

# CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN NOWRA SHOWGROUND



prepared by  
OTTO CSERHALMI & PARTNERS PTY LTD  
on behalf of  
SHOALHAVEN CITY COUNCIL, February 2003

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nowra Showground is located on the western edge of the Nowra city street grid and overlooks the Shoalhaven River. This Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by Shoalhaven City Council to establish the cultural significance of the showground and to enable future planning decisions to be made which take into account those elements and aspects of the site which are considered of historic, cultural or aesthetic significance. A Landscape Master Plan was commissioned as part of the brief which also took into account the heritage significance of the place.

The Nowra Showground comprises three distinct areas or precincts, separated by two vehicular and pedestrian entries which extend into the site - Junction and Worrigee Streets. Precinct 1, the Main Showground, was the first area developed. Major items within this area include the Main Oval, the Federation Pavilion, entries to the historic Ben's Walk and Hanging Rock Lookout which has picturesque views over the Shoalhaven River. In 1927 an area was added to the north side of Junction Street. Precinct 2, known still as the "Added Area" has a playing field and the Community Youth Centre on its western side. Precinct 3, the Horse and Cattle Area, is to the south of Worrigee Street and was developed in two phases. The first extension was in 1937, while the second was in 1954 when the Council purchased the final area of land extending to Plunkett Street. This precinct is characterised by its rural flavour, with a judging ring and a number of timber and steel horse and cattle stalls. All three precincts have extensive tree and grass cover which contribute greatly to the aesthetic significance of the showground site.

As well as the annual Nowra Show, the showground facilities are used by a number of sporting and community groups including the Nowra Warriors Rugby Club, the Nowra Cricket Club, the Nowra Gymnastics Club, the Nowra Croquet Club, among others. The Federation Pavilion is regularly used for community functions and for conventions. Several buildings are leased from the Trust including the Changerooms, the Poultry Pavilion, the Nowra Croquet Club and the Community Youth Centre. The area around Hanging Rock Lookout and the two entries to Ben's Walk are used on a daily basis by casual visitors and picnickers.

A number of agricultural associations formed in the Shoalhaven area in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These were The Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association (1863), The Ulladulla Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1866), The Shoalhaven Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1869), Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1874), Broughton Creek Horticultural Association (1883) and Kangaroo Valley Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1886).

The first show held at the new grounds was the twelfth annual show of the Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association and it occurred on the 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1886. In 1903 the Nowra Municipal Council became the sole Trustee of the Showground. The Federation Pavilion was completed on the west side of the Main Oval by 1905 and followed by McKenzie's Gates (Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet) in 1907-08, Monaghan's Memorial Drinking Fountain in 1912, and the Nowra War Memorial Gates in 1931. The Federation Pavilion was enlarged in 1939, the Community Youth Centre constructed in 1972 and the Changerooms in 1985. In 1988 the Federation Pavilion was renovated and in 1993 alterations and additions were made to the rear of the building.



Nowra Showground itself, as well as a number of individual items have been deemed of Local heritage significance in the State Heritage Inventory database. These include Hanging Rock Lookout, the entries to Ben's Walk, the Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet (McKenzie's Gates), the Federation Pavilion and the Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain. The Inter – War Castellated Gateway and Sculpture (Nowra War Memorial Gates) has been deemed to be of Regional significance, although the categories now used by the NSW Heritage Office are limited to Local and State only.

Aspects of the significance of Nowra Showground are:

- As a focus for agricultural, sporting and community gatherings since 1886, it is of high social significance.
- The showground is held in high esteem by the district community as a venue for the annual show since 1886, and sporting and social events. The War Memorial entry gates are of special significance as a tangible reminder of Australia's participation in various international war arenas, especially World War One.
- It is associated with early pioneers of the Nowra area including members of the Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association, especially James Monaghan, the first secretary of this association in 1874.
- As a showground complex the aesthetic qualities of built structures such as the Federation Pavilion, the Federation Gothic War Memorial Gates, the rustic qualities of the Horse and Cattle Area, the splendid stands of mature trees and the spectacular views from Hanging Rock Lookout combine to give it landmark qualities.
- The showground with its pavilion overlooking the oval and the adjoining Horse and Cattle area is a fine example of a design of a regional showground. The level of intactness of the pavilion and the war memorial gates display examples of architectural design characteristics of the time.

All these aspects of the significance of the Nowra Showground should be conserved and enhanced in any future developments or changes to the place. Significant fabric and landscaping elements are identified and recommendations made about how they should be treated in accordance with their significance.

Conservation policies and actions are outlined to guide in any future works or uses at the Nowra Showground site. General policies cover the areas of: conservation management plans, conservation planning, site management and community use, while more specific policies include conserving the setting of the showground, the cultural landscape, conservation and treatment of building fabric, building and landscape management, future uses and new works.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 BACKGROUND

This Conservation Management Plan was commissioned by the Shoalhaven City Council. A Landscape Master Plan for the showground also forms part of the commission. The Landscape Master Plan as well as considering use and landscape design values has also taken into account conservation issues arising out of the Conservation Management Plan.

### 2.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This Conservation Management Plan aims to be a guiding document when planning or documenting future works at Nowra Showground. It is intended to be a working document, providing information in a readily accessible format.

The primary objectives of the Conservation Management Plan are to:

- ♦ establish the cultural significance of the Nowra Showground site, its component parts and its setting by the Shoalhaven River.
- ♦ formulate appropriate policies for the conservation of the cultural significance of the Nowra Showground, taking into account its historical and social significance, the significant physical fabric including the landscaping, the scenic bushland setting, and the on-going pressure of demand for various sporting and recreational activities at the site.
- ♦ formulate appropriate policies for the long term conservation of the cultural significance of the place. These policies are to include future usage, general conservation, on-going maintenance and management of the buildings and landscape. These policies are to be implemented by the Trustee, Shoalhaven City Council.



## 2.3 STUDY METHODOLOGY

This Conservation Management Plan was prepared by Otto Cserhalmi & Partners Pty Ltd, and generally follows the format and guidelines set out in *The Conservation Plan* by Dr. J. S. Kerr (2000). The terms *place*, *fabric*, *conservation*, *maintenance*, *preservation*, *restoration*, *reconstruction*, *adaptation* and *compatible use* used throughout this document have the meaning given them in the *Australian ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (The Burra Charter, 1999)*. These terms are defined in Section 2.9.

The Burra Charter was revised in 1999. The revised charter has been used in the preparation of this document. A comparison between the old and the new versions is included with the Charter in the Appendices.

The investigation and assessment of significance of the Nowra Showground and the suggestions for the management of that significance generally follow the guidelines and procedures recommended in the *NSW Heritage Manual*.

This Conservation Management Plan includes:

- a review of historical and archival material relating to the site and the analysis of the chronological development of the showground site;
- an investigation of the existing physical fabric including the landscaping to determine the extent and condition of original elements and the nature of subsequent changes; and
- an analysis of the documentary, physical and comparative evidence to establish the nature and degree of significance of the site and individual components. This information is summarised in the Statement of Significance on which the Conservation Policies are based.
- the separate Landscape Master Plan was prepared by James Pfeiffer and Associates who also contributed to landscaping aspects in the Conservation Management Plan.

The Conservation Management Plan seeks to take account of issues such as the constraints and requirements arising from the site's significance. It also considers the general physical condition of the buildings and their setting and any relevant requirements of Shoalhaven City Council and other users of the site in the development of an overall framework for the conservation and management of the place

The Conservation Policies with specific guidelines for the conservation of the buildings and other physical elements are set out in the document.

## 2.4 STUDY TEAM

This Conservation Management Plan was prepared by:

Geoff Stennett  
Senior Conservation Architect

James Pfeiffer  
Catherine Lewis  
Landscape Architect

Robyn Florance  
Historian



## 2.5 CONSULTATION AND REVIEW

Otto Cserhalmi & Partners Pty Ltd gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the following in the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan for Nowra Showground site.

Comments on the first draft document were made by:  
Declan McDonald - Shoalhaven Council Manager Parks and Recreation.

James Harris - Council Recreation and Strategy Officer  
Lorraine McCarthy - Council Land Classification Registrar  
John Flett - Council Heritage Officer

## 2.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The historical research undertaken during the preparation of this Conservation Management Plan was to enable the preparation of the contextual and historical outline and for the analysis of Cultural Significance. Copies of historic photographs were obtained for inclusion in the report and to trace the sequence of development of the place.

The historic research undertaken, and the resulting historical outline, is not intended to be a definitive history of the place, rather it is to establish the historical context of the Nowra Showground, in order that a Statement of Significance could be prepared. The J. S. Kerr model of a chronological history, rather than a thematic history has been employed in this case.

In preparing Conservation Management Plans it is necessary to assess the available documentary evidence. Whilst anecdotal information can help establish the broad context, the Analysis of Significance and the Statement of Significance, as set out in Dr. James Kerr's methodology must be based on an analysis of evidence: both physical and documentary.

Finally, this document is a Conservation Management Plan for the Nowra Showground and not a series of Conservation Management Plans for individual items within the showground. A detailed analysis of the fabric of the Federation Pavilion, for example, was not carried out. Analysis of building fabric and of the landscaping is carried out to the degree which allows general assessment of significance. An individual Conservation Management Plan of the Federation Pavilion would enable a thorough detailed analysis of building fabric, but could not be prepared within the scope of this study.

## 2.7 PREVIOUS STUDIES

*Shoalhaven City Council Heritage Study 1995-1998* prepared by Peter Freeman Pty Ltd

*Nowra Showground Tree Survey and Analysis* December 1996  
prepared by Open Space Management Students Illawarra Institute of Technology Yallah

Shoalhaven Heritage Inventory  
Nowra Showground and Sports Complex  
Federation Brick Pavilion  
Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet  
Inter-War Castellated Gateway & Sculpture  
Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain  
Hanging Rock Lookout  
Ben's Walk and Aboriginal Art Sites



## 2.8 ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations may be used in the document:

AONSW	Archives Office of NSW
AZP	Archaeological Zoning Plan
BCA	Building Code of Australia
CMP	Conservation Management Plan
DCP	Development Control Plan
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EP&A	Environmental Planning & Assessment
HO	Heritage Office
ICOMOS	International Council of Monuments and Sites
LEP	Local Environmental Plan
NT	National Trust of Australia
PN	Planning NSW
POM	Plan of Management
RAIA	Royal Australian Institute of Architects
REP	Regional Environmental Plan
RNE	Register of the National Estate
SHI	State Heritage Inventory
SHR	State Heritage Register

## 2.9 DEFINITIONS

The following definitions explain the terms commonly used in Conservation Planning. They have been drawn from the Burra Charter and from the NSW Heritage Office publication, *Heritage Terms and Abbreviations* (1996).

### Aboriginal Significance

An item is of Aboriginal Heritage Significance if it demonstrates Aboriginal history and culture. The National Parks and Wildlife Service has the primary responsibility for items of Aboriginal significance in NSW.

### Adaptation

means modifying a *place* to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

### Aesthetic significance

An item having this value is significant because it has visual or sensory appeal, landmark qualities and/or creative or technical excellence.

### Archaeological Assessment

A study undertaken to establish the archaeological significance (research potential) of a particular site and to propose appropriate management actions.

### Archaeological Significance

A category of significance referring to scientific value or 'research potential' that is, the ability to yield information through investigation.

### Archaeological Site

A place that contains evidence of past human activity. Below-ground archaeological sites include building foundations, occupation deposits, features and artefacts. Above ground archaeological sites include buildings, works, industrial structures and relics that are intact or ruined.

### Archaeological Zoning Plan

A graphic plan of a place indicating relative archaeological potential of areas or zones within this. An archaeological zoning plan is prepared by undertaking broad scale archaeological assessment over a large area.

### Associations

means the special connections that exist between people and a *place*.

### Burra Charter (and its guidelines)

Charter adopted by Australia ICOMOS which establishes the nationally accepted principles for the conservation of places of cultural significance.

### Conservation

means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain all its cultural significance.

The earlier version of the Burra Charter noted that conservation includes *maintenance* and may according to circumstance include *preservation*, *restoration* and *adaptation* and will more commonly be a combination of these.

### Contemporary Community Esteem

The valuing of a heritage item by a recognised local, regional or state-wide community because it forms a strong part of their cultural identity.

### Compatible Use

means a use which respects the cultural significance of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

### Cultural Landscape

Those areas of the landscape which have been significantly modified by human activity. They include rural lands such as farms, villages and mining towns as well as country towns.

### Cultural Significance

means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its *fabric*, *setting*, *use*, *associations*, *meanings*, records, *related places* and *related objects*. Places may have a range of values for different individual components, fixtures, contents and objects.

### Curtilage

The geographical area that provides the physical context for an item and which contributes to its heritage significance. Land title boundaries and heritage curtilages do not necessarily coincide.

### Development Control Plan (DCP)

A plan prepared by a local council to provide more detailed development controls and guidelines to accompany an LEP. Often used for Heritage Conservation Areas.

### Environmental Heritage

means those places, buildings, works, relics, moveable objects and precincts, of State or local heritage significance (Section 4 of the Heritage Act 1977)

### Excavation Permit

A permit issued by the Heritage Council of NSW under Section 60 or Section 140 of the Heritage Act 1977 to disturb or excavate a relic.

### Exemptions

Work on heritage items covered by conservation orders which can be exempted under Section 57 (2) of the Heritage Act from the requirements to obtain the Heritage Council's consent.

### Fabric

means all the physical material of the *place* including components, fixtures, contents and objects.

### Heritage Act 1977

The statutory framework for identification and conservation of heritage in NSW. The Act also describes the composition and powers of the Heritage Council.

### Heritage Item

A landscape, place, building, structure, relic or other work of heritage significance. See also the *Heritage Act 1977*



**Heritage Significance**

of aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, natural or aesthetic value for past, present or future generations.

**Historical Significance**

An item having this value is significant because of the importance of its relationship to the evolving pattern of our cultural history.

**Interim Heritage Order (IHO)**

An order made under Part 3 of the Heritage Amendment Act 1998. The Minister may make an interim heritage order for a place, building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct that the Minister considers may, on further inquiry or investigation, be found to be of state or local Heritage Significance.

The Minister may delegate the power to place ICO's to local councils however in general the orders will be made by the Minister, following recommendations by the Heritage Council.

**Integrity**

A heritage item is said to have integrity if its assessment and statement of significance is supported by sound research and analysis, and its fabric and curtilage are largely intact.

