winners. William Ruthven was a First World War veteran and State Member of Parliament was honoured in the naming of a railway station and a park reserve. Bruce Kingsbury, Victoria's first VC winner in the Second

¹⁵ Information supplied by Paul Michell, of Darebin Libraries and, www.naby.gov.au/spc/maritimepapers/piama16/rabaul.html

¹⁶ Military intelligence

World War, killed in action in New Guinea in 1942, is commemorated in the suburb Kingsbury (Forster, 1968:102-3).

Military incursions

Mont Park

In 1910, compulsory military training was introduced for Australia's young men, but even before this fears of war in Europe and a desire to support the mother country led to the establishment of an organised militia. One of the military training grounds was in Bundoora, the future site of the Mont Park Psychiatric Hospital. A major annual event was Easter camp. Kenna describes the 1914 Easter Camp at Bundoora, when the 16th Infantry Brigade marched out to Bundoora from Clifton Hill Station. The camp was made on the corner of Plenty Road and Grimshaw Street, but manoeuvres ranged over a large area including Mount Prospect in Bundoora Park and as far as Janefield and the Plenty Gorge.

By this stage Mont Park Psychiatric Hospital had been built, and following the outbreak of the First World War the laundry workers block was handed to the Defence Department for use as a military hospital. In 1915, another large ward was taken over as a military hospital. Known as Australian General Hospital No.16, it could accommodate 1000 patients. After the war the servicemen suffering from psychiatric illness continued to be treated at Mont Park, and a special military hospital ward was built there in 1924.

During the Second World War, Mont Park was again called upon, this time to provide accommodation and training. The Australian Women's Land Army was formed to replace men in rural industries. From 1942 to 1945, the farm at Mont Park became a training centre, where women, presumably from the city, learnt to milk cows and plough, garden and care for animals, before they were sent out to work on farms. The supervisor was Mrs O. Mellor, the first woman to graduate as a landscape architect from the Burnley Horticultural College (though by no means the first woman landscape designer) (Kenna, 1988:158-9).

At the same time the newly completed Larundel Mental Hospital at Mont Park was taken over as the depot for the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force. Between 1943 and 1945, the Depot accommodated 5000 women who were trained for Air Force duties that freed men for active service (Kenna, 1988:159-60).

Repatriation Hospital Bundoora

In 1920, the Commonwealth Government purchased Bundoora Park and established a Convalescent Farm for ex-servicemen suffering from psychiatric problems. This was the first psychiatric hospital for returned servicemen in Victoria. It was part of the system of government support for veterans, and it widened the concept of 'repatriation' from merely bringing them home from war. Bundoora Park, as a large property isolated from urban settlement, was ideal for the purpose, and furthered Darebin's role in the history of psychiatric services in Victoria. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

The Smith mansion was used as the administration centre and buildings were transferred from army bases at Broadmeadows and Watsonia. Patients worked in the vegetable and flower gardens, orchard and poultry sheds. Such work was part of the rehabilitation process, but it was also a method of self-sufficiency for the hospital. The water supply came from Janefield (a few kilometres to the north along Plenty Road) and was pumped into an iron tank on Mt Cooper. A boiler attendant went to Janefield each day to start the pump. A concrete tank was later erected alongside to improve the service. Both structures are still standing. In 1933 all of the psychiatric patients were transferred to Bundoora, which had been renamed the Mental Repatriation Hospital in 1924 (Kenna, 1988:123-9).

Figure 59*Bundoora Repatriation Hospital, 1987*

[Smith Family Collection]



In the 1946 the Psychiatry Superintendent, Dr John Cade, who had been a prisoner of war at Changi, began experimenting into the cause and treatment of acute manic psychosis. In 1948, he made a breakthrough by discovering lithium as a treatment that achieved amazing success. His work received world-wide recognition.

In 1965, the hospital became known as the Repatriation Hospital Bundoora, and had grown to a capacity of 291 beds. Patients were no longer required to work in the garden, instead they were given recreational facilities including a golf course, bowling green, tennis courts and swimming pools.

The hospital was closed in 1993, and most of the hospital buildings were demolished, removed or refurbished. Bundoora Homestead has been restored to the Smith family era and now operates as Bundoora Homestead Art Centre and the nurses quarters in Prospect Hill Road have been converted to apartments. They are adjacent to the entrance of Bundoora Homestead Art Centre (Heathcote; O'Neill; [www.bundoorahomestead.com.site.history](http://www.bundoorahomestead.com.site/history)).

Macleod Repatriation Hospital

In 1915, a site for a hospital for early cases of tuberculosis (TB) amongst servicemen was granted to the Defence Department at Macleod, and No 1 Military Sanatorium Macleod was opened in 1916. This was then part of the Shire of Heidelberg. The sanatorium had 80 beds by 1918, and in 1921 was handed over to the newly formed Repatriation Department. (O'Neill & Taylor, 1995:11-2) With the early detection and treatment of the disease in the 1950s TB declined and the sanatorium became Macleod Repatriation Hospital.

Heritage

Some examples of places relating to *Governing Darebin* are:

Policing

Aboriginal Trackers dwelling at *Bundoora Park*

Former Northcote police stations at 24 Walker Street (1861 – HO87) and James Street (HO97), and Preston Police Station (HO150)

Former Northcote Court House, Westbourne Grove (within HO97 precinct)

Developing institutions of self-government and democracy

Doug Nicholls Centre, 58 Cunningham Street, Westgarth (within HO160 precinct)

Aboriginal Development Commission and League building, 2 Watt Street Thornbury

Doug Nicholls Reserve, Watt Street, Thornbury

Former Wesleyan School, 248-50 High Street Northcote (within HO97 precinct)

Northcote Town Hall complex (within HO97 precinct)

Preston Town Hall & Municipal Offices complex (HO50)

Commercial Hotel, 201 High Street, Northcote (within HO97 precinct)

John Cain Memorial Park

Aboriginal Self –Determination

Victorian Aborigines Advancement League, (third office) at Cunningham Street Northcote

Lady Gladys Nicholls Hostel, Cunningham Street, Northcote

Defending Australia

Mont Park complex (HO59, HO62, HO63, HO64, HO65, HO66, HO68 and HO109)

Former Salvation Army Temple, 57-61 David Street, Preston (HO27)

Bundoora Homestead and stables (HO74)

7 COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Introduction

Darebin's people established their communities largely through the formation of churches and early schools. The changes in these communities over the years reflect the cultural origins of the waves of Darebin's settlers.

The great majority of Darebin's children have been educated in the State school system since its beginning in 1873, and some of the area's schools demonstrate the evolution of the system over a century.

A major theme in Darebin's history is the use of its lands for large State health institutions, particularly psychiatric hospitals, although such institutions have had little impact on Darebin's community, apart from, perhaps, as a source of local employment.

Darebin has rich history of community organisations such as libraries, friendly societies and other cultural institutions. It has also always had a lively sporting culture.

This chapter incorporates the following themes:

AAV	4.3 Places of recreation; 6 Associations with missions and schools
AHT	6. Educating; 7.6 Administering Australia; 8 Developing Australia's Cultural Life; 9 Marking the phases of life.

History

7.1 Worshipping

Founding churches

When Europeans settlers began to put down roots in Darebin - as in most parts of Victoria - they founded community institutions brought from their home countries. In most cases, the first institution to mark the founding of a new community was a church, so churches reflect both the cultural origins of their founders and the beginnings of a particular community.

Churches usually commenced in borrowed buildings - barns, private homes, and later schools or public halls - before a church building was erected.

In nineteenth century Darebin, particularly the Preston area, Methodism was the earliest and most prolific Christian denomination in terms of church building and membership. In 1891, 25.33% of Preston's population were Methodist, compared with 13.86% in Victoria generally. The Anglicans were also strongly represented, with 39.65% in Preston compared with 36.65% in Victoria, although many people were nominally Anglicans rather than active worshipping members. By contrast, Presbyterians, who were of Scottish background, and Roman Catholics, who were overwhelmingly Irish, numbered well below the Victorian average in Darebin (Forster, 1968:34).

Particular Baptist

One of the earliest churches in Preston was the Particular Baptist Church, formed by a group of families who migrated together from Sussex as noted in Chapter 2. They built a chapel in High Street near Percival Street in 1856, but seem to have had a falling out with each other at some stage. When the chapel fell into disrepair, they held services in a nearby library known as the Preston Public Library (see below) until 1890s (Forster, 1968:25).

Methodist

Methodism was a revivalist faith, which was founded on the teachings of John and Charles Wesley amongst the poor in eighteenth century England and Ireland. By the time Methodism reached Victoria, it was also a middle class religion - because self improvement was a vital part of Methodist belief - and had also split into four branches, known as 'connexions'. The strongest of these connexions was the Wesleyan Church, and the second strongest was the Primitive Methodist Church. Methodists were particularly strong on the goldfields, because many miners came from Methodist strongholds in England's mining districts, particularly Cornwall and the Midlands. Methodists were able to expand rapidly because they relied on the active involvement of lay people, both men and women. They were organised into Circuits made up of several churches, which were 'supplied' by lay preachers, with one ordained minister as superintendent. To ensure that their children were instructed in the faith, every Methodist church had a Sunday School (Phillips, Benson; Brown-May, 2005:593-6). In 1902 all of the branches of Methodism in Australia united to form the Methodist Church of Australia. Much later, in 1977, the Methodists, Congregationalists and the majority of the Presbyterians amalgamated to form the Uniting Church in Australia.

Some of Forster's 'little men' (and women) who founded the first community in Preston were Irish Methodists. Samuel Jeffrey an Irish Wesleyan founded the Preston Wesleyan Methodist Church in his barn, and two years later a small wooden chapel was built on land donated by Jeffrey. The dates of its construction and of the commencement of services in the barn are unclear. According to Forster, regular services commenced in 1852 and the chapel was built in 1854 (p.21). A program for the 130th anniversary of the church (now the Preston Uniting Church) in 1982, suggests that the services commenced in the barn in 1850 and the chapel was constructed in 1852. Whatever the case, it is possible that the Preston Methodist Church was Darebin's first church.

Other early Methodist Churches in Darebin were the Wesleyans at Alphington and the Primitive Methodists in Northcote. The Alphington church started in a barn in Heidelberg in 1852-3 and their bluestone chapel was built in Heidelberg Road in 1859 (Benson: 415; Lemon 1983: 48). It is now the Alphington Uniting Church. The first church in Northcote was the Primitive Methodist church, presumably commenced before the chapel was built in 1854. Apparently the church did not survive until Methodist union in 1902, probably due to competition from the Wesleyans, nearby. The site at 312 High Street was acquired by the National Bank in 1890 (Benson, 1935:406; Butler, 1992).

The Northcote Wesleyan Methodists started services in private homes in 1854, and they erected their first building as a school in 1854. The small plain bluestone building in High Street served the Northcote community as its first school, place of worship, law court and council chamber. This highlights the role of churches in the founding of new communities.

In the 1860s, the churches could afford to upgrade their buildings to accommodate growing congregations. The Preston Methodists built their bluestone building on the corner of High and Tyler Streets in 1863. The building was enlarged and added to several times over the years to become quite a large complex of chapel and Sunday School buildings. The original chapel was demolished in 1922. It is now Preston Uniting Church. In 1869, the Northcote Methodists moved to the opposite side of High Street and built a larger bluestone chapel, which was extended in 1885 to hold 650 people ('Glimpses of Our Past', 1988:16).

Meanwhile another Methodist church had commenced in South Preston in 1859, meeting in a wooden building in High Street until about 1888. In 1888-89, a grand new 'expensive and imposing' building designed by Alfred Dunne was erected in Yann Street. This church reflected the prosperity of the boom years, and was the place of worship of factory owners such as J.C. Hutton, who donated the Fincham organ. However, when the boom ended it was found that the South Preston Methodists had over-reached their resources and they were obliged to call on the Methodist Church Building Fund for assistance (Forster, 1968:21-2; Carroll, 1985:113; Summerton, 1997:98; Benson, 1935:414).

In 1891, at the end of the boom two more Methodist Churches had been built in the newly settled areas beyond the original settlements. They were at Prince of Wales Park (Thornbury) and St George's Road, Northcote (Benson, 1935:406; Lemon, 1983:111). The concentration of so many churches in a relatively small area reflects the strength and influence of Methodism in nineteenth century Darebin.

Figure 60

Former Methodist Church, now Greek Orthodox Church, Yann Street, 2005.

[DHE, ID 416]



Anglican

Northcote's early Anglicans worshipped at St Mark's Fitzroy. In 1857, a group of residents met in the Peacock Inn to decide on a place for a church, and they accepted land grant of a reserve in the Township of Northcote. Prior to the 1870s it was usual for the government to assist churches of the major denominations, and a cash grant of £500 was received in 1859. In that year, the Governor Sir Henry Barkly laid the foundation stone of All Saints Church, and the construction work was carried out by local volunteers. All Saints Church was opened in 1860.

Preston's first Anglican Church, St Mary's, another bluestone building, was built on land donated by a stockbroker on the corner of Tyler Street and Plenty Road, in 1865. At that stage East Preston was rather isolated from the two centres of Preston's settlement, so in 1889 All Saints was opened on the corner of Murray Road and High Streets. St Mary's was closed during the 1890s Depression, to be re-opened in 1899.

Over the years new Anglican churches were built as new communities formed in the further reaches of Darebin, such as St Aiden's in East Northcote, built in the 1920s. Also the Anglicans moved into the centre of Northcote, building the Church of the Epiphany on the site of Rucker's former mansion on the top of the hill, in 1926. The Church was built to seat 400, but by the end of the 1950s church attendances had declined, and the seats could no longer be filled by Anglicans. In 1966, the building was sold to the Eastern Orthodox Church, and the proceeds applied to replacing the wooden building at St James Pender's Grove.

Figure 70

Laying foundation stone at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Thornbury, 1916.

[DHE, ID558]



Presbyterian

The Presbyterians did not have a presence in Darebin until 1870, when they commenced worshipping in the new Northcote Methodist Church. In 1874 they built a manse for their minister on the corner of Ross and Cunningham Streets, and a weatherboard church in Westgarth Street in 1876. Although the Northcote Presbyterian community was small, their minister, Rev. Duncan Fraser, was influential. It was he who initiated the Northcote Health League, which eventually succeeded in ridding Northcote of its noxious trades and forming the Borough of Northcote, as discussed above ('Glimpses of Our Past', 1988:16; Lemon, 1983:72). The Presbyterians branched out from Westgarth Street, to commence a church in David Street South in 1892, and further churches in Regent and Reservoir in the 1920s (Carroll & Rule, 1985:111-12).

Figure 71

Presbyterian Church, 40-42 James Street, Northcote, 1894.

[DHE, ID 365]



Roman Catholic

Like the Presbyterians, the Catholics were in a minority in nineteenth century Darebin and were late to establish parishes. In 1887, Bradford Hall in High Street was made available for the celebration of Mass for Preston's Catholics. The first Catholic Church, Sacred Heart in Bell Street, was a wooden building, opened by Archbishop Carr in 1889. The building was replaced with the present large brick church in 1926. The old wooden church was moved to Viola Street Reservoir and became St Gabriel's (Forster, 1968:29; Carroll & Rule, 1985:112-3).

In 1891, a small wooden church in Arthurton Road Northcote was opened and was extended over the next few years. Darebin came under the Clifton Hill Mission until 1893, when the district of Northcote and Preston was formed as a distinct mission under the charge of Father Thomas Brazil. In 1897, a more suitable site was acquired in Westbourne Grove on Rucker's Hill. The new St Joseph's Church was opened by Archbishop Carr in 1917. The Catholic Church built a number of other churches in Darebin in the twentieth century to meet the needs of Catholics in new communities as urban expansion spread (Darebin Historic Encyclopedia; Lemon, 1983:112).

Figure 72

Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bell Street, Preston (image date unknown)

[DHE, ID 428]



Twentieth century revival

As the economy revived after the 1890s depression and urban settlement re-commenced, some new denominations also arrived in Darebin. The Churches of Christ, an evangelical revivalist denomination of American origin, formed a church in Preston in 1902 and bought land in High Street. In 1911 the members expressed the enthusiasm of the new age through the American tradition of building a church in one day. On Saturday 23 March, 150 people worked on building the neat timber chapel, and by midnight it was finished. The first service was held the following morning. It is believed to be the first church in Australia built in a day (Carroll & Rule, 1985:114; Darebin Historic Encyclopedia).

Figure 73

Church of Christ, Preston – built in one day in March 1911

[DHE, ID 427]



Not to be outdone, the following October the Fairfield Baptists built their church in one day, however they did lay the foundations a week earlier. The Baptists also built a chapel in High Street, Regent in 1915, close to the site of the old Particular Baptist chapel and the new church retained the pulpit and Bible from the old one. However there was no actual connection between those early Particular Baptists and the twentieth century Baptists who opened the new church.

A Church of Christ was also built in Northcote, on the corner of Bastings Street and Prospect Grove, however no details of this are available, except it was the church in which Doug Nicholls was converted to Christianity. In 1939, Nicholls became a Church of Christ pastor, and began his ministry to the Fitzroy Aboriginal community (Darebin Historic Encyclopedia; Lemon, 1983:202).

Places of worship that reflect post-war immigration

In the second half of the twentieth century, the religious character of Darebin began to change markedly with the arrival of immigrants from Europe, the Middle East and Asia, who brought with them religious traditions new to Darebin, in particular the Eastern Orthodox churches and Islam. Since the 1990s, the Buddhists have also been represented in Darebin.

Christian

Due to declining church attendance in the traditional English-speaking churches and the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia, a number of the older Protestant churches were made redundant. Many of these churches were taken over by immigrants arriving from Europe brought their religions such as the Greeks, Macedonians and Christians from the Middle East who brought the Orthodox traditions.

A church honouring the Macedonian Saints Cyril and Methodius was formed in Fitzroy in 1950, but in 1966 it moved to the former Anglican Church of the Epiphany in High Street Northcote, and became known as the Macedonian - Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church. The former Yann Street Methodist Church became the Greek Orthodox Church of St Cyril and St Methodius and ministers to Macedonians of Greek origin (Jupp, 1988:688-9). In Northcote the Little Sisters of the Poor Convent has become the Holy Monastery of Axion Estin of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Darebin is also home to Melbourne's Protestant Macedonian community, who are descendants of Methodists and Baptists evangelised by American missionaries in the nineteenth century. The Macedonian Evangelical United Church on the corner of Wood Street and Murphy Grove, East Preston is a Uniting Church Parish, with links to the Evangelical Methodist Church in the former Yugoslavia. The Baptist Church in High Street, Regent is now used by Macedonian Baptists (Jupp, 1988:685, 690).

