

City of Gosnell

By City of Gosnell Heritage Services

Condensed City History

Full extract

http://www.gosnells.wa.gov.au/files/sharedassets/public/pdfs/heritage/condensed_history_of_the_gosnells_area.pdf

In 1977, the City of Gosnells was formally declared. Although city status was not achieved until this date, Gosnells had been a gazetted municipal area since 1907. By that date humans had already used the area for thousands of years.

The original Gosnells Roads Board offices were in Maddington and were destroyed by fire, along with all the records they contained in 1928. New offices were built in Maddington and local administration for the area did not move to Gosnells until 1973, when the present offices were opened near the corner of Gosnells Road and the Albany Highway.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the area grow slowly, with market gardens, orchards and poultry farms being established there, along with residential housing lots. Despite being part of the same municipality, areas such as Gosnells and Maddington developed separate community identities with individual townsite areas and separate competitive sporting teams.

The next major change was to occur after the Second World War, with Perth seeing its largest influx of migrants from overseas since the gold rush of the 1890s. Many more subdivisions took place with the emphasis being on smaller residential lots rather than farmlets and market gardens. In the five years from 1954, a farm named Thornlie transformed to a suburb of the same name, complete with a bus service, shops, street lighting and rubbish collection.

A real estate boom in the 1960s saw the local population continue to rise. Many of the new residents were young families and the area saw a proliferation of primary schools, soon followed by the construction of new high schools. It is worth noting that, in 1960, there were no high schools between Cannington and Armadale and that the population of the Gosnells Shire rose from 11,000 to 21,000 between 1966 and 1970.

Further developments in the 1970s saw the suburbanisation of areas such as Huntingdale and Langford. This trend continued into the 1980s with many of the housing and farmlet properties, originally part of larger farms earlier in the century, being subdivided themselves into smaller and more dense housing blocks.

Many of the higher density housing sites were specially developed for occupation by the area's growing number of senior citizens. The earliest of these was the Amaroo Retirement Village which opened its doors to residents in September 1971.

With so much redevelopment taking place, many of Gosnells' earlier buildings were demolished to make way for new structures. However, the late 1980s and early 1990s saw increased value being placed on sites of historical interest by members of the community. The Gosnells Council had acquired the 1912 Wilkinson Homestead site which stands near the 1930s gravesite of John and Frances Davis, in the 1970s. The homestead was refurbished as a museum and opened to the public in 1988. It is now known as the City of Gosnells Museum – Wilkinson Homestead and is located alongside John Okey Davis Park.

The Gosnells Hotel, originally built in 1907, was purchased by hotelier Geoff Ogden and renovated in a manner consistent with its original appearance. The hotel is now the oldest public building in the City of Gosnells. Many of the district's oldest private homes also underwent tasteful renovations by new owners who favoured recondition over demolition. The municipality of Gosnells is no longer several small townships in the countryside along the Albany Highway. It is part of the Perth suburbs and is relatively close to the centre of Perth compared to many urban areas. A position along major road and rail routes has made it viable for a strategy of development and renewal to be devised in the late 1990s.

Excursions/ Incursions

Wilkinson Homestead Museum Education Program

Information on the City's museum – Wilkinson Homestead.

http://www.gosnells.wa.gov.au/About_our_City/History_and_heritage/Places_of_historic_interest/Wilkinson_Homestead_Museum

City of Gosnells Wilkinson Homestead Museum provides hands-on activities that address key inquiry points of the Australian Curriculum, especially in the history strand.

The Wilkinson Homestead Museum Education Program is available on Wednesdays during school term and is suitable for students in Years 1 to 5.

Teachers and students are encouraged to come in early 20th Century costume and really step back in time.

Bring one class of up to 40 students and choose three activities from the following list:

Oranges and lemons

Citrus growing was a major part of Gosnells' development. The Wilkinson family owned one of the largest citrus orchards in the City of Gosnells.

At the Wilkinson Homestead orchard, students learn about various types of citrus, squeeze and taste fruit and see the 'Lightning' fruit grader in action.

Making do

In the past, people 'made do' by re-using materials to create many household items and children made toys by improvising with items found at home.

At the Museum, students can see some of these examples, discuss how the toys were made and finish the activity by making a peg doll to take home.

Scone and butter making

Scones were made in the Wilkinson Homestead as a cheap and quick means of feeding workers or children after school. Topped with homemade jam, scones were simple, filling and easy to make.

At the Museum, students learn how to make butter and scones and then enjoy eating them.

School room 1907

At the Museum, students will be immersed in a 1907 school room and take part in lessons of the day. This includes lining up, singing 'God Save the King', reciting times tables, writing on a slate board and practising the 100 demons. Older students learn to write with ink pens and they will be told off if they use their left hand.

Old fashioned washing

Women's work was hard work – washing took all day. At the Museum, students will scrub dirty clothes with a washing board, pound them with a washing dolly, rinse and then wring out the excess using a hand-operated clothes wringer. Students will hang out the washing to dry on the rope and prop clothes line.

Clothing and fabric

Students are introduced to the different styles of clothing worn in the past, looking at the impracticalities of early fashions, having a chance to dress up and do some basic sewing.

The Australian Colonies (Year 5 only)

This interactive walk through the site of the original Davis family farm highlights early Colonial settlement, the hardships endured by the pioneer families and the impact of white settlement on Aboriginal people living in the area.

Make a day of it

The Museum is a great place to spend the day. Students can bring lunch and use the games box to test skills with old-fashioned entertainment such as knucklebones, egg and spoon race, marbles or horseshoes.

Take-away history

Visit the City of Gosnells website and online library catalogue to find more heritage and history information. The Museum also has education boxes for loan, containing household artefacts and photos to use in the classroom.

Bookings and payment

Visit the City's website for current prices and the excursion management plan or contact the Museum on 9397 3144.

Please advise Museum staff of any special needs for students at the time of booking. An invoice will be sent to you for payment.

Education programs run on Wednesdays during school term.

Opening hours

Tuesday 9am – 1pm

Sunday 2pm – 5pm

Adult group bookings can be made on request.

The City's Heritage Collections, including Local History and Photograph collection are available on the City's online library catalogue. There are many photos of streetscapes at different time periods within the collection.