**Interpretation**

means all of the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

**Local Environmental Plan (LEP)**

A statutory plan prepared by a local council in accordance with the EP&A Act. An LEP regulates the carrying out of development within a local government area and controls the use and development of land and the conditions under which change may occur.

**Local Significance**

Items of Heritage Significance which are fine examples, or rare, at the local community level.

**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.

**Meanings**

denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

**Moveable Heritage**

Heritage Items not fixed to a site or place, for example, furniture, locomotives and archives.

**National Parks and Wildlife Act (NPWS Act)**

Statutory Framework for the care and control and management of natural areas and Aboriginal cultural relics in New South Wales. European cultural relics on sites owned by the NPWS also come under the jurisdiction of the NPWS Act.

**Oral Histories**

Historical research carried out by interviewing people associated with a heritage item, in a planned manner to answer questions which is archivally recorded on audio equipment so that it can be transcribed and analysed.

**Place**

means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

**Permanent Conservation Order (PCO)**

An order made under Section 44 of the Heritage Act to protect a significant heritage item in NSW. The order remains in place indefinitely unless revoked. Under the 1999 changes to the Heritage Act PCO's have been replaced by inclusion on the State Heritage Register (SHR).

**Preservation**

means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

**Rarity**

An item having this value is significant because it represents a rare, endangered or unusual aspect of our history or cultural heritage.

**Reconstruction**

means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and it is distinguished by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.

**Regional Environmental Plan**

Prepared by the Director-General of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and made by the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning following public exhibition. It deals with matters important to a specific region such as land use, development and the conservation of heritage places.

**Related Object**

means an object that contributes to the cultural significance of the *place*, but is not at that place.

**Related Place**

means a *place* that contributes to the cultural significance of another place.

**Representativeness**

Items having this value are significant because they are fine representative examples of an important class of significant items or environments.

**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.

**Section 60 Application**

An application made under Section 60 of the Heritage Act, for approval to make changes to an item covered by a PCO. Routine maintenance, and other works which do not affect the significance of an item are exempt for Heritage Council Approval.

**Section 170 Register**

Section 170 of the Heritage Act requires each NSW Government Agency to prepare and maintain a register of heritage items in their ownership or under their control. This provision continues under the amended act, with extended responsibilities for Government Agencies.

**Setting**

means the area around a *place*, which may include the visual catchment.

**Social Significance**

Items having this value are significant through their social, spiritual or cultural association with a recognisable community.

**State Heritage Inventory (SHI)**

An inventory of places of heritage significance maintained by the NSW Heritage Office. It includes items of state significance (see below).

**State Heritage Register (SHR)**

This register, required under Part 3A of the Heritage Amendment Act 1998, lists items of State Heritage Significance. It is maintained by the NSW Heritage Office and is available on the internet at [www.heritage.nsw.gov.au](http://www.heritage.nsw.gov.au). Part 3A notes "*the automatic listing of items that were formerly the subject of a Permanent Conservation Order, or that are owned by Government Instrumentalities and identified as being of State Heritage Significance*".

**State Heritage Significance**

in relation to a place building, work, relic, moveable object or precinct, means significance to the State in relation to the historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value of an item (Section 4A (1) of the Heritage Act 1977).

**State Significance**

Items of heritage significance which are fine examples, or rare, at a state community level.

**Statement of Heritage Impact**

Analyses the impact of proposed works on the significance of a heritage item.

**Technical/Research Significance**

Items having this value are significant because of their contribution or potential contribution to an understanding of our cultural history or environment.

**Use**

means the functions of a *place*, as well as the activities and practice that may occur at the *place*.

### 3.0 CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 LOCATION OF NOWRA SHOWGROUND

The city of Nowra is the main commercial and administrative centre of the city of Shoalhaven and lies immediately to the south of the Shoalhaven River approximately 160 kms south of Sydney. Nowra Showground is situated on the western edge of the main town street grid on high ground directly above the Shoalhaven River. The site commands fine views over the river to the north and west and to the city and coastal land to the east.

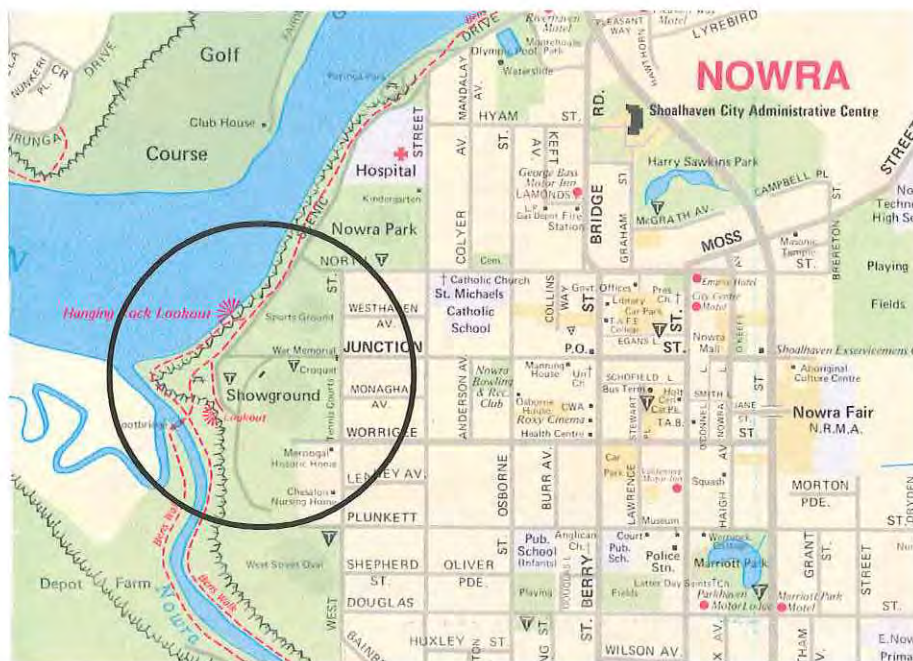
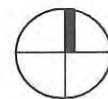


Fig 3.1  
Location of Nowra Showground.



#### 3.2 OWNERSHIP

The Nowra Showground is owned partly by the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation and partly by Shoalhaven City Council. The Council is the Trust Manager for that area of land held by the Crown.



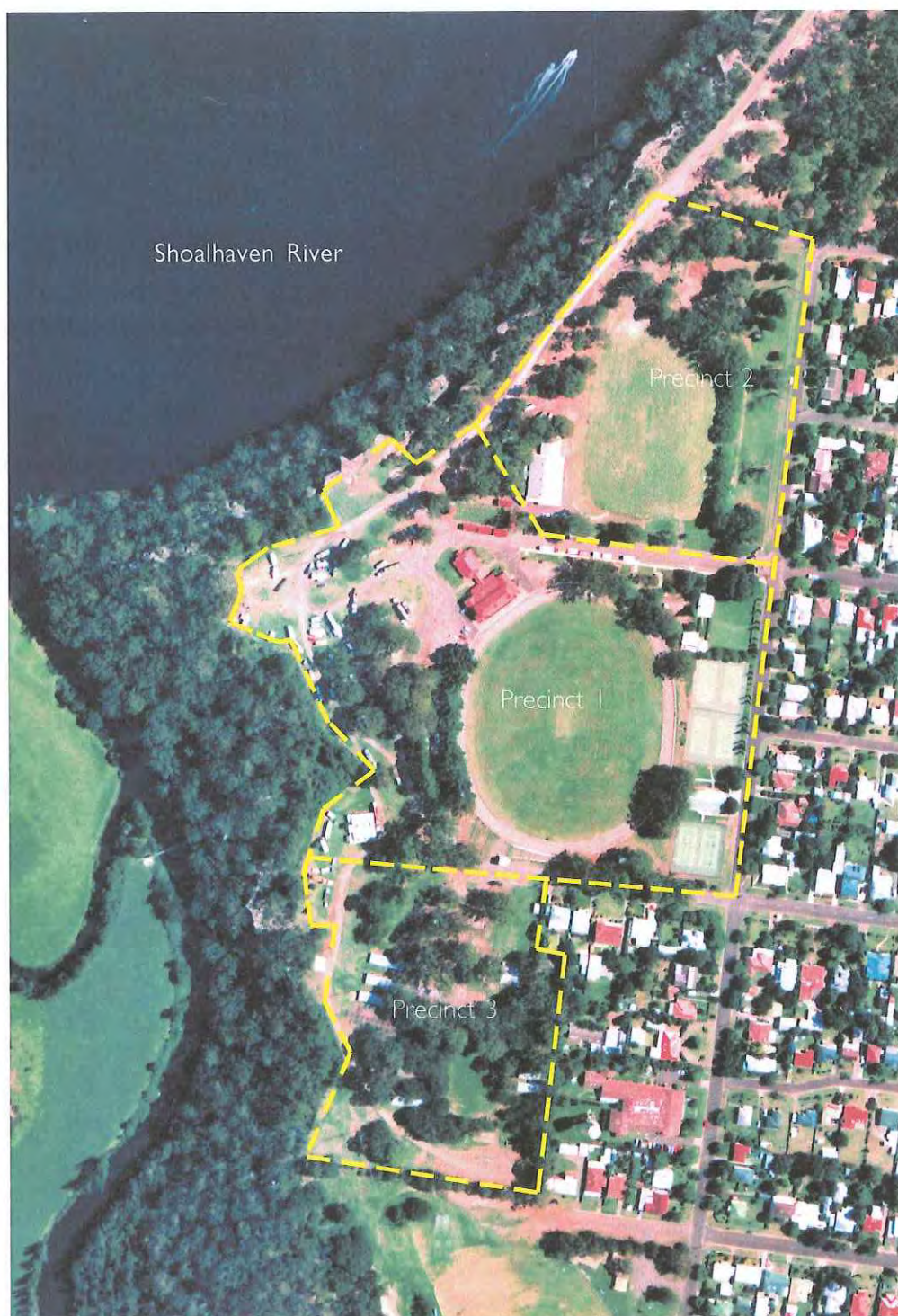
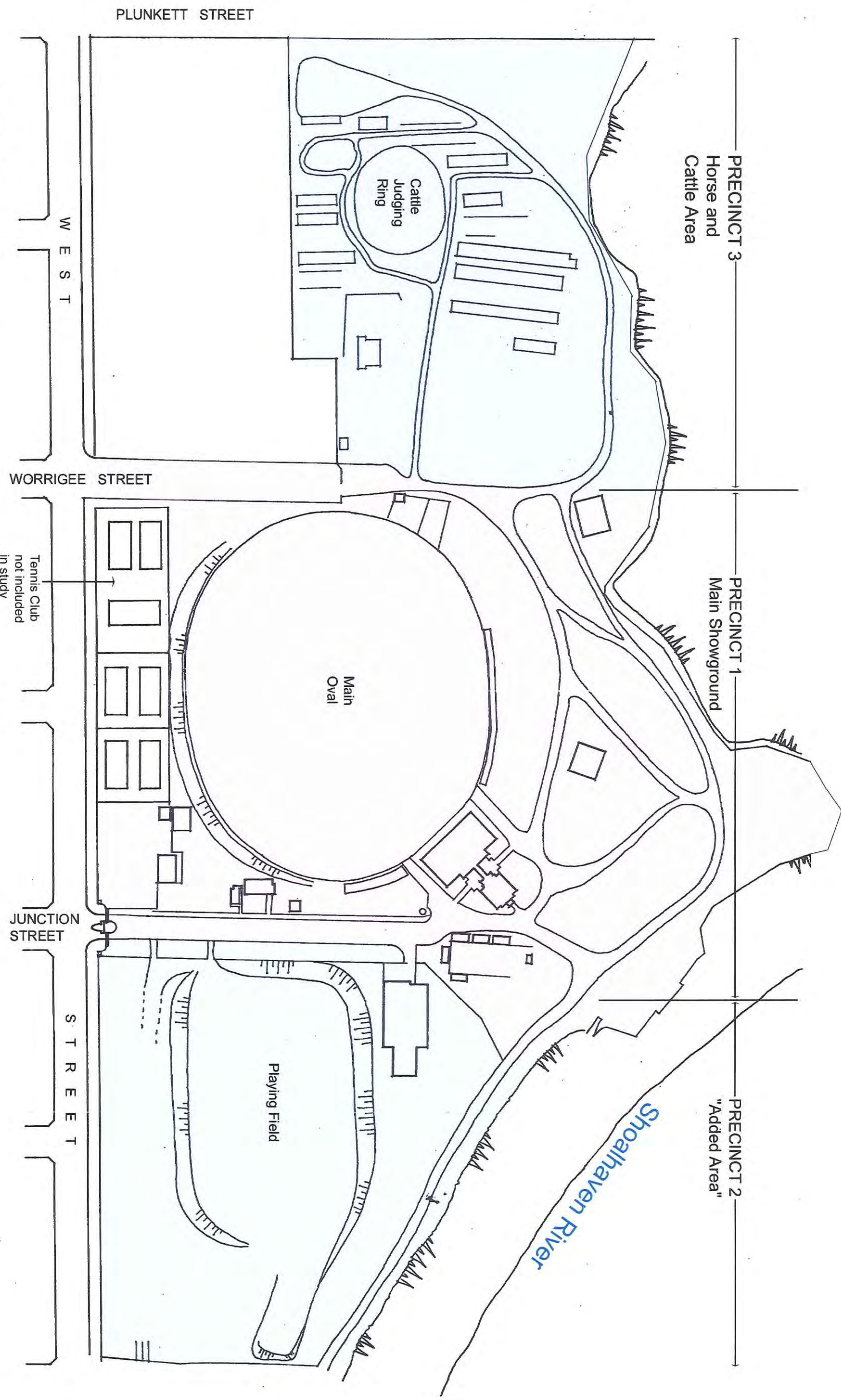


Fig. 3.2  
Aerial Photograph of showground site showing precincts.  
Photo: NSW Department of Information Technology and Management