A number of other Eastern Orthodox churches, including St Nikola in Tyler Street, Preston, Holy Church St George in St David Street, Thornbury, which was the Greek Orthodox church for Northcote and environs (until the 1990s it was located in the former Congregational Church on the corner of Martin Street and Armadale Street) and, commenced in redundant churches, while St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Gilbert Road also commenced in a redundant church before opening a new church complex in 1989. These churches show the transition of Darebin from the stronghold of non-conformist Protestantism to a multicultural community.

Figure 74

St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church

[Context, 2008]



The immigrants arriving from Europe brought their religions helped boost the Catholic Church in Darebin. Between 1947 and 1961 the number of Catholics in Melbourne more than doubled from 254,050 to 518,305 (Bourke, 1988:297). It is said that:

In expanding Melbourne, new streets of houses and whole new suburbs rose from the ground as if by magic. Old parishes were divided, and new parishes were divided again. Churches, schools, presbyteries and convents were built or enlarged. (Bourke, 1988:296)

Many post-war immigrants settled in Darebin and by 1961 the proportion of Roman Catholics in Preston had risen to 28.5%, compared with 27% of all Victorians. As a result new places of worship were constructed to serve the rapidly expanding suburbs in the north and east of Darebin. St Joseph the Worker in North Reservoir was founded by the Italian community and has one of Darebin's largest Italian congregations.

The design of new Catholic churches erected in Darebin in the 1960s also responded to the Second Vatican Council, which held sessions in four successive years from 1962 through 1965. The Holy Name church in Robb Street, East Preston erected in 1964 reflected the new philosophy. The fan shaped plan of the church accommodated 850 people was adopted by the architect as being 'the best shape for focusing attention on the altar and emphasising the present liturgical concept of unity of the Priest and the people in the offering of the Mass' (*Advocate*, 17 December 1964). In describing the church as being 'liturgically correct' Father Clearly explained that it was a church where the liturgy could be carried out effectively as 'the people were centred on the altar and not apart from it' (*Advocate*, 31 December 1964). St Raphael's in Hardy Street, Preston is another example of a post-Second Vatican Council Modernist church.

Muslim

As noted in Chapter 2, Reservoir has Melbourne's second highest concentration of Muslims, and Preston also has a high Muslim population. The Omar Bin El Khattab mosque in Cramer Street Preston, opened in 1976 was Victoria's first purpose-built mosque. It is the place of worship for 10,000 Muslims from Melbourne's northern suburbs (www.decc.org.au). A second mosque is in Blake Street Reservoir.

Buddhist

The Melbourne Linh Son Buddhist Congregation was established in March 1991 as the Melbourne branch of the World Linh Son Buddhist Congregation, and commenced services to the public in a small house in the heart of Vietnamese North Richmond. The Congregation grew rapidly, drawing devotees from Richmond and neighbouring suburbs, so that in 1994 larger premises became necessary. With financial support from the World Linh Son Buddhist Congregation and the Taiwanese Buddhist Foundation, the Congregation purchased the

former Lakeside Primary School in Reservoir and converted it to a Linh Son Buddhist monastery. It is the largest Buddhist temple in Melbourne and draws people from across the metropolitan area. It also demonstrates the movement of people of Vietnamese origins into Darebin in the last decade or so (www.linhson.org.au).

Figure 75

Construction of the Traditional Buddhist Gate and Archway, Reservoir, 2001

[Melbourne Linh Son Buddhist Congregation, accessed <http://www.linhson.org.au/developments.htm>]



Indigenous Christianity

As noted above, Pastor Sir Doug Nicholls received his Christian conversion experience in the Northcote Church of Christ in the 1930s, and subsequently became an ordained Pastor. He established a significant ministry to Aboriginal people, particularly in the Fitzroy district.

Much later, the Catholic Church developed a ministry to the Darebin Aboriginal community, as a result of a Papal visit to Australia. When Pope Paul VI visited Sydney in 1970, he addressed the Aboriginal people:

We know that you have a lifestyle proper to your own ethnic genius and culture - a culture which the Church respects and which she does not in any way ask you to renounce We deeply respect your dignity and reiterate our deep affection for you.

Pope John Paul II, in his 1986 Australian tour, strongly affirmed these sentiments, and the recognition of Indigenous peoples' ancient occupancy of and spiritual attachment to the land. ('Address to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders', pp 166-7) Such Papal encouragement gave impetus for the Aboriginal Catholic Church to be established and to bring the Catholic Aboriginal community together. The Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in St George's Road Thornbury is a local outcome of this.

Another Aboriginal Christian Group in Darebin is the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship. The AEF was formed in 1970 at Port Augusta in South Australia and is now a nationwide Christian group, which encourages Aboriginal Christians in leadership, fellowship and responsibility. The AEF occupies the former Presbyterian church in Rossmoyne Street, Thornbury (AEF website).

7.2 Educating

The story of education in Darebin focuses on the establishment of State education, although there were a few notable private schools in the area. Secondary education was not available in the area until the mid to late 1920s, when separate schools for boys and girls were opened. In times of rapid growth, after both World Wars, Darebin suffered from a shortage of schools, so additions and extensions are part of the heritage of many old schools in the area.

Church, National and Common schools

Before the establishment of the State school system in 1872, education was provided by local community groups, particularly churches, who gained some government funding towards the building and running of schools. The National Board of Education functioned from 1851 to 1862 managing government-funded non-denominational schools, of which 193 were built throughout Victoria, while there was a Denominational Board to see to the church-run schools. This was all superseded by the *Common Schools Act*, 1862, which was designed to improve the standard of education, and to end sectarian rivalries over competition for funds, thus giving education a secular focus (*Victorian Year Book*, 1973:477-8). Church or denominational schools sometimes became National or Common schools if they obtained Government Funding. Some Common schools became State schools after the introduction of free, compulsory and secular education in 1873.

Darebin's earliest school appears to have been the one run by the Wesleyans in the little schoolhouse in High Street Northcote, opened in 1854. The bluestone building was used for worship and Sunday School, as well as for other community functions, as noted above. It was then the only school within a two mile radius. In 1859 the Primitive Methodists began a school, presumably in their High Street church just down the road from the Wesleyan School. The teachers were John and Hannah Dunkerly, who had run a private school in Manchester. The church was running this school without any government assistance because they did not realise they were eligible until the All Saints Church in Westgarth applied for funding to start a school. The Denominational Schools Board Inspector assessed the situation and the number of children in the district, and decided that there were not sufficient children for three schools. He refused the application from the Primitive Methodists in favour of the Church of England. Lemon suggests that there may have been a hint of sectarianism in this decision. The Dunkerleys then applied, unsuccessfully, to the National Schools Board for funding, saying that they were no longer connected with the church and would give the children an 'unsectarian education' (Lemon, 1983:45-6, 50-2).

In 1863 Richard Tobin took over the Wesleyan school, and remained to run the new Northcote State School, when it opened in 1874. Both the Wesleyan and Anglican schools closed at that time.

The Preston Wesleyans also had a school at their church site on the corner of High and Tyler Streets in the 1860s, as did the Anglicans at All Saints, but it is not known when they commenced. In 1864 residents at Preston South, then known as Gowerville, applied for funding for a Common school. Land was donated, and funds raised to attract the pound for pound government subsidy. In 1865 the Gowerville School opened in a small wooden building on the south-east corner of Raglan and Albert Streets. This became Gowerville State School under the *Education Act* 1872, and was later rebuilt in Hotham Street in 1878. It was renamed South Preston State School in 1902 (Carroll, 1985:39-41).

Private schools

Before the introduction of State education it was common for families or individuals, especially women, to run small private enterprise schools. These proliferated in built-up areas such as Prahran, but only a few have been noted in early Darebin's scattered communities. Preston Grammar School was established in 1869 by Eugene Rodda in a large house in High Street North Preston. Its patrons included the Gardiner family of Bundoora Park, but the school was forced to close in 1891 (Lemon, 1983:98). As Darebin's population began to increase in the boom years several more opened, including that of Miss Fraser, daughter of Rev. Fraser, who taught eight students in the manse. In 1896, daughters of the vicar of All Saints Preston opened the Preparatory High School (Lemon, 1983:98; Forster, 1968:60).

The Misses Westgarth ran a 'High School' for young ladies in Clifton Hill, which they named Westleigh College after they expanded into Northcote. The school was accommodated in two large houses, one at 212 Clarke Street and the other, *Leura* in Bayview Street. In 1912, Westleigh College had an enrolment of 106 primary and secondary students. By then the

government had begun a system of inspection and registration of private schools. When the inspector visited in 1917, Westleigh, now owned by the Gresham sisters, did not reach the academic standards required of a secondary school. After 1919, it continued as a primary school only, until it closed after the Second World War (Lemon, 1983:98, 153-4, 196-7).

R.T. Farr ran a small secondary school for boys, called Northcote Grammar, until in 1902 he changed the name to Alexandra College and took in girls as well. The school ran until 1921 (Lemon, 1983:153-4, 178-9).

Developing a State school system

Following the passing of the *Free, Compulsory and Secular Education Act 1872*, the government began building State Schools throughout Victoria. Darebin's first State schools were Northcote and Gowerville (later known as South Preston) both opened in 1874, followed by Preston North in 1875. At that stage Preston still had two distinct communities in the north and south.

The Northcote State School in Helen Street was the typical building provided by the Education Department in its early years. It was built to accommodate 250 children. The appointment of Richard Tobin as head teacher provided continuity from the old Wesleyan school, and his wife was assistant teacher. The Tobins were prominent in the Northcote community, and remained at the school until the early 1890s. Within ten years Northcote School was overcrowded, and the addition of two new classrooms soon proved inadequate for the growing school enrolment. Despite several more additions in the early part of the twentieth century, overcrowding seemed to be a perennial problem well into the 1920s.

To accommodate the period of rapid growth in the central parts of Darebin during the 1880s and early 1890s, two new schools were built - Fairfield in 1885 and Wales Street, to serve the new Prince of Wales Park, in 1891. Both commenced in local church halls.

The provision of schools never seemed to keep up with urban expansion in Darebin. The story of West Preston State School (now called Preston West Primary) is indicative of the situation. Opened in 1915 with an enrolment of 233 students, West Preston required additional classrooms in rented premises by 1917. In 1919, the school was closed and served as a temporary hospital during the disastrous influenza pandemic that hit Australia after the war. By 1925 enrolments were 818 and classes were as big as 69 and 81 at junior levels. Extensions made in 1925 were soon inadequate and portable classrooms were added. Bell Primary School, opened in 1930, eased the pressure. The post-war baby boom and influx of immigrants again taxed the school's resources, as they did schools all over Melbourne. In 1958, West Preston became a training school for teachers, and there were 950 students on the roll. Overcrowding was eased as schools such as Reservoir West and Merrilands opened in the 1960s and as the population aged in the older parts of Darebin, so the pressure moved to the new schools in the developing areas further out.

Schools such as Kingsbury and Ruthven opened in 1961 and 1968 respectively represent the growth of the northern part of Darebin from the 1960s. By 1984, the City of Preston had 20 State primary schools.

Figure 76

*Helen Street State School,
Northcote, 1874*

[DHE, ID 660]



High schools

At the time of the *Education Act 1872*, primary education was deemed sufficient for working people. Secondary education was provided by the private sector and the churches. With only the few small private schools noted above to choose from locally, most Darebin families who could afford school fees sent their children to schools outside the area, such as the Methodist Ladies College and Scotch College.

A new *Education Act* in 1910 allowed the Education Department to provide secondary education, but the new secondary school system focussed first on providing agricultural and secondary education to country students. By 1925, apart from a few suburban high schools such as Melbourne, Essendon and Coburg, the majority of high schools were in country regions (*Victorian Year Book 1973*: 486-7).

It seems that the Northcote community began campaigning for a technical school around 1909, with no success. However in the 1920s moves began for a high school in Northcote. The Head Teacher at Helen Street School and the parents' association at the Wales Street School urged the Education Department to purchase land at the former Inebriates Retreat in St George's Road. The establishment of schools was still very much a community concern, and local commitment was expected in the form of municipal contributions. The school was to serve a wide area, so Fitzroy, Brunswick and Whittlesea Councils contributed funds, as well as Northcote and Preston Councils. In 1926 Northcote High was commenced in the old Wesleyan School. The school was built on its St George's Road site in 1929. Northcote High's first enrolment included girls as well as boys, but the girls were transferred to the new Preston Girls School in 1929. Northcote High became Melbourne's third boys' high school, taking students from a large region. The young Jim Cairns, later Deputy Prime Minister in the Whitlam Labor Government, travelled by horse and train from Sunbury to Northcote High in the 1930s (Blake, 1973: 222; Lemon, 1983:198).

Northcote High's companion school, the Preston Girls' Domestic Arts School & High School, to give it its full title, was opened in 1928. The Cooma Street site was given by the Preston Council (Sharp, 2004:45). The school reflected government policy of supplying domestic education for girls to prepare them for their expected roles as wives and mothers. The curriculum included 'Housewifery':

We learned to polish brass and sliver. We swept the floor with a whisk broom and pan. The carpet square we blot clean with newspaper soaked in water. Of course, we practised making the bed with well turned corners - and there was to be no 'slut's wool' under the bed either! (Sharpe 2004:51)

However Domestic Arts were not the sole focus of the school. It was to have an unusual three-fold approach, which acknowledged girls' rights to an academic and vocational education,

hence the 'High School' part of its name. A commercial course 'to rival the Business Colleges' was envisaged, but it was 1936 before the necessary equipment arrived. From the outset the school attracted students from cultures that preferred separate education for girls - Jewish, Italian and Lebanese came from Fitzroy in the 1920s. In 1988, 80% of the students were from non-English speaking families, with Greek, Italian, Macedonian, Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese being the main languages spoken (Sharp 2004:45, 72).

Until 1954 Northcote High and Preston Girls were Darebin's only two high schools, but over the following decade five more were added, as the government endeavoured to keep up with the 'baby boomers'. However none of these provided education to year twelve, as needed for university entrance for many years (Forster, 1968:112).

In 1992, Thornbury High School was formed from the reorganisation of Thornbury High School and Northcote Technical School (later known as Darebin Parklands Secondary College). For several years the new college Thornbury Darebin College occupied two sites, junior school on the high school site and senior school on the technical school site. The campuses were joined in 2000 and the name reverted to Thornbury High School in 2005.

Figure 77

*Northcote High School,
c1960s.*

[State Library of
Victoria, AN:
H32492/4771, IN:
b01131



Technical schools

Technical and trade education was traditionally acquired on the job by boys in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. Following the findings of the Technological Commission of 1869, Schools of Mines were opened in mining districts, the first being in Ballarat in 1870. Technical schools were established in Melbourne by philanthropists, such as Francis Ormond who founded the Working Men's College (now RMIT University). In 1912, the government began taking responsibility for junior technical education to prepare students for senior technical colleges, but although a few technical schools were established in industrial suburbs such as Collingwood and Brunswick, the system was not really developed until the 1930s and 40s (Blake, 1973: Vol.1).

Preston people began campaigning for a technical school in 1930, but the depression delayed progress until 1937, when Preston Technical School opened on a site provided by Preston Council in St George's Road, with 305 boys Trade and engineering workshops were added in 1947. The campus was extended to include a girls' junior technical school in Cramer Street in 1956. In 1963 a Diploma block was added and in 1964 Preston Technical School became Preston Technical College. In 1967 it affiliated with the newly formed Victorian Institute of Colleges, to become Preston Institute of Technology and the tertiary technological institute

for the northern suburbs (Blake, 1973 Vol. 3: 264-6). In the 1970s the Institute moved out to a new campus at Bundoora (outside Darebin, later RMIT University) and the old campus remained the secondary technical and trade school. The Preston campus became the Preston campus of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE in the 1980s, and is now called the Northern Metropolitan Institute of Technology. The campus therefore demonstrates the development of technical education over much of the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, after a very long wait, the Northcote people got their Technical school in 1966, which was opened as a co-educational school (Lemon 1983: 265; Blake 1973 Vol. 3: 262-3). In the late 1980s, new ideology concerning education in Victoria led to the abolition of technical schools and the amalgamation of many of them with high schools. Northcote Tech amalgamated with Thornbury High to become Darebin Parklands Secondary College. One of the longest surviving technical schools was Macleod Tech, which until 1994 was outside Darebin. It is now LaTrobe Secondary College.

Developing Catholic school systems

Local Catholic parishes provided primary schools for their children, but like the churches, they were relatively late on the scene in Darebin. St Joseph's was the first Catholic school in Darebin, commenced in Arthurton Road in 1891, and moved to James Street in 1919. In 1904 the Sisters of the Good Samaritan took over the teaching at the school. The Order bought *Maebury* in Separation Street for their convent (Lemon, 1983:112, 153, 196, 250).

Preston's first Catholic school was at Sacred Heart in Bell Street, although the date of its opening is unclear. In 1905 the Good Samaritan Sisters took over, coming on the tram from the convent at Northcote each day. St Gabriel's School Reservoir was built in 1930 (Carroll, 1985:112-3).

It was usual for the Catholic Church to bring nuns and brothers from Ireland to staff their schools, in particular the Christian Brothers and Sisters of Mercy. However the Good Samaritan Sisters was the first women's religious order founded in Australia. It was founded by Bishop Polding in Sydney in 1857. In 1904, the Sisters opened a 'high-class day schools for young ladies' at their Northcote convent, however it was not able to compete with the local private schools, and closed in 1905. The school was run as Santa Maria girls school South Yarra until 1933, when it was returned to the convent in Separation Street. Santa Maria College is now one of only three Good Samaritan Collages in Victoria. There are several more in New South Wales and other states. The Sisters still have communities in Darebin (Lemon, 1983:153; www.goodsam.org.au).

Educating Aboriginal children

Darebin also has a history of education of Aboriginal children, commencing with the Merri Creek Aboriginal School in the 1840s and later with Northland Secondary College from the last quarter of the twentieth century. Although the Merri Creek School was outside the current boundaries of the City of Darebin, once again, the School was intimately connected to the encampments along the Merri Creek that extended into present day Westgarth.

Merri Creek Aboriginal School

The location chosen for the Merri Creek School was the confluence of the Merri Creek with the Yarra River. The area had been an Aboriginal Encampment since at least 1841 and as a result the Native Police Corps Barracks, and the Assistant Protectors Quarters were established here, as noted in Chapter 7. Children from the encampment had been educated at the site under the protectorate system, with classes being held at the Assistant Protector's hut from 1842 to 1845. The classes were held as regularly as Thomas's schedule would permit, Thomas describing them as 'variously observed' (Clarke & Heydon, 1998:84).

