

Get out and experience the stories of Nowra's past. This map guide will help you on your way.



We acknowledge the traditional custodians, who have walked the paths and told the stories of this land long before the establishment of Nowra and the Nowra CBD Historical Walk.



We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders, past present and future.

Nowra is a local Aboriginal word for black cockatoo.

Nowra CBD Historical Walk

Map & guide

Nowra CBD Historical Walk

Plunkett Street

The 'Village of Nowra' was laid out by Surveyor Thomas Mann in 1823, and the township began to form after the first land sale in 1825. It is said the first house was constructed on the edge of the swamp at the bottom end of Junction Street in April of that year by Scottish born John Smith - a slab building with shingle roof.



Growth was slow for a start with only seven homes by 1825, and it would be three years before the town really was a town. The Nowra Municipality was proclaimed in 1878.

The area has a long history and fertile history and prior to the establishment of Nowra, the heart of the community was largely in the middle of the present area of Tarana and Nowra, which is located to the east of Nowra on the southern bank of the Shoalhaven River.



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However, in 1840 and again soon after in 1843, devastating floods swept through the village and surrounding areas. All in the second year of the flooding, the floods were so bad that it was time to move up the hill. And this is when Nowra truly began to emerge.



Provisioners and blacksmiths such as Walter L. Berry, Thomas and Cyril Moller, have contributed to Nowra's heritage and some of their buildings are featured in this walk.



Plunkett Street showcases some of the beautiful legal and colonial buildings in Nowra. This section of Plunkett Street is also a Heritage Conservation Area in order to preserve the historical character.

Images courtesy of Shoalhaven-Museum & Library

To commence the walk head west on Plunkett Street and look out for the black shingle slab house.

The next reference point is on Berry Street near The Bridge. Refer to the map on resource site for guidance.



