



Gosford Memorial Park and Rotary Park

Conservation Management Plan

Final Draft Report Prepared for Central Coast Council

May 2025

Acknowledgement of Country

We respect and acknowledge the First Nations peoples of the lands and waterways on which we live and work, their rich cultural heritage and their deep connection to Country, and we acknowledge their Elders past and present. We are committed to truth-telling and to engaging with First Nations peoples to support the protection of their culture and heritage. We strongly advocate social, cultural and political justice and support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Cultural warning

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this report may contain images or names of First Nations people who have passed away.

Report register

The following report register documents the development of this report, in accordance with GML’s Quality Management System.

Job No.	Issue No.	Notes/description	Issue date
24-0025A	1	Draft Report	24 June 2024
24-0025A	2	Preliminary Final Draft	9 December 2024
24-0025A	3	Final Draft Report	9 May 2025
24-0025A	4	Final Draft Report re-issued with minor amendment on page 120 (Gosford CBD Sewer Upgrades)	16 May 2025

Quality management

The report has been reviewed and approved for issue in accordance with the GML quality management policy and procedures.

It aligns with best-practice heritage conservation and management, *The Burra Charter: the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance, 2013* and heritage and environmental legislation and guidelines relevant to the subject place.

Indigenous cultural and intellectual property

We acknowledge and respect the inherent rights and interests of the First Nations in Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to be acknowledged and attributed for their contribution to knowledge but also respect their rights to confidentiality. We recognise our ongoing obligations to respect, protect and uphold the continuation of First Nations rights in the materials contributed as part of this project.

Cover image

Gosford Memorial Park. (Source: GML Heritage)

Executive summary

Gosford Memorial Park, Rotary Park and the adjoining public reserve by the Gosford waterfront, are located adjacent to one another. The sites are owned and managed by Central Coast Council (the Council), which commissioned GML Heritage Pty Ltd to prepare a conservation management plan (CMP) for the study area.

This CMP has been prepared to provide a framework for the sites' ongoing conservation, care, maintenance, use and management by the Council. The CMP includes policies to guide the ongoing public use of the parks, and is a ready reference to manage change and for the assessment of future proposals and applications for works.

Future changes and works at the study area must consider the significance of the place (including the relationship between Gosford Memorial Park and Rotary Park) and the compatibility of uses of the place as a whole and as two different parks. The parks should be managed in conjunction with each other due to their proximity and related maintenance issues. However, uses of and at the parks should be compatible with the unique heritage values of each park.

Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Study area	2
1.2	Heritage context	4
1.3	Key objectives	6
1.4	Methodology	6
1.4.1	Relevant documentation	7
1.4.2	Limitations	7
1.4.3	Terminology	8
1.5	Authorship	9
1.6	Acknowledgements	9
1.7	Endnotes	9
2	Understanding the place—historical context.....	11
2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	Aboriginal Country: The early colonial period and ongoing connections.....	11
2.3	Exploration and isolation	15
2.4	The town of Gosford	16
2.5	Historical overview of Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks	18
2.5.1	The Gosford Wharf	18
2.5.2	Establishment and early years of Gosford Park	23
2.5.3	Construction of the Gosford War Memorial	38
2.5.4	Beautification and improvements to Gosford Memorial Park	41
2.5.5	Gosford Waterfront Reserve.....	50
2.5.6	Gosford War Memorial Park, 1945–1970s	53
2.5.7	Construction of Dane Drive and residue of waterfront reserve	58
2.5.8	Rotary Waterfront Gardens and Fountain	62
2.5.9	Gosford Memorial Park and Gosford War Memorial, 1980s–present	67
2.6	Chronology.....	72
2.7	Endnotes	75

3	Understanding the place—physical analysis	82
3.1	Site layout	82
3.2	Site description.....	83
3.2.1	Memorial Park.....	83
3.2.2	Rotary Park.....	91
3.2.3	Public reserve	93
3.3	Memorials and movable items	95
3.4	Aboriginal archaeological analysis.....	110
3.4.1	Aboriginal cultural context	111
3.4.2	Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System	111
3.4.3	Relevant studies	117
3.4.4	Local landscape context	121
3.4.5	Predictive statements and summary of Aboriginal archaeological sensitivity	126
3.5	Historical archaeological potential and significance	127
3.5.1	Terminology	127
3.5.2	Historical development of the study area	127
3.5.3	Assessment of historical archaeological potential.....	128
3.5.4	Summary of archaeological potential	132
3.6	Endnotes.....	134
4	Understanding the place—significance.....	136
4.1	Introduction	136
4.2	NSW heritage assessment guidelines.....	136
4.3	Comparative analysis.....	137
4.3.1	Key features.....	137
4.3.2	Local heritage items.....	148
4.3.3	International examples	156
4.4	Discussion of significance.....	158
4.4.1	Criterion A (Historic significance)	158
4.4.2	Criterion B (Historical association)	159
4.4.3	Criterion C (Aesthetic/creative/technical achievement).....	159
4.4.4	Criterion D (Social, cultural and spiritual significance)	161
4.4.5	Criterion E (Research potential)	162
4.4.6	Criterion F (Rarity)	164

4.4.7	Criterion G (Representativeness).....	164
4.4.8	Integrity	165
4.4.9	Contemporary social value	166
4.5	Statement of significance.....	170
4.6	Significant components.....	171
4.6.1	Components within the study area	172
4.7	Views and vistas.....	178
4.8	Endnotes.....	183
5	Opportunities and constraints	185
5.1	Issues arising from the statement of significance	185
5.1.1	Issues arising from the social values of the place	186
5.2	Issues arising from the integrity and physical condition of the place.....	187
5.2.1	Landscape maintenance issues	188
5.3	Issues arising from the use of the place	188
5.4	NSW heritage management framework.....	189
5.4.1	National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 (NSW)	190
5.4.2	Heritage Act 1977 (NSW)	191
5.4.3	Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW).....	192
5.4.4	Crown Land Management Act 2016 (NSW)	196
5.5	Commonwealth legislation	196
5.6	Non-statutory listings.....	198
5.6.1	National Trust of Australia	198
5.6.2	NSW War Memorials Register.....	198
5.7	Approvals.....	198
5.7.1	Consent authority for development.....	198
5.7.2	Conflict of Interest.....	199
5.7.3	Ownership and management	199
5.7.4	Consultation and collaboration	200
5.8	The Burra Charter best practice standard	201
5.9	Opportunities and constraints for managing future changes	201
5.9.1	Potential for change	201
5.9.2	Masterplanning future changes at the site	203
5.9.3	Interpretation opportunities	206

5.10	Endnotes	207
6	Conservation policies	209
6.1	Conservation principles	209
6.2	General conservation policies	210
6.2.1	Primary conservation policy.....	210
6.2.2	Adoption and review of policies	212
6.2.3	Conservation advice	212
6.2.4	Development of the place	213
6.2.5	Ownership and approvals	213
6.2.6	Managing change	214
6.2.7	Current and future use.....	214
6.2.8	Heritage interpretation	215
6.2.9	Maintenance	216
6.2.10	Sustainability.....	216
6.3	Specific conservation policies	217
6.3.1	Existing landscape and built elements	217
6.3.2	New works to suit existing use or future use	219
6.3.3	Curtilage and setting	220
6.3.4	Signage and wayfinding	221
6.3.5	Accessibility	221
6.3.6	Aboriginal cultural heritage	222
6.3.7	Historical archaeology	223
7	Implementation plan	226

Introduction

1 Introduction

Central Coast Council (Council) engaged GML Heritage Pty Ltd (GML) to prepare a conservation management plan (CMP) for Gosford Memorial Park and Rotary Park (the study area) in order to ensure their ongoing conservation, care, maintenance, use and management.

1.1 Study area

Gosford Memorial Park and Rotary Park are located in the southern portion of Gosford, in the Central Coast Local Government Area (LGA) (Figure 1.1). The study area is bounded by Vaughan Avenue to the north, Mann Street to the east, and Dane Drive (Central Coast Highway) to the south and west. Across the highway from the parks is Gosford Public Wharf and the Brisbane Water estuary.

The study area has three distinct zones (Figure 1.2):

- **Gosford Memorial Park** (including its western slopes and stairs, located on a promontory of land);
- **Rotary Park** (built on land reclaimed from the foreshore in the 1930s); and
- **a public reserve**—a long southern extension of lawn (also lying on reclaimed foreshore land and defined by Mann Street and Dane Drive).

The study area contains several allotments, including parts of Vaughan Avenue, Dane Drive and Mann Street (Figure 1.3):

- Lot 7021 DP 1020205;
- Lot 7023 DP 1076182;
- Lot 7038 DP 1020204;
- Lot 7022 DP 1076182;
- Lot 375 DP 755227;
- Lot 20 DP 1113717;
- Lot 19 DP 1113717; and
- Lot 1 DP 629609.

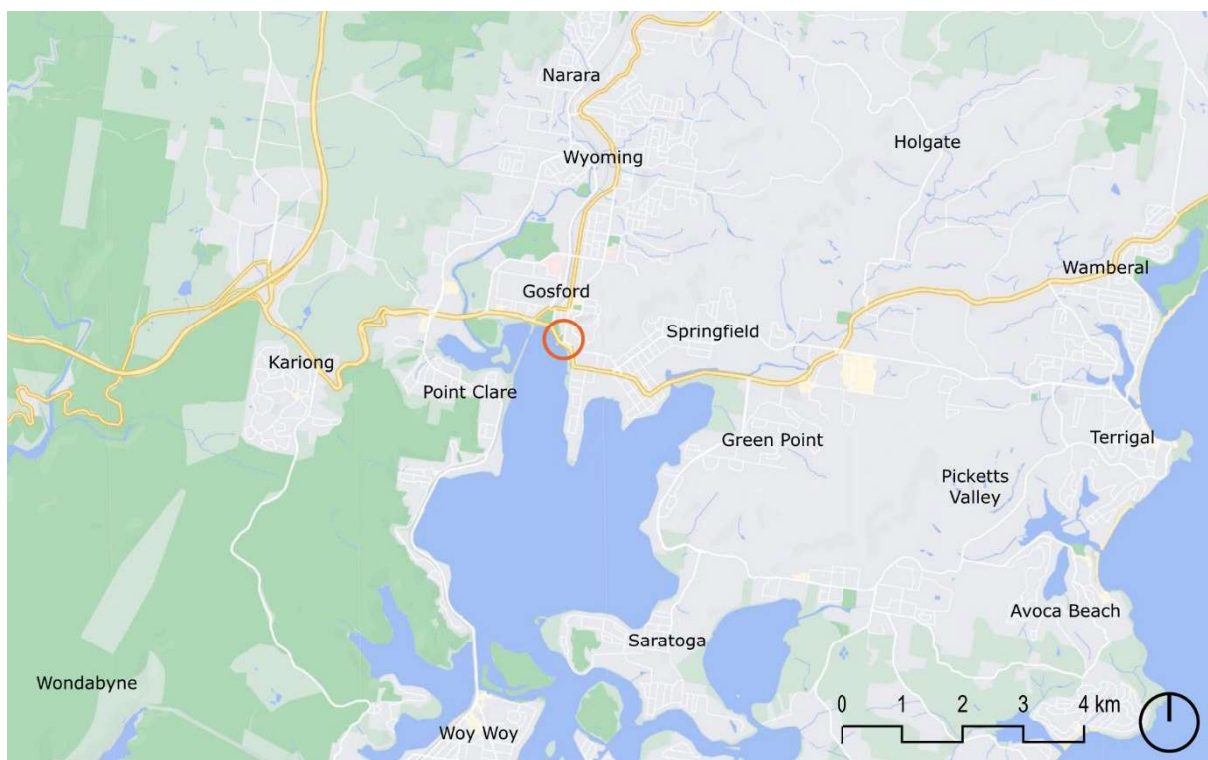


Figure 1.1 Location of the study area (circled in orange) in the Central Coast context. (Source: Google Maps with GML overlay 2024)



Figure 1.2 Aerial image of the study area showing the three zones. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay 2024)



Figure 1.3 Aerial image of the study area showing the lot boundaries. (Source: Nearmap with GML overlay 2024)

1.2 Heritage context

The study area contains the following listed heritage items and archaeological site (**).

Table 1.1 Statutory and non-statutory heritage listings within the study area.

Item name	Address	Listing	Significance	Item No.
Statutory listings				
Gosford City Council Memorial Park, including avenue and feature trees	Mann Street and Vaughan Avenue	<i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021</i>	Local	31
Rotary Club, fountain, garden and original site of Gosford Wharf	Vaughan Avenue	<i>State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts—Regional) 2021</i>	Local*	A9*
Non-statutory listings				
Gosford Cenotaph	Gosford Memorial Park, Mann Street	National Trust of Australia (NSW)		

* The State Heritage Inventory (SHI) listing notes there is a high potential archaeological resource.

Gosford Memorial Park and several memorials within it are listed on the NSW War Memorials Register, a crowd-sourced database of war memorials in NSW. Further information on the memorials is provided in Section 3.3.

The NSW SHI provides the following Statement of Significance for 'Gosford City Council War Memorial Park':

The Gosford War Memorial Park is significant aesthetically for its value as open space, and socially for its connections to the military and general communities.

The mature trees within the park and its street boundaries, consisting of *Araucaria cunninghamiana* (hoop pines), *Casuarina cunninghamiana* (River she oaks), *Lophostemon confertus* (Brush box) and *Pinus radiata* (Monterey Pines) provide an 'avenue' landscape of a comfortable scale, and frame streetscape vistas of high aesthetic and natural value, linking the city to the views over Brisbane Water and to the ridges surrounding the city. Full height mature trees, particularly in groups, are a valuable asset to the city.

The NSW State Heritage Inventory provides the following Statement of Significance for 'Rotary Club, fountain, garden and original site of Gosford Wharf':

The place has high historic and research significance.

An updated assessment of significance is provided in Section 4 of this CMP.



Figure 1.4 Heritage context of the study area (outlined in red). (Source: NSW State Heritage Inventory and Nearmap with GML overlay 2024)

1.3 Key objectives

A CMP details why and how an item has been established to have heritage significance and outlines the policies necessary to retain its significance and enable appropriate conservation, use and management.

The objectives of this CMP include the provision of guidance for managing the conservation of the heritage significance of the place through the following steps:

- understanding the place by investigating its context, history, physical fabric, and research potential;
- establishing a statement of significance for the place that is based on documentary and physical evidence to determine the nature and degree of significance of the two parks and their setting, and of the place as a whole, with regard to comparable public parks; and
- developing conservation policies to guide the current landowner and manager on the conservation of the heritage significance of the place, with consideration of its ongoing use and future changes.

This CMP revises the respective statements of significance by analysing the documentary and physical evidence to determine the nature, extent and degree of significance of the two parks and of the place as a whole. The CMP also provides conservation policies for the conservation and management of the place to allow for its ongoing use, and future changes, without impacting its significance. This report should be used as a practical document when planning any works—both temporary (including events) and permanent—and as a standard against which to assess the heritage impact of future proposals.

1.4 Methodology

This CMP has been prepared in accordance with the following documents and best practice guidelines:

- Heritage Council of NSW guidelines for CMP preparation, including *Statement of Best Practice for Conservation Management Plans*¹ and *Guide on Developing a Conservation Management Plan*;² and
- *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013* (the Burra Charter).³

This CMP is consistent with the principles of *The Conservation Plan*,⁴ prepared by James Semple Kerr and originally published by the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

1.4.1 Relevant documentation

The background material reviewed in the preparation of this CMP is collated in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Relevant documentation.

Publication details
Long Blackledge Architects, 2022, Gosford Cenotaph Heritage Asset Action Plan, Version B, prepared for Gosford RSL Sub-Branch. History researched and written by Merril Jackson
Jacobs Group, 2020, Gosford Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades, Review of Environmental Factors, Final, prepared for Central Coast Council
Jacobs Group, 2023, Gosford Sewer Infrastructure Upgrades, Statement of Heritage Impact, V2 Final, prepared for Central Coast Council

1.4.2 Limitations

This CMP is subject to the following limitations:

- This report is primarily based on existing documentation. Only limited new historical research has been undertaken.
- Formal consultation with key stakeholders and community groups were undertaken by Council and provided to GML to be incorporated into this CMP. These parties included:
 - Gosford RSL Sub-Branch;
 - Gosford Rotary Club;
 - Central Coast Council Heritage and Culture Advisory Committee;
 - Woy Woy Country Women’s Association (CWA); and
 - Guringai Tribal Link (as the only Indigenous group who responded to Council’s invitation for consultation).