Thomas was in communication with the Collins St Baptist Church, which ran a Sunday school for Aboriginal children in Richmond. Thomas offered them the use of his 'room' at Merri Creek. The Baptists decided that the Merri Creek site was most suitable '...this being what

they call their land they would the more easily be induced to locate there' (Clark & Heydon, 1998:85). The Baptists took over Dr McArthur's former residence near Thomas's hut and the Merri Creek Aboriginal School was formally established in 1845.

Absenteeism was considered to be a problem throughout the history of the school, but many absences were directly related to traditional clan observances. Edward Peacock recognised that Wurundjeri elders were allowing students to attend the school so long as it wouldn't affect these traditional activities, and as part of the daily routine children were allowed free time for swimming, boomerang throwing, fishing and hunting possums (Walker n.d. in Clarke & Heydon, 2004:67).

After 1846, student numbers dropped off dramatically. This was partly due to the death of Billibillary in August causing distress in the encampment and resulting in Woiwurrung people moving away for the rest of the year. An influenza epidemic that hit the Merri Creek encampment in 1847 further contributed to this decline in student numbers, and those remaining in the encampment to move further up the Yarra.

In 1848, Francis Edgar was employed as the schoolmaster. Improvements were made to the school building and agriculture and husbandry activities were expanded greatly with a stockyard, a pigsty, goat shed, fowl yard and goose yard. Despite these improvements to the school, student numbers never recovered, with an average of only ten students. This was a direct result of the Wurundjeri families reluctance to return to the area. By 1851, numbers dropped to an unsustainable five students resulting in its closure.

Northland Secondary College

Northland Secondary College has a long-standing connection with the Aboriginal community of Darebin, extending back at least thirty years, and closely connected with the rise in Aboriginal population in the Preston and Reservoir areas. By the early 1990s more than 60 Aboriginal students were enrolled at the College.

Despite nationally recognised success in providing for the needs of Aboriginal students, and recognition within the broader Aboriginal community as an example of practical reconciliation, the College was the target of a program of school closures implemented by the State government in 1992, largely on the basis of education budget cutbacks.

Resistance to the closure by the community was swift, and included the formation of the 'Northland Koori Community' and the running by Staff and parents of the 'Northland Secondary College Mobile Rebel School'. Action proceeded through the Equal Opportunity Board, multiple hearings in the Supreme Court and through several appeals which ran from 1992 to 1995. Early that year, the Full Bench of the Supreme Court ordered the school reopened on the grounds that the closure was racially discriminatory (Mayer, 1999).

Figure 78

Northcote Secondary College campaign poster, 1996.

Artist: Eban Roach

[Koori History Website,
[http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/great/g
rt3.html](http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/great/g
rt3.html)]



The battle for the school is widely recognised as a significant episode in Victorian history and as a major victory for the rights of the Aboriginal community and education.

Northland Secondary College currently has an enrolment of over 80 Aboriginal students, representing around 25% of the school population, one of the highest Aboriginal populations at any school in Melbourne. The school has two Aboriginal educators and provides a curriculum which includes Aboriginal history and culture (Northland Secondary College).

Developing higher education

When Melbourne's second university was being planned in the 1950s Preston Council suggested the recently vacated Bundoora Police Paddock as a suitable site, but the more populated south eastern suburbs were chosen for Monash University. It soon became clear that a third university was needed - in the northern suburbs. Again Preston Council, together with a number of neighbouring councils, promoted Bundoora. It was close to a number of large medical institutions, for teaching medicine, there was plenty of space, and there were nearby transport links, they argued (although it was not well served by public transport). La Trobe University was legally constituted by Parliament in December 1964, and the site, part of the Mont Park Psychiatric Hospital farm, was acquired. Yunken Freeman Architects drew up a master plan for the campus, placing the library in a central position with ten to twelve colleges arching around the east side. A ring road encircled the campus with car parks outside the perimeter. There was also space designated for a future hospital (Carroll, 1985:201-5).

Construction proceeded rapidly, with all buildings in a uniform beige brick. The campus was set in landscaped native parklands, and a wildlife reserve was established. La Trobe University opened in March 1967 with 552 students, including 48 graduate students, and 95 academic staff. There were four schools - Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities. Only three colleges were ever built because the college system went out of favour soon after opening (Carroll, 1985:201-5). Much of the space designated for colleges was subsequently used for car parking.

Within a few years there were nine schools, including Education and Agriculture (*Course Handbook 1981*). The site for the hospital was used as the Agriculture Reserve and an area to the north designated for parking became the Wildlife Reserve. The University has expanded its areas of teaching and research to include Medical Sciences, rather than Medicine, and Nursing after nurse training moved from hospitals to the tertiary institutions in the 1980s. A private hospital was eventually built on the Agricultural Reserve in the 1990s. In 2007, La Trobe University has 15,000 students at Bundoora, and over 7,000 students spread over six regional campuses (www.latrobe.edu.au).

Providing library services

Darebin is unusual in that its libraries did not evolve from Mechanics' Institutes as they did in many other areas of Victoria. When Northcote Town Hall was built provision was made for a Library, but it was a couple of years before a library was set up, on the instigation of R.J. Whalley, owner of the Northcote *Leader*. The library opened in the Town Hall with 300 books in 1892. It had an active committee, which ran fund-raising functions to buy books. In 1908 Whalley wrote to Scottish millionaire philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who was a patron of libraries, and was successful in receiving a grant of £3000, providing the library was free to readers and borrowers. In those days libraries were usually funded by readers' subscriptions. The sum was almost enough to build a boom style building to fit in with the Town Hall two doors away, to the design of Edward Twentymen (Jnr). It was opened in 1911 (Lemon, 1983:129-30, 158-60; 'Jubilee Celebrations', 1933:21).

Preston had a number of small libraries by 1900. The oldest was the Preston Public Library in the hall in High Street near Percival Street, opened in 1876. It was the site of the early Particular Baptist Church services. It was supported by Regent's older families, but they did not wish to support a central shire library. The second library was the Reading and Recreation Rooms, (later called the Mechanics' Recreation Institute) in Clifton Grove, South Preston,

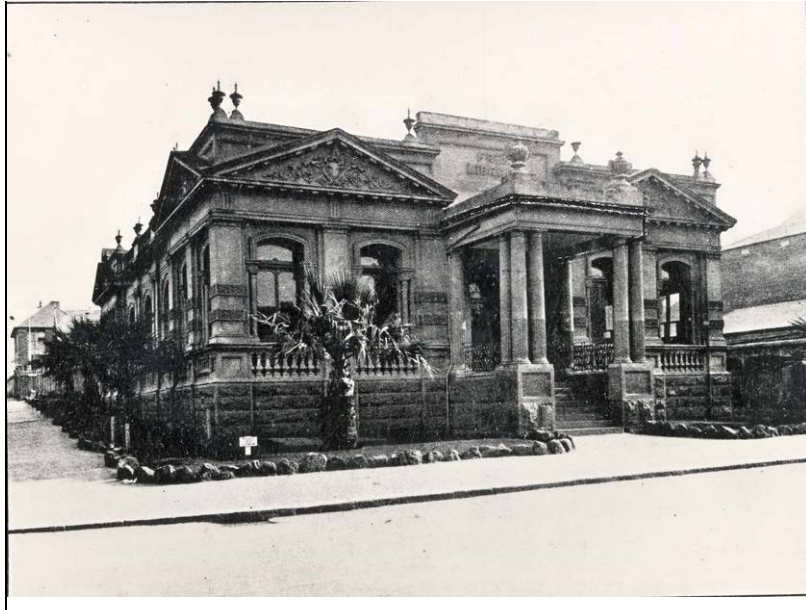
which only ran from 1892 to 1895. Another library was run by the Australian Natives Association, which, together with the other friendly societies, supported the establishment of a municipal library. They made an approach to Council in 1901 (Forster, 1968:36, 63-5).

Preston Council subsequently provided rooms in the Shire Hall for use as a library. The friendly societies all had representatives on the library committee, which ran fund-raising functions to pay the librarian and buy books. In 1908 a purpose-built library was constructed on land donated by Council next to the post office. The library committee raised the funds by running concerts, sports carnival and a jumble fair, and from government and council grants. The new library was a subscription library until 1945, when it became a free municipal library (Forster, 1968:63-5).

Figure 79

*Northcote Carnegie library
(image date unknown)*

[DHE, ID 185]



7.3 Establishing institutions of mutual support

In the 1890s, up to one in three Victorians came under the protective umbrella of a friendly society or lodge (Blainey, 1991:81). With no state welfare, friendly societies such as the Ancient Order of Foresters, Oddfellows and Rechabites were a way of providing self-help and mutual support amongst working people. Members made regular contributions of a few pence to a fund upon which they could draw if unable to work because of illness.

Friendly societies provided medicines, usually through agreements with local chemists. However problems with adulterated drugs being supplied and excessive costs charged by some chemists, led to friendly societies establishing their own dispensaries, such as the United Friendly Societies Dispensary in Gooch Street, Thornbury.

Besides providing welfare, friendly societies ran social activities for their members, and were concerned with the social improvement of society. They built halls for their meetings, social functions and other activities. These halls proliferated throughout nineteenth century Victoria, especially in mining towns and industrial suburbs.

Darebin had a full complement of friendly societies, including Rechabites, Sons of Temperance, Oddfellows, Foresters, Druids and the Australian Natives Association. The Ancient Order of Foresters was the earliest friendly society in Preston, commencing in 1859. The Foresters Hall was in High Street. In Northcote the Foresters Lodge met in the Peacock Inn in the 1880s. Friendly societies generally promoted temperance, as sobriety was akin to respectability and prosperity, so they usually avoided hotels. The Independent Order of Rechabites promoted total abstinence. The Rechabites Fidelity Tent No. 75 commenced in 1868 and met in the South Preston Wesleyan Chapel, then the privately owned Bradford Hall, before they opened their hall at 251 High Street in 1889 (now occupied by the Migrant

Resource Centre). The temperance movement was strong in Preston, due to the work of the Rechabites and the Protestant churches, hence the relatively small number of hotels (Forster, 1968:35; Bartlett b; Lemon 1983:79, *The Temperance News*, October 1889). The Star of Northcote Rechabite Tent commenced in 1876 and built their hall in Westbourne Avenue in 1901 (*The Rechabite*, June 1976).

The Australia Natives Association (ANA) was particularly influential in community matters, as was seen in the establishment of the library and will be seen in the move to have a hospital for the district. Both Northcote and Preston had branches of the Australia Women's Association, which was a sister organisation to the ANA. Northcote also had the Lady Gwalia Lodge, the women's equivalent of Druids. In 1904 a Northcote resident (presumably male) wrote to the *Leader* in disgust:

I am sorry to see that some of the women of Northcote are so far forgetting their womanhood as to form a branch of the A.W.A. It is not very edifying to see our womanhood 'playing at Parliament' when they should be home darning socks or taking care of the children (cited in Lemon, 1983:144).

The strictly male -only Freemasons made their first appearance in Darebin in 1889, when Preston Lodge No. 148 was formed. Early meetings were held in the Council Club Hotel, then Bradford Hall, before the Preston Masonic Temple was built in 1919. The temple, in Bell Street, was an early work of architect Harry A. Norris. As Darebin grew and developed and more Masonic Lodges formed in the district, the Preston Masonic Temple became the meeting place for fourteen different lodges (Forster, 1968:103-4).

7.4 Providing Health and Welfare Services

Providing institutional care

Darebin, although close to Melbourne, was isolated by poor transport services, as we have seen, and its large undeveloped areas attracted various health and welfare institutions seeking rural land near the city. Darebin became home to a number of institutions that brought people in from the wider community for care and treatment. The first two, the Inebriates Retreat and the Little Sisters of the Poor Home for the Aged, were commenced in nineteenth century Northcote.

In the twentieth century large psychiatric institutions were established in Bundoora. The repatriation of returned servicemen was established by the Commonwealth Government at Bundoora and Macleod, see section 6.4 *Defending Australia*.

Inebriates Retreat

The first of the health institution to take advantage of Darebin's rural seclusion was the Inebriates Retreat, founded by Dr Charles McCarthy on a 32 acre site on a bend in the Merri Creek. Dr McCarthy, concerned over the drinking excesses in the Victorian community, was a pioneer in the treatment of alcoholism. He believed it to be a 'disease of the nervous system', that could be cured with a regime of abstinence and 'suitable diet, medicine, exercise and cheerful occupation and in moral persuasion and kindness on the part of the superintendent', as prescribed by the regulations of the *Inebriates Act* 1872 (Lemon, 1983:64). McCarthy had been campaigning for the establishment of such an institution for many years, and he eventually received a government grant to buy Sumner's property and build suitable accommodation. He opened the Retreat in 1873, and over nearly twenty years treated 650 patients, although his success rate is not known. McCarthy ran his Retreat as a private enterprise, but it was taken over by the government in 1890 and closed in the following year, because the costs were thought to outweigh the benefits (Lemon, 1983:63-5, 122). The site is now occupied by Merri Park and Northcote High School.

Caring for the aged poor

The Catholic religious order the Little Sisters of the Poor was founded in France in 1839 to care for the aged poor. In 1883 Archbishop Gould invited the order to Victoria, and in 1894 the first eight Sisters - two from France and six from England - arrived in Melbourne. They appealed successfully to the Melbourne community to raise funds, with which they purchased Brown's property in St Georges Road. They used an existing farmhouse on the site and added a timber building, admitting their first residents soon after they moved in at the end of November 1885. The Sisters admitted men and women over 60 with no other means of support, regardless of their religion. Lemon suggests that the Protestant Northcote Council had little enthusiasm for the new project, and refused to allow the Sisters a small cemetery in the grounds for burying their own dead, a decision that was overruled by the Central Board of Health.

The first stage of the large Elizabethan style building, designed by Leonard Flannagan, was built in 1890. The second stage was designed by James Curtin and completed in 1896. It was built more cheaply than the first stage, in view of the economic situation of the time, but it included a semi-circular chapel. The third stage, by yet another architect, Kempson and Conolly, was completed in 1908. The large building accommodated 250 destitute aged people. The Northcote institution was the Order's first in Australia (Lemon, 1983:90, 129; "Jubilee Celebrations", 1933:34; Butler, 1992).

Figure 80

*Little Sisters of the Poor Convent,
1892*

Photographer: Beckett, G.

[Museum Victoria, Reference
Number: MM 008227]



Gresswell Sanatorium

Tuberculosis (TB) was a major health problem in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when it was considered incurable. Dr Astley Gresswell, Victoria's Health Inspector from 1890, commenced a campaign against TB, and in 1903, because of its highly infectious nature, it was declared a notifiable disease. As noted in Chapter 7 the Military Sanatorium Macleod was opened in 1916 for servicemen affected by the disease.

In 1927 Victoria's first Director of Tuberculosis was appointed, and he set up a State controlled TB service with diagnostic facilities, outpatients' clinics and institutions for intensive care. In 1933 the Gresswell Sanatorium was established near the Macleod Sanatorium on 500 acres of Crown land to the north east of Mont Park Mental Hospital. Two other sanatoria were established out of Melbourne at Heatherton and Greenvale in the 1940s, and three others were in country areas, but Gresswell was the largest. Bundoora's isolation and rural seclusion made it ideal for a sanatorium. Wards were pavilions with verandahs and treatment relied on open air, and physical and mental rest. The introduction of chemotherapy in the 1950s increased the recovery rate, and vaccination reduced the incidence of infection. By the 1960s the incidence

of TB had dropped sufficiently to close the sanatoria (*Victorian Year Book*, 1973:551; O'Neill & Taylor, 1995:11-4). The site is now being developed for housing.

Developing Psychiatric Institutions

Yarra Bend

Darebin's isolation also made it an ideal district for treating people with mental disorders. Melbourne's first mental asylum was established at Yarra Bend, just outside the present City of Darebin, in 1848. Before that the mentally ill had been held in gaol. The Yarra Bend site had recently been vacated by the Aboriginal Protectorate. New nineteenth century theories on the treatment of mental illness advocated pleasant surroundings, with sufficient land for the inmates to be employed outdoors, away from the gaze of strangers. However, by the 1850s there was considerable criticism of the Yarra Bend Asylum. Management was poor, and the site was considered unsuitable. Nevertheless as Melbourne's population grew, the Asylum was extended to accommodate extra patients. Although the Kew Asylum was opened in 1867, and Sunbury in 1890, Yarra Bend continued to be used until the 1920s, when the last patients were transferred to Mont Park (Lemon, 1983:ch.3; O'Neill & Taylor, 1995: 4-7). The site was later used for two other institutions that required seclusion - the Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital and Fairlea Women's Prison, both of which have now closed.

Figure 81

*Gateway of Yarra Bend
asylum
(image date unknown)
[DHE, ID 1152]*



Mont Park

The Mont Park Hospital for the Insane was built with the aim of closing the Yarra Bend Asylum, and represented a new start in twentieth century psychiatric care. The new Inspector General of the Insane Dr Ernest Jones, wanted an extensive site that would permit:

... an organised scheme for the provision of institutional accommodation, sufficient if needs be, to dispense with the metropolitan hospitals entirely (O'Neill & Taylor: 20).

In 1909, 1208 acres (489 ha) were acquired, comprising the former Stathallan Estate, part of which had been acquired for closer settlement. Building commenced in 1910 with the Farm Workers Block. The Hospital developed a large farm, because farm work was considered part of the therapy for mental illness, besides it made the hospital self-sufficient in fresh food. Women patients were employed in laundry work for the hospital, (then considered part of the therapy!) and the Laundry Workers Block was built for women patients in 1911.

In those days people with intellectual disabilities were classed as insane and kept in the same institutions as the mentally ill. At Mont Park they were accommodated separately, reflecting the changing trend, in a block called the 'Idiot Ward'. The intellectually disabled men and boys accommodated there also worked on the farm.

A branch line was constructed from the Macleod railway station in 1912, with an electric train, presumably run from the hospital's generator, which supplied the complex with power (electricity for this part of Preston and the railway was still many years off). Over the following 20 years other buildings were added. The Ernest Jones Chapel/Entertainment Hall, built in 1927 provided a community facility for patients and staff (O'Neill & Taylor, 1995 20-23; Lia 2002a).

An important feature of the Mont Park hospital is the landscaping, which was designed by Head Gardener, Hugh Linacre (also spelt Linaker). This appointment recognised the importance of pleasant surroundings for mental patients, and Linacre created sweeping landscapes of lawns and exotic and native trees, while retaining some indigenous red gums. Linacre became Superintendent of gardens for all of Victoria's mental health institutions, and he designed other public landscapes including Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance and the Yarra Boulevard in the 1930s. Linacre established a nursery at Mont Park, where he raised plants for the other institutions (O'Neill & Taylor, 1995 22; Lia 2002a).