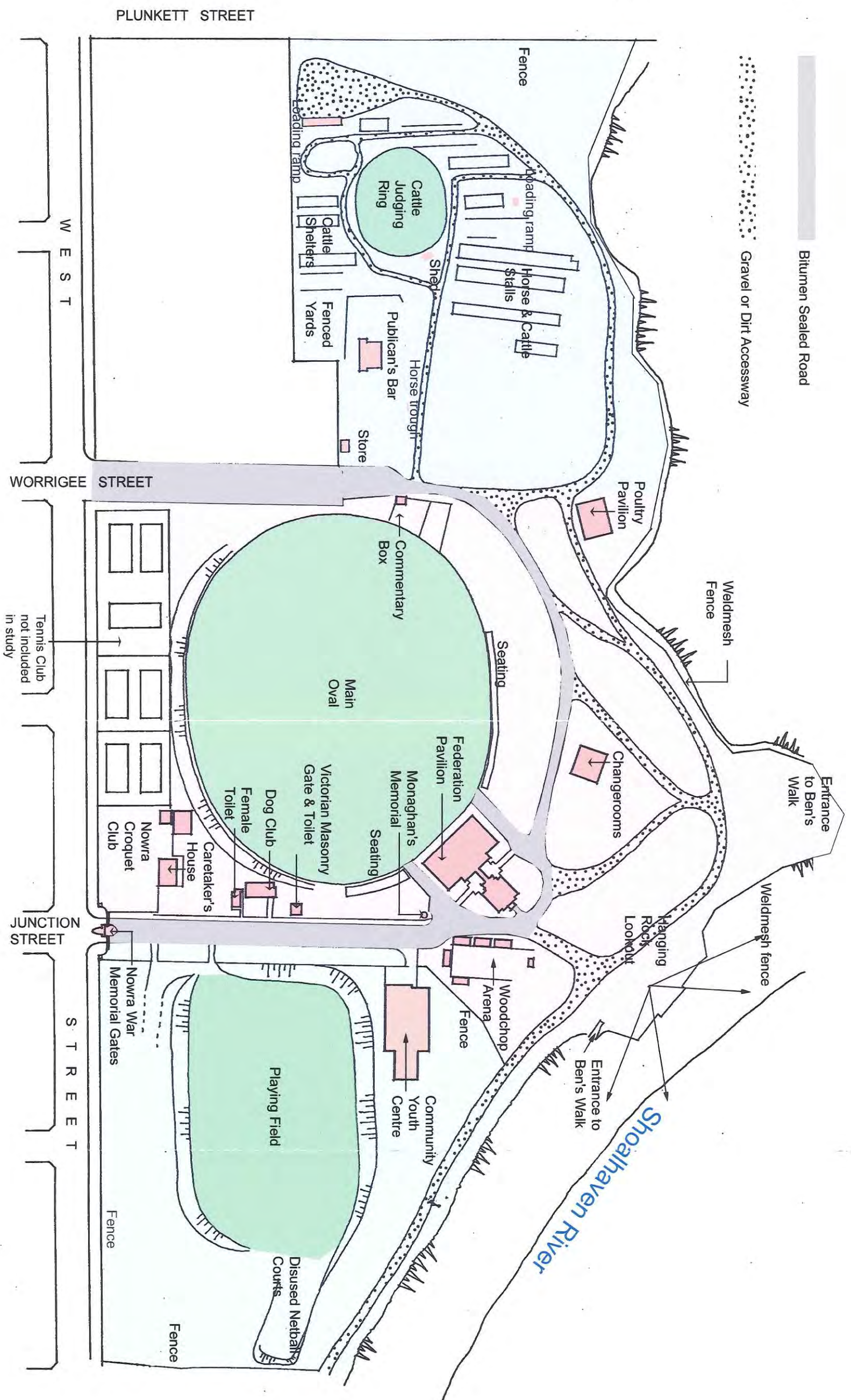
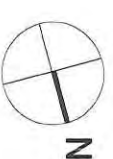


DRG 1- PRECINCTS  
Nowra Showground





# DRG 2 - LOCATION OF BUILDINGS & MAIN FEATURES Nowra Showground





# DRG 3 - DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING TREES Nowra Showground



For detailed tree survey refer to Nowra Showground  
Tree Survey



### 3.3 STUDY AREA

The study area comprises approximately 16.5 hectares of land and is defined as that land contained within the present chainwire and weldmesh perimeter fencing. (Fig. 3.2 and Plans Drg. 1 & 2). The site encompasses three main precincts or functional areas:

- **Precinct 1**  
Located between Worrigea Street and the western extension of Junction Street, the Main Showground area is dominated by the Main Oval and the Federation Pavilion.
- **Precinct 2**  
The "Added Area" to the north of Junction Street contains a large open playing oval and Community Youth Centre.
- **Precinct 3**  
An area south of Worrigea Street occupied primarily by cattle and horse stalls and a judging ring.

All three precincts are substantially grassed and contain stands of mature trees.

#### 3.3.1 PRECINCT 1 - MAIN SHOWGROUND

Bounded on the east by West Street, Worrigea Street to the south, the extension of Junction Street on the north and by Nowra Creek to the west this precinct covers approximately 73,000m<sup>2</sup>.

This area comprises:

##### **Main Oval**

Approximately 185 m long by 150 m wide this turfed oval is used throughout the year by various sporting groups (Fig. 3.3 & Plan Drg 2). On the outer circumference there is a trotting track with an inner rail. The perimeter is enclosed by a low timber fence with timber bench spectator seating to the north, west and south.



A steep embankment to the south and the proximity of the Shoalhaven District Tennis Association Courts prevents the placement of seating in this area. The tennis club and courts are not included in the area for the present study. Associated with the oval at the southern end is a fibre cement clad two level Commentary Box.



Fig 3.3 - The Main Oval looking south. The Commentary Box is in the right background.

#### **Federation Pavilion**

Opened in 1905 this grandstand building is located on the north west side of the Main Oval, with its back to the Shoalhaven River (Figs. 3.4 & 3.5). The lower level constructed of painted masonry comprises a multi-purpose hall of 422m<sup>2</sup>, a mezzanine level, two breakout rooms, an office and a kitchen area. The upper seating area is accessed by two sets of broad stairs on the oval side and is roofed with a long metal clad hipped and gabled roof supported on slender timber columns. The column tops and gable ends are finished with timber slatted fringes and filigree work.

In 1993 additions and alterations were carried out with an addition to the west linked by a covered walkway. This new area comprises a meeting room, toilets, store and kitchen.





Fig. 3.4 Federation Pavilion - view from the north east with inner rail of Main Oval trotting track in foreground.



Fig 3.5 Federation Pavilion - view from the north west with Woodchop Arena and Judging Tower in foreground.



Fig. 3.6 Woodchop Arena - looking north west at the end of Junction Street extension.

#### **Woodchop Arena**

Immediately to the north of the Pavilion is the Woodchop Arena which was constructed in 1999 (Figs. 3.5, 3.6 & Plan Drg. 2). The central grassed woodchopping area is bordered on three sides by open timber framed, metal sheet roofed spectator shelters with tiered seating. The design is stylistically similar to that of the Federation Pavilion. Constructed in the last 10 years and built over an existing substation, a two level brick Judging Tower stands at the western end of the arena complex.

#### **Changerooms (Nowra Warriors Rugby Club)**

Located about 30 metres to the south west of the Pavilion this modern brick and metal clad roof building accommodates two change rooms as well as toilet facilities (Fig. 3.7 & Plan Drg. 2). It is leased from the Showground Trust.

#### **Poultry Pavilion**

Located in the south western corner of the precinct, this is a modern steel framed and clad double gabled utilitarian shed building with permanent rows of display cages (Fig. 3.8 & Plan Drg. 2). It is under lease from the Showground Trust.





Fig. 3.7 Changerooms - viewed from the rear of the Federation Pavilion looking south west.



Fig. 3.8 Poultry Pavilion - looking south west.

**The Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet**

What is now a male toilet is located on the northern side of the Main Oval on the extension of Junction Street (Fig. 3.9 & Plan Drg.2). It once formed the entry to the showground and was called the McKenzie's Gate as well as the Members Entrance Gate. Constructed in 1907- 1908 it has rendered masonry walls with parapeted gables, classical moulded cornices and simulated quoins at the corners. The roof is painted corrugated iron.



Fig 3.9 Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet - looking south west from Junction Street with the Federation Pavilion in the background.

**Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain (Monaghan's Memorial)**

Located 10 metres to the north east of the Pavilion this drinking fountain was erected in 1912 by the Nowra Agricultural & Horticultural Association to the memory of John Monaghan a longtime member of this association ( Fig. 3.10 & Plan Drg. 2). He was also the first white child to be born south of the Shoalhaven River.

The cast iron fountain has typical Late Victorian detailing incorporating a pedestal with faceted base and capital, a bowl with turned lip and an upper decorative section with a tap and bubblers.

**Female Toilet**

Situated further to the east of the Victorian Masonry Gate this building is a simple utilitarian brick structure with a gabled metal clad roof. The gables are infilled with timber battened fibro with a central timber framed ventilation opening (Fig. 3.11 & Drg. 2).





Fig. 3.10 Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain (Monaghan's Memorial) - looking west with the Federation Pavilion on the left and the Woodchop Arena on the right.



Fig. 3.11 Female Toilet - with Dog Club on the right looking south from Junction Street extension.

#### **Dog Club**

Standing between the male and female toilets this simple facebrick structure is roofed in corrugated fibre cement (Fig. 3.11 & Drg. 2).



**Nowra Croquet Club**

Comprising a croquet green, a club room and a converted garage, this facility is located in the north eastern corner of the precinct (Fig. 3.12 & Plan Drg. 2). Adjacent to the croquet green is the Caretaker's Cottage, a timber weatherboard and fibro clad bungalow. The building is leased from the Showground Trust.



Fig. 3.12 Croquet Club and Caretaker's Cottage on the right looking south from Junction Street.

**Nowra War Memorial Gates (Inter-War Castellated Gateway & Sculpture)**

Officially opened in 1931, this memorial is dedicated to the soldiers of World War One and is a formal entry to the main Showground at the end of Junction Street (Fig. 3.13 & Plan Drg. 2). Constructed from rock-faced ashlar sandstone blocks it is comprised of a central crenellated tower displaying the main honour roll, two flanking vehicular archways, pedestrian archways, and an added centrally placed bronze sculpture of a soldier commemorating later wars.



Fig. 3.13 Nowra War Memorial Gate - looking west from West Street.

### **Hanging Rock Lookout**

This area defines the western edge of the Main Showground precinct (Fig. 3.14 & Plan Drg. 2). With a high elevation on the sandstone cliffs of the Shoalhaven River it affords spectacular views to the north, west and to the east and has long been considered a landmark of the area. There are picnic seats and tables located at the lookout for general public use.

### **Entries to Ben's Walk**

This walking track retraces a portion of a walk established during the depression years by Ben Walsh who was the trustee of the Nowra Showground in the 1920s (Fig. 3.15 & Plan Drg. 2). The entries to this track commences at the northern and southern ends of the Hanging Rock Lookout.





Fig. 3.14 Hanging Rock Lookout - looking west over Shoalhaven River.

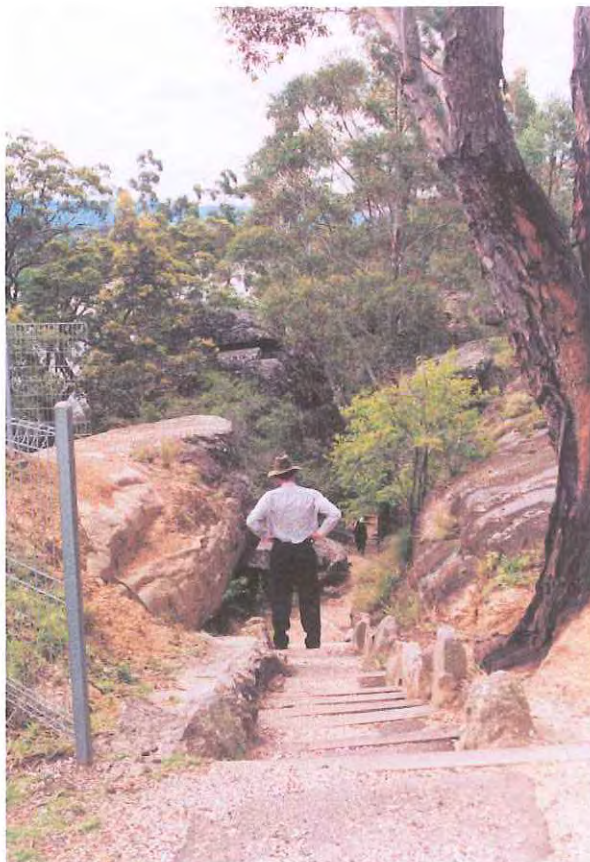


Fig. 3.15 - Northern entry to Ben's Walk.

### 3.3.2 PRECINCT 2 - "ADDED AREA"

This land to the north of the Junction Street extension covers an area of approximately 54,500m<sup>2</sup> (Plan Drg 2). The Shoalhaven River is on its western boundary.

This area comprises:

#### Playing Field

Approximately 90 m long by 50 m wide this grassed field is edged by substantial stands of Spotted Gum Port Jackson Fig trees and Small Leaf Figs (Figs. 3.16, 3.17, 3.18 and Plan Drg. 2). At its northern end are disused netball courts and an area for mulch and gravel storage.

#### Community Youth Centre

This modern facebrick and metal deck roofed building was designed as a gymnasium. ( Fig. 3.17, 3.19 & Plan Drg 2). Located on the western side of the Playing Field it contains a gym, toilets, changerooms, kiosk and children's daycare centre. The building is under lease from the Showground Trust.

*no lease:  
management committee*



Fig. 3.16 Playing Field - looking north east from Junction Street.





Fig. 3.17 Playing Field - looking north west with Community Youth Centre in background.



Fig. 3.18 Playing Field - looking north with the line of Port Jackson Figs (*Ficus rubiginosa*) and Small Leaf Figs (*Ficus obliqua*) at eastern edge.





Fig. 3.19 Community Youth Centre - entry looking north from end of Junction Street.

### 3.3.3 PRECINCT 3 - SOUTHERN HORSE AND CATTLE AREA

This land is approximately 38,000m<sup>2</sup> in area and is located immediately to the south of Worrige Street. Private residences including the historic Meroogal house separate it from West Street. The continuation of Plunkett Street forms its southern boundary and it overlooks West Street Oval (Figs. 3.20, 3.21 & Plan Drg. 2).



Fig. 3.20 Precinct 3 - looking south from the Main Showground.



Fig. 3.21 View from Precinct 3 - looking north to Main Oval.



The area of Precinct 3 comprises:

#### **Publicans Bar and Toilets**

On the eastern side of this precinct close to the Worrigee Street entrance gates is a modern brick walled flat roofed structure called the Publicans Bar (Fig. 3.22 & Plan Drg. 2). It has a servery with lift up shutters, a wash-up area and male and female toilets. Nearby is a small Colorbond steel clad sports equipment store.