No consultation process was directly undertaken by GML. Additional and ongoing consultation may be required.

- The study area description and analysis were prepared following inspection of the two parks and their setting, but without intervention into built or landscape fabric. Visual observation primarily informed this analysis.
- A review of previous documentation that relates to the potential for Aboriginal archaeology in the study area has been undertaken as part of this CMP; however, an assessment of Aboriginal cultural heritage values associated with the study area has not been conducted as part of this CMP.

- Although the Memorial Park site is captured in various photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, photographs do not appear to exist that collectively detail the exact plant selection and composition of the park. Further, an original late 1880s planting-design drawing for the study area has not been found and may not have ever existed.
- A current 'tree-by-tree' survey plan of the study area was not available to GML at the time of the preparation of this CMP—nor was an arboricultural assessment of the parks. Accordingly, the tree and shrub mapping in this report is indicative only.

1.4.3 Terminology

This report follows the Burra Charter in its use of the following terms and definitions:

- Place means site, area, building or other work, group of buildings or other works together with associated contents and surroundings. Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations.
- Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations.
- Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstance include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.
- Fabric means all the physical material of the place.
- Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly.
- Preservation means maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration.
- Restoration means returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.
- Reconstruction means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric. This is not to be confused with either re-creation or conjectural reconstruction.
- Adaptation means modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.
- Compatible use means a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require minimum impact.⁵

1.5 Authorship

This report was prepared by Hendry Wan (Senior Associate), Dr Kat McRae (Senior Heritage Consultant), Andie Coulson (Heritage Consultant) and Linda Phung (Heritage Consultant). Leonie Masson (Associate, Historian) provided the historical overview and Ari Anderson (Special Advisor) provided cultural landscape heritage assessment and conservation policies. Julian Siu (Principal) and Dr Tim Owen (Principal) provided strategic oversight and review.

1.6 Acknowledgements

GML gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Central Coast Council team: Alex Chipchase (Open Space and Recreation Planner), Rebecca Cardy (Senior Heritage Officer), Peta James (Senior Strategic Planner), Rick Gatt (Section Manager, Parks and Reserves) as well as Merril Jackson OAM (Historian), who provided valuable assistance over the course of the project.

1.7 Endnotes

- ¹ Heritage Council of NSW 2021, *Statement of Best Practice for Conservation Management Plans*, NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment
<<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/statement-of-best-practice-for-heritage-conservation-management-plans>>.
- ² Heritage Council of NSW 2021, *Guide on Developing a Conservation Management Plan*, NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment
<<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/guidance-on-developing-a-heritage-conservation-management-plan>>.
- ³ Australia ICOMOS Inc, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013*, Australia ICOMOS Inc, Burwood, VIC, 2000.
- ⁴ Kerr, J S 2013, *Conservation Plan*, seventh edition, Australia ICOMOS.
- ⁵ Australia ICOMOS Inc, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 2013*, Australia ICOMOS Inc, Burwood, VIC, 2000, Articles 1.1 to 1.11.

Understanding the place—historical context

2 Understanding the place—historical context

2.1 Introduction

The following summary history places the development of Gosford Memorial Park and Rotary Park within the context of their natural and cultural setting, including Aboriginal connections to Gosford and the Central Coast in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The following history is supplemented with additional primary and secondary information and illustrative material sourced from the National Library of Australia (Trove), NSW Land Registry Services, Central Coast Council and Central Coast Council Library's Local Studies Collection, State Library of NSW (SLNSW), Museums of History NSW—State Archives Collection, and other state and local repositories.

The summary history of the Cenotaph is drawn from *Gosford Cenotaph Heritage Asset Action Plan (HAAP)* prepared by Long Blackledge Architects in 2022. The history was researched and written by Merril Jackson.

2.2 Aboriginal Country: The early colonial period and ongoing connections

The correct names for the Aboriginal people, their territory and the language of the Central Coast region are the subject of ongoing debate. This is a contentious issue for Central Coast Council, the Aboriginal community groups and other residents. It will require further discussion and cannot be resolved in this CMP. The importance for this CMP is to acknowledge the First Nations people's connection to the Central Coast and their continuing role in its development.

This history acknowledges that today Aboriginal people who identify as Guringai, Darkinjung/Darkinoog and/or Awabakal recognise the Central Coast as being part of their Country.

They were fishers, hunters and gatherers of plants and animals of the land, rivers, estuaries and sea. These places, including the hills, valleys, creeks, wetlands, lakes and coastline, provided food, medicines, and raw materials for tools, weapons, shelter and decoration. In her diary describing a trip to the Gosford-Wyong area in 1833, Mrs Felton Mathews referred to the women wrapping themselves in 'blankets, or cloaks of sewed opossum skins'.¹

There is reliable evidence of Aboriginal people's occupation of the region, namely in a sandstone capped plateau in the Upper Mangrove Creek area west of Gosford, where stone artefacts were dated between 10,000 and 12,000 years old.

For many of the Aboriginal groups in NSW, Baiame is one of the main Creators in the Dreaming. Daramulan (often depicted with one leg) is the son of Baiame and his emu-wife. Daramulan is associated with ceremonies (usually men's). The landscapes around the Central Coast have also been marked, carved and painted with depictions of these beliefs. Sites are connected to each other and retain spiritual and cultural importance to the Aboriginal community today. Rock art along the coastline survives at Point Clare and Ettalong, and within Brisbane Water National Park.



Figure 2.1 Aboriginal axe-grinding grooves in the Ourimbah district, c1920s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library, 000153.JPG)

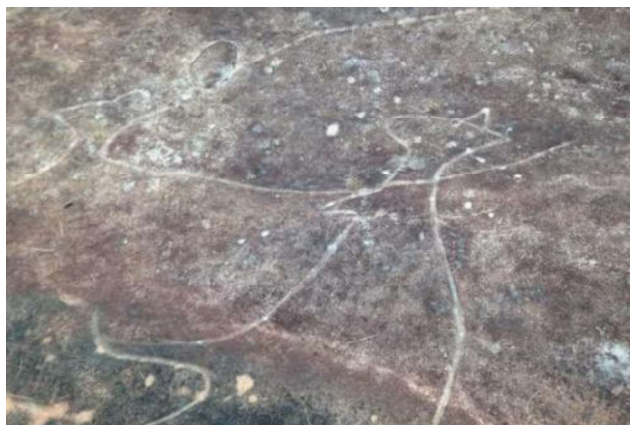


Figure 2.2 Carvings at Brisbane Water National Park. (Source: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service)

During the 1780s, the smallpox plague swept into Brisbane Water and Broken Bay ahead of settlers. The impact of the disease on Aboriginal people was devastating but the colonisation of their homeland was more gradual, allowing them to maintain cultural practices and retreat into less-penetrable areas of rugged or swampy country.² Despite the impact of European colonisation, Aboriginal people adapted to the new society and negotiated new roles within the economy. James Webb, the earliest settler of Woy Woy, is reported to have employed Aboriginal men and women on his property in 1823 to carry out domestic chores and farm labour.³ It is likely that Aboriginal people also assisted settlers in early industries such as timber getting.

The 1827–1841 counts of Aboriginal people within the Brisbane Water District did not exceed 75 people. However, it is likely that attendance at blanket returns is an inaccurate source for calculating the local population numbers.

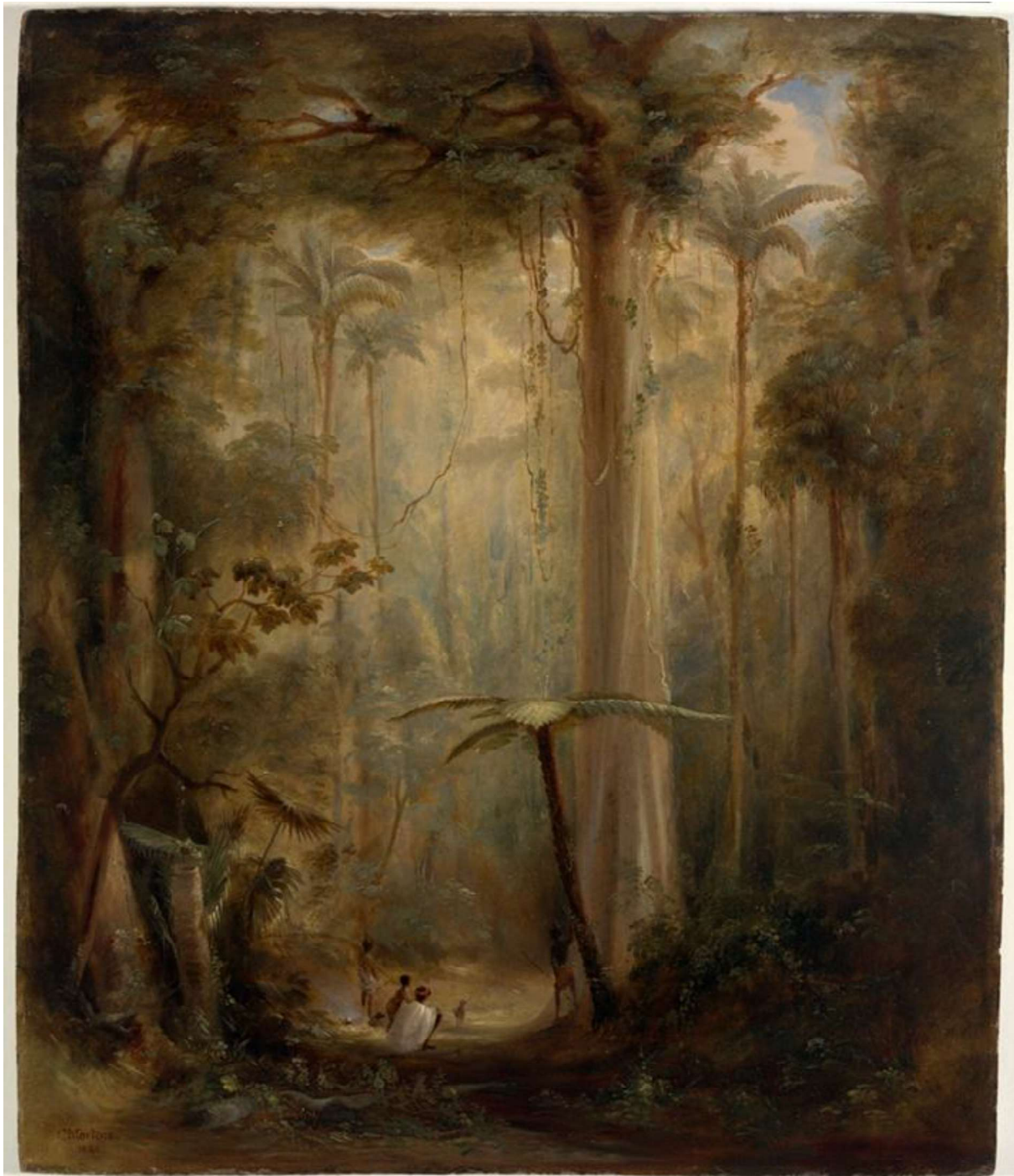


Figure 2.3 Brisbane Water by Conrad Martens, 1848. (Source: SLNSW)

In 1842, John Frederick Mann, explorer and surveyor, visited Brisbane Water, eager to meet the local Aboriginal people.⁴ Mann paid an Aboriginal man to demonstrate how to climb a 70- to 80-foot tree, which he did by cutting small notches up a tree. Mann was later guided from his accommodation by local Aboriginal people known as Emu and Mary Anne to Ourimbah, and then to the junction of Wyong Creek and Tuggerah Lake.

At this final location, a corroboree had been planned in honour of an Aboriginal group visiting from Wollombi.⁵

By the 1860s, government reserves in NSW were increasingly established to control the movement of Aboriginal people. The establishment of the NSW Aborigines Protection Board in 1883 legalised the dislocation and removal of Aboriginal people to government reserves and missions. The Darug were granted one of New South Wales' earliest reserves, to be shared with Darkinyung people. It was established by the Aborigines Protection Board at Sackville Reach on the Hawkesbury River in 1889.⁶ St Clair was also established in 1891 by Reverend JS White and covered 60 acres. Aboriginal people taken to the reserve included the Wonnarua, the Awabakal, the Worimi and the Darkinyung.

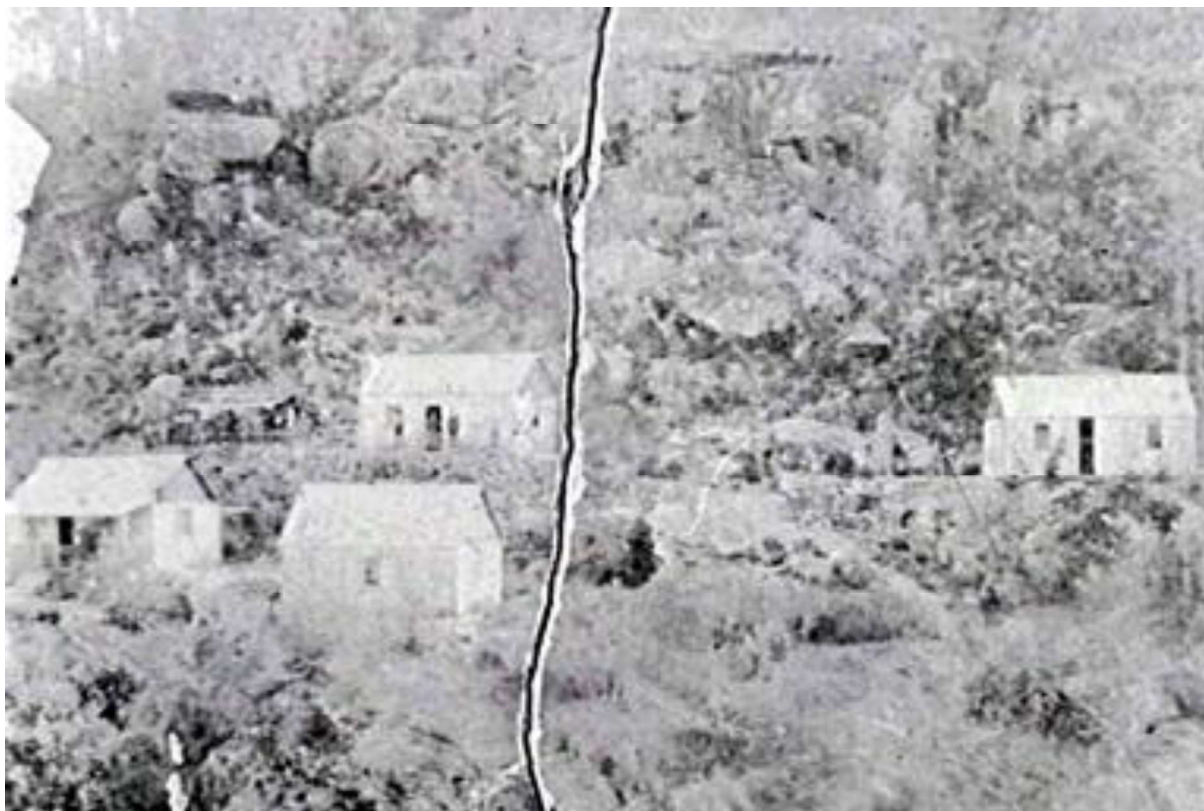


Figure 2.4 Hawkesbury Aborigines Reserve and Mission Station, Sackville Reach, c1890s–1900s. (Source: Hawkesbury Library)

During the 1920s and 1930s, and again in the 1950s and 1960s, many reserves were closed and people moved onto smaller reserves closer to towns where European people and businesses could access Aboriginal labourers while the population remained segregated from the centre. On the Central Coast, Aboriginal people still camped at Terrigal Lagoon and Avoca Lake into the twentieth century. People remained connected to kin, Country and new patterns of seasonal work.

In 1983, the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act* (NSW) saw remaining Aboriginal reserves being handed back to local Aboriginal communities. The same year, the Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) was established with a mission to assist the community in health, culture, heritage and economic development.