Mont Park's farm was an extensive operation and included sheep grazing, piggery, dairy, poultry for egg and meat production, orchard and vegetable garden. In 1912 the farm employed 212 patients and another 106 worked in the gardens. The farm supplied not only Mont Park Hospital, but also other mental institutions, and even sold the excess produce. This kept costs down considerably. The farm continued to be worked by patients well into the 1950s, but although milking machines were installed in 1954, many of the methods and equipment were primitive. However, according to Kenna, farming techniques were developed that were unique to Mental Health Farms. A combination of factors - including changing treatment of mental illness, mainly using drugs, and a reduced inclination by patients in an increasingly urbanised society to do farm work - necessitated the employment of outside labour. Eventually the farm ceased to be viable, besides there were complaints about the smells from residents in newly developing suburbs nearby, and so farming was abandoned. Much of the farm formed part of the new La Trobe University and some of the farm buildings were used for storage (Kenna, 1988:110-123, 148).

As noted in Chapter 7, the Laundry Workers Block and another ward became a military hospital during the First World War. After the war the ex-servicemen suffering from psychiatric illness continued to be treated at Mont Park, and a military ward was built in 1924. These are now Plenty Buildings 1-3. Meanwhile the Bundoora Repatriation Hospital was established at Bundoora Park in 1924, later renamed the Mental Repatriation Hospital. The Hospital was administered through Mont Park at first. In 1933 Bundoora became the psychiatric hospital for all repatriation patients, when the last patients were transferred from Mont Park (Kenna 1988: 123-29).

Figure 82

Staff at Mont Park, c1940s

[National Library of Australia, an 8737396]



Plenty Hospital and Kingsbury Training Centre

In 1960 Mont Park was divided in two, with Plenty Hospital gazetted as a separate institution. In 1973 it took patients from Pleasant View Mental Hospital in Preston, which closed. The catchment for Plenty Hospital was the northern suburbs. The other part became Kingsbury Training Centre, with 30 children in residence in 1974. The children attended Education Department Special Schools (O'Neill & Taylor, 1995:42).

Larundel

Larundel Mental Hospital was built to take patients from Kew Mental Hospital, where facilities were outdated and local residents were objecting to a mental hospital nearby. Construction commenced in 1938 to a design by Public Works Department Architect, Percy Everett. The war slowed work and caused staff shortages, so the incomplete building was used by the Airforce, as noted in Chapter 7. After the war, the Housing Commission used the building for emergency housing until 1947. There was even a school (State School No. 4631) provided for the children of the families living there (Kenna, 1988:140-5).

In 1948 the first patients were transferred from Mont Park, and later from Beechworth Mental Hospital following a fire in that institution. Due to war-time and post-war shortages Larundel was still not completed, and it operated, albeit understaffed and under-equipped, as part of Mont Park. Eventually, in 1953, Larundel was proclaimed a Mental Hospital and opened as a separate institution, with eight new wards added in 1955. In 1957, to address the shortage of psychiatric nurses, a Nurse Training School opened at Larundel, and nurses' hostels were built. The new 1950s buildings did not stick to the original plan, their austerity compared with the original Everett buildings suggests the need for economy. Larundel was declared a Receiving House, which made it a centre for admissions and early treatment (Kenna, 1988:140-5; Lia 2002b).

In the 1990s, new methods of treatment for psychiatric patients allowed them to live in the community rather than remaining institutionalised. Larundel and Bundoora's other psychiatric hospitals were made redundant. Mont Park and Larundel have since been taken over for urban development as Springthorpe Estate and Lancaster Gate. The name Springthorpe commemorates Dr John Springthorpe of the Mont Park Hospital (Lia 2002b).

Providing local hospital services

The institutions outlined above were parts Melbourne's health system located within Darebin's boundaries because of availability of suitable land. As institutions they had little impact on Darebin's people, except for individuals who happened to have been admitted to any of them, or who may have worked in them. Darebin did not have a hospital for its own community until the 1950s.

Preston Council first proposed a community hospital for Preston in 1941 as a war memorial. The idea was taken up by the South Preston Australian Natives Association (ANA) which called a meeting of all the other friendly societies in the district, along with the RSL, other local organisations, doctors and prominent citizens. Friendly societies were then the providers of hospital and health insurance, hence their interest in the matter. It was decided that a 25 bed hospital to be named the Preston and Northcote Community Hospital (PANCH), would be appropriate, and a committee was appointed to investigate the matter. When the chairman of the committee contacted the Hospitals and Charities Board, he found that there were already government plans to build a 150-200 bed hospital in Preston. It was to be one of a number of hospitals planned for suburban Melbourne, and negotiations had already begun to buy a site, however building could not commence until after the war. Meanwhile the Darebin community was given the task of raising one quarter of the expected cost of £50,000. From then on the proceeds of many of the community's social events were earmarked for PANCH.

After what seemed a good start, a series of delays, mainly due to a large backlog of urgently needed housing, hospital and other community services, slowed progress for several years. Building of PANCH commenced in 1951, but funds ran out and the site was left unfinished for three years. Eventually the 304 bed hospital was completed in 1960, but not before the ante-natal outpatients clinic had opened in February. Maternity services were particularly important to the fast-growing region. The official opening by Premier Bolte was in July 1960. Local Ladies Auxiliaries were formed in the 1950s to assist with fund-raising for the hospital. The hospital's main specialty was plastic surgery reconstructive surgery (Carroll 1985: 185-8).

PANCH closed at the end of the 1990s, and was replaced by Northern Health Services, a multi-campus service for the northern suburbs. The Northern Hospital was established further out at Epping, to serve the new suburban growth corridor. The Preston community is now served by Panch Health Services in Bell Street, opposite the old PANCH site, which is being redeveloped for student housing, offices, serviced apartments, a function centre, a restaurant and a hotel.

Figure 83

P.A.N.C.H. hospital (Preston & Northcote Community Hospital), (image date unknown).

Photographer: Wolfgang Sievers

[State Library of Victoria, AN: H2003.100/563, IN: mp022880]

**Figure 84**

Opening of the Thornbury Baby Health Centre, 1920.

[DHE: ID 786]



7.5 Pursuing common leisure interests

Playing Sport

Darebin has always supported a vibrant sporting community, especially Australian Rules football, where a few famous names have been connected with the area - Roy Cazaly, Doug

Nicholls in Australian Rules, Bill Lawry in cricket and Pam Kilborn in athletics. For the majority of Darebin people who did not achieve fame, sport has been an important form of social cement, engendering local loyalties and community involvement as people worked for facilities and enjoyed recreation together. In earlier years the churches had their own cricket, football and tennis clubs, and some of the factories also fielded teams. Northcote had the privately owned Croxton Park sportsground in the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century, where a great deal of community's sport took place, and the Fitzroy Racecourse which attracted racing fans from outside Darebin. In Preston the hub of sport has always been the Preston City Oval in Cramer Street, with Edwardes Lake Park a popular venue for water sports. Many other parks and open spaces have also been used as sportsgrounds. Cycling was a popular sport in the early twentieth century, when road races were run from the Junction to Epping and as traffic increased, from Reservoir to Woolert (Forster 1968: 68). Cycling was also a popular professional sport on the 1930s, when work was hard to find. Darebin also has a distinctive history of women's sport. The post-war immigrants brought their interest in soccer, and one of Victoria's leading clubs was established in Preston by the Macedonian community.

Darebin's interest in sports, and the availability of space for sportsgrounds, is highlighted by the recent establishment of the Darebin International Sports Centre (DISC) at John Cain Memorial Park as the home of the State Lawn Bowls Centre, State Cycling Centre and State Football Centre (darebininternationalsportscentre.com.au).

Cricket

Settlers in Darebin's small communities began to play organised sport in the 1870s, with cricket, always popular in Victoria, being one of the first and most popular games. It is believed that Preston had a cricket club as early as 1869. By 1876 Preston Park Club was playing on the newly acquired oval in Cramer Street, now known as Preston City Oval. A few years later the Preston Cricket Club was using the oval - it was probably the same club with a change of name. The Gowerville Cricket Club was formed in 1881 in South Preston. Both clubs shared Preston Park, with an intense rivalry, but after Preston Cricket Club disbanded in 1886 the Gowerville club assumed the name Preston Cricket Club.

By the late 1870s there were two clubs in the Northcote area, the Northcote Cricket Club, which played at Plant's Paddock, and the Northcote Park Cricket Club, which played at Northcote Park in Westgarth Street. In 1878 Northcote changed its name to Northcote Star. During the 1880s the two clubs competed for local supremacy, which was eventually gained by Northcote Star.

In the 1889-90 season, Northcote Star moved its base to Croxton Park, which had better facilities than Plant's Paddock. In 1890, the club won the first cricket trophy for Darebin, the Alliance Trophy, by defeating Fitzroy Imperial. The game was played at Sumner's Paddock, next to the Inebriate Retreat. In 1894 Northcote Cricket Club, having dropped 'Star' from its name in 1892, won the Melbourne Sports Depot trophy. It seems that the Northcote Cricket Club moved to Northcote Park after the improvements were made in 1903. In 1906 the Victorian Cricket Association formed a new two-division district competition and Northcote Cricket Club gained entry to the second division. After winning the inaugural second division premiership, Northcote was promoted to the first division, where it has remained ever since.

Northcote has provided some first-class Victorian and Australian cricketers, including Bill Lawry who led Northcote to victory in the Melbourne District final in 1965-6 and went on to captain the Australia team from 1967 to 1971.

Preston Cricket Club became a member of the second tier 'Sub-district' competition in Melbourne in 1922. They continue to play their matches at Preston City Oval as they have done for over 100 years. The club claims a history that dates back to the 1860s, although there are some breaks in the historical timeline (dhe.darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia; www.mcc.org.au).

As suburban development came to Darebin many more cricket clubs were established, some of them representing local industries. In 1922 the Jika Cricket Association, was formed with five local clubs, but increased to fourteen two years later. Since its formation over 250 clubs have played in the Association. The Jika Cricket Association is now one of the Victoria's largest, with more than 2000 players in competitions for all ages ranging from Under 13s to Veterans.

The premiership winning clubs serve as a demonstration of Melbourne's sprawl. In the first 44 years of the Association, only two clubs based north of Murray Rd won A Grade Premierships. However since that time, only one club based south of Murray Rd has claimed a Premiership. Keon Park, Thomastown and Lalor are some of the newer suburbs to have successful clubs in the Jika Association (dhe.darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia).

Football (Australian Rules)

Like cricket, football was popular in Darebin as early as the 1860s. A Northcote Football Club played against North Melbourne and Brunswick in 1869 and in the 1870s football was being played on the Croxton Park sports ground. By the 1880s Northcote had a regular club, although it struggled to remain viable during the 1890s. Croxton Park was run by the owners of the associated hotel, and problems with alcohol-induced disorderly behaviour by players and supporters led to the move to the Northcote Park. From 1915 Northcote Park was the Club's permanent home.

By this time Northcote had joined the Victorian Football Association. Their heyday was between 1929 and 1936, when the 'Brickfielders' played in seven grand finals, winning five Premierships. Amongst their great players was Frank Seymour, and Doug Nicholls, who joined the club in 1927 after being rejected by Carlton. After five years Nicholls was recruited by Fitzroy, but he returned to Northcote as coach in 1947, but with little success for the team's premiership aspirations. In 1944 Nicholls organised an exhibition match between a team of Aboriginal players from New South Wales and Northcote. The match attracted thousands of spectators in attendance, and the proceeds were donated to Aboriginal welfare funds.

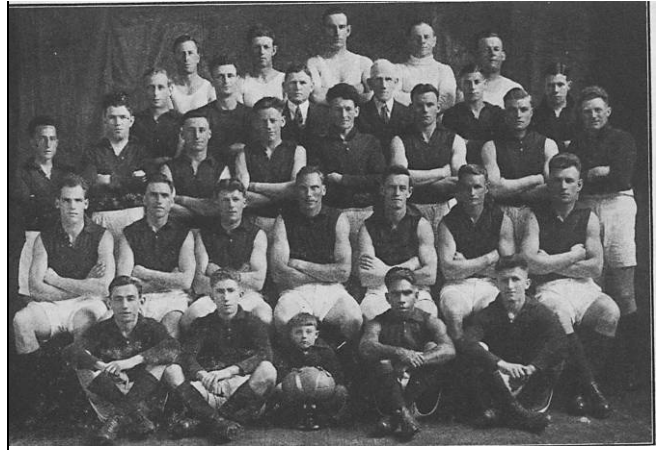
For the next 40 years Northcote struggled, moving into the second division in 1964, and finally ceased in 1987.

It is believed that Preston Football Club commenced in 1882 as Gowerville. Preston Football Club joined the VFA in 1903, but due to lack of success on the ground was relegated to the Victorian Junior Football Association until 1926. Preston was nicknamed the 'Bullants' in the 1930s. It has always played on the Preston Oval. The club won a final in 1931 with Roy Cazaly's as captain-coach, but the Premiership was elusive until 1963 when Preston won the second division grand final, winning premierships in first division in the 1960s and 1980s. Preston has struggled to survive, but strong local support has kept it going, through an amalgamation with the Northern Knights in the 1990s, and separation in 2000 to become the Northern Bullants. The club is now affiliated with Carlton Football Club (Carroll 1985: 190-91; dhe.darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia).

Reservoir Football Club first participated in local Melbourne football in 1923, but from 1946 the club played in the Diamond Valley Football League, winning Premierships in 1946 and '47. In 1949 they moved to the Metropolitan Football League, where they became a feeder club for Preston. Until 1952 Reservoir's home ground was J.E. Moore Park near Edwardes Lake Park. When Preston Council resolved to remove football and cricket from that park the Club moved to Crispe Park. In the 1950s Reservoir had a close association with the Chandler family, several of whom played and served as committee office holders. In 1971 Reservoir switched to the Panton Hill Football League, then in 1981 returned to the Diamond Valley Football League. A year later the Club amalgamated with the Reservoir Y.C.W. Football Club. Reservoir won the Division 2 premiership 1984 (dhe.darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia).

Figure 85*Northcote football club, 1929*

[DHE, Id 754]]



Horseracing

As noted in Chapter 4, a race track was run in conjunction with the Croxton Park Hotel. In 1891 another private racecourse was established in the district by W. Byrne and P. Callaghan to the west of St George's Road. Croxton Racecourse was successful amongst working people during the 1890s depression (Lemon, p 129). By 1914 Croxton Park was known as the Fitzroy Racecourse, and was owned by notorious Collingwood gambling entrepreneur John Wren, who held sixteen race meetings a year there. Regular meetings attracting thousands of people into the 1920s, when the Racecourse was owned by the Victorian Trotting and Racing Association:

In those days they used to race ponies the ponies under 14½ hands high. Once you raced at Fitzroy you couldn't race the courses in Melbourne, you were barred from going to the registered races.

When a horse couldn't win in Melbourne they'd say, 'Take it to the ponies'. Every Tom, Dick and Harry went tot he races at Fitzroy trying to boost their incomes. (Fred Moran in "Glimpses of our Past": 39)

The races ceased in 1931 and after lying idle until after the Second World War the property was eventually redeveloped for housing as Bird and Bradley Avenues. Another private racetrack and sportsground was Plant's Paddock, which became the Railway Estate in 1903.

Lawn Bowls

Darebin's first bowling club was initiated by a meeting of Northcote businessmen and citizens in 1903, but it took a few years to secure the Pearl Street site, which was sold to the Club by the Railways Department. The Northcote Club's green was laid down and officially opened in 1906. The Club boasted several champion players, including 1924 Victorian Champion of Champions, Dr Catarinch. It remained an all-male club until 1982, when it accepted women as associate members. A decline in popularity of the sport and an ageing membership led a take-over by Collingwood Football Club in 1993, and the installation of poker machines. The partnership was not a success and the venture was abandoned with the loss of one of the Club's two bowling greens. In 1999 Northcote merged with Faircote Bowling Club to form the Darebin City Bowling Club (Darebin Historical Encyclopedia).

Faircote Club had formed 1966, with both male and female members, and established greens and a clubhouse in Darebin Road at the John Cain Memorial Park. Northcote Club sold its Pearl Street property and invested the proceeds in a new facility on the Faircote's site. State and local governments contributed substantial amounts to create the new State Bowling Centre at the Darebin International Sports Centre. This was the venue for the Lawn Bowls events at the 2006 Commonwealth Games (Darebin Historical Encyclopedia).

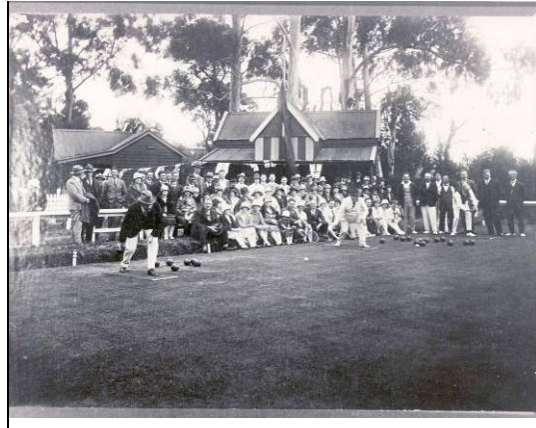
Other bowling clubs were formed in Preston and Thornbury in the early twentieth century and at Edwarde's Lake Park in 1960. Of particular interest is the Thornbury Club, which originated in 1909 as the private green belonging to retailer Oliver Gilpin next to his house

Nyora, in Normanby Avenue. It was sold to the Thornbury Club a few years later. This Club did not survive the decline of the 1990s and the site is now occupied by a reception house (Lemon, 1983: 142-3; 'Jubilee Celebrations', 1933: 27).

Figure 86

Fairfield Bowling Club, Station Street, c1930s

[DHE: ID 657]



Water Sports - Edwardes Lake

The Preston Lake, now known as Edwardes Lake, and its Park have been a special place of recreation for Darebin people, especially those in the north, for over a century. It has been used for a wide variety of sports and leisure, both organised and informal. It was a popular place for swimming, even after it was declared dangerous, and a few swimmers have drowned there. A number of other sports, including tennis and athletics have used facilities developed at the park and water activities on the lake included fishing as well as rowing and yachting ('Edwardes Lake', 2002:passim).