Fig. 3.22 Precinct 3 - looking east to the Publican's Bar.

#### **Cattle Judging Ring**

Surrounded by a white painted timber fence and some steel tiered timber seating this oval is used for judging during the Annual Show (Fig. 3.23 & Plan Drg. 2). On the northern side is a small judging shed.

#### **Horse and Cattle Stalls**

A number of stalls for horses and cattle are located on the eastern and western sides of the Judging Ring (Fig. 3.24 & Plan Drg. 2). They are generally rural in nature and are steel pipe and timber framed, some being roofed in corrugated metal, others simply open, while others are paved feed and water stations. Associated with these stalls are a number of rustic timber fences and two rubble stone built truck loading ramps (Fig. 3.25).



Fig. 3.23 Precinct 3 - Looking north east to Judging Ring.



Fig. 3.24 Horse stalls - looking east.





Fig. 3.25 Stone loading ramp in south east corner of Precinct 3.

### Horse Trough

Located adjacent to the Publican's Bar is a stone horse trough, one of many which were donated by Annis and George Bills and scattered throughout Australia in many locations. This trough was previously located in Bridge Road Nowra.

### 3.4 LANDSCAPING AND OTHER ELEMENTS

#### Roads and Accessways

Both vehicular entries to the showground, Worrigee Street on the south of the Main Showground and the extension of Junction Street on the north, are bitumen sealed, while on the western side of the main oval and in the area of the horse and cattle stalls much of the roads are merely access tracks and unsealed with a gravel finish (Plan Drg 2). A gravel road (Scenic Drive) runs along the western edge of the "Added Area" adjacent to the Shoalhaven River and continues along the western boundary terminating in a turning circle in the south east corner of Precinct 3.

#### Landscaping

All three showground precincts are marked by substantial stands of mature trees, the emphasis being on informality rather than a structured formal planting.

In Precinct 1, the Main Showground, substantial stands of Blackbutt and Spotted Gum occur mainly to the west of the oval. On the southern side of the Pavilion a row of "Hill's" Figs follow the line of the oval and the timber seating (Fig. 3.26).

The western side of the "Added Area", between the playing field and the river, is dominated by stands of large Spotted Gum, while on the east there are some Radiata Pine with a line of Port Jackson and Small Leaf Figs marking the edge of the playing field (Fig. 3.27).

In Precinct 3, the most heavily wooded area of the showground, the Judging Ring and cattle stalls and stables are shaded by Coral Trees together with substantial numbers of Blackbutts, Spotted Gums and Grey Gums (Fig. 3.28).

Only one area of formal small-scale planting exists within the main public area and this is in the immediate vicinity of the Pavilion. A small area of formal planting exists at the Caretaker's Cottage.

#### Street Furniture and Signage

There is little furniture to speak of at the showground complex other than a scattering of fixed picnic tables and chairs around the Hanging Rock Lookout, and in parts of Precinct 3. The Main Oval has simple timber bench seating on the west, north and south, while there is tiered steel and timber seating around the Judging Ring.



Fig. 3.26 The row of "Hill's" Figs (*Ficus macrocarpa* var. 'Hilli') on the southern side of the Main Pavilion.



Fig. 3.27 Port Jackson Figs (*Ficus rubiginosa*) and the Small Leaf Figs (*Ficus obliqua*) at the eastern edge of the Added Area.



Fig. 3.28 Coral Trees (*Erythrina x sykesii*) in the vicinity of the Judging Ring.



Formal signage is minimal, with framed timber locational signs at the Junction Street and Worrigee Street entries, the southern end of Hanging Rock Lookout, the north west corner of the site and another one at the entry to the Community Youth Centre (Fig. 3.29).

### Lighting

Formal lighting, in the form of metal pole mounted white spheres line both sides of the Junction Street access road and extend along the western side of the main oval opposite the line of "Hill's" Fig trees (Fig. 3.30). No other formal lighting is present at the showground complex. The main oval is supplied with high masted floodlighting and the "Added Area" oval with smaller floodlights. Lighting in the Horse and Cattle Stalls area is utilitarian lighting on timber poles.

### Fencing

The western edge of the showground site is defined by a Weldmesh fence which in Precinct 1 forms the "safety fence" of the lookout (Fig. 3.31). On the north a chainwire fence extends from the gravel road at the western side to West Street, returns along the eastern boundary to the War Memorial Gates, then along to the Worrigee Street entry. Beyond the residences and Nursing Home on the southern side of Worrigee Street a chainwire fence extends from West Street to the western boundary, where the fence again reverts to Weldmesh.

Internal chainwire fences separate the Main Showground from the "Added Area" and from Worrigee Street on the south.



Fig. 3.29 Location sign on Junction Street.



Fig. 3.30 Formal pole lighting along the Junction Street.



Fig. 3.31 Metal fencing and picnic seating at Hanging Rock Lookout.



## 4.0 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

### 4.1 NOWRA AREA - BRIEF HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The shoals at the mouth of the Shoalhaven River had been noticed as early as 1797 by George Bass, but no exploration was undertaken until 1805 when the government surveyor, James Meehan, and Lieutenant King, sailing to the mouth of the Crookhaven, inspected the Shoalhaven Valley as far west as Burrier. The importance of Meehan's observations was twofold: he drew attention to the cedar in the area and he discovered the Shoalhaven River Ford at Burrier.<sup>1</sup>

Meehan recorded that the river, after leaving the later site of Nowra, crossed alluvial flats comprising grassland and freshwater swamps; and the area was '*...covered with rain forest, brush cedar, softwoods, coachwoods, blackbutt, sassafras, flame trees, brushes, palms, ferns, vines, orchids, eucalypts and casuarinas...*'<sup>2</sup>

It was not long before men in search of cedar began to sail along the coast from Sydney and enter the Shoalhaven River to cut and load cargoes. The *Speedwell* of 15 tons reached Sydney in January 1812 loaded with cedar. In 1813 the brig *Mary and Sally* took out a cargo and in 1814 the brig *Trial* took out 26,000 feet.<sup>3</sup>

When a cedar party was lost early in 1815 Governor Macquarie forbade the cedar cutters from visiting the district, although exploration of the district continued and settlers began to secure and take up grants in the district. Early grants were promises and often by the time the grants were made the land had passed to, and been registered in the name of others.

The first grant was Cooloomagatta of 10,000 acres to Messrs Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft in 1822, with a further 2,000 acre grant on the south side of the Shoalhaven River at Numba. Berry secured additional lots each of 4,000 acres north of the first grant and one lot of 4,000 acres west of Broughton Creek. Downstream on the south of the Shoalhaven River, Berry secured a 2,000 acre grant on either side of the Numba grant and other grounds around Crookhaven.

Along the river to the west, 1,300 acres went to Prosper De Mestre and 640 acres was promised to John Layton. Brundee, of 2,516 acres, went to William Elyard, whilst 2,000 acres promised to Hamilton Hume in 1825 was granted to Alexander Berry in 1842.

William Graham secured 100 acres known as Butlers Grant that had previously been promised to John Layton. This area became known as Greenhills, and extended along the southern bank of the Shoalhaven River from near where Bridge Road is today, to the Nowra to Bomaderry ferry road (now known as Ferry Lane). Graham's Greenhills was adjacent to Prosper De Mestre's Terara and adjacent to Alexander Berry's 2,000 acre grant that included Jindiandy and Pyree.

Greenhills was mainly devoted to dairying in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Milk, butter and cheese were sold locally and shipped to Sydney, usually on the coastal steamer *Echo*. Beef was slaughtered on the property as were bullocks, and the meat was sent to market. There was also a blacksmith's forge located on the property and many farmers from the surrounding district were customers.<sup>4</sup>



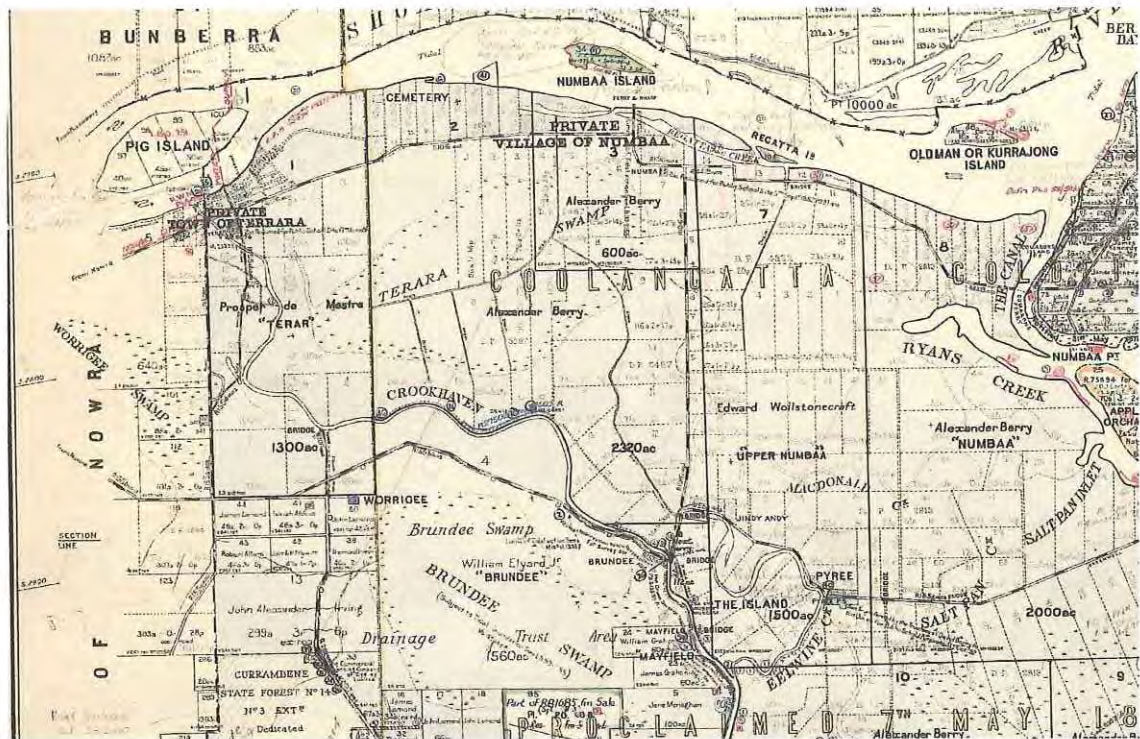


Fig. 4.1 - Parish map on south side of Shoalhaven River showing the Berry and Wollstonecraft land grants, Prosper de Mestre's grant of "Terar" and private towns of Terrara and Numbaa.

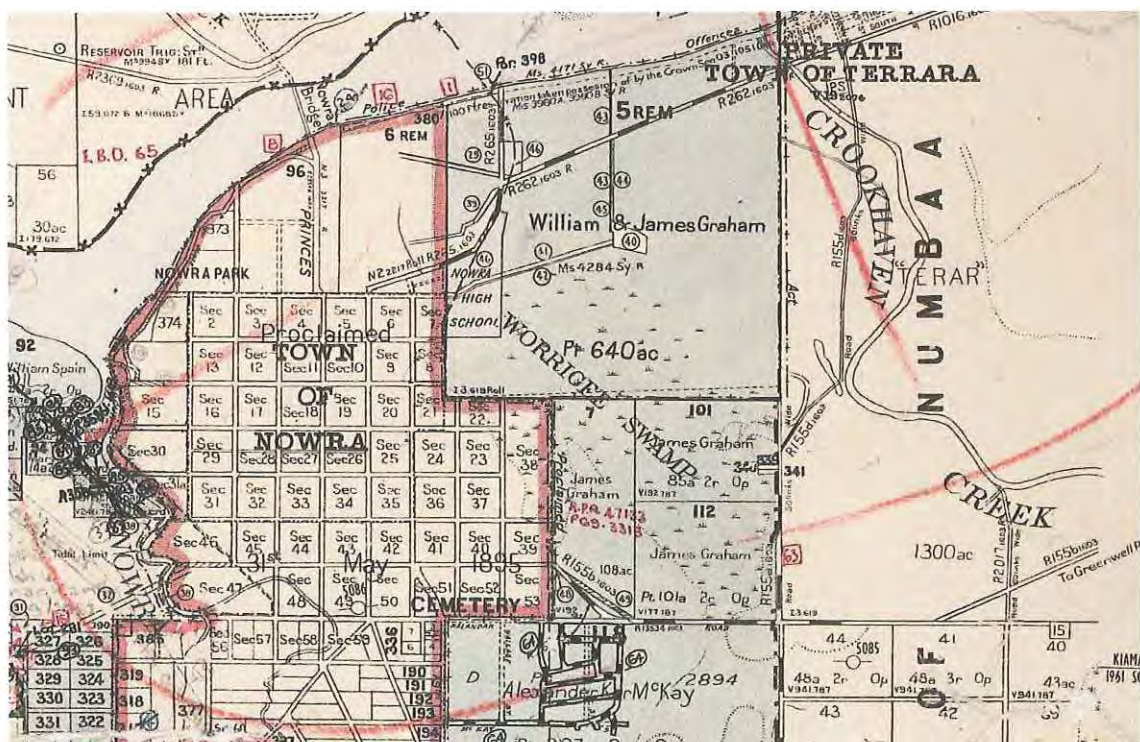


Fig. 4.2 - Parish map on south side of Shoalhaven River showing the Graham's land grant between Nowra and Prosper de Mestre's "Terar".



To help clear and cultivate the land, some of the property was leased to tenant farmers. The first tenants were the Gardner, Crittle and Bartlett families, who had been 'brought out' especially from England in 1841 by Graham, to help clear and cultivate his land.<sup>5</sup>

Seven years later there were no fewer than thirteen farmers renting parcels of land.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the increase in population additional estate stores were established. At Greenhills there was five stores, including a tailor's establishment, a bootmaker's, at least three hotels, a butcher and slaughtering business, a post office, school, Scot's Church and private burial ground.<sup>7</sup>

Further to the east, at the head of the Shoalhaven River, Alexander Berry's earliest agricultural and dairying enterprises were well established by the 1840s. Berry and Wollstonecraft's Coolangatta was the largest convict establishment in the region. By the 1840s it had been enlarged to 26,000 hectares from the original 5,600 hectares of 1822 and 1826. It had been a condition of the major grant that Berry and Wollstonecraft should maintain 100 convicts for ten years. Many of the assigned men spent their entire time with Berry, who was a good employer, and after gaining a ticket of leave many stayed on in the neighbourhood.



