

TIMELINE FOR HEATHCOTE

- PRE 1827** Part of the tribal lands where the Beeliar people lived and hunted.
- 1827** Point Heathcote became a camp base for Captain James Stirling and his crew. It was assessed for settlement possibilities and a garden was established to test the soil.
- Heathcote named by Stirling after Midshipman G.C. Heathcote – said to be the first European to set foot there.
- 1829** Captain Fremantle visits Heathcote in May.
- Captain Stirling considers Heathcote as the site for the capital city but finally chooses Perth, as it was seen as being better endowed with suitable resources and more favourable for communications.
- 1830** May 28 – Lionel Lukin acquires 300 hectares at Point Heathcote (Swan Location 61), later increased to 400 hectares.
- 1830s – Mid 1885** Heathcote mainly used for horse and cattle grazing.
- 1830s – 1896** Swan Location 61 has numerous owners, namely Lionel Lukin (1830-1842), Alfred Waylen (1842-1856), John Wellard (1856-1865), Silas and George Pearse (1865-1886), William McMillan (1886-1892), London and Western Australian Land Company (1892-1896).
- 1862** A Working Men’s Association picnic held at Point Heathcote - possibly its first documented use for public recreation.
- 1896** Alexander Matheson obtains a major part of Swan Location 61 from the London and Western Australian Investment Company.
- 1896** Heathcote subdivided for residential development by the Melville Water Park Estate Company (Matheson was a director).
- 1896** Eleanor Matheson gains ownership of the tip of Point Heathcote from her husband Alexander.
- 1906** Much of the land on which Heathcote Hospital is now to be found was transferred to Eleanor Matheson from the Perth Trust Ltd.
- 1918** Lady Eleanor Matheson sells some land to the Christian Brothers for £3,000 (Christian Brothers initially show an interest in 1909). She and the London and Western Australian Investment Company retain an interest in parts of the Heathcote site until 1927.
- 1920** Christian Brothers also buy the 1.6-hectare block on which Matheson’s house still stood.
- At this time the Christian Brothers used Matheson’s old house as a retreat called ‘Killarney’.
- 1921** Applecross Progress Association desire to see Point Heathcote become a recreation reserve.

- 1922** Melville Council protests at the possibility of a Catholic Boys School being built on the Heathcote site and request that the State Government resume the land for use as public open space.
- The Public Works Department requests a title search on Swan Location 61.
- 1922-1925** Debate occurs as to where a new Reception Home is to be located. It is eventually decided that Heathcote is the best place.
- Approx 1923 – 1927** The State Government purchases land from the Christian Brothers, Lady Eleanor Matheson, N.S. Bartlett and Harold Redcliffe with a view to building a Reception Home and the Applecross Reservoir (Lot 6 of Swan Location 61 resumed from the Christian Brothers by the Metropolitan Water Supply).
- 1924** Plans are submitted for a Reception Home (an institution for the ‘mildly mentally afflicted’) with the condition that costs are kept down.
- Inspection of Heathcote site conducted, Cabinet approves funding for a Reception Home.
- 1926** Amended plans submitted after debate over the cost and size of the project. The design was under the direction of the Government Architect of the time, W.B. Hardwick. Construction of Heathcote Hospital commences 1926.¹
- 1927** June: Lot 8 of the Heathcote site is resumed from the London and Western Australian Investment Company (the Mathesons had an interest in this company).
- 1928** Plans for a Water and Clock Tower are designed by the Principal Architect J.M. Tait and approved the same year.
- 1929** Point Heathcote Reception Home completed and opened on 22 February by the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Robert McMillan.
- 1935** Fears of overcrowding and the mentally ill in general cause the Melville Roads Board to request that the Government move the Hospital elsewhere. Inspector General for the Insane responds by accusing the Board of ignorance and selfishness.
- 1940** Additions added due to overcrowding – namely a treatment block (Swan House) for an additional 26 patients and costing £15,000.
- 1952** A new boiler house is built.
- 1954** Administration block extended northwards and the kitchen upgraded.
- 1955** A dental surgery is started.
- 1957** Superintendent’s quarters extended and converted to a Day Centre.
- 1958** A matron’s flat constructed.

¹ Cooper, W.S. and McDonald, G.M. (1989) *A City For All Seasons: The Story of Melville*. City of Melville, Western Australia. Page 169 – commencement of construction for Point Heathcote Reception & Mental Home is given as 1928.

- 1960** Friends of Heathcote started – a voluntary organization to champion the cause of the mentally ill.
- The first full time occupational therapist is employed. Occupational therapy conducted in one of the dining rooms.
- 1962** The Social Therapy Department is built after lobbying from the Friends of Heathcote. It had an occupational therapy wing, a hall and a canteen.
- 1963** Extension of administration.
- 1968** Friends of Heathcote provide the hospital with a new swimming pool.
- Early 1970s** Large treatment ward constructed.
- 1972** Avon House is opened for more patients and for administrative purposes.
- 1977** Existing nurses quarters turned into an MDD Hostel.
- 1981** A report commissioned by the State Government recommends that Heathcote should be closed.
- 1989** State Cabinet announces that Heathcote is to be closed.
- 1990** In September, a public meeting results in the establishment of a committee to prevent redevelopment of the site for residential purposes.
- 1991** March 6: Heathcote Hospital and associated site passed for classification by the National Trust.
- 1993** June: Heathcote Hospital placed on the interim register in the State Register of Heritage Places.
- 1994** Heathcote Hospital is officially closed on Friday, 21 October.
- 1997** The State Government and the City of Melville come to an agreement that the upper lands of Heathcote be set aside for public use and the lower lands for housing.
- 2000** Heathcote Hospital site opened to the public Sunday, 19 March by Premier Richard Court after a \$6 million refurbishment by the City of Melville.
- 2001** In January, the Liberal State Government (soon to lose office) and the City of Melville sign the Heathcote Coordination Agreement (HCA) to save the lower lands and rezone it for parks and recreation.
- 2001-2002** Fears and rumours abound over the possibility that the State Labor Government may sell off the lower land of Heathcote for housing.
- 2002** State Government announces that Duncraig House (originally a nurses quarters for Heathcote Hospital) is to be sold.
- 2003** Work begins on the Canning House café, kiosk, restaurant and function room at Heathcote.
- Duncraig House is sold to an Applecross businessman for more than \$4 million.

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