Rowing commenced on Preston Lake as early as 1891, well before the Edwardes Lake Park was given to the people of Preston in 1914, but the Rowing Club ceased after the weir was washed away. After a new weir was built in 1919 the Northern District Rowing Club was formed, later renamed the Preston Rowing Club. A women's rowing club was formed shortly after. Boats were donated by other suburban rowing clubs. In 1920 the Club held an Easter carnival to raise funds, and the carnival became a popular annual event. A boathouse was built in 1921 and extended to include a clubhouse in 1927. Dances in the clubhouse also became regular events until 1934, when the Club was fined because the clubhouse did not meet regulations. In 1970 the old boathouse was demolished and the Ern Rose Pavilion, named after the Club's founding secretary, was built. The opening celebrations included a regatta. Over many years there were problems with the Lake's water quality, and it was drained and cleaned many times. Because of this the Rowing Club was disbanded in 1983 ('Edwardes Lake', 2002:18-9).

Meanwhile the Preston Yacht Club had been formed at the Lake in 1967, and within a few months had 60 members. The Lake was ideal for training sailors, as it offered a variety of wind conditions. The Club was successful in competitions, producing several national champions. However, like the Rowing Club, the Yacht Club was forced to disband, in 1999, due to deteriorating water quality ("Edwardes Lake" 2002: 21-2).

Figure 87*Boating on Edwardes Park Lake, 1980s*

[DHE, ID 719]

**Baths**

In 1923, Northcote Baths was opened for business in Frederick Street. Joe Fogg at the pool was actively involved with the 'Learn to Swim Campaign', later known as the 'Herald Learn to Swim Campaign', through which many school children learned to swim (information supplied by Paul Michell, Darebin Libraries). It is now part of the Northcote Aquatic and Recreational Centre at 180 Victoria Road Northcote.

Football (Soccer)

Soccer was first played in Preston in 1912, with a match against St Kilda at Bell Street. However soccer only took off in Darebin in the second half of the twentieth century with the wave of post-war immigration. Darebin's most famous team, perhaps of all sports, is the Preston Lions Football Club, founded in 1947 as Makedonia Soccer Club as a focal point for the Macedonian community. Their first home ground was the T.A. Cochrane Reserve in Preston. In 1959 the name was changed to Preston Makedonia. The Club came top of the Victorian Metropolitan League in 1966 and 1981, and was promoted to the National Soccer League. They moved to a larger ground at B.T. Connor Reserve and around the same time the Makedonia Social Club was established opposite.

In 1992 the Club won the Docherty Cup, but subsequent poor performance saw the Club moved back to the Victorian Premier League in 1993. Since then the name has been changed in accord with League policy to abolish ethnic titles and to use the word 'football' instead of 'soccer'. Preston Lions has won a number of premierships and claims the largest following in the League. Its matches often attract a crowd of 10,000 (www.prestonlions.com).

Women's sports

The Preston Ladies Cricket Club, founded in 1922, originated in a women's team formed at All Saint's Church Preston in 1907. Women's cricket faced considerable prejudice at the time, but it was more accepted in Victoria than in other states, and Victoria was the first state to form its own women's cricket association. Preston was one of the four foundation clubs in the Victorian Womens' Cricket Association, formed in 1923. The Preston team produced a number of successful women cricketers (Darebin Historical Encyclopedia).

More recently Darebin's women have formed the Darebin Women's Sports Club, which originated as a women's football club in Fairfield, known as the Fairfield Falcons. In 1991 Northcote Council provided McDonnell Park as a women's sporting ground. The Club won the Premiership of the Victorian Women's Football League in 1996. Since then the Club has added a soccer team, becoming the first women's sports club in Australia to field both Australian Rules and soccer teams. In its first year the team won a shield final in the second

division of the Victorian Women's Soccer Association. In 2000 the Club changed its name to the Darebin Women's Sports Club, due to a desire to offer more sports to members, and to reflect its geographic location more accurately. The Club now has Australian Rules football, soccer, cricket, eight ball and Gaelic football teams, and also a cricket team in the Victorian Women's Cricket Association's B West competition. Darebin Women's Sports Club is one of the strongest and best supported women's sporting clubs in Victoria, and has its own purpose built venue at A.H. Capp Reserve in Preston (Darebin Historical Encyclopedia).

Making music

Brass Bands

A tradition of community music making is the brass band, which originated in industrial centres in nineteenth century Britain as an expression of working class pride. Both Northcote and Preston had bands, although Northcote seems to have lasted for a only few years in the 1890s. They were present to welcome the Governor with a playing of the National Anthem when he came to proclaim the Town of Northcote in 1890 (Lemon 1983: 109). Preston had bands associated with lodges such as the Foresters and the ANA and also the Salvation Army. There was also a Preston Citizens Band, which was a forerunner of the Preston Municipal Band formed in 1934 with W.S May as musical director. The Band established a fine record in competitions and also performed locally. In 1965 Preston Council provided a cream brick band room in Cramer Street. The Band is now called Darebin City Brass, and has a junior class ready to provide continuity (Forster 1968: 118-9; www.darebincitybrass.com).

The Reservoir District Band was also active in the 1960s, and performed at Edwardes Lake, where it requested a band rotunda. This does not appear to have been built, but a Community Stage was provided in later years (Edwardes Lake 2002: 29).

Preston Symphony Orchestra

Of more recent origin is the Preston Symphony Orchestra, formed in 1950, although Forster suggests it may have existed earlier, and re-formed in 1950. The first conductor was Bill May (possibly W.S. May mentioned above). The orchestra has traditionally performed at the Midwinter Festival of Schools Music in the Preston Town Hall, and have performed with various suburban choral societies (Forster 1968: 119).

7.6 Appreciating and defending the environment

Enjoying the natural environment

Darebin has a many beauty spots that have been traditional places of recreation for locals. In the 1870s Sunday school excursions used to visit George James' paddock on Rucker's Hill and Pender's Grove. Arthur Howard remembers Alphington Scouts held camps on Darebin Creek in the 1930s (Howard A., 2007: pers comm).

Edwardes Lake Park has long been a very popular destination for picnicking in a semi-natural parkland and Bundoora Park has been popular ever since it opened to the public. Both the Darebin and Merri Creeks are important as places to enjoy the natural environment and the walking tracks are well used.

Preserving the natural environment

Early colonist Richard Howitt regretted the destruction of the beauty of the native woodland and its wildlife, but he knew that "we can't eat wood", and felt forced to proceed with the destruction.

The Northcote Health League was formed in 1880 to address the problem of air pollution from the noxious industries, and managed to have the industries better regulated and cleaned up. A more recent body seeking to preserve the environment is the Warringal Conservation

Society, formed in 1970, mostly active in the City of Banyule, but has been active in the La Trobe University area.

More recently still, some parks have resulted from campaigns to conserve areas of biodiversity at Central Creek Grassland Reserve (Merri Creek Management Committee, Friends of Merri Creek) and Gresswell Forest, Gresswell Hill.

Re-creating the natural environment

By 1960s, creeks were the unpleasant, unsafe and ugly backs to some lesser valued properties, but the potential for their rehabilitation began to be recognised. The Darebin Parklands Association began work in the 1960s on revegetation of cleared areas. Programs to restore Merri Creek began in the mid 1970s, with the investigations of the Monash University Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) at the request of the Fitzroy Resident's Association. Community action and interest in linear parklands and habitat creation led to acquisitions of parkland through purchase, negotiation and campaigning. Creeks became popular destinations for less formal recreation, particularly walking and cycling.

The Merri Creek Coordination Committee was formed in 1976 as a forum for agencies and the community to work together towards preserving the natural assets of the Merri and Edgars Creeks. It set up the Merri Creek Management Committee in 1989 to employ specialist staff to protect and restore the Merri Creek. The Darebin Creek Co-ordinating Committee was formed in 1984, and in 2001 was amalgamated with the Darebin Parklands Committee of Management to create the Darebin Creek Management Committee. These groups have accelerated the pace of natural environmental restoration along the Creeks, and have acted as models for similar groups, such as the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee and the Werribee River Association.

Figure 88

Revegetation programs along the Merri Creek by Friends of Merri Creek, (image date unknown)

[Merri Creek conservation works images on Google search engine <http://images.google.com.au/imgres?i>]



Studying the natural environment

La Trobe University has long had Departments of Botany and Zoology, actively involved in studying, and teaching the study of the natural environment. The Melbourne Wildlife Reserve (originally the La Trobe University Wildlife Reserve) was set up in 1967 as a project in restoration and management of indigenous flora and fauna (www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife). It now is the caretaker of four areas: The Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary at La Trobe University; the Gresswell Forest Nature Conservation Reserve; the Gresswell Habitat Link; and Gresswell Hill. The Melbourne Wildlife Sanctuary provides an indigenous natural environment for conservation, education and research activities that support the learning and teaching objectives of La Trobe University (www.latrobe.edu.au/wildlife/vision).

Bundoora Park runs environmental educational programs for schools etc at their wildlife reserve, farm dam and the nearby Darebin Creek. School groups are often taken on excursions

to the Darebin and Merri Creeks to study water quality and habitat management. These programs are run by the Merri Creek Management Committee and Darebin Creek Management Committees.

Figure 89*Gresswell Habitat link*

[City of Darebin, 2007]



7.7 Commemorating

Memorials

Memorials and monuments are a way in which communities remember past events and honour people and their contributions to the community. In Darebin many councillors and prominent citizens have been commemorated in the naming of parks and gardens. For example C.T. Crispe, a Preston Councillor for the first two decades of the twentieth century and Preston's first representative on the MMBW, Northcote's Cr Albert Oldis, Northcote Councillor and State Premier John Cain (Snr) and Aboriginal activist Sir Doug Nicholls, all have parks named in their honour and represent several themes in Darebin's story.

In all communities war memorials are a poignant reminder of the sacrifice of local people who served in war and express local pride and grief, particularly after the devastating losses of the First World War.

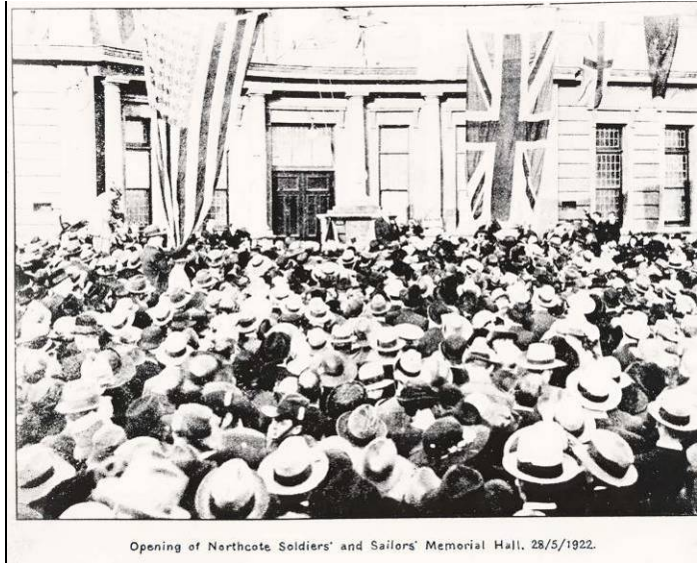
A Memorial Hall was built next to the Preston Town Hall in 1921, but it has since been demolished to make way for extensions to the Town Hall. Darebin's most elaborate war memorial is probably the Memorial Entrance to the Municipal Offices at Preston built to commemorate the First World War. The names of the dead from the Second World War and subsequent wars in which Australia has been involved have been added.

In Northcote the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, designed by Harry A. Norris, was built in High Street in 1922, with funds supplied by Council and public donations. It is now known as the RSL Hall, and has a cenotaph outside commemorating those who died in later wars as well.

Figure 90

Opening day of the Northcote Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, 1922

[DHE 794]



In Macleod the row of sugar gums along Cherry Street in part of the former Mont Park Hospital was planted by Hugh Linacre to commemorate the First World War.

At the former Bundoora Repatriation Hospital a plaque commemorates Sister Sheila Sheldrake. In the Greek Monastery in Northcote there is a shrine for Greek and Australia soldiers (Bradley 1994).

Cemeteries

Cemeteries are important markers of the phases of human life. They are also rich storehouses of community and family history.

The Preston General Cemetery in Plenty Road originated as the small Strathallan Cemetery in 1864 and has the graves of many Preston pioneers, as well as the elaborate graves of Italian families, demonstrating Darebin's large post-war Italian community (Forster 1968: 16; Carroll 1985: 224).

Cawdortown Cemetery in Separation Street was established by the early German settlers in the area and is a strong physical reminder of this distinctive phase of settlement.

The Little Sisters of the Poor established a private cemetery for the Order in their convent grounds in Northcote.

Darebin acquired the Coburg Cemetery on its north west border at the time of municipal restructure in 1994. It was established as Pentridge Cemetery in 1859 for the community of the district then known as Pentridge, later Coburg. It was enlarged in 1877 and 1884 (Broome 2001: 90).

Figure 91

*German cemetery,
Northcote
(image date unknown)*

[DHE, ID 42]



Heritage

Some examples of places relating to the development of Darebin's community and culture are:

Worshipping

Early or founding churches include the former Wesleyan Methodist Church, Preston (cnr. High and Tyler streets – HO49), former Wesleyan Methodist Church (787 Heidelberg Road – HO38), All Saints Church, Westgarth (14-16 High Street – within HO102 precinct), and the Wesleyan Church (249-51 High Street – within HO97 precinct) and the former Wesleyan Chapel (248-50 High Street – within HO97 precinct)

Other churches include the former Primitive Methodist Church (18 Mitchell Street, Northcote), Holy Trinity church of England (28 Shaftesbury Parade, Thornbury – HO151), Baptist Church, High Street, Regent, St Mary's Anglican Church, Preston, Preston Church of Christ, and Northcote Church of Christ

Catholic churches include the St Joseph's, Northcote (140 Westbourne Grove), St Mary's, Thornbury (718-30 High Street – HO46), Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Bell Street, Preston and the Holy Name Catholic Church and School, Robb Street, Preston, and St Gabriel's Catholic Church Reservoir (original wooden building?)

Churches that reflect the influence of immigration include the Macedonian - Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church (Former Church of the Epiphany), Bayview Street, Northcote, St Cyril and St Methodius Greek Orthodox Church (Former Methodist Church), Yann Street, Preston, St Georgio's, originally at corner of Martin and Armadale Streets, Northcote.

Other places of worship that illustrate post-war immigration include the Omar Bin El Khattab Mosque, Cramer Street, Preston

Educating

State primary schools – Preston East, Sylvester Grove (HO81), Wales Street, Thornbury (HO84), Preston State School (within HO169 precinct), Newlands State Primary School (HO31), Helen Street Primary School, Northcote (HO40), Bell Primary School, Oakover Road, Preston (within HO169 precinct), other examples include West Preston State School (Bell Street), and South Preston State School (Hotham Street)

Church and private schools – former Wesleyan school room (248-50 High Street – within HO97 precinct), and the former Westleigh College at 212 Clarke Street (HO20) and *Leura*, Bayview Street (not extant?), Northcote

State high schools - Northcote High School, and Preston Girls School (HO24) and Northland Secondary College

Northern Metropolitan Institute of Technology Preston

La Trobe University

Northcote Library

Establishing institutions of mutual support

Merri Park, site of Inebriate's Retreat

Former Little Sisters of the Poor convent (including cemetery), St George's Road, Northcote

Providing health and welfare services

Mont Park (HO59, HO62, HO63, HO64, HO65, HO66, HO68 and HO109)

Larundel (HO107, HO108 & HO111)

Pleasant View, Pleasant View Drive (HO92)

Pursuing common leisure interests

Sporting reserves – Preston City Oval, Northcote Park, Edwardes Lake Park, John Cain Memorial Park, T.A. Cochrane Reserve, B.T. Connor Reserve, McDonnell Park, and Darebin Women's Sports Club (A.H. Capp Reserve).

Preston Band Hall, Cramer Street

Preston Town Hall & Municipal Offices, High Street (HO50)

Northcote RSL Hall, High Street (

Appreciating and defending the environment

Darebin and Merri creeks parklands

Gresswell Forest Nature Conservation Reserve and other sites at La Trobe University

Commemorating

Memorial Avenue, Cherry Street, Macleod

Cawdortown (German) Cemetery, Separation Street, Northcote

Preston General Cemetery and Coburg Cemetery

8 DAREBIN'S NATURAL HERITAGE

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Darebin's natural heritage in the present, in contrast to the picture provided in Chapter 1 Creating Darebin, before the time of European arrival. The range of activities and processes that have altered the environment are described in 4.5 *Altering the environment*. Moves to protecting and managing the environment are discussed in 5.5 *Creating public landscapes* and 7.6 *Appreciating and defending the environment*. This chapter follows the themes in the Australian Natural Heritage Charter of ecosystems, biodiversity and geodiversity and provides a summary of Darebin's natural heritage.

8.1 Ecosystem values

According to the Natural Heritage Charter, *Ecosystem* means a dynamic complex of organisms and their non-living environment, interacting as a functional unit.

Most of Darebin falls into the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion, but the higher parts of Bundoora Park and Mount Cooper, and the LaTrobe University and Bundoora sections of the municipality are part of the Gippsland Plain bioregion.

Landscape structure and connectivity

The process of settlement of Darebin has changed the landscape from having multidirectional connections between a mosaic of ecosystems that extended across the whole municipality (and further) to one where small fragments of ecosystems remain, many completely surrounded by suburbia.

This fragmentation of the landscape has reduced its habitat values even more than suggested by the massive reduction in the total area of natural ecosystems to an estimated 2%. According to Bennett (1999):

Habitat fragmentation is a dynamic process that has three main components: an overall loss of habitat in the landscape, reduction in the size of remaining blocks, and increased isolation by new forms of land use. Changes to the pattern of habitats in the landscape result in changes to ecological processes that in turn affect the status of the flora and fauna. Effects of habitat fragmentation on wildlife include: loss of species in fragments, changes to the composition of faunal assemblages, and changes to ecological processes that involve animals. Isolation of habitats is a fundamental consequence of fragmentation. A range of evidence shows that isolation, and the degree of spatial isolation, have negative impacts on many populations and communities. The negative effects of isolation are attributed to the decreased opportunity for movement of animals to and from other habitats.

While there is not a lot of evidence to demonstrate how effective habitat corridors can be, it is safer to assume that a connected landscape with corridors is preferable to a fragmented landscape. Anderson & Jenkins (2006) identify two basic types of corridors - the landscape corridor which provides multidirectional connections between a mosaic of ecosystems that extend over an area of tens to thousands of square kilometres, and linear or habitat movement corridors which provide a single continuous (or near continuous) link between two or more usually larger habitat blocks. The landscape corridor that Darebin was is no more. Many remnant habitats are poorly connected if at all to other habitat areas, reducing their ability to maintain animal and plant populations, especially over time. Some linear corridors remain, and these should be protected and enhanced. There is much scope to re-create linear corridors at least along the main waterways.

Strategies to enhance the connectedness of habitats in Darebin should form part of Stage 5 of the Heritage Study.