Fig. 4.3 - Coolangatta Estate

To encourage the development of the huge estate Berry released land to tenant farmers from 1842 onwards. The population of Coolangatta remained thinly spread, however, only 367 people occupied over 5,000 hectares by 1850.

The village of Numba, owned by Alexander Berry, had several large stores, a hotel and a 'commodious hall' for entertainment known as 'The Long Room'. A Court of Petty Sessions was established in 1852. The wife of Prosper De Mestre, Mary Ann, was instrumental in the building of Terara. In 1854 there were three wharves on the river including Adam's Wharf and boasted nine hotels. There were several big general stores, a Town Hall, Telegraph Office, a newspaper and a number of professional men including doctors, dentists and lawyers<sup>8</sup>

At Greenhills, John MacArthur established the Greenhills Iron Store in 1854 on the banks of the Shoalhaven River. Here he had a wharf from where his ship *My Own* plied, delivering goods to wharves along the river. After the 1860 flood he moved to higher ground and built a store adjacent to his residence 'Greenhills Cottage'.<sup>9</sup> Richard H. F. Kemp established a store on an acre of land on the Shoalhaven River Bank in 1856 about 200 metres east of Ferry lane, where he sold Wine and Spirits.



The Greenhills Post Office was established in Kemp's Store in January 1860.<sup>10</sup> The Post Office was transferred to the Greenhills Iron Store in January 1861 with MacArthur as Postmaster, while the Telegraph Office was located at Terara. The Post Office remained here until it was transferred to Nowra in 1879 when the Post Office and the Telegraph Office were amalgamated into one authority.

The Shoalhaven Regatta was held each Anniversary Day, 26 January, on the river, near Robson's Wharf where hundreds of spectators gathered on the riverbank to enjoy the entertainment. In later years this event moved downstream to Regatta Island at Numbaa.

Cricket was a very important sport in the early days of settlement. The Greenhills Cricket Club was formed in 1864 and matches were played on Monaghan's Meadow at Greenhills. James Graham and James Monaghan were stalwarts of the team.<sup>11</sup> The Nowra Cricket Club was formed in November 1880 and the club's first match was played on 'Graham's Flats' at Greenhills.<sup>12</sup>

From 1852 to 1858 the Shoalhaven Court of Petty Sessions met in Numbaa Court-house. Nowra being separate from the rural community, and being essentially a government planned village, did not provide a focus to compete with the private towns, although it was the centre of administration and government. By 1859 Nowra still had only sixteen dwelling houses.

The formation of Shoalhaven Municipal Council in 1859 led to the election of James Graham as Mayor in 1860. This council was defunct by 1865, due to the determination of Alexander Berry who did not want his lands taken over by local government. It was a further two years before municipal councils were established in the district. Both new councils, Numbaa (south of the Shoalhaven River) and Berry (north of the river) were proclaimed in 1868. Nowra itself did not receive municipal status until 1871.

People occupying the land on the south bank at Numbaa, Terara and Greenhills suffered greatly in the flood of 1860 and although it did great damage, it had little effect on their lifestyle. However when there was another major flood in 1870, the people decided to move out.

The Government town of Nowra had already been established by the late 1850s and was further to the west on higher ground. The town already had some government buildings and a small community. Its population in 1871 was 243 but it leapt to 886 in the next ten years.

After the 1870s floods, the major churches relocated to Nowra, the commercial centre went ahead, the bridge over the Shoalhaven was opened and with no fear of floods, people were happy to live on the higher land at Nowra.<sup>13</sup>

The Shoalhaven Agricultural and Horticultural Association held their first exhibition at the Greenhills Show Ground on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1875 on the old Presbyterian Church Grounds, a quarter of a mile back from the main road to Terara and was reached by an 18 foot lane which separated Terara and Greenhills.<sup>14</sup> The annual shows were

held on this ground for eleven years until 1886 when the Annual Shows were held at Nowra on ground granted by the Crown.

## 4.2 AGRICULTURAL SHOWS IN AUSTRALIA

As agriculture and pastoralism were of great importance for the ongoing growth of colonial settlement in Australia, agricultural shows were organised which promoted farming techniques, horticulture and animal husbandry in the form of competitive displays. These shows provided the opportunities for new and improved agricultural and pastoral initiatives to be transmitted to farmers.

The first agricultural society formed in Australia was the Van Diemen's Land Agricultural Society on 1 January 1822. Other agricultural societies to closely follow were formed in New South Wales (1822), Perth (1829), Adelaide (1839) and Port Phillip (1840). Early agricultural societies were at first relatively closed associations, serving the interests of the landed gentry, but their membership and activities soon opened up to serve rural communities and their interests in general. What were originally cattle fairs and ploughing competitions, agricultural shows quickly became more diverse in their nature, featuring commercial, governmental and entertainment activities. At the turn of the century hundreds of shows were held throughout Australia in a seasonal cycle. In the major cities state-wide societies became known as 'Royal', and were held over a period of days.

In the twentieth century changes to the traditional show became more pronounced. What was once a venue for the display of produce and technology developed into an event which promoted education, entertainment and leisure. The popular sideshow alley and fun rides were as much a part of the experience of going to the show as the more traditional events.

For most showgrounds the focus for the activities was the main parade ring. This large area together with ancillary spaces was a resource not just utilised once a year for the annual show. In Australia ninety-eight percent of all showgrounds are used for purposes other than show purposes. The most common alternative use is for sporting activities. Nowra Showground is a good example of the multi-functional use of a traditional showground.

This combination of entertainment, education, commerce and popular culture which characterises annual agricultural shows is unique in Australia. Not only do the annual shows provide an economic link between city and country, but they provide an insight into Australian society, in particular the rural-based industries and their communities.

Reference: *Agricultural Shows in Australia* by Kate Darian-Smith and Sara Wills



#### 4.3 THE FORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES IN NSW

According to the "Encyclopaedia Britannica", properly organised agricultural shows did not evolve in Europe until the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the earliest agricultural and livestock exhibitions, in England was the National Show held in 1821 in Aldridges' Repository in London. Later, such shows were sponsored at different centres by the Royal Agricultural Society of England, beginning in 1839 at Oxford. Specialised shows had been held much earlier, such as the beef cattle industry show at Smithfield (London) in 1799.

The first agricultural society in Australia was the Van Diemen's Land Agricultural Society (now the Royal Agricultural Society of Tasmania), formed at Hobart on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1821. As well as the general encouragement of production from the soil; one of its objectives was the "protection of stock". This was necessary as the free settlers of Tasmania were being subjected to a reign of terror by bushrangers and escaped convicts.

The new Society staged Australia's first official agricultural show in January 1822, in the old Market Place, Hobart, immediately in front of State Parliament House. Prizes in the form of medals were given for sheep, cattle and boar, the best acre of wheat, barley, artificial grasses; the largest crop of potatoes taken from three acres of land and for a collection of vegetables. Awards were given for the best-conducted convict, male and female.

Six months after the formation of the Van Diemen's Land Agricultural Society the first effective step to form a similar body on the mainland was taken at the house of Mr J. Robertson, jeweller and watchmaker, 96 George Street, Sydney, on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1822.<sup>15</sup> It was here that the Agricultural Society of NSW was formed, with Sir John Jamieson, pastoralist, banker and former Royal Naval surgeon, as its first President and Alexander Berry as its first secretary.<sup>16</sup>

Free settlers of "very good class and respectability" were reaching New South Wales from England at this time and had urged the establishment of such a body. By 1822 there were more than 10,000 cattle in New South Wales and more than 290,000 sheep. But cultivation methods were still very primitive and the great explorations of the inland were still to come.<sup>17</sup>

The establishment of a Stock Fund to import good stock, plants and seeds was the most important function of the new Society in those days. Edward Wollstonecraft acted as secretary to the organisation.<sup>18</sup>

The Governor, Sir Thomas Brisbane, was the first patron and he granted the society 10 acres of land at Westmead, near Parramatta, for agricultural experiments and for depasturing of cattle to be imported. It was there that the society's first cattle and sheep were exhibited on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1823. It could not be described as a proper agricultural show, but it can be regarded as Australia's first sheep show.

The first properly arranged show, called the Parramatta Fair, was held in October 1824. There were classes for Australian Merino Sheep; Colonial bred bulls, stallions, boars, and sows, teams of horses and bullocks, and prizes for the best Colonial cheese, tobacco and beer.<sup>19</sup>

The first society to be formed outside the Sydney area was the Hunter River Society at Maitland on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1842. It succumbed a few years later, to be reformed in 1859. The Cumberland Agricultural Society and the Penrith Agricultural Society were both established in 1843, and the Illawarra Agricultural Society at Wollongong in 1844.

Other pioneering societies found in the 1840s and 1850s included Hawkesbury (1845), Mudgee (1846), Kiama (1848), Bathurst (1855), Dapto (1856) and Albury (1857).

#### 4.4 AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE SHOALHAVEN AREA

Societies founded in the Shoalhaven district were the Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association (1863), The Ulladulla Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1866), the Shoalhaven Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1869), Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1874) Broughton Creek Horticultural Association (1883) and Kangaroo Valley Agricultural & Horticultural Association (1886).

##### The Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association

Alexander Berry realised the importance of allowing farmers to exhibit their results and at Coolangatta had held 'open days' in the 1840s and invited all and sundry to sample his hospitality and to inspect his farms and farming methods.

Anxious to show the high standard to which the Estate had reached he encouraged the formation of the Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association, with Shows being held chiefly on Berry Estate land.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1863 a meeting was held to form an Agricultural Association and 72 men appointed to committee of new Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association with membership confined to Shoalhaven Estate tenants. Alexander Berry himself was Patron of the new association and his brother David, President and Henry G Morton, Berry's land steward was elected Vice President. James Lang, Postmaster of Numba, was elected Treasurer and John Bindon, of Numba, was elected Secretary.

20

The Society totalled 216 members and its operations extended from Pyree to Gerringong. The 1<sup>st</sup> Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Association Annual Show was held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1864 at Numba.<sup>21</sup> A list of prizewinners was reported in the *Kiama Independent* 12<sup>th</sup> April 1864 and a perusal of the schedule shows some interesting entries.<sup>22</sup> The nine classes included horses, cattle, pigs, poultry, grain,



butter and dairy products, vegetables, flowers and implements. Prizes were offered for the best made wooden plough (£1); best made iron plough (£1); best made wooden harrow (£1); best made and improved scuffer (£1); best made bullock dray (£1); best made horse cart (£1).<sup>23</sup>

The entry fee was 5/- per class and admission to the ground 6d. People outside the Berry Estates were not admitted as members to the Society but were permitted to compete for prizes in the open sections. A good range of Exhibits was on show at Wheatley's Hotel.<sup>24</sup>

The district Show served a very serious purpose in allowing the farmers to show off their prize stock, others to view it, and to buy and improve their own herds. It gave the farmers an opportunity to meet and discuss farming methods with neighbours and to learn what was going on outside their own parcel of land.

There were scarcely 2000 souls on the Berry Estates at that time, but at the turn of the century, the district population had risen to 16,000.<sup>25</sup>

The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual show was held at Numba.<sup>26</sup> The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Show was held at Broughton Creek held near to the Kangaroo Inn <sup>27</sup>

*The third annual exhibition of the Shoalhaven Estate Agricultural Society came off at Broughton Creek on Tuesday last. There was a great assembly of people from many parts of the Illawarra district, while the steamer from Shoalhaven brought its load up the Creek. Towards midday the infant settlement looked very imposing dressed out in flags.*

*The show was held near the Kangaroo Inn, on the slope of the rising ground facing north, a large room having been erected by Mr David Berry expressly for the occasion and although the building is fifty feet in length, it barely held all that offered for inspection.<sup>28</sup>*

Prizewinners were once again announced in the *Kiama Independent* 1<sup>st</sup> March 1866.

The Association continued to stage attractive shows, people travelling great distances to be present. On the 6<sup>th</sup> February 1867 the annual show was held on David Berry's estate at Toolijooa. A weatherboard building measuring 50ft by 22ft on a stone foundation with shingle roof was erected for use as an exhibition hall.<sup>29</sup> This hall later became the schoolroom for Toolijooa School when it opened in 1871.

James Lang left the district in 1869 and Charles Murray was elected Treasurer in his place. The last official meeting of the Association was at the Bullock Paddock, Friday's Farm, at Numba on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1869 when an Annual Ploughing Match was held.<sup>30</sup>

Results were published in the *Shoalhaven News* of 17<sup>th</sup> April 1869.

Floods ravaged the Shoalhaven area in March and April 1870 and the district took a great deal of time to recover from the devastation the flooding caused and the Association ceased to exist.

### The Shoalhaven Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural Association

The first meeting of the Shoalhaven, Pastoral, Agricultural & Horticultural Association was held at Moss's Central Hotel on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1869. James Aldcorn JP was nominated President of the Association. William Lovegrove and Zacheus Bice were nominated Vice Presidents, The Manager of the Commercial Bank at Terara was nominated Treasurer and Mr Watson nominated Secretary.<sup>31</sup>

At a subsequent meeting held in April the Rules and Regulations of the Association were proposed and carried.<sup>32</sup>

The Associations first Annual Ploughing Match was held on The Queen's Birthday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1869, on Mr H Wheatley's paddock at Terara.<sup>33</sup>

Floods ravaged the Shoalhaven area in March and April 1870 and the district took a great deal of time to recover from the devastation the flooding caused. The Association became insolvent and according to an article published in the *Shoalhaven News* on 9<sup>th</sup> July 1870 - through '*the want of energy on the part of the inhabitants*'. Official assignees then took over the affairs of the Association.

### The Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1874, at a meeting held at Terrara the Shoalhaven Agricultural and Horticultural Association was re-formed. James Aldcorn was the first president and John McArthur was its first secretary. James Monaghan was first treasurer.

The formation of the Society was celebrated by a ploughing match on the Terrara Estate on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1874 and a dinner at night. The dinner was held at Isaac's Royal Victoria Hotel. Henry G. Morton presided.<sup>34</sup>

The first government grant of money was received on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 1874 and the Society held its first show on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1875 on land at Greenhills, using the former weatherboard Presbyterian Church building and a wooden shed the society built alongside it.

In 1883 the Broughton Creek farmers decided to establish their own organisation. At first it was thought that the two Associations would not be able to be sustained. But they co-existed: one on the north of the Shoalhaven River and the other on the south side.