The Darkinjung LALC boundary extends from 'Catherine Hill Bay to the North, Hawkesbury River to the South, Pacific Ocean to the East and Watagan Mountains to the West'.⁷ However, some local Aboriginal community groups and their allies contest that the Central Coast is solely Darkinjung Country.

2.3 Exploration and isolation

The need for productive land to support the burgeoning settlement at Port Jackson led to early expeditions to the inlets and branches of Broken Bay in 1788–1789. Governor Phillip and Captain John Hunter explored Broadwater and the site of Gosford, documenting mostly their experience of navigating the shoals in the waterways, describing 'the land at Broken Bay ... in most parts rocky and barren.'⁸ The Hawkesbury area was a more attractive prospect to settlers during the 1790s; expansion into Brisbane Water only occurred in the 1820s after the best Hawkesbury land had been taken. As settlers took up tracts of land in the Lower Hawkesbury and Brisbane Water, formal surveys began to investigate the rugged and isolated region.

James Webb was the first known settler of the Gosford area, settling near The Rip in 1823. He was one of the first 22 settlers on the Hawkesbury River at Pitt Town.⁹

By 1825, the waterway between Wagstaffe and Gosford was named Brisbane Water after the incumbent governor. This area was described in *The Sydney Gazette* as containing good land but only in 'small patches, from sixty to one hundred acres', making suitable farms for 'small settlers'.¹⁰ The author noted that 15 miles north of Brisbane Water was land:

available for large agricultural establishments ... a quality *equal to any* in New Holland, and *superior to most* tillage of every description, consisting of thick brush and forest land, heavily timbered.¹¹

The government noted this observation. The land around Brisbane Water was granted to small settlers, including free settlers, emancipists, retired military men and native-born people. The land at the northern end of the waterway, such as the heavily timbered lands on Narara and Erina creeks, was granted to settlers of higher standing in the colony.

By 1831, there were only a handful of settlers between today's Gosford and Wyee. The isolation of the area meant that residents depended on waterways, and the boat building economy was established before major roads and rail connected the area.

Several locations around Brisbane Water were singled out as government reserves for future townships. The Gosford site was chosen for the government township at Brisbane Water because it was 'on the best anchorage and at the termination of a straight and flat-topped range'¹² but it was not finally surveyed and named Gosford until 1839. A settler named Samuel Peek established the private township of East Gosford, advertising allotments a few kilometres away.

This was consolidated by Gosford's accessibility to a public wharf and the railway built in 1887–1888. The breakthrough of the railway through rugged country collapsed the distance to Sydney and helped fuel the fishing, timber and, later, recreational industries of Gosford.

Later still, the road bridge built across Brisbane Water at Parks Bay, Woy Woy, in 1941 expanded access to the region around the time that car ownership was on the uptake. A few years later, in May 1945, the opening of Hawkesbury River road bridge on the Pacific Highway dispensed with the need to use the ferry.

2.4 The town of Gosford

In 1830, Surveyor-General TL Mitchell identified land at Point Frederick as the best site in Brisbane Water for a town. This location was to become present-day Gosford. Mitchell described it in a letter to the Colonial Secretary as:

... the best anchorage in Brisbane Water; and at the termination of a straight and flat topped range which would connect a town on this promising bay with the new road at the head of the Wollombi.¹³

The site was occupied by Thomas A Scott and he was asked to vacate the area. Scott was allowed to select 1,200 acres at Point Clare and he later acquired more land. The suburb of Tascott is named after him.¹⁴

After the official survey and naming of Gosford as a government town in 1839, two villages developed in parallel, as East Gosford was run as a private town. However, the government village of Gosford overtook the eastern village, and the administrative centre developed along Mann Street.

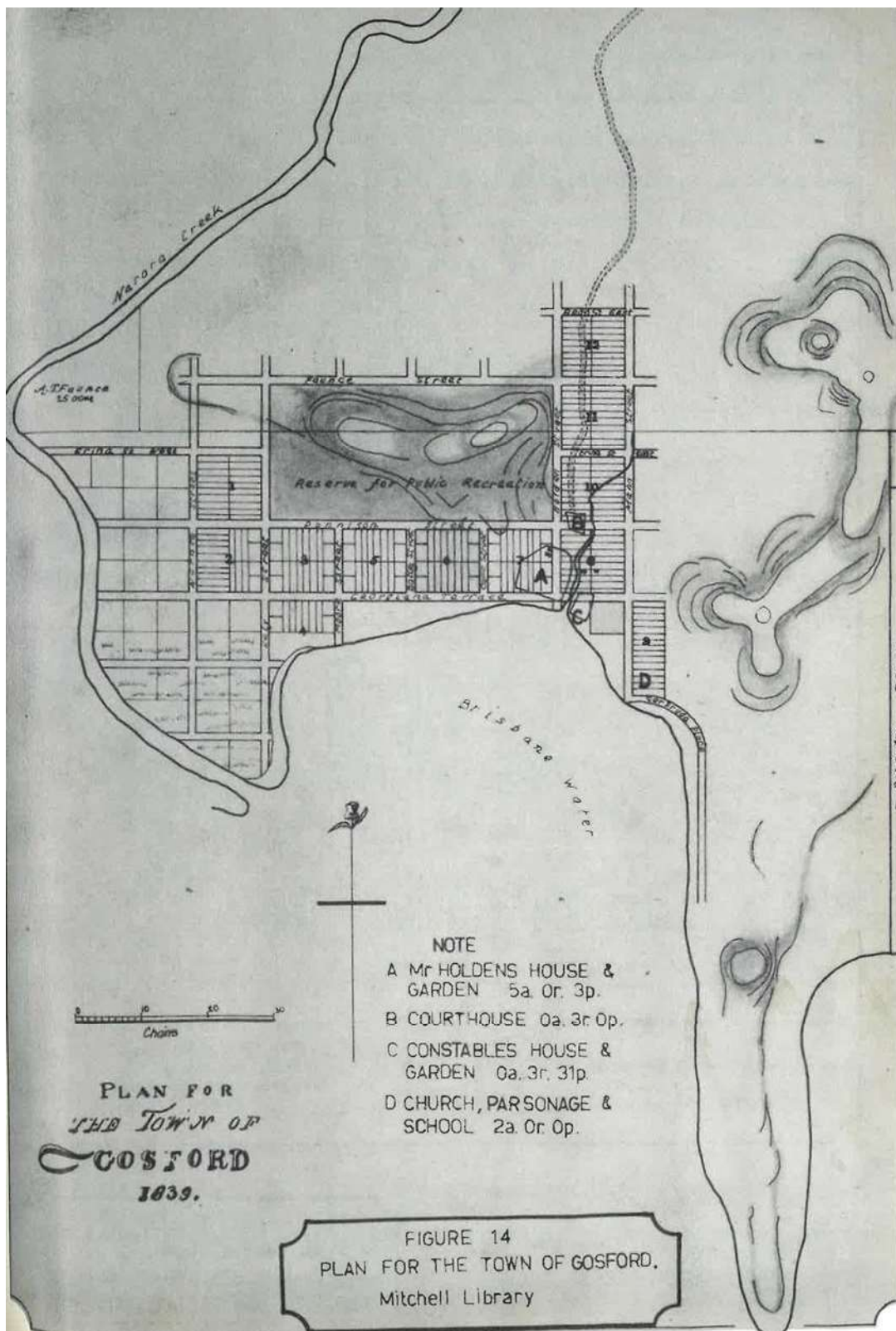


Figure 2.5 Plan for the Town of Gosford, 1839. (Source: Reproduced in Tanttari, K 1976, 'The Historical Development of Gosford', p 67)

In 1840, a *New South Wales Government Gazette* was published on the 'Boundaries of the Police Districts of the Colony'. The Brisbane Water boundary was defined as:

Embracing the south-eastern portion of the County of Northumberland; bounded on the north by a line from Reid's Mistake across Lake Macquarie, bearing westerly to Dora Creek and by Dora Creek to the Warrawolong Range and to Mount Warrawolong, hence on the west by the crest of the said range to Mount Simpson and the north road, and by this road to Wiseman's Ferry; on the south by the Hawkesbury and Broken Bay roads to Box Head on the sea shore, which forms the eastern boundary to Reid's Mistake aforesaid.¹⁵

In 1843, the Brisbane Water District Council was established and operated until 1859. It was the forerunner of later shire councils and the present Central Coast Council.

2.5 Historical overview of Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks

In the following discussion of the history of the Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks (collectively referred to as the study area), the history is broken into phases, defined by land acquisitions, development stages, and key built and landscape elements.

2.5.1 The Gosford Wharf

Sea and river transport formed the primary means of moving goods and people around the Central Coast region until the development of rail and reliable roads. Water transport remained essential for trade, tourism and general communication well into the twentieth century.

Wharves were built to service Gosford and Brisbane Water, including a wharf erected near the southern end of Mann Street, Gosford, in 1841.¹⁶ *The Australian* reported in December 1840 that 'it is his Excellency's intention to send down a party of men without delay for the purpose of constructing a stone wharf at Gosford'.¹⁷

The Department of Works invited tenders in May 1864 for the construction of an 'Approach leading from the present roadway to the timber jetty recently erected at Gosford'.¹⁸

In July 1881, 2 acres 2 roods (1.01 ha) were surveyed at Gosford for a wharf reserve as shown in the plan at Figure 2.6. The annotated text in red indicates that Hugh Campbell, William Irvine Coulter and John Earl Stradling Worley were appointed trustees of the site by notice in the *Government Gazette* on 26 September 1881.¹⁹ The plan shows a formed road for access to the wharf from Mann Street, depicted in dotted lines, and structures on the wharf, including a shed, designated by cross-hatching. Plan R 121 shows the land was reserved from sale for a public wharf. The land covered by high tide is also shown.

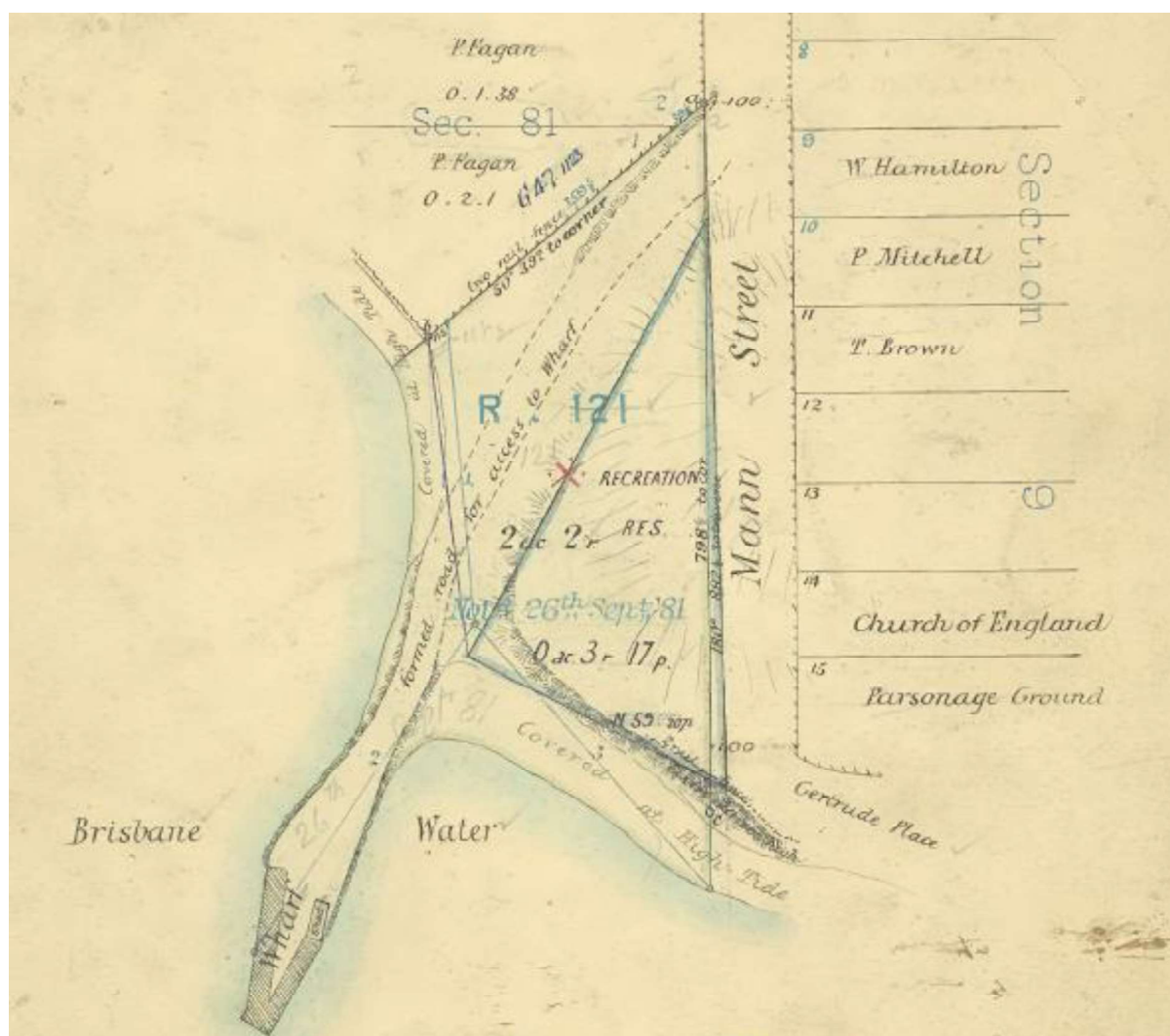


Figure 2.6 Plan of a portion of 2 acres 2 roods in the Parish and Town of Gosford County of Northumberland measured as a site for a wharf reserve, surveyed 26 July 1881. (Source: NSW Land Registry Services, Crown Plan 38-2071)

New trustees for the public wharf and shed were announced in June 1886.²⁰ In September and October the same year the Department of Public Works invited tenders for extension of the Gosford Wharf.²¹ Following completion of the works, management and control of the wharf was handed over to Gosford Borough Council in October 1887.²² The following year the council passed by-laws that established tolls, rates and dues, among others.²³

At various times the wharf was repaired and, in some cases, rebuilt. For instance, in 1910 the Department of Public Works approved plans to construct a new wharf. The works were completed in 1911²⁴ at a cost of £600, which included a grant of £300 from the department.²⁵ In 1928 the council considered raising a loan of £5000 to reconstruct the wharf and review the proposed design.²⁶

This plan was abandoned due to financial constraints and the council instead undertook repairs to the existing wharf decking in 1930. The wharf was inspected in 1932 and two defective piles were found in the wharf that required replacing. At this time the road to the wharf had been scarified and graded, and repairs to walling stonework were estimated to cost £10.²⁷

After the reclamation of the Broadwater (Brisbane Water) was completed, a new public wharf was constructed. It is unclear how much of the old wharf remains beneath the present Rotary Park, the public reserve and Dane Drive.