Waterways

Impacts upon waterways in Darebin have included pollution, filling, vegetation removal, rock removal, straightening, putting into channels and piping, as well as diversion of flows from upstream.

The Draft Regional River Health Strategy indicates:

Merri Creek's urban sections (including Edgars Creek) are listed as being in very poor condition, with very poor water quality, poor aquatic life, moderate habitat and stability, very poor vegetation, and poor flow. Its social value is listed as very high. Priorities include improving water quality and vegetation to poor, and habitat and stability to good.

Darebin Creek's urban section is in poor condition, with moderate water quality, poor aquatic life, excellent habitat and stability, very poor vegetation and poor flow. Its social value is listed as very high. Priorities include improving water quality from moderate to good.

These findings are based on very few sampling points, and they should not be interpreted to mean that no parts of the waterways are in good condition, or worth protecting.

Figure 92

Merri Creek, Northcote

[http://www.darebin.vic.gov.au/Page/images/OS_Merri_Creek.jpg]



Grassy woodlands

The Grassy woodlands in Darebin are now largely cleared and removed as a result of timber clearing, firewood cutting, grazing and urban development. Remnants still occur at Bundoora Park, and the natural reserves set aside in the grounds at La Trobe University (Greswell Forest Nature Conservation Reserve etc.). The conservation status of Grassy woodlands is well summarised by Robinson & Traill (1996):

The temperate woodlands are the most threatened type of wooded ecosystem in Australia. They once covered 10% of land in eastern and south-western Australia. Since European settlement more than 80% of that area has been cleared of its former native vegetation for agriculture. In some districts, more than 95% has been cleared much of what remains is grossly altered. Because of this destruction and alteration of most woodland habitat, the temperate woodlands now contain a very high number of threatened plants and animals....

The Bioregional Conservation Status of Plains Grassy Woodland and Grassy Woodlands is 'endangered', which is the most significant rating available (PPWCMA, 2006). Plains Grassy Woodland is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (as Western Basalt Plains [River Red Gum] Grassy Woodland Floristic Community 55-04) for protection (DSE, 2006).

Figure 93

Red Gums mainly form the canopy of Grassy Woodlands.

[Darebin Parklands
<http://www.dcmc.org.au/parklands/biology.php>]



Grasslands

Originally grasslands only occurred in the north west of Darebin and are now almost totally lost from the municipality because of grazing and urban development. Nevertheless, remnants still occur – one example is at Central Creek Grassland in Reservoir.

The Bioregional Conservation Status of Plains Grasslands is ‘endangered’, which is the most significant rating available (PPWCMA 2006). It is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (as Western [Basalt] Plains Grassland Community) for protection (DSE 2006).

Figure 94

Central Creek Grasslands near Davidson Street, Reservoir.

[Darebin City Council website
http://www.darebin.org/Directory/S2_Item.asp?Mkey=547&S3Key=752]



Other Ecological Vegetation Classes

A number of other types of vegetation occurred, mostly along waterways. These were almost totally removed through clearing, grazing, filling, straightening and other channel management, although very small remnants remain, which have now often been heavily reinforced with recent revegetation projects. The conservation status of the remaining Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs) is shown in the table below.

Table 9.1 – Conservation status of EVCs

Ecological Vegetation Classes	Bioregional Conservation Status		FFG status
	Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion	Gippsland Plain Bioregion	
<i>22 Grassy Dry Forest</i>	Depleted	Least concern	not listed
<i>68 Creepline Grassy Woodland</i>	Endangered	Endangered	not listed
<i>125 Plains Grassy Wetland</i>	Extinct	Endangered	not listed
<i>641 Riparian Woodland</i>	Endangered	Endangered	not listed
<i>851 Stream-bank Shrubland</i>	Endangered	N/A	not listed
<i>895 Escarpment Shrubland</i>	Endangered	Endangered	not listed
<i>937 Swampy Woodland</i>	Extinct	Endangered	not listed
<i>653 Aquatic Herbland</i>	Endangered	Endangered	not listed
<i>56 Floodplain Riparian Woodland</i>	Endangered	Endangered	not listed
<i>53 Swamp Scrub</i>	Endangered	Endangered	not listed

It should be noted that at Gresswell Hill a community (Box Woodland) is reported by Muyt 2003 occurring instead of Grassy Dry Forest. This is not a recognised EVC in either the Victorian Volcanic Plain or Gippsland Plain bioregions, but is reported by Muyt as endangered.

Figure 94

Strettle Wetland Reserve, Thornbury

[Darebin City Council website
http://www.darebin.org/Directory/S2_Item.asp?Mkey=547&S3Key=705]



3.2 Biodiversity values

According to the Natural Heritage Charter, *Biodiversity* means the variability among living organisms from all sources (including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part), and includes diversity within and between species and the diversity of ecosystems.

The status of biodiversity is briefly discussed below, using information available at this stage of the project. Stage 5 of the Heritage Study will provide more detailed, relevant and up to date information.

O’Malley and Kern list (in their Appendix 3) species recorded in Darebin which are at least of regional significance. However the list is not intended to be a comprehensive look at how Darebin’s flora and fauna have changed. Since their work the naming of some of the species has changed and this will be updated in Stage 5 of the project also.

Flora

As noted above, the two main EVCs of Darebin are amongst the most endangered in Australia. Other EVCs are also endangered or at the very least depleted. The species which make these vegetation types up have often fared just as badly.

The worst hit species are probably the grazing-sensitive orchids, lilies and daisies, which now occur rarely even in Plains Grassland remnants. The reasons for their decline include:

- historic grazing by cattle, sheep and rabbits
- changing fire regimes
- lack of Aboriginal ongoing management in the post settlement period
- red-legged earth mite infestations
- grazing by introduced snails and slugs and
- genetic deterioration

O'Malley and Kern (2005) list 114 plant species of at least local significance recorded recently in Darebin.

Fauna

The temperate woodlands of Australia have the highest densities of threatened bird species of any region in Australia and for all species listed as declining but not yet threatened in south-eastern Australia, more than 80% occur in the woodlands regions. The two groups of birds most at risk are ground-feeders and hollow nesters. The situation is complicated by the fact that 85-95% of the land in the region is private; there is very little opportunity to conserve this habitat on public land. Several listings under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (FFG) highlight the situation, including the loss of hollow-bearing trees as a threatening process. O'Malley and Kern list 46 bird species of at least regional significance.

Mammals have also been badly affected by settlement, with almost all of the small ground mammals of Darebin having become locally extinct, and some such as the Eastern Quoll becoming extinct in Victoria also. O'Malley and Kern list 5 Mammal species for Darebin of at least regional significance.

Amphibians have been severely affected by vegetation removal, swamp filling and draining and water pollution. O'Malley and Kern list two significant species of frog for Darebin.

Reptiles have suffered from habitat removal in Darebin. O'Malley and Kern list 5 skinks, two snake species and one Gecko as being of at least regional significance for Darebin.

Fish species have been severely reduced by alterations to the waterways, and pollution. O'Malley and Kern list two significant fish species.

Invertebrates are poorly documented in Darebin. Braby and Beardsell list 38 butterfly species occurring in the La Trobe University wildlife reserves or adjacent areas.

Figure 95

Bush Stone Curlew, (now known as “Bush Thick-knee” and locally extinct)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Bus_h_Stone-curlew.jpg]



8.3 Geo-diversity values

Many natural exposures of rocks and landform units have been removed, buried or covered in houses or industry. Human-made exposures in quarries or cuttings have very often subsequently been buried again, or grassed over. As a result there is little opportunity for Darebin residents to observe and learn about and appreciate the area's geology and geological history.

According to the Natural Heritage Charter, *Geodiversity* means the natural range (diversity) of geological (bedrock), geomorphological (landform) and soil features, assemblages, systems and processes. Geodiversity includes evidence of the past life, ecosystems and environments in the history of the earth as well as a range of atmospheric, hydrological and biological processes currently acting on rocks, landforms and soils.

According to Mitchell et. al. (2000), a place should be considered to have Geodiversity significance if it is a Geological, geomorphological or palaeontological site with at least one of the following attributes:

- A type section of a geological unit (none known at this stage in Darebin)
- A fossil locality (none known at this stage in Darebin)
- Exposures of a range of features characteristic of the rock unit, or exposures of features which are unusual in the rock unit
- An unusual occurrence of a particular feature or mineral
- An example of tectonic and/or volcanic processes
- Features which enable palaeoclimatic reconstruction (none known at this stage in Darebin)
- Demonstration of the effects of present-day or past weathering, erosion and/or deposition on landform evolution
- A representative example of a landform type

Heritage

Some examples of places relating to Darebin's natural heritage are:

Sites with ecosystem and biodiversity values

The Standard Criteria for Sites of Biological Significance in Victoria (Amos 2004), indicate that a place's significance should be assessed in a number of criteria under 5 headings:

- Ecological integrity and viability
- Richness and diversity (high biodiversity)
- Rarity/conservation status of assets
- Representative of type.
- Scientific and educational value

According to Amos 2004, all areas should be considered to have biodiversity significance until they have been assessed and shown to have no significance. This embeds the precautionary approach to significance assessment. The inference that sites that have not been assessed (and therefore not ranked as a site of significance) are 'insignificant' and do not have biodiversity conservation value must be avoided. The designation 'not significant' should be used for sites that are genuinely devoid of conservation value to reverse the inference.

It is worth noting that the Natural Heritage Charter includes a number of qualities of sites (e.g. aesthetic and life-support values) which are not included in Amos (2004).

In 2004, O'Malley and Kern summarised what was known about ecosystem and biodiversity sites within the City of Darebin. Their report, the *City of Darebin Biodiversity Review Part 1 Final Report*, lists 74 sites ranging in significance from national to local. The sites are listed in *Appendix 3*. They are mapped on Council's internal computerised geographic information system.

Since O'Malley and Kern's report was published a revised listing of Biosites across Melbourne has been published, as well as a final version of the Port Phillip and Western Port Native Vegetation Plan, which includes revised tables of significance for Ecological Vegetation Classes. Furthermore the native vegetation controls in the planning scheme have been changed state-wide, and rely on a different measure of significance.

In some areas (notably the wetlands north of Edwardes Lake on Edgars Creek) major new rehabilitation works have been carried out since the fieldwork O'Malley and Kern's report is based on. These sites deserve investigation and a separate or additional listing from those given below.

Some of O'Malley and Kern's sites have not been reassessed on the ground for over 10 years, during which time significant changes may have occurred ranging from complete destruction to significant rehabilitation. Systematic on-ground re-assessment of these sites and updating of significance levels based on the newer methods is needed to ensure appropriate prioritization and management.

The study area is mostly within the Victorian Volcanic Plain Bioregion, but the northeast corner, including the higher elevation parts of Bundoora Park, La Trobe University, Greswell Hill and Bundoora are part of the Highlands Southern Fall Bioregions. This is important as the same ecological community sometimes have different levels of significance in each bioregion.

Key biodiversity sites in Darebin include:

- Bundoora Park and Public Golf Course
- Bundoora Park Grasslands Conservation Area

- Central Creek Grassland
- Sites along Darebin Creek including Plenty Road to Dougharty Road, Sullivan Reserve and Surrounds and Darebin Parklands
- Sites along Edgars Creek including Edwardes Lake
- Sites at Lancaster Gate Estate
- Sites at La Trobe University
- Sites along Merri Creek
- Mont Park Precinct

For further details see the complete table of Biodiversity sites at *Appendix 3*.

Suggestions for sites of possible biodiversity significance made in the natural heritage consultation resulted in only one possible additional site, being a reserve in Lancaster Gate, which hasn't yet been identified.

Geodiversity places

Known sites and those suggested in consultations to date within Darebin include:

Silurian Dargile Formation outcropping:

- Elizabeth Street cuttings (On east side of Elizabeth Street between Bell Street and Booth Street) (Mitchell et al 2000)
- Capp Reserve Preston - vertical cliff quarry face remnant on two sides of the tennis courts at the southern end of Halwyn Crescent. (Destroyed) (Rosengren 1993)
- Kendall Street, Preston formation - cliff on left bank of Merri Creek below Kendall Street - (Rosengren 1993)
- Epping Rail line cutting - Westbourne Grove (consultation)
- All Nations Park (suggested in consultation, although destroyed as a geological site by filling, it could still be the site for interpretation.)
- Darebin Creek Alphington (suggested in consultation)
- Epping Rail line cutting at Westbourne Grove (suggested in consultation)

Silurian Andersons Creek (or Yan Yean) Formation outcropping (only in Thornbury):

None recorded

Devonian volcanic outcropping

- Greswell Hill (Muyt 2003)

Tertiary Brighton Group sands

- Summerhill Gardens (suggested in consultation)

Tertiary Basalts

- Basalt flows around Mt Cooper and fused sand and silcrete (Merv Lia pers. comm., also Kern, 1999)

Silurian-Basalt unconformity (contact)

- Edgars Creek Reservoir Dolomite nodules (right bank of Edgars Creek south of Broadhurst Avenue and adjacent to Ameily Crescent) (Rosengren 1993)

Newer Volcanic Basalt outcropping

- Northcote Park Football Ground Basalt Columns (east bank of Merri Creek upstream of Heidelberg Road) (Rosengren 1993)
- Cunningham Street Basalt structures/escarpments (upstream and downstream of Cunningham Street, Northcote) (suggestion)
- Darebin Creek Alphington tessellated pavement (suggested in consultation)

Quaternary Alluvial features

- Mahoneys Road Alluvial Terrace (left bank of Merri Creek immediately south of the southern carriageway of Mahoneys Road) (Rosengren 1993)
- Unclassified geological features
- Darebin Creek near Clarendon Street: Rock exposures (suggested in consultation)
- Darebin Parklands rock exposures (suggested in consultation)
- Kingsbury Drive road cutting east of Waterdale Road (includes Aboriginal artefacts) (suggested in consultation)
- Rucker's Hill rock exposures (suggested in consultation)
- Merri Creek Northcote and Reservoir rock exposures (suggested in consultation)

9 WHY IS DAREBIN SIGNIFICANT?

9.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the Statement of Significance for the City of Darebin, which is based upon the information contained in this history and seeks to describe the principal reasons for the significance of the municipality. Cultural significance is defined in the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* (1999) as:

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.

Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.

Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups

Cultural significance may be embodied in the fabric of a place (including its setting and relationship to other items), the records associated with the place, its current or former use, and in associations and the meanings that the place may have for people to whom it is important.

A Statement of Significance is intended to be:

... a brief, pithy but comprehensive statement of all the ways in which the place is significant. It should not just be a list of every conceivable reason for significance that the assessor can think up, however, it must state clearly and unequivocally the major reasons why the place is important. It must be supported by the presentation of sufficient evidence to justify the assessment judgement. (Pearson & Sullivan, 1995)

In order to more readily understand the significance of the City of Darebin as a whole, the thematic historical development has been divided into the following key chronological stages and focuses on the primary period of influence in each stage:

- Creating Darebin (pre 1835)
- First contact and pastoralists (c.1835-c.1870s)
- Boom, bust and recovery (c1870s – c1910s)
- Becoming cities – the interwar boom (c.1910s – c1950s).
- Becoming a multicultural and environmentally aware city (c.1950s onwards)

A final stage deals with Darebin's natural heritage, which will be explored further during a later stage of this Study.

The preceding chapters each include a brief assessment of the cultural and natural heritage values associated with specific historic themes in the development of the study area and identify representative places associated with each. The Statement of Significance in this chapter builds upon those assessments and should be read in conjunction with them. In assessing the significance of each stage, this chapter considers:

- *What is significant?* This identifies and summarises the legacies¹⁷ of each stage, which illustrate the various themes described in detail in the preceding chapters. The 'legacies' may be 'tangible' (or physical) features (such as buildings, parks & gardens, monuments, railways and associated objects etc.) or 'intangible' (such as historic events or associations, community identity or associations, etc.).

¹⁷ Legacy: We are using the word legacy in this report to mean result, in terms of a consequence or outcome i.e. what is left as a result of the processes described in this thematic environmental history

- *Why is it significant?* This provides a summary of the reasons why each stage is significant. In accordance with the definition set out above (Pearson and Sullivan, 1995), this does not attempt to list every reason, but provides an overview of the key reasons why the City of Darebin is significant, particularly when compared to other metropolitan areas.

9.2 What is Significant?

The natural and cultural heritage places in the City of Darebin contains are significant for aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values.

Creating Darebin (pre 1835)

The area that is now the City of Darebin has its origins in tens of thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation and settlement as the traditional country of the Wurundjeri willam. The local Aboriginal people's traditions about how the land and its features were created are unique to the area and of great cultural significance.

The environment was (and continues to be) inherent to the groups' spiritual and social traditions. The rich abundance of natural resources were used and altered through activities such as fire - stick farming and making and using stone tools and implements. The water ways, particularly Merri and Darebin Creeks, were central meeting places for the Wurundjeri willam and visiting clans from the wider Woi wurrung network. The pre-contact Aboriginal history of the study area is evidenced by the rich archaeological deposits, scar trees and a range of other sites, and the enduring spiritual and cultural associations of local Aboriginal people with the landscape and its features.

The places associated with this theme illustrate the natural process over thousands of years that created the study area as it was at the time of European invasion and settlement. Creation stories of the Woi wurrung also explain how the wider landscape was shaped by ancestor beings. Significant places associated with the theme of *Creating Darebin* include:

- Natural features, especially the distinctive geology, landscapes, and flora and fauna of the study area which have evolved over millions of years;
- Places associated with the creation stories of the Woi wurrung, which explain how the wider landscape was shaped by ancestor beings
- The scientific, social and spiritual significance of the pre-contact Aboriginal cultural landscape and its influence on subsequent layers of European development of the city, and the ongoing importance of the Aboriginal cultural heritage to Aboriginal people and the broader community.

First contact and pastoralists (c.1835-c.1870s)

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the first contact between Aboriginal people and European explorers and settlers and it is noted that the site of first contact between John Batman and Aboriginal people was possibly within Darebin. This is the era, which led to the eventual displacement of many Aboriginal people and the creation of new communities that would become Northcote and Preston and their surrounding districts.

Examples of places associated with the era of *First Contact and Pastoralists* include:

- Places associated with first contact between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people;
- Places associated with the continuing occupation of the land by Aboriginal people after first contact.
- Places associated with the occupation, and displacement of the local Aboriginal communities in Darebin;
- Places associated with the history of the colonial administration of Aboriginal people

- Places associated with land speculators, pastoralists and immigrant groups;
- Places associated with formation of new communities such as churches, cemeteries and community buildings.
- Places associated with the establishment of early transport networks.