The Annual Shows were attracting more exhibits every year and although the ground on the Greenhills ground was quite a good position it was located a quarter of a mile back from the main road and was difficult to access. The ground had become too small and conditions left much to be desired. Vacant land suitable for a Showground was found but at a meeting of the Association objections were raised to the cost.



Land on the foreshores of the Shoalhaven River at Nowra was set aside by the Crown and officially dedicated as a Recreation and Showground Reserve in 1881.

Following the official dedication the Shoalhaven Agricultural and Horticultural Association applied to Nowra Council for approval to make the area the venue for the annual shows instead of the grounds in use at Greenhills.<sup>35</sup>

After five years of negotiation an Agreement was drawn up. The ground was managed by a Trust giving the Association the right to use the ground and to erect any structures necessary for the conduct of its shows and control thereof.

There had been a great deal of local opposition to the change of venue. Older residents of Numba and Terrara protested against the move and distributed leaflets containing 'threatening language' in paraphrased lines of a Scottish poet:

*"Nowra, Nowra, beware of the day  
When the Lowlanders shall meet thee in battle array"*

#### 4.5 NOWRA RECREATION RESERVE- 'SHOALHAVEN PARK' AND NOWRA SHOWGROUND

The area set aside in Nowra by the Crown for special purposes comprised all the land between the present bridge over the Shoalhaven River and the Braidwood Road (Albatross Road) totalling some 640 acres.

In order to improve the Public Reserve, Council decided in January 1877 to fence in an area of ten acres, which took in the area between North Street and Nowra Creek. A grant of £100 was received from the Minister for Lands enabling the clearing and fencing to be carried out.

This area was officially dedicated as a Recreation Reserve in 1881 but for years it remained a veritable jungle.<sup>36</sup>

Following the official dedication of the Reserve in 1881 the Shoalhaven Agricultural and Horticultural Association applied to the Nowra Council in July for approval to make the area the venue for the annual shows instead of the grounds in use at Greenhills.<sup>37</sup> After great debate in the community on the subject, an area comprising 17 acres was eventually dedicated for Show Ground purposes on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1884.<sup>38</sup>

In August 1884 more than 230 ornamental trees were planted on the Showground and Reserve, having been donated by the Botanic Gardens, Sydney.<sup>39</sup> At the same time Council changed the name of the Nowra Recreation Reserve to 'Shoalhaven Park'.<sup>40</sup>



Fig. 4.4 - Parish map showing regular grid pattern of Nowra Streets with the Showground on the west edging the Shoalhaven River.

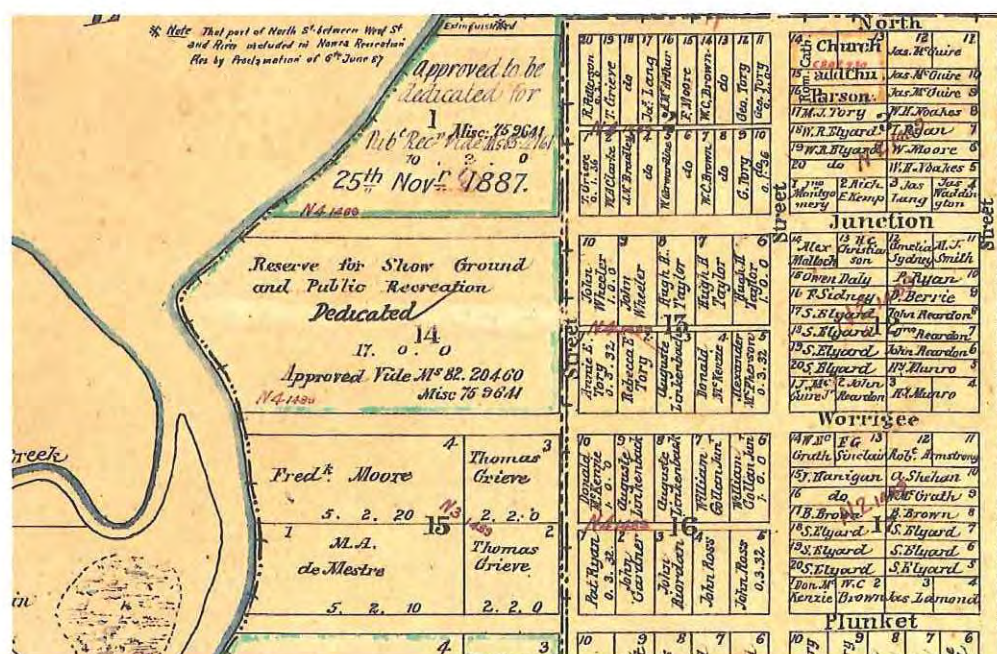


Fig. 4.5 Parish map showing dedicated reserve for Showground between Worrigee and Junction Streets.



The reserve was managed by a Trust set up by the Government and after five years of negotiation an Agreement was drawn up giving the Association the right to use the ground and to erect any structures necessary for the conduct of its shows.

The area of land being used for recreation and show purposes at that time was approximately 7½ acres. It consisted of a piece of ground bounded by Junction Street, Worrigee Street and West Street extending back to Spain's Creek (now Nowra Creek).

The twelfth annual show of the Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Society was held on the new showground and in the new exhibition building on Thursday and Friday 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 1886.

A report in the local press described the event.<sup>41</sup>

*The ground is nearly the highest in the whole of the locality and enables the visitor to see much of the beautiful Shoalhaven River and districts as well as that is worth seeing to the west, north and east as far as the mountain ranges.*

*A post and rail and six-foot, split paling fence securely enclose about ten acres. Inside there are a number of cattle yards and pens; but those will be increased in number and some of them – the pens for the more valuable animals, covered in so as to protect valuable stock from the extremes of weather.*

*Mr James Monaghan deserves a mention for the amount of time he devoted to the task of directing and supervising the preparation of the pens and flooring of the exhibition building with asphaltum.*

Others recalled the shift to higher ground at Nowra in 1886, with buildings of saplings, galvanised iron, sheet bark and slabs dotting the 7½ acres.<sup>42</sup>

By 1903 the Nowra Municipal Council had become sole Trustee of the Show Ground and Recreation Reserve and gave permission to the Shoalhaven Turf Club to convert part of the Reserve into a Race Course and to erect buildings in certain parts of the ground.

In 1927 Nowra Council bought an additional area of land to the south which has since been known as the 'Added Area'. This brought the total area used for show purposes to 13 acres.

*but original area was 17 acres.*

#### 4.6 HISTORICAL CHRONOLGY NOWRA SHOWGROUND

**1881** - Crown land is dedicated on banks of Shoalhaven River as a showground site. Application is made to Nowra Council to use as official showground.

**1884** - 17 acres eventually dedicated for showground purposes in January. In August more than 230 ornamental trees planted at Showground donated by Botanic Gardens, Sydney.

**1886** - Show moves to present site from where it was first held at Greenhills Showground on the Presbyterian Church grounds. First show held in Feb. 1886.  
The area of land for use is bounded by West Street, Junction Street, Worrigee Street and Spain's Creek. Buildings of saplings, galvanised iron, sheet bark and slabs dot the 7.5 acres between Junction and Worrigee Streets. Later a 100ft by 40ft Agricultural Hall was erected near the southern end of the showground near the Worrigee Street entrance gates.

**1903** - Nowra Council becomes sole Trustee of the showground and allows the Shoalhaven Turf Club to use part of the ground.

**1905** - New Grandstand Pavilion opened on 16<sup>th</sup> February replacing old grandstand. At this time the main parade ring is smaller with lawn in front of the pavilion.

**1907-08** - McKenzie's Gates constructed (Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet).

**1912** - Cast iron drinking fountain erected in February in recognition of John Monaghan for his 36 years membership of the Nowra Agricultural and Horticultural Association John Monaghan was also the first white child born south of the Shoalhaven River.

**1914** - Decision is made to build 120 new cattle stalls, 12 bull stalls and two new judging rings along the West Street boundary where present Croquet Club and Tennis Courts are located.

**1917** - A feature of the show is established which is a competition between north and south sides of the Shoalhaven River. The exhibits were shown at either end of the Pavilion. This practice ends in 1937.

**1924** - The Luncheon Hall is erected as a 'memento of the Jubilee Show'.

**1927** - 8 acres are added on the northern side of the existing showground making the original entry in Junction Street redundant. This is still known as the "The Added Area". Both the General Public Entrance Gates and the McKenzie's Gates are no longer used as entries. Show abandoned due to drought. New Caretaker's Cottage erected north of the main pavilion.

**1929** - The years show is abandoned due to prolonged drought.

**1931** - Nowra War Memorial Gates designed by Cyril Blacket erected across Junction Street opened January 1931.

**1937** - Showground oval reconstructed and levelled. McKenzie's Gates converted to toilets and stone piers removed to Worrigee Street entrance. Ground extended across Worrigee Street halfway to Plunkett Street. Luncheon Hall and Publican's Booth erected.



**1938** - Installation of a sewerage service to the Showground except for cottage (18 water closets, 2 Urinals, 1 Basin and 1 Shower recess).

Caretaker's Cottage removed and relocated to present site. Cyclone gate erected on cottage allotment Croquet Green and Clubhouse built – verandah added by 'Watty' Graham. Telephone connected to the Showground in May.

Altered galvanised lavatory on "Added Area" and converted into weathershed.

**1939** - Electricity connected to Show Ground – Officially turned on at Show on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February – First Night Show a great success.

New lavatories completed in June.

Removal of old ticket box from main entrance to back gate (Worrigea Street) in September (together with plaque).

Federation Pavilion enlarged by local builder A E Vost at a cost of £723.

Old fence removed and re-erected around Show Ground.

**1940** – The main ring was enlarged for gig trotting and the lawn in front of the main pavilion is lost. The showground was used by the 6th Light Horse Regiment, which was later known as the 6th Armament Regiment

**1942 and 1943** – Shows abandoned due to wartime conditions with military occupation of the grounds.

**1950** – The old pig pavilion, located south of the Federation Pavilion is converted to a Junior Farmer's Hall due to the decline in pig numbers.

**1954** – Council purchases remainder of land extending to Plunkett Street and the cattle judging ring is again repositioned to where it remains today. The bull stalls are demolished and the timber is used for conversion to a publican's booth. The committee room, bar and toilet block was built by the committee from its own funds.

A Rural Youth Hall and Powder Room were built onto the Main Pavilion, together with a refreshment kiosk.

**1957** - Caddell Memorial Tennis Club opened on the site of old cattle area.

**1956 and 1958** – Shows are abandoned due to excessive rain.

**1964** - In the interest of public safety Council fenced in the Hanging Rock Lookout in March.

**1970** - In the 1970s the older buildings were demolished. The publican's booth built on the old bull's stall site of 1914 is demolished and a new bar and toilet is constructed just south of Worrigea Street. New horse stalls and yards were constructed.

**1972** – Community Youth Centre on "Added Area" is constructed.

**1979** - Horse Trough relocated to Showground cattle area from Bridge Road Nowra.

**1985** - Brick ablution and changeroom block (Warriors Rugby Club) erected south of the Main Pavilion – funded by Shoalhaven City Council, Lands Department, Nowra Show Society, Nowra Warriors and Nowra Saints R.L.F.C. at a cost of \$72,000.

Fire destroys 12 horse stalls and the equestrian equipment owned by the Nowra Show Society.

**1986** - Truck demolished an arch at the Nowra War Memorial Gates on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Damage estimated at \$100,000.

**1987** - Old booth (Bull stalls) was demolished and the present bar and toilet block was built on the site.

**1988** - Restoration and renovation of Grandstand Pavilion – Paul Bishop Architect.

**1993** - Committee room at the rear of the pavilion officially opened. Plans drawn by Shoalhaven City Council draftsman P Jennings and Nowra Show Society contributed \$110,000 to the cost. Old Publican's Booth, which housed the committee room demolished.

**1996** - First Alcohol Free Show in New South Wales.

**1998** - The main oval was completely re-constructed between November 1998 and January 1999. This work was totally funded and project managed by Council. The new wood chopping pavilion was erected and officially opened by NSW Governor the Honourable Gordon Samuels at the Nowra Show in February 1999.

*10yr interest free  
loan from Council*

*\$120 grant } NSW  
\$130 loan } Gov.  
\$135 Council*



#### 4.7 BRIEF HISTORY OF INDIVIDUAL SHOWGROUND BUILDINGS AND OTHER ELEMENTS

##### FEDERATION PAVILION

The original grandstand was located at the southern end of the showground near the Worrigee Street entrance gates (Fig. 4.6). Mr M. F. Morton laid the foundation stone of the new Grandstand Pavilion on 19th October 1904 and the structure was completed in January 1905 (Fig. 4.7).<sup>43</sup> It was designed by Cootamundra Architect Ernest R Laver and erected under the supervision of Mr A Schuler of Sydney. The building was officially opened at the opening of the Annual Show on 16th February 1905. Local builder A. E. Vost at a cost of £723 enlarged the Pavilion in 1939. The plans were drawn by the Council engineer, Mr Gowans, with an additional 15ft in depth provided in a north west direction.<sup>44</sup> Restoration and renovation of the Grandstand Pavilion took place in 1987-88 from plans drawn by Paul Bishop, Architect, Nowra. Work was completed in time for the 1988 Annual Show. A separate extension to the rear was built in 1993 which provided a Committee Room, a store and toilets connected to the main building with a covered way. It was designed by City of Shoalhaven staff. The pavilion can accommodate 200 people.

##### Main Oval

The oval has a 480m trotting track around the perimeter, floodlighting, PA system, and outdoor seating on three sides (Fig 4.8). For a number of years lawn extended from the front of the Federation Pavilion to the ring of the oval which was much smaller than at present (Fig. 4.9). Mr Hugh McKenzie took great pride in the Showground and did not like to see people standing on the ringside seats. In an attempt to prevent this he had barbed wire erected above the seats (Fig. 4.10). This proved to be ineffective and the wire was pulled down and never put back.<sup>50</sup> The Nowra Showground Oval was reconstructed and levelled in 1937. The oval had seen little improvement or development over the years since it was constructed. The combined effect of use by the Rugby League, Little Athletics and Cricket resulted in significant compaction and erosion. The oval was renovated in 1998-1999 and was ready for the Annual Show in February 1999.

##### Woodchop Arena

Wood chopping has been a feature of shows since the 1890s and was at one time held in the main ring. Pearce and Percy erected the new wood-chopping pavilion, in 1998, from a design by Malcolm Windley and Tracey Whiteman in sympathy with the structure of the old grandstand. It has 9 blocks and 7 pits.