Figure 2.7 Gosford Wharf with steamships, c1885. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 001\001097)



Figure 2.8 View north along the roadway from Gosford Wharf spit towards Mann Street, c1886. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, HistoricV0338)

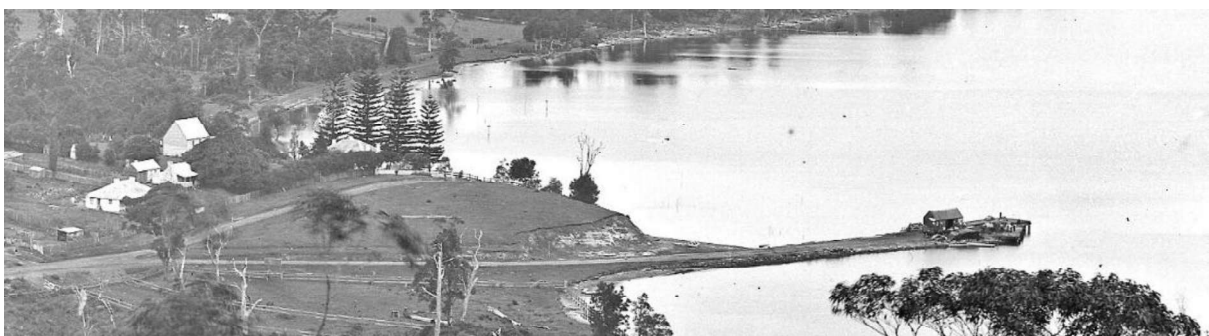


Figure 2.9 Detail from Gosford, NSW, taken on 30 March 1887, showing the original form of the Gosford Wharf and approach roadway from Mann Street (at left). This image, taken before extensive reclamation works along the foreshore, highlights the close spatial relationship between the wharf and the small promontory site that became Gosford Park—seen here completely barren, essentially an open western forecourt to the church and parsonage sites on the opposite side of Mann Street. Photograph by Ralph Snowball. (Source: University of Newcastle, Hunter Living Histories, ASGN0877-B39)



Figure 2.10 Gosford Wharf in centre and Gosford Park at left (surrounded by a timber picket fence and including its original cultural plantings), c1895. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 003\003226)



Figure 2.11 Brisbane Water and Gosford Wharf, c1895. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.12 Boat docked at Gosford Wharf, 1905–1910s. Note the canopy of a maturing cultural planting (foreground) on the lower western slopes of Gosford Park. Image by Broadhurst. (Source: SLNSW, PXA 635/313)



Figure 2.13 Deconstruction of the Gosford Wharf at the Broadwater, August 1969. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gostalgia/15076226969/>)

2.5.2 Establishment and early years of Gosford Park

Land adjoining the Gosford Wharf was dedicated for public recreation on 15 January 1886 and formally proclaimed on 18 March 1887 to be known as 'Gosford Park'. The park comprised 3 roods and 17 perches (0.35 hectares), as shown in the Crown plan N59-2071 (Figure 2.14).

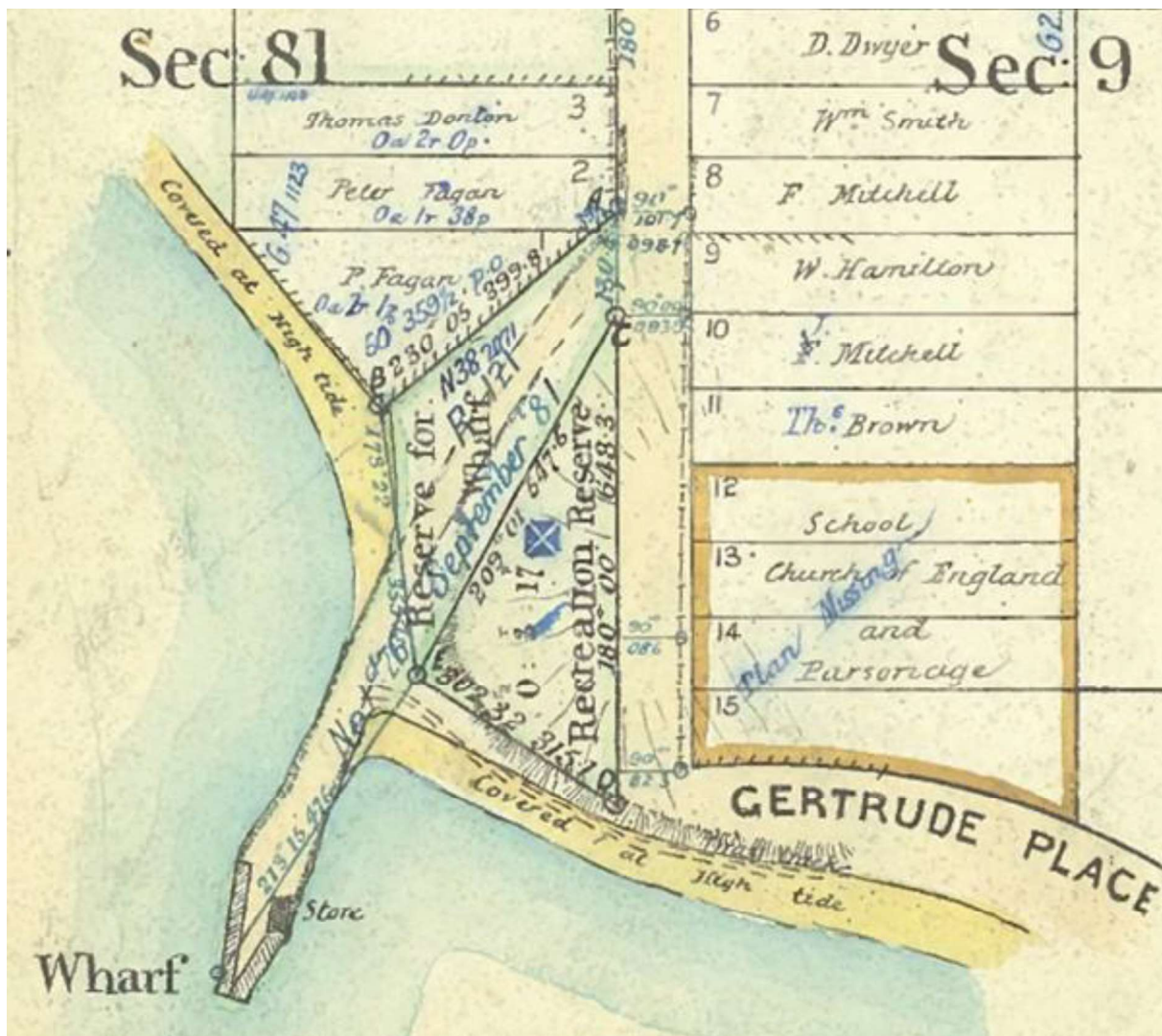


Figure 2.14 Detail from plan of one portion of 3 roods and 17 perches surveyed as a site for a recreation reserve on 20 June 1884, with later annotations. (Source: NSW Land Registry Services, Crown Plan 59-2071)

The nature of the terrain framing the park site is partially indicated on the 1884 Crown plan (Figure 2.14), which includes the land covered by high tide. The dedicated triangular land parcel was broadly in accordance with the topographical form/features of the head of the promontory at the southern end of Mann Street.

According to the New South Wales Government Gazette, the Municipal Council of Gosford was appointed the trustee of Gosford Park in April 1887.²⁸

In an early photograph from March 1887 that includes the parkland (Figure 2.9), the study area is barren and devoid of trees, having been clear-felled of its endemic vegetation some decades before.

The only landmark cultural plantings near the site at the time were four already-mature Norfolk Island Pines to the immediate east, in the grounds of a house that was reputedly the property of Governor Brisbane, and one very large canopy tree, possibly a fig, in or abutting the grounds of the Church of England site. What appears to be a small amount of regrowth eucalypt vegetation was present at this time on the southern flank of the headland, south of where the park was laid out.

One of the council's first tasks was to fence the park, which was completed by January 1888 for the sum of £50/9/4. The council simultaneously received a government grant of £50.²⁹ Government grants were awarded for Gosford Park over successive years including 1887/1888 and 1888/1889. Photographic evidence indicates that that funding went towards the first stage of park beautification and cultural planting, which was carried out in those years. In a Crown plan of streets in the town of Gosford from 1888 records the 'new picket fence' along the Mann Street frontage of the park site.

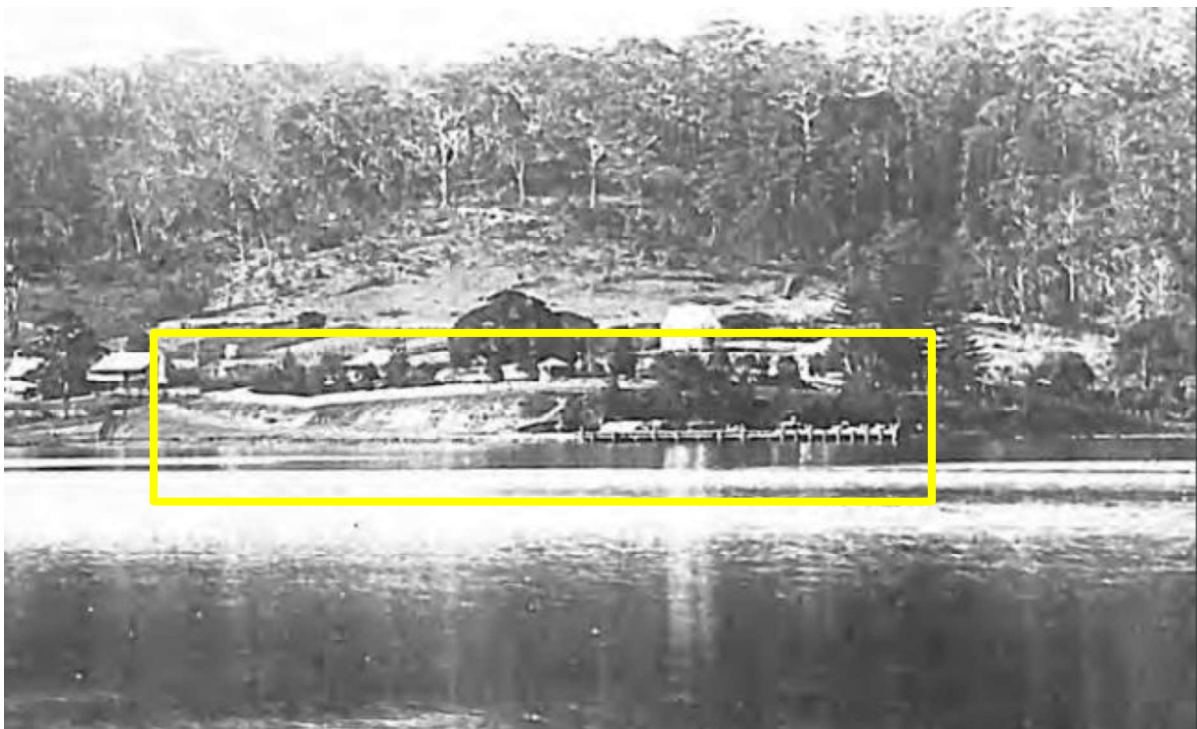


Figure 2.15 View to Gosford from Brisbane Water, about 1895, showing the roadway to the wooden wharf adjoining Gosford Park, which is surrounded by the white picket fence. Note the barren western slopes of the park's promontory and some of the maturing 1887/1889-planted columnar pine specimens toward the northern end of the park (at left). (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, courtesy Brisbane Water Historical Society, with GML overlay 2024)

No original plan of the park has been found during research for this CMP to confirm, for example, where paths were first laid out, where gates in the boundary fence were located, where flower and shrub beds were sited and which, and how many, tree species were first specified.

In August 1891 the *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* reported that the flowerbeds in Gosford Park had been 'cleaned and put in order, and the trees and shrubs are attaining a great height'.³⁰ However, three months later the same newspaper commented that the popular park:

is just now in a very untidy state, while the trees, shrubs and flowers are growing wonderfully. The paths, and grass-plots are a mass of long grass and weeds, and sadly need attention.³¹

Evidently the council was made aware of the state of the park, as in January the following year the park had undergone maintenance and the long grass had been mown and trees and flowers pruned and tidied.³² Further improvements in the park took place in June, when the *Australian Town and Country Journal* noted:

The flowerbeds and around the ornamental trees have been cleaned of the long grass and weeds, and the palisading is being painted.³³

The same newspaper reported in January 1893 that the council was to erect a rotunda to accommodate the local brass band.³⁴ The rotunda is depicted in several photographs such as ones from 1896 (Figure 2.16), 1898 (Figure 2.17) and 1906 (Figure 2.19).

During the 1890s the council was awarded small sums of money to improve public parks as in January 1896 when a sum of £10 was granted.³⁵ By this time, the park had been comprehensively planted; various conifer and canopy specimens were inset from its boundary fence. The majority of the park appears to have been largely unplanted lawn in its first designed incarnation. The original landmark tree arrangement suggests that council was first and foremost interested in delineating the site with a grand and formal 'frame'.

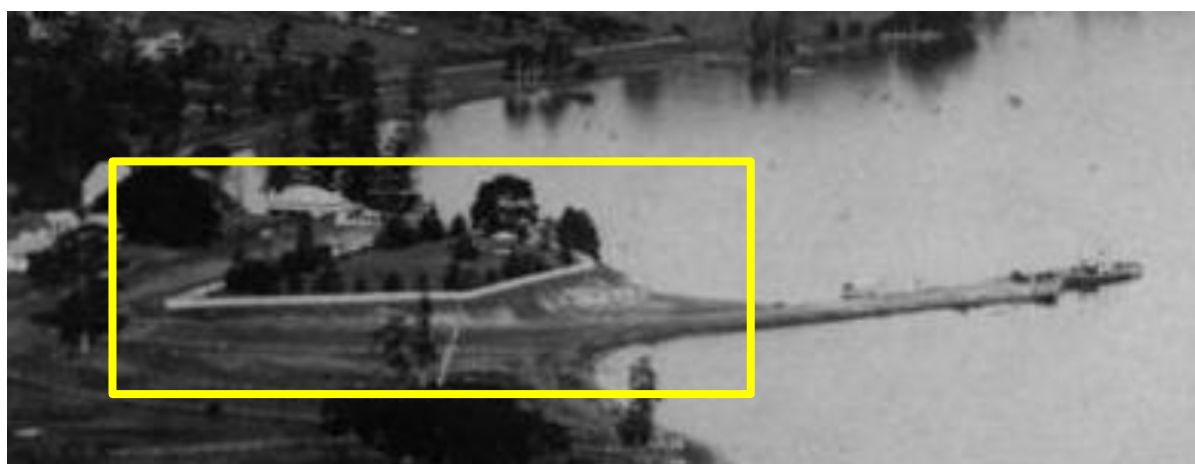


Figure 2.16 Detail from 1896 view from Presidents Hill, Gosford, to the east and southeast, showing Gosford Park outlined in yellow. Note the maturing conifers in the park and the rapidly maturing regrowth eucalypt canopy immediately abutting the southern edge of the park and promontory. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 003\003159 with GML overlay 2024)



Figure 2.17 Gosford Park and its rotunda, which was sited in the vicinity of the existing cenotaph. Note the maturing conifer species around the park boundaries. Does not show the water tower as in Figure 2.19. (Source: *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 23 April 1898, p 19)



Figure 2.18 View along Mann Street with Gosford Wharf and Gosford Park to the right of the roadway and Brisbane Water at the far right, 1903. Note the rapidly maturing sentinel conifer specimens in the park (at centre) and the very large regrowth eucalypt at the end of Mann Street (southern side of park promontory). The park's Boer War Memorial, which is visible in this image, had just been built. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 003\003239)

Multiple local men from the district enlisted and served during the Boer War of 1899–1902. Of the volunteers, three died on active service: Corporal Harcourt Franklin Legge in May 1900; Trooper John Murray in November 1900; and Trooper Sidney S Mayo in March 1902.

Two of Legge's brothers were given a welcome home at the School of Arts in March 1901. On this occasion an appeal was launched to raise funds to erect a war memorial to the fallen soldiers of the district. *The Maitland Daily Mercury* reported:

Although giving a hearty welcome to her returned soldiers, Gosford has not forgotten those who will return no more, Trooper Murray, who was shot—and Trooper Legge, who died of a fever. Already ten pounds has been raised to erect a memorial of those who may fall in the war.³⁶

In November 1902 a 12-foot-high marble monument was erected in the centre of Gosford Park to the memory of the three soldiers from the district who fell during the Boer War.³⁷ The memorial is visible in a 1903 photograph (Figure 2.19) and the c1908 photograph by Charles Kerry (Figure 2.20).



Figure 2.19 Looking south through the centre of Gosford Park showing the Boer War Memorial and former rotunda and water tower at right. All the trees in this image were planted in the late 1880s. (Source: *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 9 May 1906, p 22)

The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate on 31 May 1907 reported on an upcoming visit to Gosford by the Scottish Rifles Band, which was to play a Sunday evening concert at Gosford Park, among other performances.³⁸ It is assumed that the rotunda was used for this purpose.

The park's original layout looks to have been very rudimentary. Although some paths through the park were reputedly established, it does not appear that a formal pedestrian network through the park was ever completed. As is evident in Figure 2.20, the core of the park was essentially gently sloping grass, which retained the natural levels of the headland.

At regular intervals the council was required to undertake improvements to Gosford Park. For instance, in 1911 the wharfinger was instructed to clean up the park, cut grass and provide chipping around trees in 'his spare time'.³⁹ Later the same year, vandalism included damage to trees by 'knocking the bark off the best tree in the park'.⁴⁰

Further vandalism was reported in the *Gosford Times* in September 1915 when rope swings erected for the amusement of children were cut down.⁴¹ By this period the fence was described as 'dilapidated'.