Boom, bust and recovery (c1870s – c1910s)

The land speculation, which began in the 1850s gathered pace in the 1870s and 1880s. The urban boundaries were pushed out as people sharing in the general prosperity sought new residential lands in which to build homes. Darebin had many acres of vacant land, held by speculators waiting for the right time to sell, however, the area was disadvantaged by a lack of good transport facilities. Even so, the boom took hold in Darebin, where many estates were subdivided and offered for sale, using creative marketing techniques. Industries were established, transport networks developed and expanded and civic institutions were established. The development of railways and the first cable tram networks, in particular, had a significant influence upon the pattern of settlement that extended northward in a narrow band along the key routes of St Georges Road, the Whittlesea railway and High Street. The 1890s halted development for over a decade, but

Significant places associated with the era of *Boom, bust and recovery* include:

- Places associated with the ‘boom and bust’ speculative development in the late nineteenth century, such as working class cottages, middle class villas and ‘boom-style’ mansions;
- Places associated with failed speculative subdivisions, which illustrate how far suburban development expanded prior to the 1890s depression;
- Places associated with the establishment and development of rural, extractive and manufacturing industries in Darebin;
- Places associated with the establishment of Melbourne’s first water supply;
- Places associated with the establishment and development of Darebin and Melbourne’s road network;
- Places associated with the establishment and development of the public transport network, and that illustrate its influence upon suburban development;
- Places associated with the early development of local retail centres, particularly along High Street;
- Places associated with the establishment of local government authorities;

Becoming cities – the interwar suburban boom (c.1910s – c1950s)

After the interruption caused by World War One, Darebin entered perhaps its most significant phase of development. Northcote had been proclaimed a city by 1914, and Preston followed suit by 1926. This was the era of ‘Garden Suburb’ housing estates that were constructed along key transport routes including the expanding tram network, which was developed first by the Fitzroy-Northcote-Preston Tramway Trust and later by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board who established their depot and workshops at Preston in 1924. This included some of the first ‘public’ housing estates in Victoria, which were developed by War Service Homes Commission from 1919-20 and the Housing Commission of Victoria (1938 onwards). High Street developed into a major shopping centre. During this time, the rural seclusion of the northern parts of Darebin and its large undeveloped areas continued to various health and welfare institutions seeking rural land near the city. Darebin became home to a number of major health institutions that brought people in from the wider community for care and treatment. This included the repatriation of returned servicemen.

It was during this time that Aboriginal people began to move back into Darebin in search of opportunities, driven by closure and mismanagement of country reserves and also by the 1930s Depression and the Second World War. One of these people was (Sir) Doug Nicholls who would go on to become one of the most important and influential figures Aboriginal social justice movement, and was thus influential in Northcote becoming a centre of Aboriginal activism in the 1950s

Significant places associated with the era of *Becoming cities – the interwar suburban boom* include:

- Civic institutions, buildings and other features such as parklands and beautification projects that illustrate the development of Northcote and Preston into cities.
- Places associated with the development of High Street as a major regional shopping centre;
- Housing estates, both public and private, including estates developed by the War Service Homes Commission, Housing Commission of Victoria and with the assistance of the State Savings Bank of Victoria;
- Educational facilities associated with suburban development in Darebin and also with the development of higher education in Victoria;
- Places associated with the development of the Aboriginal community in Darebin, particularly those that illustrate Aboriginal self-determination and left-wing political movements;
- Places associated with key roles in Australia's defence efforts in the two world wars, such as the Mont Park military training grounds and Macleod repatriation hospital, and industries associated with the war effort; and
- Places associated with the development of the State's mental health system including the former Mont Park and Larundel hospitals.

Becoming a multicultural and environmentally aware city (c.1950s onwards)

Cultural institutions both influence and reflect the character of the area. Significant places associated with the theme of *Community and Culture* include:

- Places such as social clubs and churches that illustrate the development of Darebin into one of the most culturally diverse municipalities in Victoria;
- Places of worship that illustrate the changing socio-demographics of the community and, in particular, the influence of immigration;
- Places associated with the strong conservation movement that actively protects Darebin's waterways and parklands.

Darebin's natural heritage

The development that has occurred since the first contact between Aboriginal people and European settlers has had a significant impact upon the natural environment of Darebin. While much of the original flora and fauna has been lost, there remain some important remnants of endangered ecological vegetation classes, threatened ecosystems, geological sites, and water catchments.

9.3 Why is it Significant?

The natural and cultural heritage places within the City of Darebin are significant for the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and spiritual values at a local and sometimes State level.

Creating Darebin (pre 1835)

The places associated with the pre-contact Aboriginal history of Darebin are significant as evidence of the enduring spiritual and cultural associations of local Aboriginal people with the landscape and its features. The environment was (and continues to be) inherent to the groups' spiritual and social traditions, and the local Aboriginal people's traditions about how the land and its features were created are unique to the area and of great cultural significance.

(Note: These aspects will be further explored and documented in Stage 6 of the Darebin Heritage Study)

First contact and pastoral era (c.1860s-1870s)

Darebin contains places that are historically and spiritually significant for their associations with the first contact between Aboriginal communities and European settler, and maintaining traditional lifestyles after settlement began. Although the exact location of the first contact site is contested and no physical evidence remains, the symbolism and consequences of the treaty form an important component of Darebin's (and Victoria's) cultural identity, which is commemorated in local histories.

Other places associated with this era are historically important as evidence of the pastoral and farming communities that developed in the time after first contact. The earliest surviving buildings in Darebin are historically significant as an illustration of the land boom that accompanied Victoria's gold rushes in the early 1850s, which brought new optimism and a demand for farm land close to Melbourne. Places such as churches and cemeteries are of particular social and historic significance as they provide evidence of the different immigrant groups that were among the early settlers in Darebin. The early importance of Heidelberg Road and High Street as main roads connecting Melbourne to its hinterland is demonstrated by the cluster of early buildings along these thoroughfares.

Because so little of the physical fabric of this early phase of Darebin's history remains, any traces of this formative period (including archaeological sites) are considered to be of primary heritage significance to the city. (AHC criterion A4, B2, C2, D2, G1 and H1)

Boom, bust and recovery (1870s-1910s)

The places associated with this era are significant as an illustration of the period of unprecedented prosperity, growth and development in Melbourne in the late nineteenth century, known as the land boom. They illustrate how the urban boundaries were pushed out as people sharing in the general prosperity sought new residential lands in which to build homes, despite the fact that Darebin, up to the 1880s, was disadvantaged by a lack of good transport facilities. The places also provide evidence of the devastating consequences of the 1890s economic depression, which effectively halted development for more than a decade and of the recovery that followed in the early twentieth century.

The nineteenth century industrial places within Darebin are significant of the large and small rural and extractive industries that existed prior to suburban development and the noxious trades that took advantage of the area's nineteenth century isolation. These industries were vital to servicing both the local population and Melbourne, and the employment opportunities they offered attracted people to live and work in the area.

Becoming cities – the interwar suburban boom (c.1910s-1950s)

This significant period of growth is represented by a range of civic, commercial, residential, industrial and institutional places, as well the provision of urban amenities and public works, which illustrate the significant growth that saw both Northcote and Preston elevated to the status of a City. The new civic status was reflected in new council buildings, community facilities and public works including beautification projects, and public recreational spaces, which were a source of great community pride.

The interwar residential areas of Darebin are historically significant as they provide further evidence of the significant growth during this era. They also illustrate important influence of railways and trams in shaping the residential and commercial development of Melbourne. This is particularly reflected in the narrow pattern of linear growth along the key north-south routes of High Street, the Whittlesea Railway and St Georges Road that persisted until after World War Two. Finally, they illustrate the emerging role played by government agencies such as the War Service Homes Commission and the Housing Commission of Victoria in the provision of housing. The estates in Darebin are among the first in Victoria and are therefore provide an important historic record of the early development of public housing initiatives.

Darebin is also notable for places that have significant associations with Australia's World War One effort and dealing with its aftermath. These places are also linked to the development of psychiatric institutions, and repatriation hospitals, which are historically significant at a State level as evidence of the development of the state public hospital system early in the twentieth century.

The re-establishment of Aboriginal communities in Melbourne in the twentieth century is illustrated a number of places within Darebin. These places are significant as evidence of how Aboriginal people have maintained a strong physical and cultural presence in Darebin in the face of displacement, disenfranchisement and policies of assimilation, such that by the mid twentieth century, it had the largest Aboriginal community in Melbourne. This community played a prominent role in the national struggle for Aboriginal rights and social justice.

Becoming a multicultural and environmentally aware city (c.1950s onwards)

Darebin is also significant as a place that illustrates the massive growth and suburban expansion of Melbourne in the post-Second World War era. The legacy of this era includes the many places that demonstrate the significant influence of immigration upon the historic development of Darebin during that time. Perhaps the most vivid illustration of this is the sheer diversity in the places of worship now found in Darebin, many of which are old churches now used by different religions and cultural groups. The influence of immigration can also be seen in social, community and sporting facilities, which were important in establishing new community identities in Australia.

Another legacy is the large Housing Commission of Victoria estates that illustrate the program enacted by the Commission to meet post-war housing shortages - no fewer than 10,000 people were housed by the Commission in the period up to 1966 in Darebin. These estates included the use of innovative low-cost techniques such as the Concrete Houses Program. These residents were employed in the many new industries that established in the East Preston and Reservoir areas.

This era was a time of increasing awareness of environmental issues in Darebin and places associated with the activities to conserve and restore the natural environment are significant as an illustration of the broader environmental movement that emerged in the post-war period.

Another legacy of this era is the places that are significant for their associations with the continuing fight of Aboriginal people for self determination and social justice. The Northland Secondary College is also important for its strong connections with the Aboriginal community over at least 30 years.

Darebin's natural heritage (c.1860 – c.1980s)

While Darebin's natural heritage will be the focus of further work in Stage 5 of the City of Darebin Heritage Study, preliminary findings are presented below.

- Whilst most of Darebin has been cleared and developed, it retains significant remnants of the endangered Plains Grassy Woodland, Western (Basalt) Plains Grassland, and other ecological vegetation classes, which means the remnants have a high priority for protection. These remnants provide habitat for 65 animal species of at least regional significance, but many of national significance, and 122 plant species of at least regional significance, some of which are endangered at the national level.
- Darebin's geological sites are of regional and local significance and help residents understand the long history and evolution of the land around them.
- Darebin's waterways are environmental, heritage and recreation corridors that draw their significance from their roles as continuous corridors linking natural heritage and recreation values as well as from the qualities of individual reaches.
- The Merri and Darebin creeks and their immediate surrounds, as well as the Greswell to La Trobe University areas, are host to some of the most threatened ecosystems in Australia and have a unique role to play in the preservation of threatened flora and fauna and the maintenance of vegetation communities that in other places have almost been totally destroyed.
- The creeks are the focus of a large number of pre and post contact archaeological sites which as a group are highly significant. Revegetation works along the creeks and parkland development including path construction have created linear parks of outstanding quality and landscape character and which play an important role in the park system of the metropolitan region.

9.4 Conclusion

In a metropolitan context, the City of Darebin is significant as it is one of the few municipalities that provide evidence of all of the key phases in the historic development of Melbourne, from first settlement to the present day.

The City of Darebin has a rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage that illustrates the historical occupation, use, adaptation and development of the land since the arrival of Aboriginal people. This in turn promotes a greater understanding of the history of Victoria and Australia as a whole. This history is demonstrated in the City of Darebin by a wide range of heritage places including buildings and structures, monuments, trees and landscapes, archaeological sites, and places with spiritual or symbolic meaning. Some of these places have been mentioned in this report, and there are many others besides. All have one thing in common:

These are places that are worth keeping because they enrich our lives – by helping us to understand the past; by contributing to the richness of the present environment; and because we expect them to be of value to future generations. (The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 1999).

These places provide an insight into the complex cultural layering that gives the City of Darebin a sense of historic continuity as well as a distinctive character. They reveal the way communities in past years thought about their local area as well as illustrating prevailing economic, social and political circumstances that were important in the development of the study area. In some cases the places and the people, uses and events associated with them had an even greater influence, extending to the whole of Melbourne, Victoria and sometimes Australia.

It is important that all aspects of this cultural layering are recognised and, where appropriate, protected and conserved to ensure that the history of the City of Darebin as it is 'written on the landscape' can continue to be interpreted, understood and celebrated by the community now and in the future.

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GLOSSARY

Australian Natural Heritage Charter	This is the <i>Australian Natural Heritage Charter for the Conservation of Places of Natural Heritage Significance</i> produced by the Australian Heritage Commission in 2002.
Burra Charter	<p>The <i>Burra Charter</i> is the short name given to the <i>Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance</i>, which was developed by Australia ICOMOS at a meeting in 1979 in the historic South Australian mining town of Burra. It is now widely accepted as the basis for cultural heritage management in Australia.</p> <p>The Burra Charter may be applied to a wide range of places - an archaeological site, a town, building or landscape and defines various terms and identifies principles and procedures that must be observed in conservation work.</p> <p>Although the Burra Charter was drafted by heritage professionals, anyone involved in the care of heritage items and places may use it to guide conservation policy and practice.</p>
Cultural significance	<p><i>Cultural significance</i> means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.</p> <p>Cultural significance is embodied in the <i>place</i> itself, its <i>fabric, setting, use associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects</i>.</p>
Conservation	<i>Conservation</i> means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its <i>cultural significance</i> .
Darebin Historical Encyclopaedia (DHE)	Local history resources in the Darebin Libraries and available on the website dhe.darebin-libraries.vic.gov.au/encyclopedia
ICOMOS	<i>ICOMOS</i> (International Council on Monuments and Sites) is a non-governmental professional organisation formed in 1965. ICOMOS is primarily concerned with the philosophy, terminology, methodology and techniques of cultural heritage conservation and is closely linked to UNESCO.
Place	<i>Place</i> means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of building or other work, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.
Post contact	<i>Post-contact</i> means the period after first contact between indigenous and non-indigenous (sometimes referred to as 'European') individuals or communities.
RNE criteria	The <i>Register of the National Estate (RNE) criteria</i> are used to assess whether a place has significant cultural heritage values. A list is provided in Appendix 2.
The study area	The study area is the whole of the City of Darebin municipality. However, in documenting the history, the study may sometimes refer to places outside the study area that had an important influence on it.
AHT themes	Australian Historic Themes prepared by the former Australian Heritage Commission, see Appendix 1
AAV themes	Aboriginal Affairs Victoria themes , see Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1

AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEMES

1 TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENT

The environment exists apart from being a construct of human consciousness. However, a thematic approach recognises the human factor in the natural environment, and how our understanding and appreciation of the environment has changed over time.

- 1.1: Tracing climatic and topographical change
- 1.2: Tracing the emergence of Australian plants and animals
- 1.3: Assessing scientifically diverse environments
- 1.4: Appreciating the natural wonders of Australia

2 PEOPLING AUSTRALIA

This theme group recognises the pre-colonial occupations of Indigenous people, as well as the ongoing history of human occupation from diverse areas.

- 2.1: Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants
- 2.2: Adapting to diverse environments
- 2.3: Coming to Australia as a punishment
- 2.4: Migrating
 - 2.4.1: Migrating to save or preserve a way of life
 - 2.4.2: Migrating to seek opportunity
 - 2.4.3: Migrating to escape oppression
 - 2.4.4: Migrating through organised colonisation
 - 2.4.5: Changing the face of rural and urban Australia through migration
- 2.5: Promoting settlement
- 2.6: Fighting for land
 - 2.6.1: Resisting the advent of Europeans and their animals
 - 2.6.2: Displacing Indigenous people

3 DEVELOPING LOCAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ECONOMIES

While Geoffrey Blainey conceived of Australian history as dominated by the 'tyranny of distance' this concept is alien to Indigenous Australians. Eighteenth and nineteenth century developments in technology made it possible to link the continent to distant marketplaces, and the incentive for almost every expedition by the first European 'explorers' was the search for valuable resources. Much subsequent Australian history has revolved around the search for a staple on which to base regional economic development.

- 3.1: Exploring the coastline
- 3.2: Constructing capital city economies
- 3.3: Surveying the continent
 - 3.3.1: Looking for inland seas and waterways
 - 3.3.2: Looking for overland stock routes
 - 3.3.3: Prospecting for precious metals

- 3.3.4: Looking for land with agricultural potential
- 3.3.5: Laying out boundaries
- 3.4: Utilising natural resources
 - 3.4.1: Hunting
 - 3.4.2: Fishing and whaling
 - 3.4.3: Mining
 - 3.4.4: Making forests into a saleable resource
 - 3.4.5: Tapping natural energy sources
- 3.5: Developing primary production
 - 3.5.1: Grazing stock
 - 3.5.2: Breeding animals
 - 3.5.3: Developing agricultural industries
- 3.6: Recruiting labour
- 3.7: Establishing communications
 - 3.7.1: Establishing postal services
 - 3.7.2: Developing electric means of communication
- 3.8: Moving goods and people
 - 3.8.1: Shipping to and from Australian ports
 - 3.8.2: Safeguarding Australian products for long journeys
 - 3.8.3: Developing harbour facilities
 - 3.8.4: Making economic use of inland waterways
 - 3.8.5: Moving goods and people on land
 - 3.8.6: Building and maintaining railways
 - 3.8.7: Building and maintaining roads
 - 3.8.8: Getting fuel to engines
 - 3.8.9: Moving goods and people by air
- 3.9: Farming for commercial profit
- 3.10: Integrating people into the cash economy
 - 3.10.1: Assisting Indigenous people into the cash economy
 - 3.10.2: Encouraging women into employment
 - 3.10.3: Encouraging fringe and alternative businesses
- 3.11: Altering the environment
 - 3.11.1: Regulating waterways
 - 3.11.2: Reclaiming land
 - 3.11.3: Irrigating land
 - 3.11.4: Clearing vegetation
 - 3.11.5: Establishing water supplies
- 3.12: Feeding people
 - 3.12.1: Using indigenous foodstuffs
 - 3.12.2: Developing sources of fresh local produce
 - 3.12.3: Importing foodstuffs
 - 3.12.4: Preserving food and beverages
 - 3.12.5: Retailing foods and beverages
- 3.13: Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity
- 3.14: Developing an Australian engineering and construction industry

- 3.14.1: Building to suit Australian conditions
- 3.14.2: Using Australian materials in construction
- 3.15: Developing economic links outside Australia
- 3.16: Struggling with remoteness, hardship and failure
 - 3.16.1: Dealing with hazards and disasters
- 3.17: Inventing devices
- 3.18: Financing Australia
 - 3.18.1: Raising capital
 - 3.18.2: Banking and lending
 - 3.18.3: Insuring against risk
 - 3.18.4: Cooperating to raise capital (co-ops, building societies, etc.)
- 3.19: Marketing and retailing
- 3.20: Informing Australians
 - 3.20.1: Making, printing and distributing newspapers
 - 3.20.2: Broadcasting
- 3.21: Entertaining for profit
- 3.22: Lodging people
- 3.23: Catering for tourists
- 3.24: Selling companionship and sexual services
- 3.25: Adorning Australians
 - 3.25.1: Dressing up Australians
- 3.26: Providing health services
 - 3.26.1: Providing medical and dental services
 - 3.26.2: Providing hospital services
 - 3.26.3: Developing alternative approaches to good health
 - 3.26.4: Providing care for people with disabilities

4 BUILDING SETTLEMENTS, TOWNS AND CITIES

Although many people came to Australia in search of personal gain, they realised the need to co-operate in the building of safe, pleasant urban environments. Australian urbanisation and suburbanisation have special characteristics which set them apart from similar phenomena elsewhere in the world.