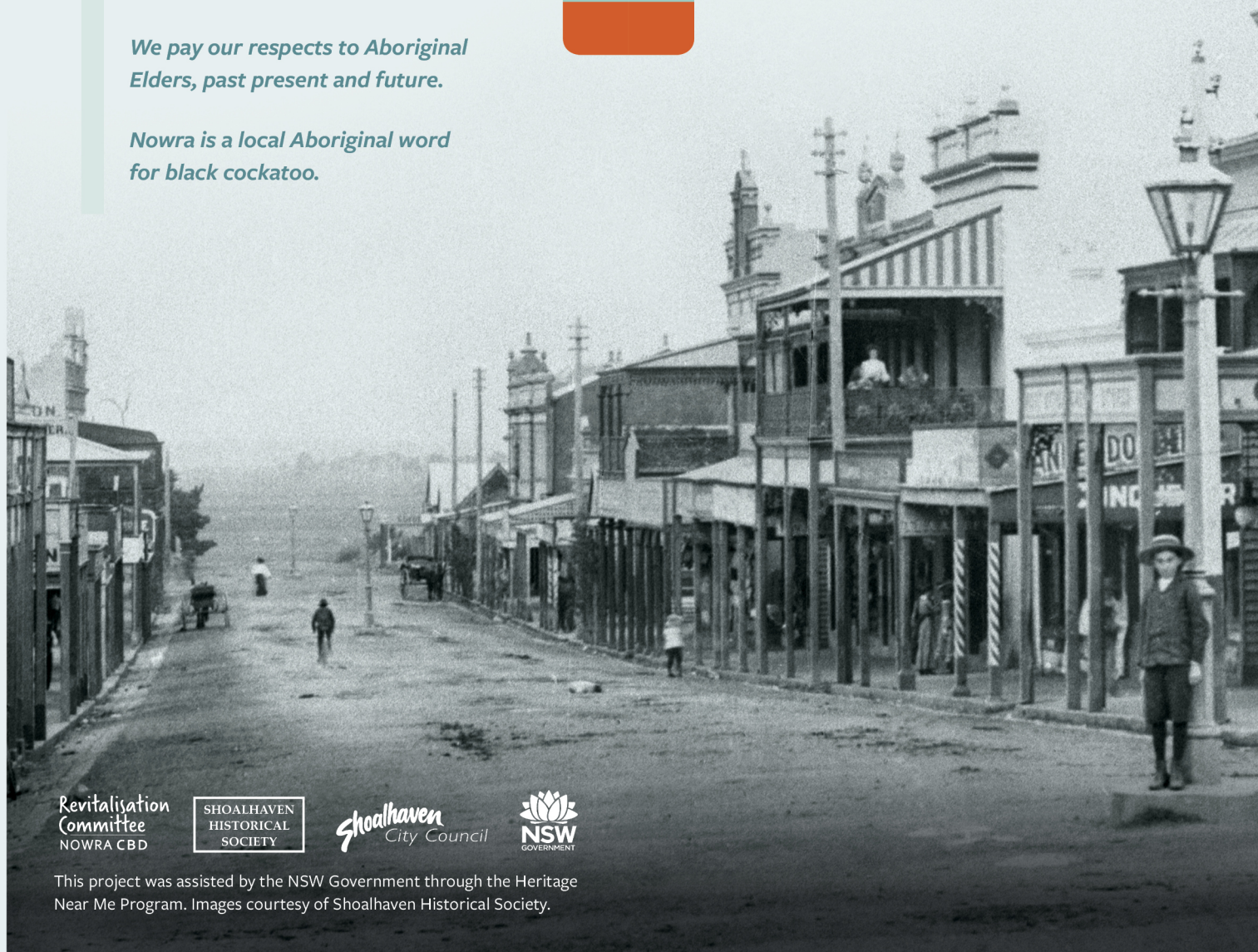
Nowra Public School

Victorian Classical style school
c. 1865 (National School)
1892 (Public School)

Architects:
Henry Robertson, Walter Liberty Vernon,
Richard Seymour Wallis

Nowra CBD
Historical Walk

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Revitalisation
Committee
NOWRA CBD

SHOALHAVEN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Shoalhaven
City Council

NSW
GOVERNMENT

This project was assisted by the NSW Government through the Heritage Near Me Program. Images courtesy of Shoalhaven Historical Society.

Nowra CBD Historical Walk

The Nowra CBD Historical Walk is a collaboration of the Nowra CBD Revitalisation Committee and the Shoalhaven Historical Society.

The walk commences at the Shoalhaven Historical Society on Plunkett Street with the law enforcement and educational precinct and takes you on a journey through space and backwards through time; showcasing four connected precincts of the CBD that contribute to Nowra's cultural and urban fabric.

Although the four precincts are connected, they can be experienced in isolation and in any order - each precinct is identified with a large information sign and each individual item with a plaque.



Plunkett Street

Law Enforcement & Education

Commencing at the Shoalhaven Historical Society on the corner of Kinghorne Street and Plunkett Street, the walk takes in the law enforcement and education buildings. It is a heritage conservation area so the buildings can be enjoyed in context. This section of the walk introduces prominent architects that have contributed to the town, including Walter Liberty Vernon and Cyril Blacket.



Berry Street & Junction Street Axis

Culture & Entertainment

Look out for the Roxy Theatre where you will find the large information sign for this precinct. This precinct showcases some of Nowra's most distinguishable buildings, such as the Roxy Theatre and the Mechanics Institute and School of Arts. Look out for similar architecture to Plunkett Street and see if you can match the architect.

Bridge Road & Moss Street End

Connections

After taking in the view of the School of Arts, you will come across the next information sign. Moving to the Bridge Road and Moss Street end, one gets a sense of the grandeur of the past by strolling down the tree-lined boulevard of Bridge Road Heritage Streetscape to the Nowra Bridge. Looping back through Harry Sawkins Park you arrive in Moss Street, which was once part of Greenhills Estate. The buildings of Moss Street have links to early commercial enterprise in Nowra.



Kinghorne Street & Junction Street Axis

Former Main Road

Across from Moss Street, you will find the next information sign on the corner of Kinghorne Street and North Street out the front of St Andrew's Manse. The final section of the walk leads one to the centre of town. Once dotted with hotels, Kinghorne Street and Junction Street axis would have been a major juncture up until the 1980's when the Princes Highway was diverted away from the CBD.



Nowra CBD Area

Start your journey here

1 Former Police Station & Lock-up
Corner of Kinghorne & Plunkett Streets

The Shoalhaven Historical Society Museum building was originally built as Nowra's police station and lock-up.

Architect: Walter Liberty Vernon. Period/style: Federation c. 1900

2 Nowra Courthouse
Plunkett Street

The Nowra Courthouse opened in March 1896 and has been a symbol of law and order ever since.

Architect: Walter Liberty Vernon. Period/style: Federation Romanesque c. 1896

3 Former Courthouse
84 Plunkett Street

No. 84 Plunkett Street was built to serve as a court house and lock-up. In 1905 it became the police sergeant's residence.