Figure 2.20 Gosford Park showing the Boer War Memorial and rotunda, c1908. Note the maturing canopy tree at centre right, between the now non-extant rotunda and the Boer War Memorial. This tree, no longer present (seemingly a Brushbox), was likely positioned to provide some shade for the rotunda and through the middle of the park generally. Note also what appears to be the poor health of a couple of semi-mature pine trees, along the southern boundary of the park, at right. Image by Charles Kerry. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.21 View towards Paul's Corner, Mann Street, early 1900s. Image by Phegan. The picket fence around Gosford Park is visible at centre right. (Source: Mrs Sylvia Coulter, Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.22 View at the southern end of Mann Street at Paul's Corner, c1905-1910. The picket fence and gateposts to Gosford Park are visible at far right. Image by Broadhurst. (Source: SLNSW, baZJwRJpWpXgP)

In 1915 *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* described the approach to the Gosford Park site from the south. Reference is made there to the road climbing up Gosford Park Hill and the distinct 'triangular headland' shape of the park site.⁴² Until the 1930s reclamation works around the bay and the subsequent development of the waterfront roadway, the only pedestrian and vehicular access to and from Gosford, from the south, was via Mann Street and the eastern side of the park.



Figure 2.23 View from about the early 1900s, facing north toward the Gosford Park site, behind the large eucalypt canopy at centre left of the image. Note the site's proximity to the waters of the bay prior to reclamation works. (Source: Private Collection)

The old fence around the park was partially removed and replaced in 1921 as the Erina Shire Council invited tenders for the purchase of the sawn hardwood palings (5 feet) 'being removed from the Gosford Park'.⁴³ The council also voted to repair and paint the fence.⁴⁴

Somewhat oddly, there is record of a tender by Mr F Turvos being accepted by the council in 1922 for the erection of a picket fence around Gosford Park.⁴⁵ This may have only related to a dilapidated section of the existing picket fence.



Figure 2.24 Gosford Park and Gosford Wharf, c1905–1910. In the early 1900s, the fence along the Mann Street frontage of the park was changed from picket to arris rail, the latter seen at the far left of this photograph. Note the mature pines and conifers near the northern apex of the park, no longer present. Image by Broadhurst. (Source: SLNSW, ZmD5zpGDMomxj)



Figure 2.25 Detail from 'Boat Haven, Gosford', photographed by Charles Kerry. This photograph captures well the park site's former framing by the prominent western fence, and its setting, perched above Brisbane Water. Note the extent to which the western flank of the park is open to views from the west. This depicts the park prior to the existing Hill's Figs having been planted and the failure of some of the first cultural plantings from the late 1880s. The park is enclosed by a picket fence. (Source: Flickr, <https://flic.kr/p/U5MCwY>)

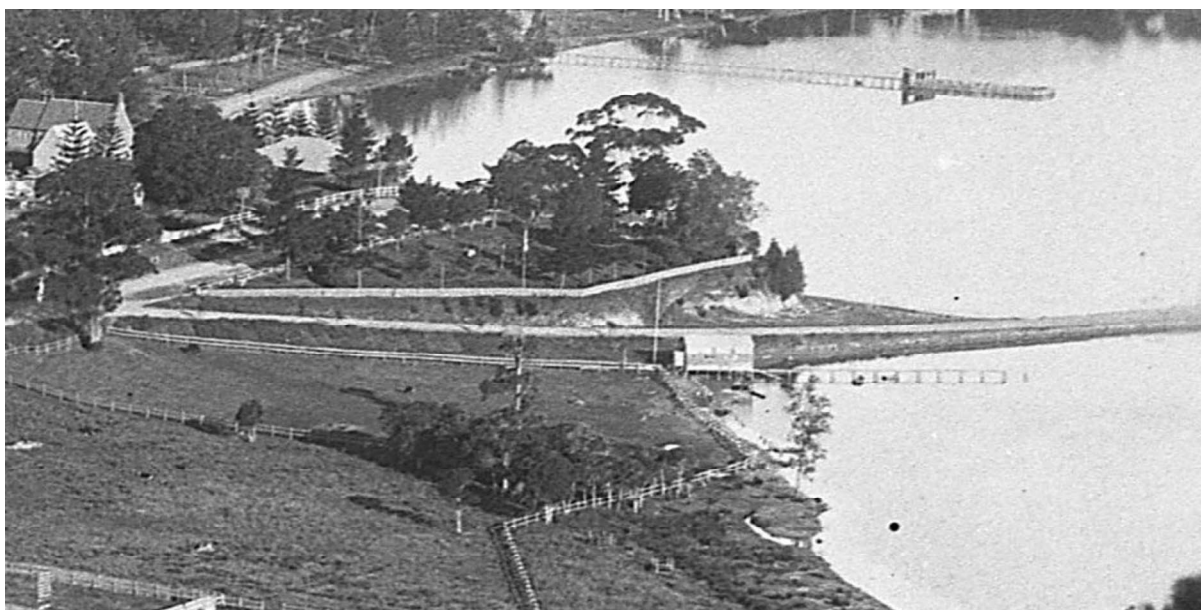


Figure 2.26 Detail from the view of Gosford looking south from Presidents Hill, c1910s. Note that the fence along the Mann Street frontage of the park had been altered to arris rail by this time. Note here also the former proximity of the park to the waters of the bay, before the 1930s reclamation works. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.27 View southeast along the waterfront below Gosford Park, from Gosford Wharf, undated. (Source: SLNSW, reproduced in Long Blackledge Architects 2022, *Gosford Cenotaph Heritage Asset Action Plan*, p 17)



Figure 2.28 View west along the waterfront below Gosford Park, undated. The 1930s foreshore reclamation works filled over the location where this photograph was taken. Views of the southern end of Gosford Park (background right) from the location of this image are no longer possible, due to the scale and density of vegetation around the junction of Dane Drive and Mann Street. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.29 Parsonage Hill, later known as Paul's Corner, Gosford, with Gosford Park at far left, undated. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)

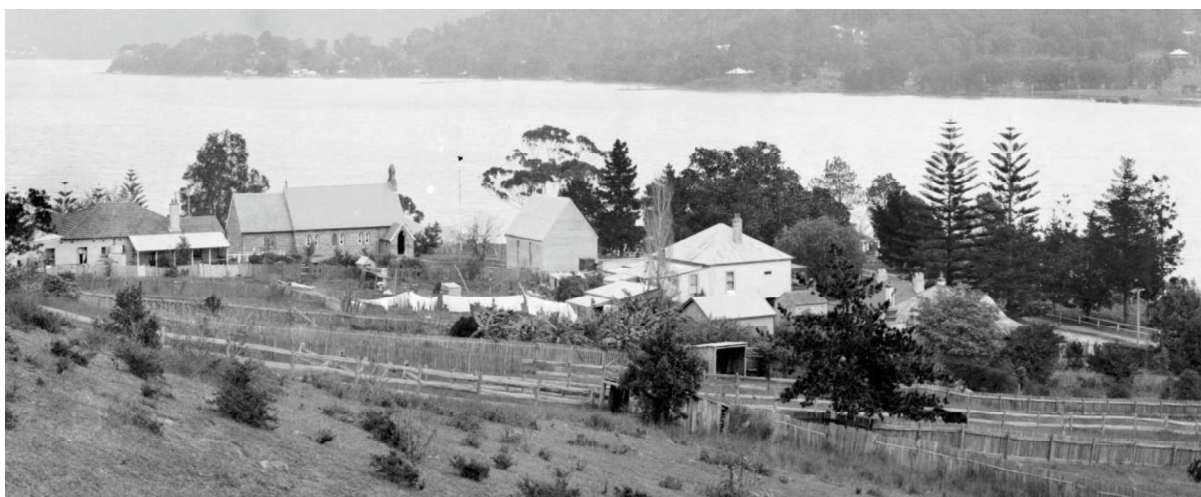


Figure 2.30 View south over the Gosford Park site (at right), circa late 1910s. At that time the park still retained many of its various mature pines and canopy tree plantings from the late 1880s. The park's second fencing typology along Mann Street, an arris rail fence, had been installed by the time this image was taken. This image by Rex Hazlewood highlights the visual prominence of the park site from Brisbane Water. (Source: SLNSW, FL10449)



Figure 2.31 Anzac Day ceremony at Gosford Park, possibly 1925 or 1927. Vehicles parked in Mann Street South adjoining Gosford Park. Its arris rail fence is visible. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.32 Australia Day procession in Mann Street South adjoining Gosford Park, 1915. Image by Rex Hazlewood. The arris rail fence is visible. (Source: SLNSW, <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/YEG7bwVn>)

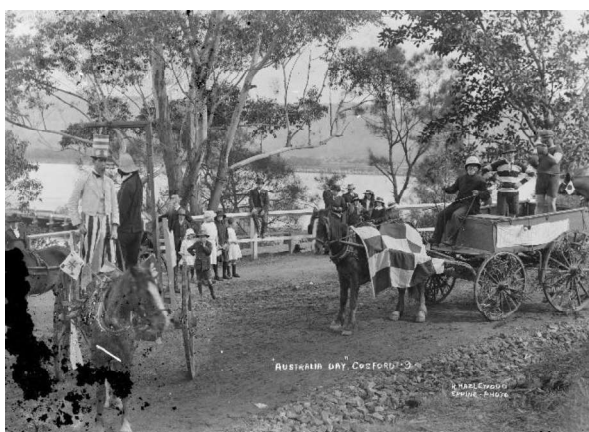


Figure 2.33 Australia Day procession in Mann Street South adjoining Gosford Park, 1915. Image by Rex Hazlewood. (Source: SLNSW, <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/digital/AGqxbzKzR7aAR>)



Figure 2.34 Australia Day procession, in Mann Street South adjoining Gosford Park, 1915. Image by Rex Hazlewood. A semi-mature fig tree visible in the background at the right of this image is likely a specimen from the original planting design for the park in the late 1880s. (Source: SLNSW, <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/digital/2RE8wpOv8moPd>)

After the war memorial was unveiled on Anzac Day 1924, Gosford Park generally came to be called Gosford Memorial Park.

The **Gosford Park** is more than usually favored now for picnics by visitors to the town. Launch loads come even from the south end of Brisbane Water. Such a party had apparently a jolly time in the **Park** all day yesterday, using the swings and playing games that seemed to give all a good day's amusement. Provided with firewood gratis on the flat below the **Park**, they boiled their billy, and had a real Australian picnic.

Figure 2.35 Picnicking at Gosford Park (later Gosford Memorial Park). (Source: *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate*, 23 January 1923, p 7)

In 1923, the local council received a proposal for the development of 'privileged' tennis courts on the Memorial Park site, principally on behalf of the 'Secondary Class' girls. This proposal was not approved.⁴⁶

Also in 1923, *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* reported on a proposal to erect a soldiers' memorial on the site of the Gosford Park pavilion (rotunda) and water tank due to the 'fine outlook' over Brisbane Water. The author stressed that pulling down the rotunda—then a popular picnic venue—would remove one of the few public comforts in Gosford. The article also mentioned the destruction of old pine trees along both sides of Mann Street, in the vicinity of the park.⁴⁷

The rotunda was nonetheless removed from the park in 1923 to make way for the Gosford Cenotaph. *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* reported in October 1928 that Inspector Fletcher was opposed to moving the rotunda back to Gosford Park, preferring to leave it beside the road to the wharf where it was used as a shelter for waiting passengers, 'and [instead to] build a new and better one in the park'.⁴⁸ The inspector also recommended it should not be moved due to its age and the likelihood of damage if it was moved again; furthermore, it was not large enough for a bandstand.⁴⁹

2.5.3 Construction of the Gosford War Memorial

In December 1918 Henry George Parry wrote to *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* advocating a soldiers' memorial, citing 'Waterside Park' as a suitable location.⁵⁰ Manasseh Ward, former first president of Erina Shire Chamber, wrote in March 1919 urging the community to commence fundraising to erect a 'suitable memorial' to perpetuate the memory of local heroes of the Great War.⁵¹ Richard Henry Creighton and the Gosford wharfinger Richard Henry Clifford proposed Gosford Park as the site of the war memorial, and this location was endorsed by Robert James Baker, proprietor of *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* and president of the Erina Shire Council (1920–1922).

At a public meeting in November 1919 the Gosford War Memorial Committee was formed and resolved that 'a Public Memorial be erected in or about Gosford in memory of the Great War and in thankfulness to those brave men and women who jeopardised or sacrificed their lives...'⁵² The Gosford Branch of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) and the local Red Cross Society were heavily involved in supporting the proposed memorial and fundraising.

Various forms of memorial suggested for Gosford included a memorial hall with a roll of honour, planting a memorial avenue of trees, building a soldiers' memorial cottage hospital with a memorial tablet or vellum manuscript, a chiming town memorial clock, memorial swimming sea baths located at Waterside Park and a memorial arch erected at the entrance to Waterside Park from Georgiana Terrace. The community rejected most of the proposed schemes; however, the Town Improvement Committee placed its support behind the proposed Waterside Memorial Reserve and Recreational Ground, which could accommodate a memorial arch.

In August 1921 the War Memorial Committee advertised a competition to re-name Waterside Park where the memorial arch was to be erected.⁵³ Simultaneously, the committee advertised for 'Monumental Masons, etc' to submit designs and prices for a memorial arch to be erected at Gosford.⁵⁴ In September the committee considered the two designs submitted, rejecting them due to the high cost and the unsuitability of design without projected costs.⁵⁵

At an impasse, the War Memorial Committee and RSSILA Gosford Sub-Branch contacted Captain Gordon Samuel Keesing, honorary architect of the RSSILA of NSW, in 1922 for his advice for the proposed memorial arch for Waterside Park. Captain Keesing's credentials included studies in built environment architecture and town planning and international qualifications from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in New York and Paris. He had also worked with distinguished architects in Australia and abroad, and he was an Associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (ARIBA).

During 1922 and the first half of 1923 the War Memorial Committee, Erina Shire Council and RSSILA Gosford Sub-Branch, in conjunction with Keesing, continued to develop the memorial arch as part of the Waterside Park scheme. This included one of Keesing's proposals for a gum tree-lined Anzac Avenue for Holden Street (the present Dane Drive).