- 4.1: Planning urban settlements
 - 4.1.1: Selecting township sites
 - 4.1.2: Making suburbs
 - 4.1.3: Learning to live with property booms and busts
 - 4.1.4: Creating capital cities
 - 4.1.5: Developing city centres
- 4.2: Supplying urban services (power, transport, fire prevention, roads, water, light and sewerage)
- 4.3: Developing institutions
- 4.4: Living with slums, outcasts and homelessness
- 4.5: Making settlements to serve rural Australia

4.6: Remembering significant phases in the development of settlements, towns and cities

5 WORKING

Although a lot of what we call work is related to the economy, most of it is not undertaken for profit. A great deal of the work done in the home is neither paid nor counted as part of the national economy. Some of the most interesting recent social history written about Australia concerns work and workplaces.

5.1: Working in harsh conditions

5.1.1: Coping with unemployment

5.1.2: Coping with dangerous jobs and workplaces

5.2: Organising workers and work places

5.3: Caring for workers' dependent children

5.4: Working in offices

5.5: Trying to make crime pay

5.6: Working in the home

5.7: Surviving as Indigenous people in a white-dominated economy

5.8: Working on the land

6 EDUCATING

Every society educates its young. While European education places a great emphasis on the formal schooling system, education encompasses much more.

6.1: Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self-education

6.2: Establishing schools

6.3: Training people for the workplace

6.4: Building a system of higher education

6.5: Educating people in remote places

6.6: Educating Indigenous people in two cultures

7 GOVERNING

This theme group is as much about self-government as it is about being governed. It includes all the business of politics, including hostility to acts of government.

7.1: Governing Australia as a province of the British Empire

7.2: Developing institutions of self-government and democracy

7.2.1: Protesting

7.2.2: Struggling for inclusion in the political process

7.2.3: Working to promote civil liberties

7.2.4: Forming political associations

7.3: Making City-States

7.4: Federating Australia

7.5: Governing Australia's colonial possessions

7.6: Administering Australia

7.6.1: Developing local government authorities

7.6.2: Controlling entry of persons and disease

- 7.6.3: Policing Australia
- 7.6.4: Dispensing justice
- 7.6.5: Incarcerating people
- 7.6.6: Providing services and welfare
- 7.6.7: Enforcing discriminatory legislation
- 7.6.8: Administering Indigenous Affairs
- 7.6.9: Conserving Australian resources
- 7.6.10: Conserving fragile environments
- 7.6.11: Conserving economically valuable resources
- 7.6.12: Conserving Australia's heritage
- 7.7: Defending Australia
 - 7.7.1: Providing for the common defence
 - 7.7.2: Preparing to face invasion
 - 7.7.3: Going to war
- 7.8: Establishing regional and local identity

8 DEVELOPING AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL LIFE

Australians are more likely to express their sense of identity in terms of a way of life rather than allegiance to an abstract patriotic ideal. One of the achievements of this society has been the creation of a rich existence away from the workplace. While some of the activities encompassed in this theme are pursued for profit - horse racing and cinema, for instance - their reason for being is the sheer enjoyment of spectators. While many people could not pursue careers in art, literature, science, entertainment or the church without being paid, those activities do not fit easily into the categories of economy or workplace.

- 8.1: Organising recreation
 - 8.1.1: Playing and watching organised sports
 - 8.1.2: Betting
 - 8.1.3: Developing public parks and gardens
 - 8.1.4: Enjoying the natural environment
- 8.2: Going to the beach
- 8.3: Going on holiday
- 8.4: Eating and drinking
- 8.5: Forming associations
 - 8.5.1: Preserving traditions and group memories
 - 8.5.2: Helping other people
 - 8.5.3: Associating for mutual aid
 - 8.5.4: Pursuing common leisure interests
- 8.6: Worshipping
 - 8.6.1: Worshipping together
 - 8.6.2: Maintaining religious traditions and ceremonies
 - 8.6.3: Founding Australian religious institutions
 - 8.6.4: Making places for worship
 - 8.6.5: Evangelising
 - 8.6.6: Running city missions
 - 8.6.7: Running missions to Australia's indigenous people
- 8.7: Honouring achievement
- 8.8: Remembering the fallen
- 8.9: Commemorating significant events

- 8.9.1: Remembering disasters
- 8.9.2: Remembering public spectacles
- 8.10: Pursuing excellence in the arts and sciences
 - 8.10.1: Making music
 - 8.10.2: Creating visual arts
 - 8.10.3: Creating literature
 - 8.10.4: Designing and building fine buildings
 - 8.10.5: Advancing knowledge in science and technology
- 8.11: Making Australian folklore
 - 8.11.1: Celebrating folk heroes
 - 8.11.2: Myth making and story-telling
- 8.12: Living in and around Australian homes
- 8.13: Living in cities and suburbs
- 8.14: Living in the country and rural settlements
- 8.15: Being homeless

9 MARKING THE PHASES OF LIFE

Although much of the experience of growing up and growing old does not readily relate to particular heritage sites, there are places that can illustrate this important theme. Most of the phases of life set out below are universal experiences.

- 9.1: Bringing babies into the world
 - 9.1.1: Providing maternity clinics and hospitals
 - 9.1.2: Promoting mothers' and babies' health
- 9.2: Growing up
 - 9.2.1: Being children
 - 9.2.2: Joining youth organisations
 - 9.2.3: Being teenagers
 - 9.2.4: Courting
- 9.3: Forming families and partnerships
 - 9.3.1: Establishing partnerships
 - 9.3.2: Bringing up children
- 9.4: Being an adult
- 9.5: Living outside a family/partnership
- 9.6: Growing old
 - 9.6.1: Retiring
 - 9.6.2: Looking after the infirm and the aged
- 9.7: Dying
 - 9.7.1: Dealing with human remains
 - 9.7.2: Mourning the dead
 - 9.7.3 Remembering the dead

AAV THEMATIC LIST OF POST-CONTACT ABORIGINAL PLACES/SITES

1 Associations with Pastoralists/Farming/Rural Industry

- 1.1 Properties where initial contact with pastoralists occurred
- 1.2 Properties where people are known to have worked
- 1.3 Properties where people are known to have lived/camped
- 1.4 Properties where people visited to obtain regular supplies of food/clothing/utensils (other than Honorary Correspondent depots)
- 1.5 Properties where people are known to have frequented for purposes other than above (or if nature of particular association is unknown)

2 Associations with Settlements/Towns

- 2.1 Places where people camped/lived around towns
- 2.2 Places where people congregated around towns (stores, parks, houses etc.)
- 2.3 Shops/industries/places where people worked around settlements/towns
- 2.4 Places where people obtained regular supplies of food and goods (not B.P.A. depots)
- 2.5 Places where people participated in settlement/town activities
- 2.6 Other facilities used/frequented by people

3 Associations with Forests (not known if association originates in pre-contact period)

- 3.1 Places where people worked in forest industries
- 3.2 Places where people lived in forests

4 Places where People Independently Congregated/Frequented/Travelled (not known if association originates in pre-contact period)

- 4.1 Living camps away from towns and properties
- 4.2 Ceremonial and formal meeting places
- 4.3 Places of recreation (played sport, holidays, get togethers)
- 4.4 Historical travelling routes
- 4.5 Places where people procured food and/or raw materials

5 Government Administration of Resources for Aboriginal People

- 5.1 Protectorates
- 5.2 Government stations
- 5.3 Locations where Native Police were housed/camped/worked
- 5.4 Properties/locations of Honorary Correspondents to the Board for Protection of Aborigines
- 5.5 Locations of Board for the Protection of Aborigines depots
- 5.6 Places where Aboriginal Affairs have been administered by the government
- 5.7 Schools
- 5.8 Housing/shelters
- 5.9 Hospitals/houses for sick people

6 Associations with the Church

6.1 Missions

6.2 Schools

6.3 Churches

7 Land Reserved for Aboriginal People

7.1 Land reserved for general Aboriginal population use

7.2 Land reserved for specific individuals/families

8 Places of Conflict

8.1 Places where Aboriginal people were killed/assaulted/threatened by Europeans

8.2 Places where Aboriginal people were killed/assaulted by other Aboriginal people

8.3 Places where Europeans were killed/assaulted/threatened by Aboriginal people

8.4 Places where Aboriginal people were imprisoned

9 Places where Aboriginal People have Died or been Buried since Contact

9.1 Location of individual burials outside Of formal cemeteries

9.2 Location of burial grounds outside Of formal cemeteries

9.3 Location of burials within cemeteries

9.4 Places where people have died

10 Places Linked to Significant People

10.1 Places where known ancestors were born

10.2 Monuments

10.3 Buildings

10.4 Homes

10.5 Natural features associated with significant people

11 Places Linked to a Significant Incident

11.1 Significant incident relating to a significant person

11.2 Significant incident relating to a number of people

12 Attachments to/Associations with Places Known to Precede Contact

12.1 Pre-contact food resources/areas where people continued to procure food (swamps, fish weirs, forests etc.)

12.2 Camp sites/meeting places

12.3 Spiritual places

12.4 Ceremonial places

12.5 Sources of raw materials used for making artefacts post-contact

12.6 Sources Of bush medicines

12.7 Travelling routes

12.8 Burial/burial grounds

12.9 Named places

13 Places Relating to Self Determination

13.1 Community resource centres (co-operatives, health services, legal services etc.)

13.2 Community cultural centres (museums, keeping places etc.)

13.3 Tourism endeavours

13.4 Businesses

13.5 Government departments

13.6 Land claimed/reclaimed under Native Title

13.7 Land owned by Aboriginal people

13.8 Places related to a significant individual achievement

APPENDIX 2

RNE CRITERIA

CRITERION A:

ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE COURSE, OR PATTERN, OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

- A.1 Importance in the evolution of Australian flora, fauna, landscapes or climate.
- A.2 Importance in maintaining existing processes or natural systems at the regional or national scale.
- A.3 Importance in exhibiting unusual richness or diversity of flora, fauna, landscapes or cultural features.
- A.4 Importance for association with events, developments or cultural phases which have had a significant role in the human occupation and evolution of the nation, State, region or community.

CRITERION B:

ITS POSSESSION OF UNCOMMON, RARE OR ENDANGERED ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

- B.1 Importance for rare, endangered or uncommon flora, fauna, communities, ecosystems, natural landscapes or phenomena, or as a wilderness.
- B.2 Importance in demonstrating a distinctive way of life, custom, process, land-use, function or design no longer practised, in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest

CRITERION C:

ITS POTENTIAL TO YIELD INFORMATION THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

- C.1 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of Australian natural history, by virtue of its use as a research site, teaching site, type locality, reference or benchmark site.
- C.2 Importance for information contributing to a wider understanding of the history of human occupation of Australia.

CRITERION D:

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS OF: (I) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL PLACES; OR (II) A CLASS OF AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTS

- D.1 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of landscapes, environments or ecosystems, the attributes of which identify them as being characteristic of their class.
- D.2 Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of the range of human activities in the Australian environment (including way of life, philosophy, custom, process, land use, function, design or technique).

CRITERION E:

ITS IMPORTANCE IN EXHIBITING PARTICULAR AESTHETIC CHARACTERISTICS VALUED BY A COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP

E.1 Importance for a community for aesthetic characteristics held in high esteem or otherwise valued by the community.

CRITERION F:

ITS IMPORTANCE IN DEMONSTRATING A HIGH DEGREE OF CREATIVE OR TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT AT A PARTICULAR PERIOD

F.1 Importance for its technical, creative, design or artistic excellence, innovation or achievement.

CRITERION G:

ITS STRONG OR SPECIAL ASSOCIATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR COMMUNITY OR CULTURAL GROUP FOR SOCIAL, CULTURAL OR SPIRITUAL REASONS

G.1 Importance as a place highly valued by a community for reasons of religious, spiritual, symbolic, cultural, educational, or social associations.

CRITERION H:

ITS SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIFE OR WORKS OF A PERSON, OR GROUP OF PERSONS, OF IMPORTANCE IN AUSTRALIA'S NATURAL OR CULTURAL HISTORY

H.1 Importance for close associations with individuals whose activities have been significant within the history of the nation, State or region.

APPENDIX 3

List of Biodiversity Sites in the City of Darebin with Site Number and Significance Rank from O'Malley & Kern 2005

Site No.	Site Name	Rank	Reliability
1	Bundoora Park - Subsite: Bundoora Park and Public Golf Course	6	3
2	Bundoora Park - Subsite: Grasslands Conservation Area (Grass PPPR001)	6	3
3	Bundoora Park - Subsite: Plenty Road Grassland	2	2
4	Central Creek	4	3
5	Central Creek - Subsite: Central Creek Grassland (Grass PPPR002)	6	3
6	Darebin Creek – Subsite: Clough Parade	3	2
7	Darebin Creek – Subsite: Gronn Street Peninsula	5	2
8	Darebin Creek – Subsite: The Fairway Corner	1	1
9	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Winter Crescent:Arch Gibson Reserve	2	1
10	Darebin Creek - Subsite: K.P. HardiMn Reserve 1	3	2
11	Darebin Creek - Subsite: K.P. HardiMn Reserve 2	1	2
12	Darebin Creek – Subsite: Reach 4 Plenty Road to Dougharty Road	6	2
13	Darebin Creek - Subsite: C.T. Barling Park Reserve	5	2
14	Darebin Creek - Subsite: C.H. Sullivan Reserve and Surrounds 1 - LTU Footbridge Escarpment	6	2
15	Darebin Creek - Subsite: C.H. Sullivan Reserve and Surrounds 2 – Clingin St	6	2
16	Darebin Creek - Subsite: C.H. Sullivan Reserve and Surrounds 3 – Memorial Park Ovals	3	2
17	Darebin Creek - Subsite: C.H. Sullivan Reserve and Surrounds 4 - South-east Escarpment	5	2
18	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Tyler Street Private Blocks	3	3
19	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Greenbelt Avenue Escarpment	4	2
20	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Southern Road Wetlands	3	2
21	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Bell Street Mn Drain	5	2
22	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Grollo Wetland and Redgums	1	1
23	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Dundus Street to Darebin Parklands	3	2
24	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Dundus Street Wetlands	3	2
25	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Ford Grove Escarpment	4	2
26	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Abbot Road	2	2
27	Darebin Creek - Subsite: Darebin Parklands	6	3
28	Edgars Creek - Subsite: Hughes Parade to Broadhurst Avenue	1	1
29	Edgars Creek - Subsite: Edwardes Lake	6	2

Site No.	Site Name	Rank	Reliability
30	Edgars Creek - Subsite: Edwardes Street to Henty Street	4	3
31	Edgars Creek - Subsite: Henty Street to Gumbrae Street	3	2
32	Edgars Creek - Subsite: Kia Ora Road End	1	1
33	Edgars Creek - Subsite: Rear Council Depot	3	2
34	Epping Rail Reserve	1	1
35	Greenwood Drive Reserve	1	1
36	Gresswell Forest Reserve	5	2
37	Gresswell Habitat Link	5	2
38	Harry Pottage Reserve	5	3
39	Hurstbridge Rail Reserve	5	3
40	Hurstbridge Rail Reserve - Subsite: AMP Rail Reserve	2	3
41	Lancaster Gate Estate	5	2
42	Lancaster Gate Estate - Subsite: Larundel Grasslands	5	2
43	Lancaster Gate Estate - Subsite: Kingsbury Triangle	6	2
44	La Trobe University - Campus and Wildlife Reserves	6	3
45	La Trobe University - Subsite: La Trobe Playing Fields and Retarding Basin	6	3
46	La Trobe University - Subsite: Research and Development Park	4	3
47	Merri Creek - Subsite: Joan Court Rear	3	2
48	Merri Creek - Subsite: Hamersley Bowl	4	2
49	Merri Creek - Subsite: Moomba Park Reserve	2	1
50	Merri Creek - Subsite: South of Bartrop Street	5	2
51	Merri Creek - Subsite: Florence Close Rear	4	2
52	Merri Creek - Subsite: Capri Court South	3	2
53	Merri Creek - Subsite: B.T. Connor Reserve	5	2
54	Merri Creek - Subsite: Broadhurst Avenue to Brex Court	4	3
55	Merri Creek - Subsite: Buddhist Temple Area	3	2
56	Merri Creek - Subsite: Lakeside Secondary College	3	2
57	Merri Creek - Subsite: Lakeside to Carawa Drive	5	2
58	Merri Creek - Subsite: Bell Street to Miller Street	4	2
59	Merri Creek - Subsite: Miller Street to Normanby Avenue	3	2
60	Merri Creek - Subsite: Northcote Golf Course	2	2
61	Merri Creek - Subsite: Merri Park	5	2
62	Merri Creek - Subsite: St Georges Road to Epping Bridge	4	2
63	Merri Creek - Subsite: Epping Bridge to Rushall Footbridge	3	2
64	Merri Creek - Subsite: Cunningham Street to High Street	2	1
65	Merri Creek - Subsite: Creek Parade/Ross Street	3	1

Site No.	Site Name	Rank	Reliability
66	Merri Creek - Subsite: Northcote Gorge	5	2
67	Mont Park Precinct	6	3
68	Mont Park Precinct - Subsite: Cherry Street Grassland	6	3
69	Mont Park Precinct - Subsite: Forensic Drive	4	2
70	Mont Park Precinct - Subsite: Gresswell Hill	6	3
71	Mount Cooper Estate	5	2
72	Penders Park	1	1
73	Strathalan Golf Course	3	1
74	Merri Creek - Reach 1: Normanby Avenue to Heidelberg Road	6	2

Notes to table:

- The highest ranking of 6 indicates the highest biodiversity values and lower scores are less significant.
- The reliability ranking varies from a high level of reliability scoring 3 to a low of 1. A high reliability rating means that the site has been well studied or surveyed.