Architect: Alexander Dawson, Colonial Architects Office. Period/style: Symmetrical Victorian Georgian; Federation additions c. 1861

4 Former Teacher's Residence
82 Plunkett Street

No. 82 Plunkett Street was the former residence of the Nowra Public School head teacher.

Architect: William Edmund Kemp, Government Architect. Period/style: Victorian c. 1891

5 Nowra Public School
74 Plunkett Street

Nowra's first National School was conducted on private premises. The first school building was opened on 15 May 1865 at 74 Plunkett Street. It became Nowra Public School in 1892. The building has seen many alterations and additions over the years, with the three main iterations associated with three prominent architects.

Architects: Henry Robertson (GA), Walter Liberty Vernon (GA), and Richard Seymour Wells (Department of Education). Period/style: Victorian Classical c. 1865 (National School); c. 1892 (Public School)

6 All Saints Anglican Church & Church Hall (former St John's Church)
70 Plunkett Street

All Saints Church was dedicated by the Archbishop of Sydney on 18th April 1900. The attached church hall was originally built in 1880 to serve the St John's community, after St John's, Terara was devastated by the major floods of 1870.

Builder: Alex Johnston (All Saints); Mr Mason (St John's). Period/style: Federation Gothic Revival (All Saints); Victorian Gothic (St John's) c. 1899 (All Saints); 1880 (St John's)

7 Former Anglican Rectory
66 Plunkett Street

The Rectory was originally constructed for St John's, and preceded the church building. The first residing clergyman was Reverend Joshua Hargrave.

Builder: Mr Mason. Period/style: Victorian, with Federation additions c. 1878

8 The Roxy Theatre
41 Berry Street

The Roxy Theatre opened on 14 August 1935. The building facade and the front footpath have been updated to reflect and highlight the period of its construction.

Architect/Designer: Guy Crick & Bruce Turner. Period/style: Inter-war Art Deco c. 1935

9 The People's Emporium - Woodhill & Co
26 Berry Street

This building is known by many names based on its history of ownership and use. Originally constructed as a "two-storey shop and residence" for John McArthur and Son, it was known as 'the Peoples Emporium'. It was later known as 'Woodhills'. To many, it is commonly now referred to as 'the Spotlight building'. Consistently it has been a visual landmark and an impromptu meeting place.

Builder: John Schadel. Period/style: Victorian c. 1888

10 Walsh's Building
90 Junction Street

It's not just the building of significance here - P. Walsh & Sons originally opened in Terara in 1877, and continued at the Nowra site from 1892 - 2015.

Architect: Cyril Blacket
Period/style: Victorian c. 1892

11 Inter-War Art Deco Commercial Building
78-80 Junction Street

This building was constructed during the peak of the Great Depression in Australia, which may have been a source of hope for many locals.

The detailing to the parapet, walls and doorways, angular motifs and geometric openings highlight its Art-Deco character.

Architect: unknown. Period/Style: Inter-war Art Deco c. 1932

12 Victorian Commercial Building
76 Junction Street

Used by servicemen as 'Comfort Rooms' during WWII, this building highlights Nowra's longstanding connection with the Australia's servicemen and women.

Architect: Cyril Blacket. Period/style: Victorian c. 1899

13 Former Nowra Post Office - Postman's Tavern
72 Junction Street

Erected in 1883 as the Nowra Post Office, the building served that purpose for 110 years. It was designed by Government Architect WL Vernon and shares characteristics of his other architectural designs.

Architect: Walter Liberty Vernon, Government Architect. Period/style: Federation Romanesque c. 1883.

14 Mechanics Institute and School of Arts
Berry Street

The Mechanics Institute and School of Arts Movements were highly respected institutions and a focal point of community life. This building became the premier venue for community and entertainment events. At one stage it was also home to the Shire Council and library.

Architect: Cyril Blacket. Period/style: Victorian Classical c. 1892

15 William Batt Memorial Garden & Bridge Road Heritage Streetscape
Road Reserve - Bridge Road

This garden landscape monument is dedicated to former Town Clerk, William C Batt, who was responsible for the beautification of the area. It marks the end of the Bridge Road Heritage Streetscape and once contributed to a 'sense of arrival' into Nowra CBD.

16 The Bridge Hotel
Corner of Bridge Road and North Street

In January 1885 Henry Moss applied to the Licensing Court for a conditional licence for a 'large and elegantly finished two-storey hotel'. It wasn't until 1887 that the Victorian style Bridge Hotel finally opened its doors and became Nowra's fourth major hotel.

