

Town of Vincent History

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For tens of thousands of years before the settlement of the Swan River Colony, the indigenous Nyungar people were hunters and gatherers who occupied the southwest corner of Western Australia. The lakes on the coastal plain were particularly important to the Aboriginal people, providing them with both spiritual and physical sustenance.

At the time of the first European contact in 1827, the area in which Perth now stands was called Boorloo. Boorloo formed part of Mooro, the tribal lands of Yellagonga, whose group was one of several based around the Swan River known collectively as the Whadjug. The Whadjug was a part of the greater group of 13 or so tribes which formed the south west socio-linguistic block still known today as Nyungar ("The People"), or sometimes by the name Bibbulman.

After settlement in 1829, the Europeans gave the name of "Third Swamp" to one of a chain of lakes stretching from Claisebrook to Herdsman Lake. Nearly seventy years later, in 1897, 15 hectares of Third Swamp would be gazetted as a public park and two years later renamed Hyde Park. Hyde Park is now of course one of the Town of Vincent's most attractive and popular parks.

From 1831, hostile encounters between European settlers and Nyungars – both large-scale land users with conflicting land value systems – increased considerably. This phase of violence culminated in events such as the execution of Whadjug tribal chief Midgegooroo, the murder of his son Yagan and the massacre of the Murray tribe.

By 1843, when Yellagonga died, his tribe had begun to disintegrate and had been dispossessed of their land around the main settlement area of the Swan River Colony. They retreated to the swamps and lakes north of the settlement area including Third Swamp, formerly known by them as Boodjamooling.

Third Swamp continued to be a main campsite for the remaining Nyungar people in the Perth region and was also used by travellers, itinerants and homeless people. By the goldrush days in the 1890s they were joined by many miners en route to the goldfields.

Meanwhile the principal lakes had been drained and between 1855 and 1883 there were phases of settlement to the north of Perth. The 1871 Municipalities Act established Perth and seven other towns as municipalities with the authority to levy rates, while Local Road Districts were financed almost exclusively from government grants.

Leederville, Highgate and North Perth were originally included in the vast area controlled by the Perth Road Board District, whose limited revenue over the next twenty years was reflected most obviously in the lack of road construction. Much early infrastructure was financed by private citizens.

Residential development progressed from the 1880s, particularly following the completion of the Fremantle to Guildford rail line in 1881. Highgate began to develop, the Woodville Estate (now North Perth) was opened in 1890, and the Monger and Leeder Estates were sold to developers and subdivided in 1890-1891. The first subdivision of the Mount Hawthorn locations into residential estates occurred between 1887 and 1903, with the Hawthorne Estate being one of the later subdivisions.

Development was rapid in Leederville and North Perth. In May 1895, the section of the Perth Roads Board area covering Leederville and West Leederville was gazetted Leederville Roads Board. Less than twelve months later, Leederville became a municipality, having sufficient property within its boundaries to provide a minimum of £300 in annual rates at a rating of not more than one shilling to the pound. In April 1897 the population of the Leederville municipality had reached more than one thousand and its municipal area was divided into three wards – north, south and central.

By 1897 Third Swamp was no longer a camp site and was vested for the Citizens as a public reserve.

Much of Vincent's rich heritage stems from the 1890s and 1900s when many community buildings were established, including the North Perth district school (now North Perth Primary), Highgate Primary School, Leederville and Brisbane Street post offices, North Perth police station, Brisbane and Queens hotels, the North Perth Town Hall, the Redemptionist Monastery and the Perth Mosque.



By 1895 North Perth had also emerged as a suburb in its own right.

Four years later it was declared a Roads Board and, in October 1901, gazetted as a municipality. The North Perth Council was in existence from 25 October 1901 to 22 December 1914.

In 1914 the Councils of Perth, North Perth and Leederville agreed to the union of the three municipalities, as prescribed in the Municipal Corporation's Act 1906. The union took effect on 22 December 1914. Later, the ratepayers of Victoria Park Council decided by referendum on 22 November 1916 to amalgamate with the City of Perth, and this union was consummated on 1 November 1917.

On 1 July 1994, the restructure of the City of Perth created three new local governments: the Towns of Vincent, Cambridge and Shepparton (now Victoria Park), plus a smaller City of Perth. Commissioners were appointed to control these until elections were held in May 1995.

The Town of Vincent is named after Vincent Street, which is a major road through the centre of the Town. It is also the location of the Town's Council Chambers and administrative offices.

Vincent Street is believed to be named after George Vincent, the Chief Draftsman in the Lands Department and original grantee of land on the north side, east from Charles Street. He named it after himself on issue of the first Crown Grant of Perth c.1876. The municipality includes the suburbs of North Perth, Leederville, Highgate, Mt Hawthorn, and parts of East Perth, West Perth, Perth City, Mt Lawley and Coolbinia.

Although only new, within its boundaries Vincent holds a rich and varied history. It is a place of cultural diversity with residents whose origins lie in places like Europe and Asia, and 45% of whom were born overseas. Reflections of this variety are found in the number of religions or spiritual groups that have representation within the Town, among them 18 Christian denominations, and Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

There are busy and popular commercial areas such as Beaufort, Fitzgerald, Oxford Streets and Scarborough Beach Road, and peaceful suburbs where old and new lie side by side. There is more than a hundred years of built history and heritage within the boundaries of the municipality - and all of it, whether a century, a decade, or just a few years old, is important to the Town of Vincent. All of it contributes to the colour and personality of Vincent, enriching the lives of the people who live here and of those just passing through.