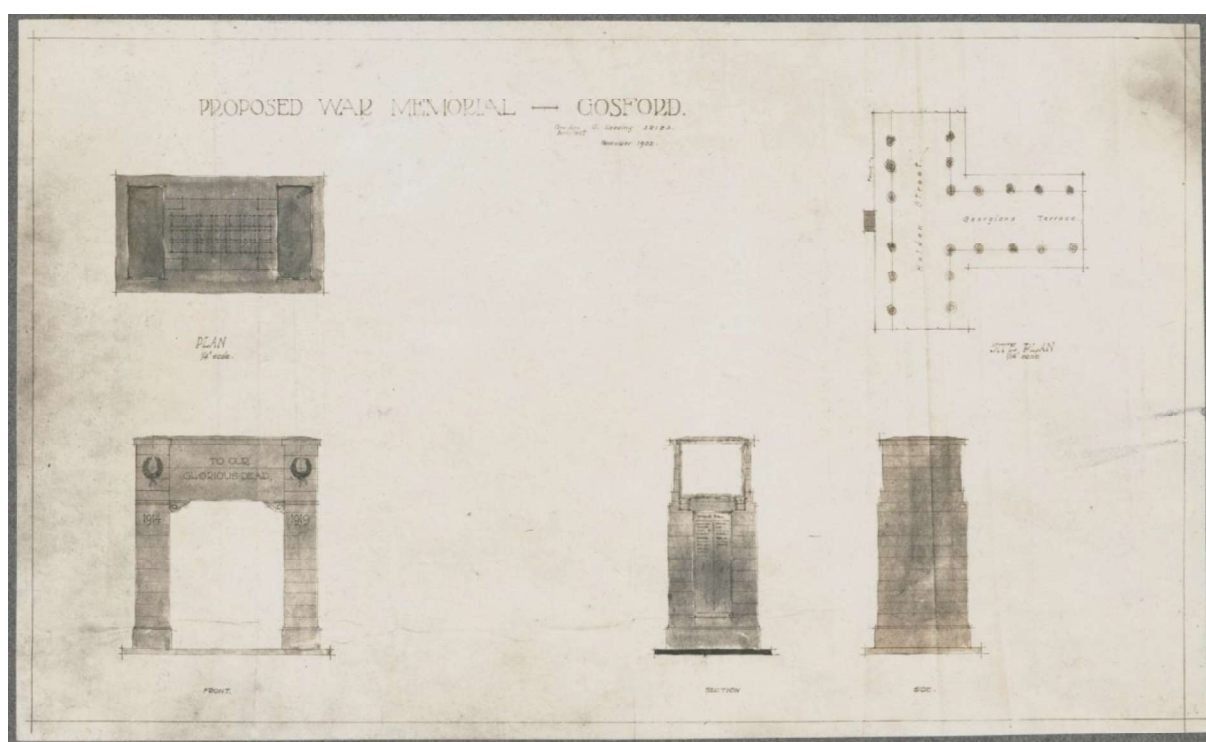


Figure 2.36 Proposed war memorial, Gosford, drawn by Gordon S Keesing, November 1922. (Source: Museums of History NSW (MHNSW)—State Archives Collection, NRS-18195-1-[9/5878]-1-163)

However, the grand utilitarian Waterside Park scheme, including plans for the proposed memorial arch, was abandoned. The War Memorial Committee revived its original plan to erect a symbolic monument in a prominent civic place. In May 1923 the committee was renamed Gosford Soldiers' Memorial Committee to pursue a new soldiers' memorial scheme. Simultaneously in May, Erina Shire Council 'agreed to present a section of Gosford Park to the soldiers' memorial committee for the erection of a monument', costing between £600 and £700.⁵⁶

The new committee asked Keesing to prepare a memorial design costing a maximum of £650, including construction costs. One month later the committee approved Keesing's cenotaph design. According to *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate*:

The Memorial will stand 17ft 6in height, is to be preferably of local stone, a bronze tablet to be placed on the western face with the names of the men who 'went West', whilst on the eastern side, a bronze rising sun will face the break of day. The whole will stand on the present site of the old Band rotunda, which is to be removed, and will be set on a concrete raft foundation, with steps leading to the upright section of the Memorial, whilst

it is intended to provide for the construction of footpaths leading from the various gates to the central position, where the Cenotaph will stand. Provision will be made for the addition of the names of enlistments from the district at a later stage, the main objective of the Committee being to get the Memorial up at the earliest, with the principal names inscribed, viz., those of the fallen. The estimated cost is £650, and it is anticipated that the Memorial will be unveiled free of debt, notwithstanding that £60 to £80 will be required to make up the cost. Tenders will be called on the plans being approved by the Central Advisory Board, and a few weeks should see the construction underway.⁵⁷

Owing to tight funding and time restraints the committee elected to list only the names of fallen soldiers. Keesing's design for the proposed landscaping, gates, pathways and fencing to complement the Cenotaph was also deferred for the same reasons.

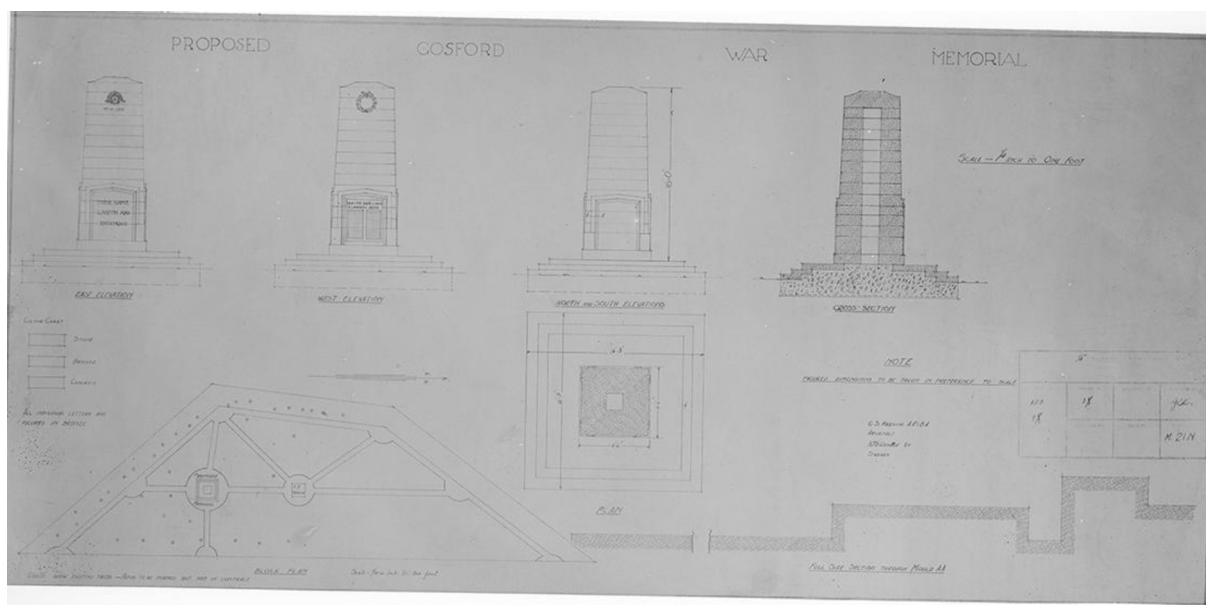


Figure 2.37 Proposed Gosford War Memorial, [1923?]. Attributed to Gordon S Keesing. (Source: MHNSW—State Archives Collection, NRS-4481-4-726-[AF00257474])

The War Memorials Advisory Board approved the Gosford Cenotaph design by Keesing in late August 1923. Tenders for construction of the stone cenotaph were promptly invited the same month.⁵⁸ The committee received eight submissions ranging in price from £624 to £950 and selected the tender of Harrison and Elliott Ltd to supply a monument of white freestone for the sum of £624 and 12 shillings.⁵⁹ Harrison and Elliott Ltd was a local business operating quarries at Gosford and Flemington. The company was run by returned soldier Thomas Glenroy Harrison.

Stone for the Cenotaph was extracted from the central and northern parts of Gosford Quarry.⁶⁰ The construction of Gosford Cenotaph commenced in November 1923, with Harrison & Co. transporting stone down from the hills of Gosford Quarry.

Poor weather coupled with a shortage of stonemasons delayed progress of the Cenotaph. It was completed shortly before Anzac Day in 1924.

On the afternoon of 25 April 1924, large crowds attended the unveiling ceremony of the Gosford Cenotaph.

2.5.4 Beautification and improvements to Gosford Memorial Park

Following completion and unveiling of the Cenotaph, the War Memorial Committee laid out a plan to address deferred site works including, in the short term, fencing off the Cenotaph as a protective measure (which was later to be replaced with more appropriate fencing), and 'the beautifying of the Park, with flower beds, pathways, &c'.⁶¹ In a 1927 photograph of the war memorial (Figure 2.39) one of the two war trophies relocated from Waterside Park in 1926 is visible. The short-term fencing and intended improvement of Gosford Park to accentuate the war memorial had not yet been undertaken.

The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate on 1 May 1924 reported the details of local Anzac commemorative ceremonies held on 25 April, including a service at Gosford Memorial Park's cenotaph. The report also mentioned the intention of the War Memorial Committee to construct gates to the park, on which a record of district enlistments would be inscribed.

A resident's letter in *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* of 18 September 1924 raised the issue of park neglect in Gosford, specifically of the Memorial Park. That letter to the editor noted that the fence along the southern (cliff) side of the park was in disrepair, that there were no rubbish 'baskets' and that the previous swings in the park had not been replaced. It also suggested that at that time there were no pedestrian pathways through the park or to the Cenotaph. The letter stated that in the late nineteenth century, the park contained well-kept gardens of beautiful flowers.

The Cenotaph was initially completed without the formal surrounds and landscape that were originally designed and planned by Keesing and the War Memorial Committee. On 2 May 1927, the War Memorial Committee met to discuss completion of the Cenotaph by the construction of kerbing around it.⁶² It was determined that Gordon Keesing, the Cenotaph's architect, be 'interviewed' regarding the work. That article recorded the improved state of the park compared to previous years. The kerbing evidently went ahead, with a 4-foot-wide strip of lawn between it and the cenotaph steps.⁶³

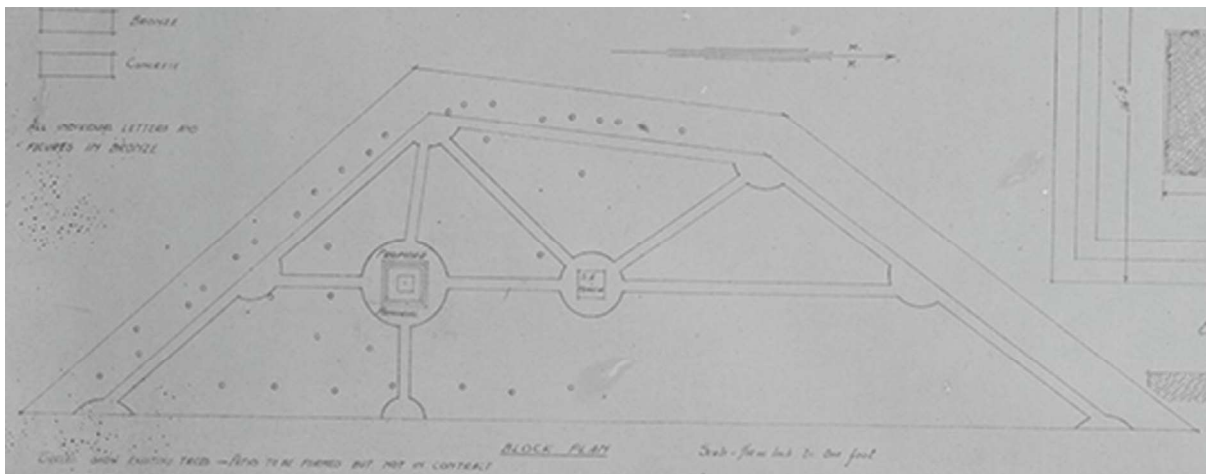


Figure 2.38 Detail from a 1923 plan by Gordon Keesing showing the proposed siting of the Cenotaph on an axis with the Boer War Memorial (which actually sits close to the centre of the park), axial paths and a pathway (with bulb-outs) around the edge of the park. (Source: MHNSW—State Archives Collection, NRS-4481-4-726-[AF00257474])



Figure 2.39 View of Gosford War Memorial prior to kerbing around the monument, 1927. By this date, aris rail fencing had evidently replaced the earlier picket fencing around the southwestern side of the park. Poplar trees (centre background, west of the Cenotaph) appear to have been experimented with on the site during the early 1920s. (Source: National Library of Australia, PIC Row 14/6/5 #PIC/15611/5488, reproduced in Long Blackledge Architects 2022, *Gosford Cenotaph Heritage Asset Action Plan*, p 26)



Figure 2.40 Anzac Day Commemoration Service at War Memorial Park, Gosford, post-1929. Note how devoid of trees the southern surrounds (at left) of the memorial were at that time. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 001\001322)

The committee also requested that Erina Shire Council contribute towards beautifying Gosford Park, inclusive of a 'gate and Memorial, tablets, approaches, seats, enclosure, and new kiosk'.⁶⁷ There was no definite outcome of the request, and no action was taken at this time. The committee however remained wedded to erecting war memorial gates, with fundraising continuing in 1925. These appear to have never been built.

One visitor to Gosford Park in June 1925 reported that the overgrowth of trees obscured the Cenotaph, inferring the intention for a memorial to be prominent and not hidden, and suggested the need for electric light to illuminate the Cenotaph at night.⁶⁴

The New South Wales State Trophy Committee allotted Gosford a '77 millimetre field gun, German old type carriage, with 1918 barrel, range six thousand (6,000) yards and a heavy minenwerfer used in trench warfare and which fired a 90lb shell'.⁶⁵ The war trophies were handed over to the RSSILA Gosford Sub-Branch in 1921 and erected in Waterside Park.⁶⁶ Following the erection of the Gosford War Memorial in Gosford Park in 1924, the War Memorial Committee applied to the council in June 1924 requesting the removal of the gun from Waterside to Gosford Park.⁶⁷ The committee repeated this request in April 1926, specifying that the gun and minenwerfer be mounted on concrete bases and painted, and the council granted this request.⁶⁸ The following month CK Adrian of the council reported that he had made arrangements for the concrete bases once his labourers completed other work in hand.

Later that year the two war trophies were relocated to Gosford Memorial Park from Waterside Park to flank the Gosford War Memorial, as shown in Figure 2.41 and Figure 2.42.



Figure 2.41 Gosford Cenotaph and one of the war trophies (a trench mortar) on a concrete base, between 1929 and 1939. (Source: SLNSW)



Figure 2.42 Gosford Cenotaph flanked by two war trophies and two floodlight poles, post-1926. Note the expansive open views to the south during that period. (Source: MHNSW—State Archives Collection FL3811970)

Other improvements undertaken in the park in the years following the unveiling of the war memorial included erecting a flagpole and re-erecting swings. In December 1927 the council inspector recommended using:

material from the old swings, replacing the awnings with substantial white mahogany supports and non-wearing top supports, properly braced, with posts 4ft 6in in ground, and concreted, the whole to be substantial and safe.⁶⁹

In 1927 Erina Shire Development League suggested filling the eastern side of the bay (fronting the study area), and establishing a promenade, public reserve and new wharf.⁷⁰

The next year the Gosford District Sub-Branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League (later RSL, former RSSILA) instructed Alexander Annandale Gollan (Supervisor of the Gosford State Forest Nursery and trustee of the war memorial) to liaise with others to prepare a 'beautification scheme'.⁷¹ Gollan was to begin the scheme using the £25 funding 'accumulated for the purpose and to request assistance from the Shire Council'.⁷² One month later floodlights, funded by Erina Shire Council, were officially switched on at a ceremony in the park arranged by the sub-branch on 4 August 1928, the anniversary of the declaration of the Great War.⁷³ The first floodlighting of the Cenotaph appears to have been installed in 1928.⁷⁴

The Memorial Park was also the venue for outdoor concerts by Gosford Band in the late 1920s as in November 1928.⁷⁵



Figure 2.43 Gosford War Memorial, 1928. Note a very large pine tree (at left), possibly a Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) or similar, along the Mann Street frontage. This tree is no longer present. (Source: *Erina Shire Holiday and Touring Guide*)

By 1931 the old rotunda from Gosford Park was removed to the reserve opposite Hinemoa Hospital, Point Frederick. The council gave permission to Bert Coulter to relocate the rotunda to the new position on the provision it was re-erected and painted at his own cost.⁷⁶

The Depression halted substantive improvements to the park for several years. In 1932 Gosford District Sub-Branch approved proposals to substitute flower beds for trees.

At the same time a diseased tree and three other trees were replaced by flower beds 'as a matter of urgency'.⁷⁷

The following year a new memorial and tree planting in memory of the late Sister Katherine Sumner, a war nurse of the Australian Imperial Force, were added to the park on 19 March 1933; the council gave the Country Women's Association (CWA) approval to plant a memorial tree. A little stone tablet was placed in front of a newly planted tree, a Red Silky Oak (*Grevillea banksii*). The tree was planted in the far northern corner of the Memorial Park and remains in situ (albeit heavily shaded and dwarfed by an abutting Hill's Fig). Mrs Paul, president of the CWA, officially planted the tree in memory of Sumner.⁷⁸



Figure 2.44 Colourised photograph of Gosford War Memorial, 1924–1928. Note the arris rail fence along the western side of the park at that time. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)

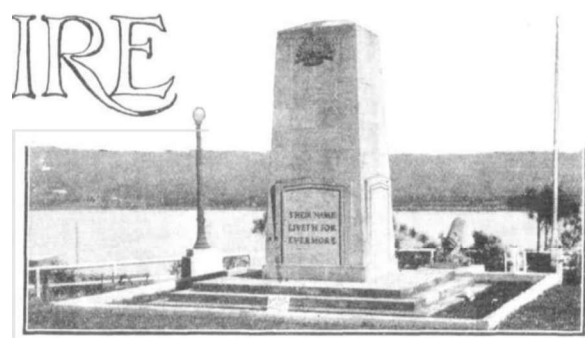


Figure 2.45 The Cenotaph at Gosford. Note the recently established kerb around the memorial monument. (Source: *Sydney Mail*, 11 September 1929, p 40)



Figure 2.46 Gosford Park (at left) and the roadway to the jetty and Gosford Wharf, c1930s. Note that arris rail fencing surrounded the western side of the park by this time and a semi-mature Hoop Pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*) (far left) was present toward the northern corner of the park (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.47 Gosford Cenotaph and one of the war trophies, between 1929 and 1939. Image by James Blaxland. The arris rail fence is visible along the Mann Street frontage of the park. (Source: SLNSW, reproduced in Long Blackledge Architects 2022, *Gosford Cenotaph Heritage Asset Action Plan*, p 33)

According to *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* the Memorial Park and war memorial were a 'neglected asset' by 1934. The war memorial was a place of commemoration and occupied a stately and idyllic location; however, its condition as a parkland honouring Great War soldiers was a public disgrace and deserving of better care. The writer urged landscaping and regular maintenance of the park to assist in conveying 'lasting gratitude' for the local heroes of the district.⁷⁹ The 'wonderful setting' of the park is also described in this article, which states that 'there are few vantage points in this State from which so beautiful a panorama of sea, hill and mountain beauty presents itself to the traveller's gaze'.