First publican: Mr Benjamin Thompson. Period/style: Victorian c. 1887

17 'Hazelmere'
9 Moss Street

Originally home to Mr Henry Richard Hodgkinson and his wife Janet nee Fleming, who ran the neighbouring 'Iron Store'. In 1903, both 'Hazelmere' and the 'Iron Store' were sold to Dr Francis William Kane. The site has connections to Nowra's early commercial development and medical practice.

Architect: Unknown. Period/style: Victorian Georgian c. 1880

18 Former 'Iron Store'
3 Moss Street

The Victorian weatherboard cottage at 3 Moss Street is thought to have evolved from the former 'Iron Store'. The western side wall provides evidence of the 'Iron Store' being clad in corrugated iron. The 'Iron Store' was a general store run by Henry Hodgkinson who resided in the neighbouring 'Hazelmere'. It was later sold to Dr Francis William Kane.

Architect: Unknown. Period/style: Victorian c. 1887

19 Fitzgerald's Residence
1 Moss Street

This building is a rare example of a rural residence inspired by metropolitan terrace housing. The land was purchased from Greenhills Estate by James Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald built the nearby Imperial Hotel, now the Australian, to replace the original Greenhills Hotel.

Architect: Unknown. Period/style: Victorian c. 1897

20 Armstrong's Saddlery
83 North Street

Armstrong was originally located in Terara. He was a saddler and the town's first postmaster. After the devastating floods of 1870, he moved to Nowra and eventually opened his business in his newly constructed 'shop and residence'. The building occupies an important corner on the former main road through Nowra.

Architect: Unknown. Period/style: Victorian c. 1890

21 Former Imperial Hotel
4 Kinghorne Street

There have been hotels in this vicinity since the 1860s, but James Fitzgerald was responsible for the three-storey Imperial Hotel being built in 1886 to replace the former 'Greenhills'. It's not a nominated heritage item but has links to Fitzgerald as an early hotelier in the CBD. c. 1886

22 St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Church Hall and Manse
5 Kinghorne Street

This Victorian Academic Gothic period church was designed by distinguished American architect John Horbury Hunt in the 'Early English' style. Designed for the Presbyterian community, it also served the Anglican community for period of time prior to St. John's being constructed (see Item 6). The church hall and manse are also located on the grounds.

Architect: John Horbury Hunt (Church). Period/style: Victorian Academic Gothic, Early English style (Church); Federation Ecclesiastical Gothic (Church Hall); Victorian Gothic (Manse). c. 1875 (Church); c. 1904 (Church Hall); c. 1892 (Manse)

23 'Roslyn Court'
21 Kinghorne Street

This two storey Inter-war Art Deco building was erected in October 1936. Whilst the shop front has seen extensive modification, the upper level and the northern elevation reveals quite an interesting interpretation of the Inter-war Art- Deco style in a town now largely devoid of architecture from that period.

Builder: W Draper. Period/style: Inter-war Art Deco c. 1936

24 Site of Former Prince of Wales Hotel
Intersection of Junction & Kinghorne Streets

On this site on the north-west corner of Kinghorne and Junction Street intersection, the Prince of Wales Hotel was a landmark for more than 100 years. It was built by Anton Wolfe in 1883, burnt to the ground in 1901 but was later rebuilt with verandahs and balcony.

25 Site of Former Albion Hotel
Intersection of Junction & Kinghorne Streets

The corner now occupied by the Commonwealth Bank was formerly the site of a hotel that was opened by William Wheatley as the Albion in 1880 and had its name changed to the Hotel Nowra in 1926. On this site the Prince of Wales Hotel was a landmark for more than 100 years.

First Publican: Anton Wolfe C. 1883

26 Site of Former Commercial Bank, including Original Stables
Intersection of Junction & Kinghorne Streets

This site was purchased by the Commercial Banking Co in 1884. The bank's original horse stables remain on the site today.

Architect: Messrs Mansfield Bros. Period/style: Victorian c. 1888

27 Former Automotive Dealership
82-84 Kinghorne Street

Conrad's Holden dealership, including a GMH workshop, operated from this site in the 1950's. The car yard spread over two blocks of land and traded from 82-84 Kinghorne Street.

28 Former Butchery
27 Kinghorne Street

Long association as a butchery. One of the Butchers, AK Schofield, is the namesake of the adjoining Schofields Lane. c. 1880