##### Changerooms (The Nowra Warriors Rugby League Football Club)

The Mayor Harry Sawkins opened the new ablution block at the 1985 Show. It was built at a cost of \$72,000 which was funded by Shoalhaven City Council, Lands Department, Nowra Show Society, Nowra Warriors and Nowra Saints Rugby League Football Clubs. The block contains two changerooms with showers and storage rooms



**14** "The Old Grandstand"

CLYDE'S PHOTOGRAPH

Fig. 4.6 - The original Grandstand located on the southern side of the Showground near the Worrigee Street entrance gates.  
Photo: Courtesy The Shoalhaven Historical Society



Fig. 4.7 - The Federation Pavilion c. 19...  
Photo: Courtesy The Shoalhaven Historical Society



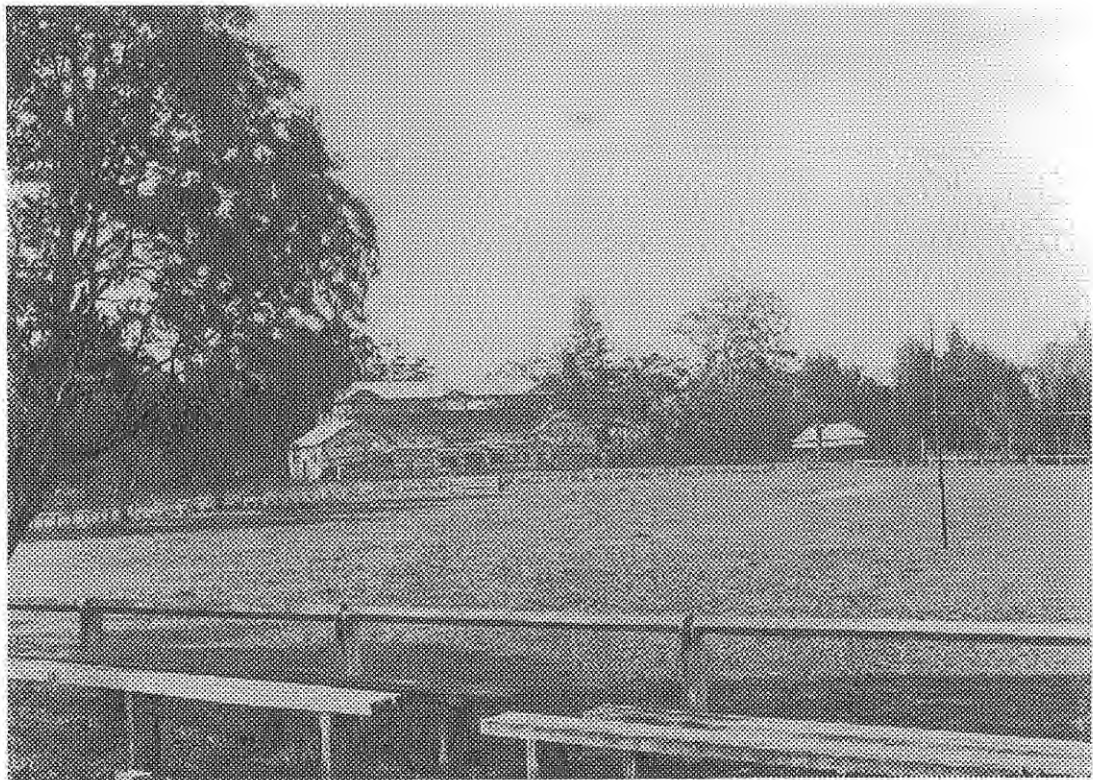


Fig. 4.8 - Looking across Main Oval to Federation Pavilion in 1921 with old Caretaker's Cottage in the background on the right.

Photo: Government Printing Office Collection, State Library of NSW



Fig. 4.9 - Nowra Show 1907 looking south from recently opened Federation Pavilion. Note expansive lawn in front of the pavilion and the smaller size of the oval.

Photo: Bicentennial Copying Project, State Library of NSW

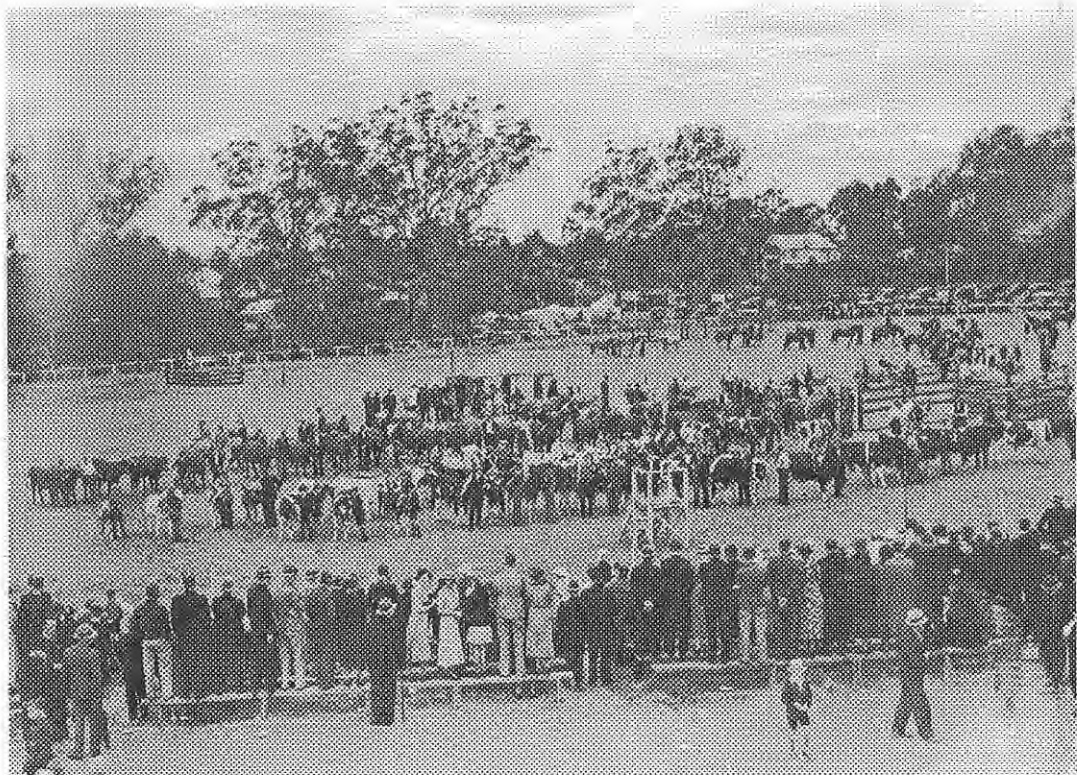


Fig. 4.10 - Nowra Show 1937 looking south-east across Main Oval. Note people standing on ringside much to the disapproval of Hugh McKenzie. Historic Meroogal Cottage is in background right.

Photo: Hood Collection, State Library of NSW

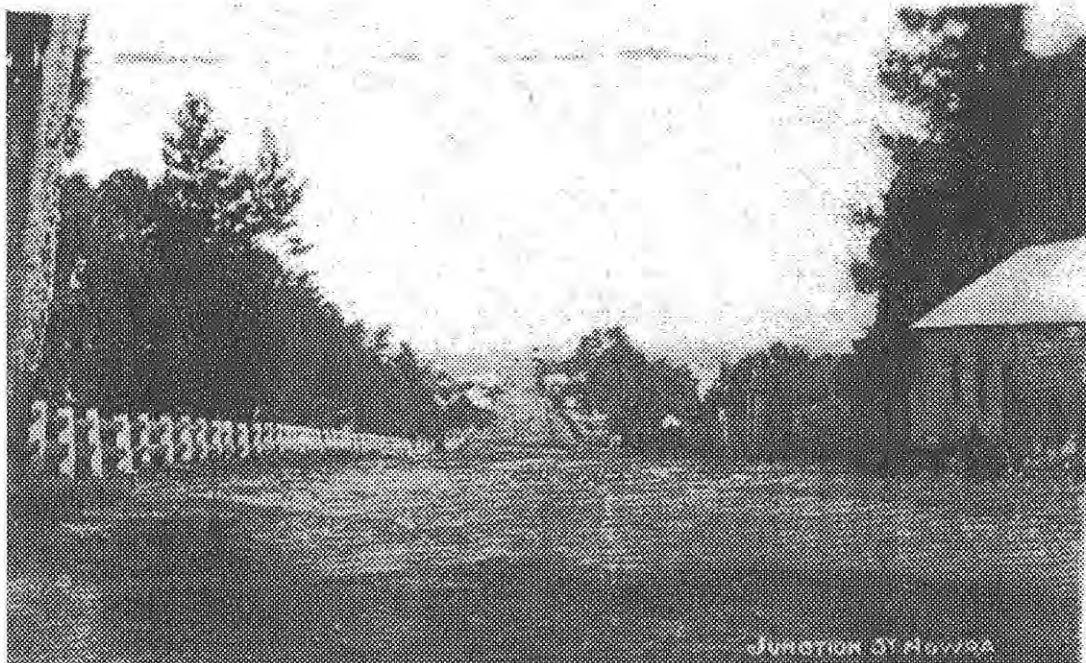


Fig. 4.11 - Junction Street looking east prior to construction of Memorial Gates. Note old Caretaker's Cottage on right and McKenzie's gates further down the hill on the right.

Photo: Courtesy The Shoalhaven Historical Society



**Victorian Memorial Cast Iron Fountain (Monaghan's Memorial)**

This cast iron drinking fountain was erected in February 1912 by the Nowra Agricultural & Horticultural Association to the memory of John Monaghan recognising his 36 years membership of the association (Fig. 4.12). Monaghan was the first treasurer of the Association and was president in the years 1879-1882, 1888-1890, 1896 and 1904.

The fountain is presently located at the top of Junction Street to the north of the Federation Pavilion. This was not its original location as a photograph from 1941 shows it positioned further to the south in the vicinity of where the McKenzie Gates were situated.

The fountain was fabricated by Andrew Thomson & Son Ltd of Alexandria, Sydney

An inscription at the base of the upper half of the fountain reads:

*Erected by public subscription by the people of Shoalhaven to the memory of the late John Monaghan Esq JP, first white Australian male child born in the Shoalhaven district, south of the river. Also one who rendered invaluable services in advancing the district.*

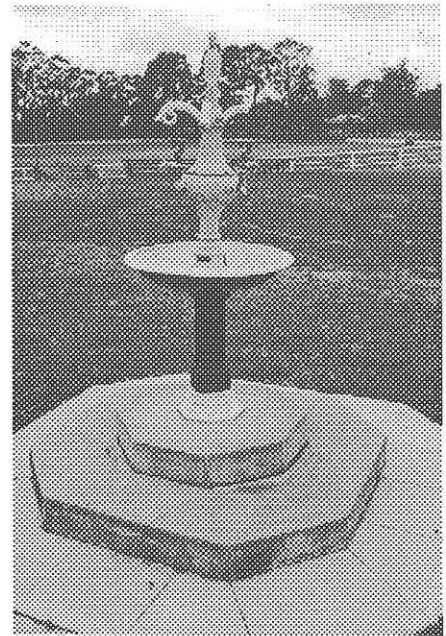


Fig. 4.12 - Monaghan's Memorial Fountain.

**Victorian Masonry Gate and Toilet**

This small building originally formed an entry for Shoalhaven Agricultural & Horticultural Association members on the north side of the main oval from Junction Street (Fig. 4.11). Just to the east of this building, further down the slope, non-members entered via a timber gate.

Constructed during 1907-1908 by Hugh McKenzie, the building became redundant as an entry gate when in 1927 the "Added Area" to the north was opened up for showground use. To the outrage of the local community the entrance building was converted for use as a public male toilet in 1937.

**The Croquet Lawn & Clubhouse**

The Croquet Club was formed in 1922 and originally had use of the croquet lawn at the rear of the Nowra Bowling Club clubhouse. In April 1937 Nowra Council received a request from the Nowra Bowling Club asking if the Ladies' Croquet Green could be shifted to the Showground if the Bowling Club paid the cost of construction of the ground.<sup>46</sup> A croquet lawn and clubhouse was established at the entrance to the Showground in 1938 and was ready for use the following year.<sup>47</sup>



**Caretaker's Residence**

The Caretaker's Cottage at one time was situated on the northern side of the grandstand and was occupied by the caretakers Mr and Mrs C Brown for many years (Figs. 4.8 & 4.13). Mrs L. Williams lived in the cottage prior to it being moved. The cottage was demolished and re-erected on this site in 1938.<sup>48</sup>

**The Caddell Memorial Tennis Court Complex**

The site on the eastern boundary of the Showground was selected in 1954 for a tennis complex. This had been the location of the cattle judging for the Show and tennis members helped relocate the pens. The tennis courts were completed by using a base of gravel and ant bed in the construction and were put to good use in August 1957 when the NSW Lawn Tennis Association's annual coaching school was held in Nowra. The four courts and clubhouse were officially opened on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 1957. By March 1967 the old Clubhouse had been sold and removed to make way for the new clubhouse. It was erected by Mr Alex McCoy and officially opened on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1968.<sup>49</sup> Today there are six Tech-Tone courts on the site.

**Inter War Castellated Gateway and Sculpture (Nowra War Memorial Gates)**

Located at the corner of Junction Street and West Street this memorial marks the main northern entry to the Showground (Fig. 4.14). These gates were erected as a memorial to the soldiers of World War One instead of the Memorial Hospital for which the money had been raised. They were designed by Cyril Blacket, Architect, and were built by George Cook and his brother James of Windsor at a cost of £1890. Rear Admiral E R Evans, CB, DSO performed the official opening on 22nd January 1931.

Subsequently O L Sheen, Sculptor, was commissioned to add to the memorial in commemoration of the Second World War and subsequent fields of war. The sculptor depicts an Australian serviceman standing free on his island home, with his helmet and rifle discarded and on the alert for future security. This statue symbolises the serving men of the Second World War, Korea, Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam.

**Community Youth Centre and Day Care Centre**

Located on the southern edge of the "Added Area" the youth club was established in 1966 using premises in North Street, Nowra, where 350 people were in attendance each week. The new brick building was erected at the Showground at a cost of \$61,000 and officially opened by Hon. J.G. Beale MLA in September 1972.<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 4.13 - Nowra Show 1937 looking west toward the old Caretaker's Cottage, with Junction Street to rear of sideshows on the right.