The council engineer was asked to report in 1935 on a proposal from the RSS&ILA to undertake grading and levelling of the Memorial Park under the Unemployment Relief Scheme.⁸⁰ This confirms that the issue of levels through the park is not only a contemporary concern.

In April 1935 *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate* eulogised Henry Charles Wheeler, former mayor of the Shire, stating he was reputedly responsible for planting a Brushbox tree (no longer present) to the immediate north of the Cenotaph prior to the construction of that monument.⁸¹ This should not be confused with the mature Brushbox to the west of the Cenotaph, which was planted sometime later.

Municipal gardener Ernest James Woods secured the stone around the Cenotaph and planted annuals and flowers. In 1936 the council approved Woods' proposal to plant rosemary as a symbol of remembrance.

AJ Brown presented a report on the development of Gosford's foreshores to the Gosford Municipal Council in January 1938. In his report he recommended that trees in the Memorial Park should be preserved.⁸² Gosford Municipal Council determined to carry out an extensive scheme of tree plantings through parks in the municipality, including the Memorial Park site, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in October the same year.⁸³

The following year James Woods expressed concern about the state of the fence along the park's Mann Street frontage; he recommended to remove that length of fencing and use the timber to repair the fencing skirting the western side of the Memorial Park.⁸⁴ Woods received approval from the council to remove the timber fence on the Mann Street frontage of the park. In 1940 he removed two dead pine trees in the park.

Throughout this period the Cenotaph in Gosford Memorial Park remained the focal point for Anzac Day services in the district.



Figure 2.48 Anzac Day group pictured at War Memorial Park, Gosford, on 25 April 1939. Note how open the view out onto Brisbane Water was at that time. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 001\001758)

2.5.5 Gosford Waterfront Reserve

During Australia's sesquicentenary year (1938) Gosford Municipal Council was engaged in several large-scale town planning and development projects including new reclamation works and seawalls across several sections of the Broadwater, revitalisation of Burns Place near Gosford Railway Station and an extensive scheme of planting of shrubs, trees and flowerbeds throughout the municipality including the Memorial Park within Gosford Memorial Park.

In 1937 the Minister for Works and Local Government approved the council's application to reclaim the foreshores of Brisbane Water from near Duke Street (East Gosford) to the Great Northern Railway line, providing 11 acres (4.4 hectares) of land for recreation purposes. The project was wholly funded as an unemployed relief scheme.⁸⁵

An extract from the council's survey plan in June 1937 (Figure 2.49) depicts the foreshore reclamation in the vicinity of Gosford Memorial Park and shows the new wharf, stone retaining seawall, and built elements in the park comprising the two war memorials and two galvanised iron structures (toilets) at the foot of the embankment.

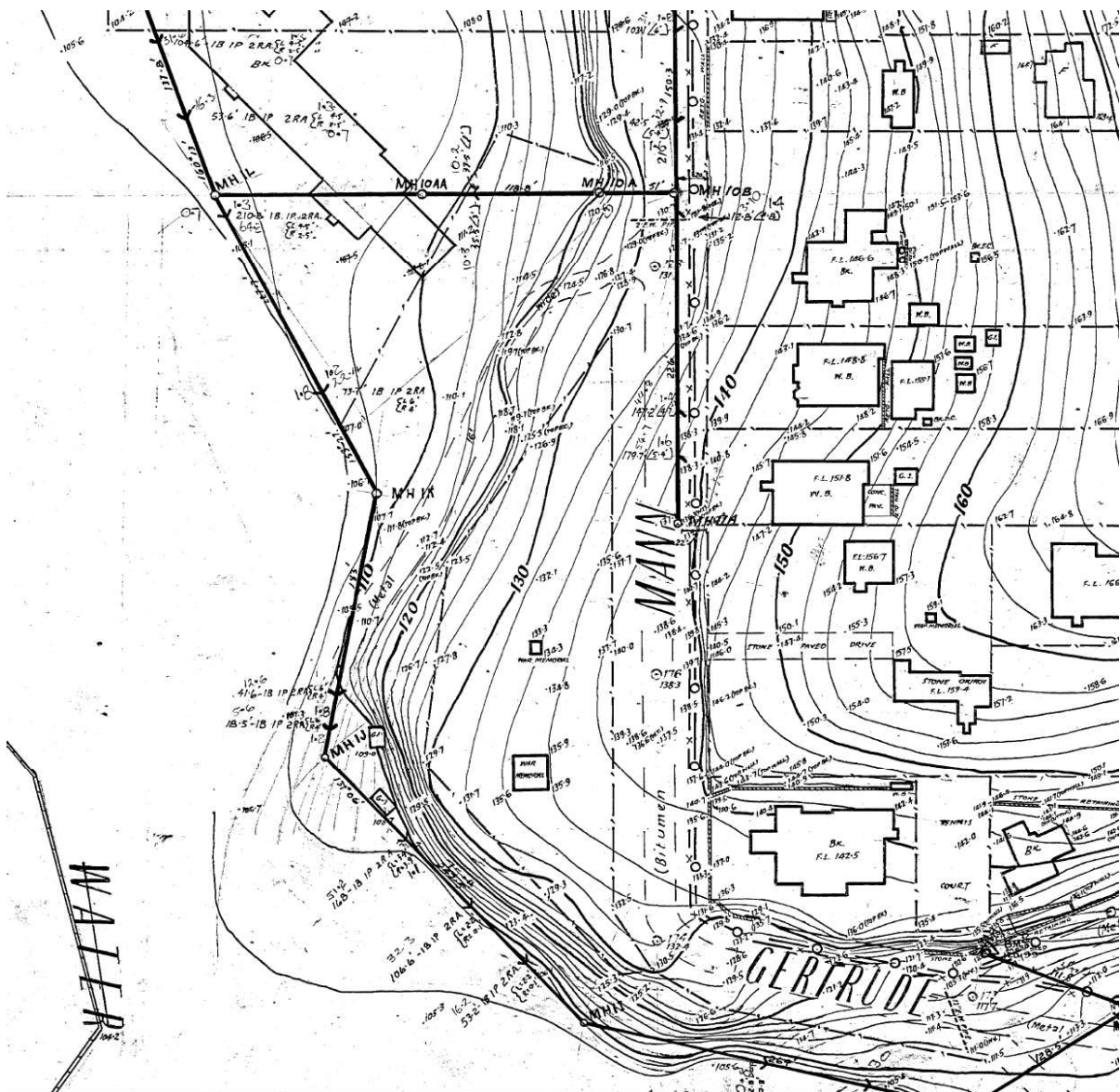


Figure 2.49 Extract from Detail Survey Sheet Gosford, Sheet 8, 8 June 1937. The portion of the retaining wall built during reclamation of the foreshore is shown . (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.50 The 1937 survey sheet overlaid with a current aerial photograph, showing the location of the park fencing (red) at that time, the location of the wharf road (yellow) and the approximate foreshore line (blue) prior to bay reclamation. (Source: Central Coast Library Service and Nearmap with GML overlay 2024)

The vast seawall along the waterfront was constructed using stone quarried from the hillsides of Gosford. The following year the council was notified that approval was given for construction of a breakwater and tourist wharf at the foot of Mann Street.⁸⁶

Reserve No. 70,467 was reserved from sale for public recreation in January 1942. It comprised the 15 acres (6.07 hectares) of reclaimed lands extending from the original high water mark of the Broadwater (Brisbane Water) to a substantially constructed stone seawall and stretching from the eastern boundary of the railway lands (Main or Great Northern Railway line) at Gosford generally southeasterly to near York Street, East Gosford. This reserve excluded 'any encroaching part of R 121 for Public Wharf' and the Gosford Olympic Pool.⁸⁷ The reclaimed land was known as the Gosford Waterfront Reserve.

Following reclamation of the waterfront a small parcel of reclaimed land was removed from the Gosford Waterfront Reserve as notified in the Government Gazette on 16 December 1955 and leased to the Gosford Kindergarten Association.

Two years later a playground and kindergarten were erected on the waterfront reserve adjoining the base of the Gosford Memorial Park, as shown in the 1963 survey (Figure 2.57). 11 Dane Drive, as it was later known, comprised Portion 375 of the Town of Gosford. The community preschool/kindergarten was located on this site (now part of Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks) until 2003 when it was relocated to its present site. The following year that lease was consolidated with two other portions of land in Reserve No. 78162.

2.5.6 Gosford War Memorial Park, 1945–1970s

In March 1949, in response to a request from the Gosford branch of the CWA, the council agreed to construct sandstone steps from the Memorial Park to the toilet located below the park near the Gosford Wharf for the cost of £25.⁸⁸ It would seem that until that time, there was no formal access between the Cenotaph memorial section of the park and its later public foreshore addition. It is not clear where those first steps were located, although they may have been built close to the existing stair (approximately the location where gateposts through the boundary fence can be seen in images from the early 1900s).

Aerial images from 1954 (Figure 2.53) confirm that in the several decades leading up to that period, trees were planted across the western slopes of the Memorial Park—possibly in association with the foreshore reclamation works of the 1930s, to help stabilise those slopes. That planting probably included some of the current casuarinas.

Before Anzac Day 1950, a visitor to the district remarked on the attractive appearance of the park, noting the ‘brightly painted seats, railing and lamp posts’ and also the garden colour presented by the red salvia and the Rosemary edging the war memorial, and the backdrop against the blue of Brisbane Water.⁸⁹

Following the end of World War Two the Gosford RSL Sub-Branch commenced fundraising to attach an additional bronze plaque to the vacant northern face of the Cenotaph recording the names of fallen soldiers of the district from the most recent war. The bronze plaque was unveiled by Governor-General Northcott on Anzac Day 1953.



Figure 2.51 Gosford War Memorial Park, 1948, looking south past the Cenotaph, showing its floodlight poles on either side of the monument and the tree-less outlook of the park to Brisbane Water. The tree at far right, formerly in the centre of the reserve (a Brushbox), is no longer present, having been removed since this date. (Source: MHNSW—State Archives Collection, NRS-4481-3-[7/16128]-St33418)



Figure 2.52 1950 photograph of a ceremony at the Cenotaph, showing what appears to be box hedge or Rosemary and roses around the memorial. Red Salvia was also used around the monument at this time. (Source: *The Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate*, 28 April 1950)

In 1952, Gosford Shire Council intended to remove an oak and a pine tree from the Memorial Park, due to poor health.⁹⁰ This arboricultural work was predated by the removal of two pine trees in 1940, which were nearly dead.⁹¹

The same newspaper reported in December 1954 that the council planned to replace three dead trees in the Memorial Park.⁹²

The 1954 aerial photograph of Gosford (Figure 2.53) shows a dense canopy of trees along the Mann Street park frontage, the former Brushbox specimen between the Cenotaph and Boer War Memorial and a reasonably dense skirt of vegetation across the western slopes of the park. Most of the Hill's Figs along the northwestern boundary of the site had not been planted by this time, with the exception of the specimen in the northern apex of the park. The road to the wharf remains unformalised at this time, as does the 1930s reclaimed foreshore land.



Figure 2.53 Detail from the 1954 aerial survey of Gosford showing the study area. (Source: NSW Spatial Services)

The major change to the study area between 1954 and 1965 was the laying-out of Dane Drive along the foreshore, and Vaughan Avenue, along the northern side of the park. The kindergarten buildings in the reclaimed foreshore zone were developed in this period. Several very tall Norfolk Island Pines off the southern curve of Mann Street were removed prior to 1965. Municipal planting of the foreshore parkland, in the vicinity of the study area, had not commenced by 1965 and a portion of the western slope of the park had been cleared of vegetation between 1954 and 1965.

Most of the Hill's Figs around the northwestern side of the Memorial Park appear to have been planted during this decade.



Figure 2.54 Detail from the 1965 aerial survey of Gosford showing the study area and its state of development. (Source: NSW Spatial Services)



Figure 2.55 Looking west in 1967 from the grounds of St Mary's Anglican Church on Mann Street, showing some of the mature trees towards the northern tip of the Memorial Park (in the middleground). Note that the row of Hill's Figs around the northwestern side of the park had not yet become prominent, meaning that views north through the foreshore zone from the Memorial Park remained available. Note also at far left a very large pine tree (or similar), now removed, which would have been one of the original park plantings from the late nineteenth century. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.56 View from Presidents Hill, Gosford, showing the construction of the waterfront road (Dane Drive), c1960s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service with GML overlay 2024)

2.5.7 Construction of Dane Drive and residue of waterfront reserve

In June 1963 Gosford Shire Council prepared a survey plan showing the proposed route of new roads through the waterfront reserve at Gosford and East Gosford. An extract of this plan at Figure 2.57 shows the park, kindergarten, playground and a parking area adjoining two new bitumen roads (now Vaughan Avenue and Dane Drive). This plan contains an approximate footprint of the two memorials, seats, toilets, war trophy guns, lights and an arris rail fence along the southern boundary of the park. The toilets are located at the foot of the embankment of the park in an area described as a parking area.

The proposed new roads and improvements through the waterfront reserve were gazetted on 23 April 1966.

59

In June and December 1972, additional land, forming part of Reserve No. 70,467 (part of 15 acres reclaimed in 1937–1938) was gazetted for public recreation, comprising the present Rotary Park. This land is shown in the diagram at Figure 2.58.



Figure 2.59 View from Presidents Hill, c1970s, showing the park site (arrowed). Fencing around the western side of the Memorial Park can be seen in this image, which appears to have been taken prior to the Rotary Park being laid out. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.60 View from c1970s looking towards Brisbane Water, showing the public wharf and Aquatic Club, Dane Drive, and the preschool/kindergarten and playground in the foreground. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 001\001219)



Figure 2.61 1970s view west along the newly formed Dane Drive, taken from the Gertrude Place public reserve. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.62 Detail from a view from the Presidents Hill Lookout, pre-1973, showing Gosford Park, Vaughan Avenue, the kindergarten, Dane Drive, Aquatic Club and the wharf. Note that the northwestern flank of the Memorial Park remained predominantly open at this time, prior to the maturation of the existing Hill's Figs. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)

Between 1965 and 1975 the main consequential change to the parklands was the development of the Rotary Park.

2.5.8 Rotary Waterfront Gardens and Fountain

In July 1972 the Rotary Club of Gosford offered to prepare an outline plan for future development of the waterfront park bounded by Mann Street, Vaughan Avenue and Dane Drive comprising at that date the Memorial Park, Gosford preschool/kindergarten, public toilets and shelter sheds. The southwestern corner of the area was described as 'presently not properly and fully developed'.⁹³

The plan proposed removal of the kindergarten, possible relocation of the toilets, removal of the fence around the Memorial Park, stabilisation of the bank in the higher level and removal of vehicle access within the area.

Although Gosford Shire Council did recognise some merit in the project, the Rotary Club was advised that prior to any approval, a development plan was to be prepared by a qualified landscape architect in association with council's town planner, shire engineer, and parks and gardens supervisor.

The Rotary Club applied in November 1972 to the council to 'make a major start in the gardens on the waterfront' and request use of the council's equipment/plant.⁹⁴ Less than one month later the club successfully applied to supply and lay turf on the corner of Vaughan Avenue and Dane Drive.⁹⁵

Architect Kevin Winterbottom, a member of the Rotary Club, designed the original concept for the 'Waterfront Fountain and Garden'. Detailed architectural plans were prepared by past president/part district governor George Grenfell (architect and long-time member of the club) and Bob Fraser (past president, Rotary Club of Gosford North).⁹⁶

The Rotary Club notified the council in May 1973 that Stages 1 and 2 (and part of Stage 3) of the 'Waterfront Gardens Project' were completed. The club anticipated full completion of the project in the 'new Rotary year'. To date the project had cost \$6,500, and the club expected the balance to complete the park would amount to \$3,000. The council considered the works were completed to 'a most reasonable standard and considerable expenditure'. The council recommended as follows:

- that the council reimburse the club an amount of \$512 representing plant hire on the project;
- that the council agree to make available a three-phase electric power supply within the existing toilet block to provide power for the operation of the fountain and lighting; and
- that the club be advised that the council requires the retention of the existing picnic shelter shed.⁹⁷

In October 1973 the council president resolved to contribute \$1,000 towards lighting of the Rotary Park if the Brisbane Water County Council could not assist.⁹⁸

By this date the central feature of the Rotary Park was a fountain that was installed but not yet operational as it was awaiting a filtration plant. Incomplete works in the gardens included the lighting of the fountain, building of a stairway and concreting of pathways. The memorial steps were reportedly completed in 1973 using the services of non-Rotarian Lodger Horsnell to supervise the concreting and completion of the stairs. The steps were completed on Remembrance Day, 11 November 1973.⁹⁹

The Gosford Rotary Club officially handed over the Rotary Park to the council on 16 December 1973, though some garden works remained unfinished and were expected to cost \$6,000. The council agreed to set aside this sum in the 1974 works program to complete the improvements required.¹⁰⁰



Figure 2.63 Rotary Fountain soon after completion at the end of 1973. (Source: *The History of the The Rotary Club of Gosford 1945–2008*, p 23)

The following year the council's engineer prepared a report regarding ongoing care and maintenance of the new Rotary Park and fountain.

According to Rotary the improvements amounting to \$6,000 'were never intended to be the responsibility of Rotary [and] are quite beyond its resources' and the club was disappointed at the council's refusal to take over the fountain and park.¹⁰¹

The club had stated it was unable to make any further contributions to the project, which it viewed as a permanent memorial of the 1973 celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the district. In response the council expressed disappointment that no further financial assistance was forthcoming from Rotary to complete the project, yet stated that it would formally take over the project and carry out improvements and continued maintenance from its own resources.¹⁰²

According to the official history of the club, the water pressure pumps were supplied by Rotarian Gordon Martin while past president Jim Kirkness acted as engineer, overseeing installation and operation of the equipment. Other club members and locals supplied materials, labour and equipment. The club history stated:

The cost of the project was \$14,000 and it was necessary to use in excess of 4,000 cubic yards (3,000 cubic metres) of soil to complete the fountain. Many hundreds of hours of labour was given voluntarily to complete the task. At the time the fountain was estimated to be worth \$50,000.¹⁰³

After taking over control and maintenance of Rotary Park, the council allocated \$1,500 in 1975 for landscaping of the batter, the retaining wall and drainage.



Figure 2.64 Detail of 1975 aerial survey of Gosford showing the study area visible, including the Rotary Fountain, and the kindergarten. (Source: NSW Spatial Services)



Figure 2.65 Rotary Fountain and Park, c1976. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)

On 16 December 1978 the Rotary Clubs of Gosford, East Gosford and Gosford North, installed a time capsule, and had a plaque mounted on a plinth in the fountain, to commemorate the construction of the gardens and fountain to celebrate the sesquicentenary celebrations of the first settlement in the shire (1828–1978).



Figure 2.66 Rotary Fountain, Dane Drive and Gosford Wharf beyond with *Karrabee* moored, 1980s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.67 Rotary Fountain, Dane Drive and Gosford Wharf beyond, 1980s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.68 Rotary Fountain and Park, viewed from the steps to the Memorial Park, 1980s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)

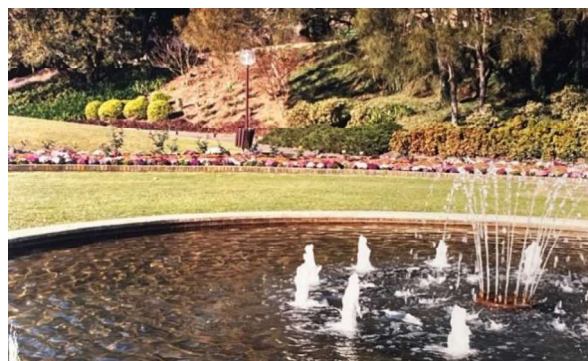


Figure 2.69 Rotary Fountain, garden beds and slope of the Memorial Park, 1990s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.70 Rotary Fountain and the commemorative plaque on the plinth, undated. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)

2.5.9 Gosford Memorial Park and Gosford War Memorial, 1980s–present

Various phases of re-levelling works have occurred around the Cenotaph since at least the late 1970s.

In about 1988 three additional military emblems were affixed to the northern face of the war memorial above the plaque dedicated to soldiers who lost their life in World War Two. This may have coincided with works on the memorial in April 1988 when a new small brass plaque reading 'restored, upgraded and dedicated as a tribute to all veterans by Gosford RSL Sub-Branch' was affixed to the upper-side step on the northern face of the memorial.

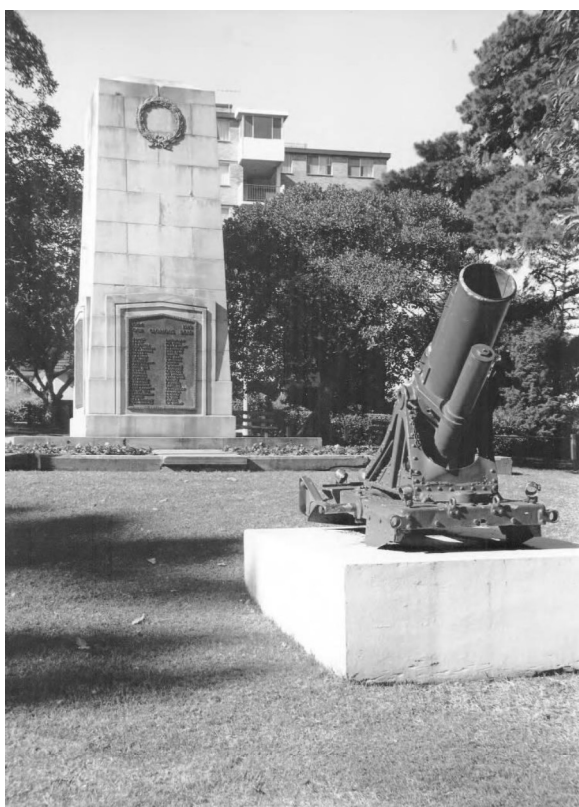


Figure 2.71 Gosford War Memorial and trench mortar, c1981. Image by Gwen Dundon. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 001\001771)



Figure 2.72 The Boer War memorial, set among symmetrical planted garden beds (no longer present in this layout), 1981. Image by Gwen Dundon. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service, 001\001178)



Figure 2.73 View over the former playing fields to the north of the Rotary and Memorial Parks, c1980s. Note the now non-extant arris rail fence, which was the second phase of fencing formerly defining the Memorial Park. Several large pines framing the eastern side of the park (seen in this image, and part of the original plant palette from the late nineteenth century) are no longer present. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.74 View southeast across the playing fields formerly abutting the Memorial and Rotary Park sites, 1980s. (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.75 Detail from the 1984 aerial survey of Gosford showing the development of the waterfront reserve, now part of the study area. The Rotary Fountain and Rotary Park were well developed by this time. (Source: NSW Spatial Services)

The World War One war trophies were removed from the park after 1988; their whereabouts is known to the Gosford Sub-Branch of the RSL. A newer gun was erected in their place. The following year the Harry Newhouse and Gallipoli Veterans memorial plaque was mounted on stone plinth and dedicated.

According to Geoffrey Potter (Local Studies Librarian, Central Coast Council), the Sister Sumner Memorial was a forgotten piece of history in the 1990s. During research on war memorials in the Central Coast, Michael Rooksberry re-discovered the stone lying flat in the gardens and overgrown with ivy.

An additional bronze plaque was affixed to the southern face of the monument acknowledging all conflicts from the Boer War to Vietnam; an additional line was added for Iraq, East Timor and Afghanistan in recent years.

In 2015 the Anzac Centenary was marked at Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks by the Poppy Project: Never Forgetting the Sacrifices. About 40,000 poppies made from fabric, yarn and clay were installed in a massive display in and around the fountain in Rotary Park below the Gosford War Memorial.

A temporary poppy sculpture by Margrete Erling was placed in the base of the fountain. The following year the poppy sculpture was temporarily removed for maintenance.



Figure 2.76 Liquidambar tree memorial (tree and memorial no longer present). (Source: Central Coast Council Library Service)



Figure 2.77 Poppy Project in Rotary Park showing Gosford Memorial Park in the background (Source: Rotary Club of Gosford)

Substantial works took place at the Gosford War Memorial in 2000, which comprised raising the ground at its base and levelling part of the site, submerging two of the three steps below ground. At this time a level platform area was formed spanning the two war memorials.

In 2021 the Gosford RSL Sub-Branch was awarded a Community War Memorials Fund (CWMF) grant of \$4,285 to prepare a conservation management plan for the Gosford Cenotaph. Long Blackledge Architects was commissioned to prepare a heritage asset action plan (HAAP) for the war memorial. Funding for the project was organised by Merril Jackson amid community concerns about its condition and maintenance, including the immediate surroundings and gardens. The HAAP concluded that the war memorial was 'showing signs of incipient deterioration mechanisms that should be addressed as soon as possible'.¹⁰⁴ Conservation work on the war memorial took place in 2022 and 2023 in two stages; Stage One focussed on the upper half of the memorial and Stage Two on the lower half.¹⁰⁵ The Gosford RSL Sub-Branch received \$9,999 in Round 2 of the CWMF in 2022/2023 for Stage Two conservation work to the lower section of the Cenotaph.

In May 2023 Merril Jackson nominated the 'Gosford Cenotaph and Cultural Landscape' to the State Heritage Register (SHR). The State Heritage Register Committee did not consider it 'a priority to progress for a full assessment for potential listing on the SHR' and consequently closed the nomination in July.¹⁰⁶

The Central Coast Council was awarded \$10,000 in funding in Round 2, CWMF 2023-2024 to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the Gosford Memorial Park.¹⁰⁷ Restoration works were completed prior to its centenary on Anzac Day 2024.

2.6 Chronology

The Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks have been subject to ongoing periods of development spanning over 160 years. Table 2.1 summarises the key changes and development phases to the two parks.

Table 2.1 Timeline summary of the development of Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks.

Date	Event
1841	Stone wharf and wall established near Vaughan Avenue.
May 1864	Tenders invited for construction of approach leading from the roadway to the timber jetty.
April 1884	Reserve No. 121 surveyed at Gosford to be dedicated for public recreation.
Late 1880s	First phase of cultural plantings made in Gosford Park including various Pine trees.
15 January 1886	Land dedicated for public recreation.
1887	Public park formally named Gosford Park (18 March). Gosford Council appointed trustee of Gosford Park (April). Management and control of the Gosford Wharf was handed over to Gosford Council (October).
July 1889	Gosford Park By-Laws gazetted.
1891–1892	Palisade fence painted.
1893	Rotunda erected.
1902	Marble monument erected as Boer War Memorial.
1910s	Gosford Park retained many of the cultural plantings made in the late 1880s.
1911	Gosford Wharf rebuilt.
1911–1915	Random acts of vandalism.
November 1918	Thanksgiving service held in park.

Date	Event
1920s	Some infill tree planting had occurred around the perimeter of the Memorial Park.
1921	Tenders invited for purchase of hardwood fence palings being removed from park. Council awarded two war trophies. Erected in Waterside Park.
June 1923	State War Memorial Committee approved Keesing's design of the war memorial in Gosford Park.
November 1923	Rotunda relocated from park to foot of hill near Gosford Wharf.
25 April 1924	New war memorial, Gosford Cenotaph, unveiled in park. Gosford Park generally called Gosford Memorial Park from this point forward.
April 1926	Trustees of the War Memorial Committee requested the council relocate war trophy guns to concrete base in Gosford Memorial Park.
1927	Permanent flagpole erected in park.
1928	Swings re-erected in park.
4 August 1928	Floodlights installed and officially switched on at the Cenotaph.
1920s / 1930s	Various mature Pine trees (eg Monterey Pines), from the first phase of Gosford Park cultural plantings, remained along the Mann Street frontage of the site (some of these actually remained extant until c 1960s).
1930s / 1940s	Various tree replacements occurred in the Memorial Park, some as a result of disease.
19 March 1933	Unveiling of memorial tablet and planting of commemorative tree in memory of late Katherine Sumner, a war service nurse in World War One.
1937	Minister for Works and Local Government approved plan to reclaim the foreshores of Brisbane Water from near Duke Street (East Gosford) to the Great Northern Railway line.
1938–1940	Improvements in park, removal of Mann Street fence, and removal of two pine trees.
January 1942	Reserve No. 70,467 (Waterfront Reserve) gazetted for public recreation.
1949	Sandstone steps erected from park to the toilets below park near Gosford Wharf.
1953	Installation of World War Two commemorative plaque on one of the faces of the Cenotaph.
1954	Three dead trees replaced.

Date	Event
1950s	Area of waterfront reserve set aside and leased to Gosford Kindergarten Association. Kindergarten built with adjoining playground.
1960s	Dane Drive constructed through waterfront reserve.
Late 1960s	Hill's Figs around northwestern side of the Memorial Park were planted.
1972	Rotary Club of Gosford proposed plan for Rotary Waterfront Gardens and Fountain on former waterfront reserve (formerly occupied as parking area). Council approved landscape plan.
May 1973	Stages 1 and 2, and portion of Stage 3, of Rotary Waterfront Gardens and Fountain completed.
October 1973	Rotary Fountain installed but not yet connected and operating. Completion of memorial steps from new gardens and fountain to Memorial Park.
16 December 1973	Rotary Club handed over of Rotary Waterfront Gardens and Fountain to Gosford Shire Council.
1975	Council voted funds for landscaping of batter, retaining wall and drainage in Rotary Waterfront Gardens.
Late 1970s	Various phases of re-levelling works have occurred around the Cenotaph from this time onwards
25 April 1998	Dedication of Harry Newhouse and Gallipoli Veterans memorial plaque mounted on stone plinth.
25 April 1999	Plaque mounted on stone plinth commemorating Century of Service unveiled.
2000	Substantial works comprised levelling part of the site and forming a level platform area spanning the Cenotaph and Boer War Memorial. Rededication plaque commemorating Gosford memorial plaque unveiled to commemorate opening of upgraded park (2 December).
22 June 2002	Dedication and blessing of National Servicemen's memorial plaque mounted on stone plinth.
23 June 2003	Dedication of War Widows memorial plaque mounted on stone plinth.
2004	Former site of kindergarten and adjoining land (being part of waterfront reserve) gazetted as addition to Gosford Memorial and Rotary Parks.
11 March 2008	British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) Australian Component plaque dedicated.
2015	Poppy Project: Never Forgetting the Sacrifices art installation placed in Rotary Park for Anzac Day.

Date	Event
	Poppy sculpture by Margrete Erling installed at base of Rotary Fountain as part of poppy project.
2016	Poppy sculpture temporarily moved for inspections.
2021	Gosford RSL Sub-Branch awarded a CWMF grant to prepare a conservation management plan for the war memorial. Long Blackledge Architects prepared a HAAP for the war memorial.
2023	Merril Jackson lodged an unsuccessful State Heritage Nomination for the 'Gosford Cenotaph and Cultural Landscape'. Gosford RSL Sub-Branch received \$9,999 in Round 2 of the CWMF in 2022/2023 from Department of Veterans' Affairs for Stage Two conservation works on the Cenotaph. Conservation works completed. Poppy Sculpture reconditioned and returned to park by Central Coast Council.

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