Photo: Hood Collection, State Library of NSW

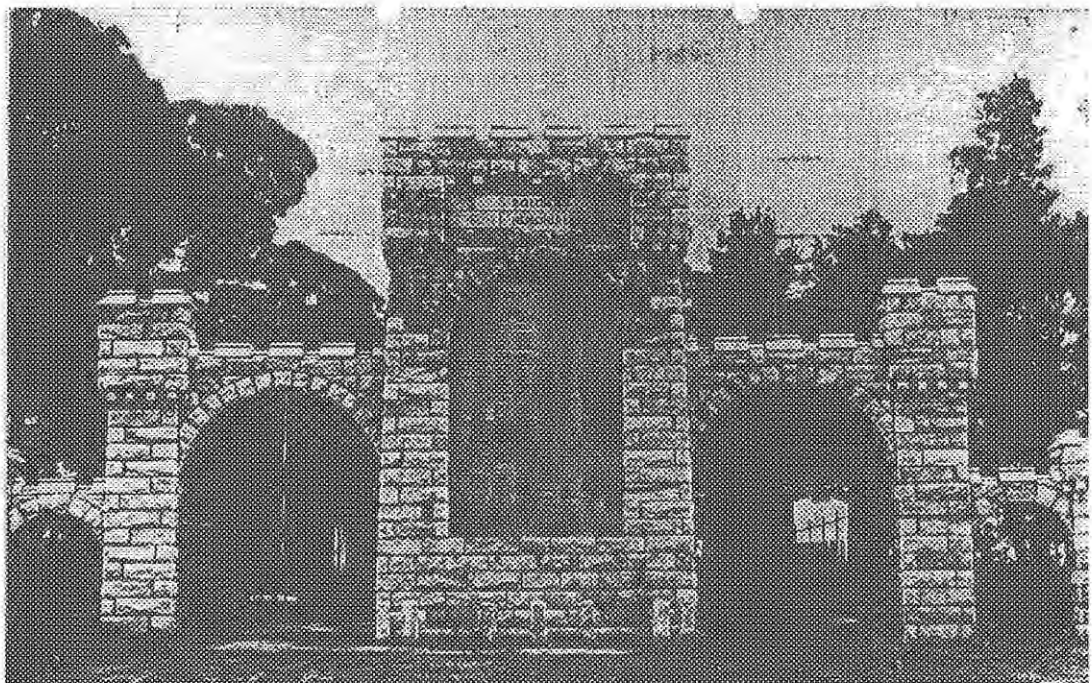


Fig. 4.14 - Memorial entrance gates soon after opening in 1931.

Photo: Courtesy The Shoalhaven Historical Society

### Publicans Bar and Toilets

In 1914 the A & H Society built 120 new cattle stalls, 12 bull stalls and two new judging rings along the West Street boundary. In 1954 the old bull stalls were demolished and the timber used to erect a (temporary) Publican's Booth 50 feet east of the existing horseboxes. In 1987 the old Publican's booth (Bull stalls) was demolished and the present bar and toilet block was built on the site.

### Horse and Cattle Area

In 1914 the A & H Society built 120 new cattle stalls, 12 bull stalls and two new judging rings which were erected along the West Street boundary of the Show Ground.

Cattle were housed and judged where the croquet ground and tennis courts are now situated. In the early days cattle were taken to the ground on the evening prior to the first day of the show and remained there until they were paraded on the second day. Reg Jennings, former Vice President and committeeman of the Nowra Show Society recalls as a boy walking from his father's farm at Bolong to Nowra with the cattle to be exhibited at the show.

*We would walk them along Bolong Road, across the Bridge into Bridge Road, turn into Hyam Street then along Shoalhaven Street to the cattle pens at the entrance to the Show Ground.<sup>51</sup>*

This practice continued until 1940 when after considerable discussions with the exhibitors it no longer proved to be practicable to leave the exhibits on the ground overnight. In addition to this the farmers were faced with the critical labour shortage, with so many men called into the services.<sup>52</sup>

During 1937 the ground was extended across Worrigee Street, half way to Plunkett Street and the following year new cattle judging ring, 80 open cattle stalls and horse yards (380ft of hitching rails) were built in this area. The cattle were now brought through the Plunkett Street entrance. Coral Trees were planted for shade around the Cattle judging ring in 1939.<sup>53</sup>

In 1954 the bull stalls were removed to make way for tennis courts to be constructed. The good timber was converted into a Publican's Booth.

Under the State Government Subsidy for Showground improvements scheme older buildings were demolished in 1970 and new horse stalls and yards were constructed, Fire destroyed 12 horse stalls and the equestrian equipment owned by the Nowra Show Society in 1985. At present the stables complex comprises 74 covered horse stalls, 64 cattle stalls, 45 open yards designed for event stabling and a judging ring with a commentary box.





Fig. 4.15 - Nowra Show 1937, looking south to Worrigeer Street - cattle judging in Main Oval.  
Photo: Hood Collection, State Library of NSW

### The Worrigeer Street Gates

When the McKenzie ticket gate was remodelled into the men's lavatory in 1937 the gates and stone piers were relocated to this entrance.

### The Horse Trough

Nowra's horse trough was previously located in Bridge Road and was shifted to this site to make way for the new highway deviation in 1979. Other horse troughs are located at Cambewarra, Bomaderry and Berry and is one of over 7,000 found throughout Australia. Some can be found in Central Australia for the use of camels.

The troughs all have the same inscription - "Donated by Annis and George Bills, Australia". George Bills was the son of an English naturalist and entered business in Sydney with his brother Henry. He became a life governor of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1924. Annis, his wife, was born in England and died there on a visit in 1910. Both were animal lovers and during their lifetime, travelled the world and donated troughs wherever they went. When George died in 1927, much of his estate of £70,000 was converted into a trust fund for the erection of horse troughs.<sup>61</sup>

### Picnic Areas

From an early date a portion of the Recreation Reserve had been used for a camping area. At its meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1929, the Chairman of the Trust referred to the value of the town and district amenity and stated that in the near future it was intended to increase the amenities in order to attract additional tourists.

Picnic tables and benches would be provided for the use of locals. In September 1937 tenders were called for the clearing of the Recreation Ground of all undergrowth, leaving existing trees. The tender of £18 from Mr E Mulley to clear the undergrowth was accepted.<sup>54</sup>

At a Report presented to Council on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1937 the Ganger had '*grubbed undergrowth and partly grubbed stumps on Added Area. Four extra men have been engaged in this work.*'

At show time this added area was used for car parking space and at the Council meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1938 the Ganger reported that he '*had gang grub out stumps on parking area for cars and packed some for burning. Filled holes with soil and made car entrance to area.*'

Notice was given to the 'permanent's' living on the Council Caravan Park at the Showground ("Added Area") Reserve that they must vacate the site not later that 30<sup>th</sup> September 1958. As most of the 'permanent's' were serving Naval personnel action was taken by the Naval authorities and the Housing Commission to provide permanent homes from them, either at East Nowra or the R.A.N.A.S. itself.

The camping area was closed, Council making a new area available at Grey's Beach on the northern bank of the Shoalhaven River.<sup>55</sup>

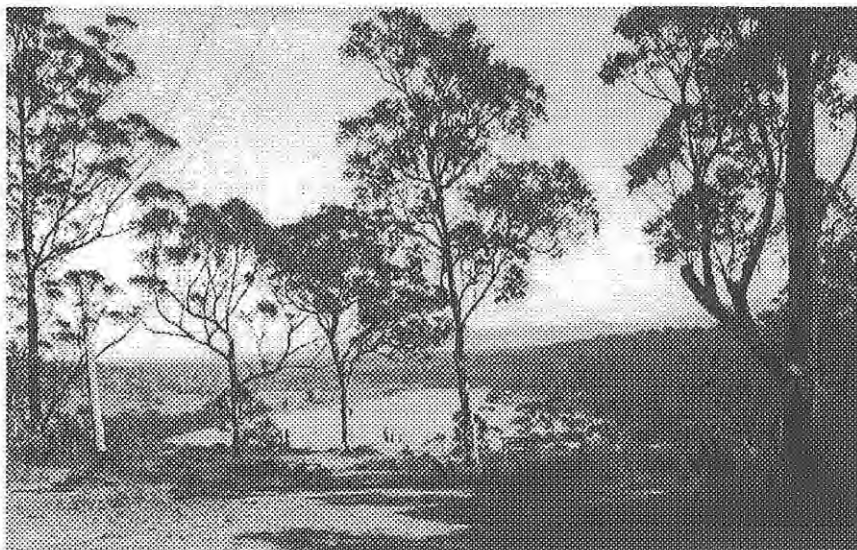


Fig. 4.16 - Hanging Rock Lookout 1937.

Photo: Government Printing Office Collection, State Library of NSW

**Reg's Shed (Storage Shed)**

When the old wooden sheds were removed from the grounds there was nowhere to store show society equipment. A new shed was erected c. 1995 adjacent to the Publican's Bar and was named Reg's Shed after Society stalwart Reg Jennings.

**Hanging Rock**

This has been a prominent landmark of Nowra since the town was established. It is 46.25 metres above the river and is a superb lookout (Fig. 4.16). The extent of the overhang can best be seen from the walking track, which passes beneath the Rock.<sup>57</sup>

**Bens Walk**

During the depression years there were many itinerants living in the shelter of the sandstone caves and Ben Walsh arranged a grant and employed these men in the construction of a walking track below Hanging Rock. Ben was the son of Peter Walsh, a botanist and founder of the Terrara Hardware Store of P. Walsh & Sons in 1877 (this business is still operating in Junction Street).<sup>58</sup>

**Cave Shelters**

The numerous caves and shelters in the vicinity of Hanging Rock were the homes for men during the depression years. In the evenings the rock face would be aglow with the illumination from many small fires. Coyner's Cave, Creeper Cave and the Tom Douglas Room were some of the inhabited caves. Mrs Dorothy Large recalls that Tom Douglas was an Oxford Graduate who lived in a cave near the Showground and was often drunk and frightened children.<sup>59</sup>

**Suspension Bridge**

When Nowra Council built the footbridge over Nowra Creek in 1887 it was the only suspension construction of its type in Australia. The bridge was necessary to allow children to walk to school, instead of having to negotiate the creek in a rowing boat. The following year Council provided a pathway through Nowra Showground to allow easier access. This bridge has been replaced more than once since, but the current suspension bridge is a popular landmark in the district.<sup>60</sup>

**Landscaping and Planting**

Trees & Shrubs supplied by Botanic Gardens

22 <sup>nd</sup> July 1884	Nowra Municipal Council	230	
26 <sup>th</sup> July 1892	Nowra Recreation Reserve & Showground	120	
7 <sup>th</sup> August 1893	Nowra Recreation Reserve	112	280 shrubs
7 <sup>th</sup> July 1895	Nowra Show Ground	54	
17 <sup>th</sup> May 1906	Nowra Recreation Ground	1	



**Trees and Shrubs supplied by Government Nursery at Gosford**

In 1904 100 *pinus insignis* and 50 camphorlaurels were obtained from the Government Nursery at Gosford and these were planted in Nowra Park, Bridge Road and the Showground.

**Empire Day**

School children planted trees in the Showground on Empire Day (May) for many years. Plaques were placed on each tree but no records can be found to the species planted.<sup>56</sup>

**Memorial Trees (interview with Peter Walsh)**

Fig Trees were planted as a memorial to soldiers who served in the First World War. Plaques were placed on the trees but during the depression years they were lost.

**Croquet Lawn**

A huge Moreton Bay Fig tree forms a natural breakwind on the northern side of the lawn.

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36. Antill R G *Settlement in the South*, Weston & Co., Kiama, 1982, p. 44
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41. *The Shoalhaven Telegraph* 4th March 1886
42. The Nowra Show Society Booklet - Nowra Showground Pavilion Grandstand Restoration Official Opening 12th February 1988, p. 2
43. Nowra Show Society Official Program - Nowra Showground Pavilion Grandstand Restoration Official Opening 12th February 1988,
44. Report of the Special Showground Pavilion Committee 29th July 1938
45. Bayley Shoalhaven op. cit. p. 253
46. Nowra Municipal Council Meeting 19th April 1937 Minute 77d
47. In February 1938 the ground was ploughed and 51 yards of soil tipped and spread and grass seeds were sown. Nowra Council Ganger Report 28th February 1938 'two mwn were involved in levelling the area'

- <sup>48.</sup> Correspondence from Town Clerk WC Batt to Mrs L. Williams, caretaker at Showground dated 3rd November 1937; Tender from Harold Brown for installation of lights and power points at the Showground Cottage dated 20th January 1938.
- <sup>49.</sup> Clark Alan, *Serves and Smashes at West Street*, Compiled for the Shoalhaven District Ladies' Tenniss Reunion 7th August 1998
- <sup>50.</sup> Recollections of Mr Ray Morison published in the *South Coast Register* 6th February 1974; At the Council Meeting held on 13th March 1939. Ald. Morison asked 'who erected the barbed wire fence at the Showground?'
- <sup>51.</sup> Interview with Reg Jennings at Nowra Show Ground on Friday 2nd November 2001.
- <sup>52.</sup> Recollections of Mr Ray Morison published in the *South Coast Register* 6th February 1974
- <sup>53.</sup> In a report from the Ganger dated 25th February 1939 the following work was carried out at the Showground: Split posts and rails in the common and morticed posts and erected 160ft of 6ft paling fence, 380 ft of hitching rail and 80 open cattle stalls, 50 new fowl coups, new ramp for unloading stock, removed and erected 2 chns of ring fence and placed rails back in ring where removed for electric light pole.
- <sup>54.</sup> Nowra Council Meeting 1st November 1937
- <sup>55.</sup> Antill op. cit. p. 45
- <sup>56.</sup> The Shoalhaven Historical Society holds two plaques (1906 & 1908) in the Nowra Museum.
- <sup>57.</sup> Nowra Lands Office - Bens Walk at Nowra
- <sup>58.</sup> Florance Robyn, *The Shoalhaven River Bank - Nowra to Regatta Creek - A Field Study* prepared in October 1993 as part of an Associate Diploma in Local & Applied History, University of New England.
- <sup>59.</sup> Florance Robyn op. cit.
- <sup>60.</sup> Clark Alan, *Nowra 1888*, Leader Printery, Nowra, 1988, p. 13
- <sup>61.</sup> *South Coast Register* 4th June 1979