

## INTRODUCTION

The first recorded European exploration of Wanneroo was in 1834 when John Butler led a small party approximately 35 miles (60 kilometres) north of Perth in search of lost cattle.

Passing through the area just to the east of Lake Joondalup, Butler reported that the Aboriginal people he saw were "those Wanneroo men who frequent Perth in company with the Yellagonga tribe, they were friendly towards us but we were cautious in letting them see our bread."

Certain individuals and local groups within the Nyoongar tribal area were given custodianship of different areas of land. A large portion of the country north of the Swan River, including much of Wanneroo, was the tribal land of the Mooro people. At the time of European settlement in 1829, this group was led by Yellagonga.

To the north of Lake Joondalup, and also incorporating part of the lake, was the tribal area of Waylo.

Surveyor General John Septimus Roe sent T. Watson to conduct the first surveys of the Wanneroo area in 1838. Later that year, the first land was taken up. A second syndicate of George Shenton, Samuel Moore, W. S. Rogers and E. Jeffers purchased land a little later. The 1000-acre grants, with absentee lessees, were used for pasturing cattle and horses.

It is not known when early settlers started using the name 'Wanneroo', but as early as 1842 a surveyor recorded the 'road to Wanneroo'. Although locally spelt 'Wanneroo', the townsite was gazetted as 'Wanneru' in 1907 and not amended until 1953.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

This brochure is a brief overview of Wanneroo's colourful pioneering history and remarkable development.

If you would like to know more, visit the Wanneroo Regional Museum and Community History Centre at the Wanneroo Library and Cultural Centre, 3 Rocca Way, Wanneroo.

You can also visit our website: [wanneroo.wa.gov.au](http://wanneroo.wa.gov.au) or phone 9405 5920 for enquiries and bookings.

For further reference, the following books are available from any City of Wanneroo Library and the Community History Centre:

Chambers, A. (1991). **The Pioneers: a story of Wanneroo**. Perth: City of Wanneroo.

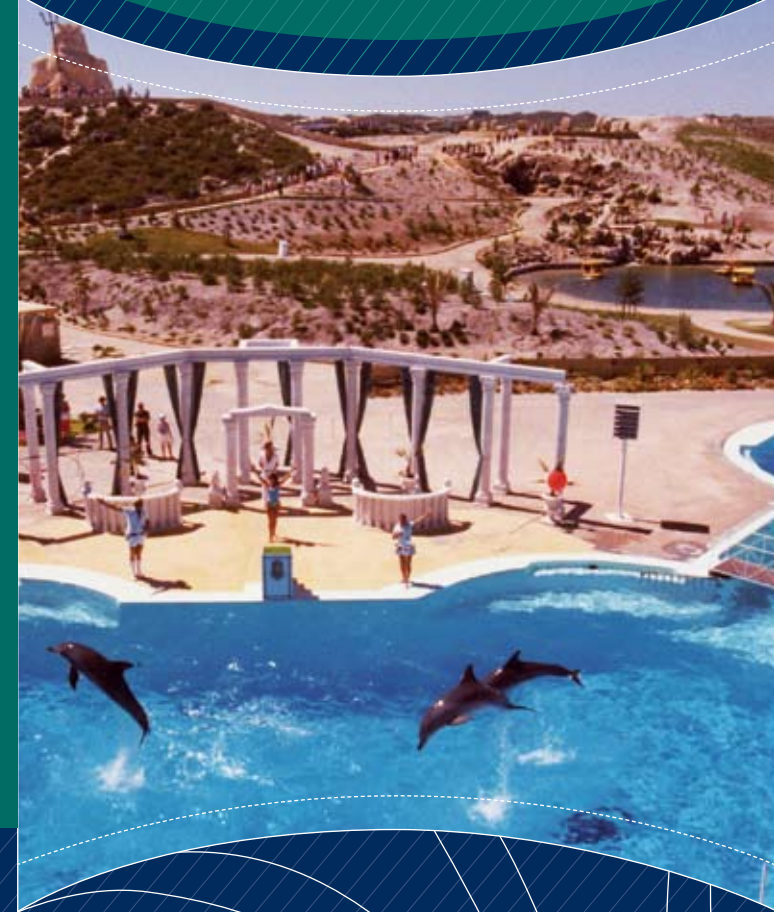
Marwick B. (2005). **The Times of Wanneroo as told to Bill Marwick**. Perth: Wanneroo and Districts Historical Society Inc.



Cover: Atlantis Marine Park, Two Rocks, closed in 1990 but is still highly recognisable by the giant statue of King Neptune.



## A HISTORY OF WANNEROO



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One of the first farms to be established in the Wanneroo area was 'Mission Farm' in 1844. Located on the banks of Lake Goollelal, this was an experimental farm founded by the Wesleyan Missionary Society to be worked and lived on by Aboriginal people under the guidance of the church. Mission Farm was not successful and by 1851 the decision had been made to relocate the farm to the agricultural area of York.

In 1860 the farm was leased by 'ticket-of-leave' convict Thomas Darch, whose family later purchased the property.

About 150 ticket-of-leave convicts worked in the Wanneroo district and 19 of these settled in the area when they became ex-convicts. Their occupations included sawyer, tutor, general servant, lime burner, tree clearer, teamster, plasterer, shingle splitter, medical attendant, cook, shepherd, brick maker and general labourers.

Pioneers to settle the area included the Cockman, Buckingham, Gibb, Duffy and Chitty families. By 1872 there were about 60 families, with development mainly around the lakes.

The North West Stock Route extended from Star Swamp in North Beach to Walkaway, near Geraldton and was gazetted in 1889. It followed the former North Road between Perth and Champion Bay and was used by drovers and travellers as well as being the route for the overland mail service to Geraldton.

The first school opened in Wanneroo in 1874 after a School Building Fund appeal. On Sundays it was used for church services, but was closed when student numbers fell. The next Wanneroo School was opened on 30 January 1899 after John Buckingham donated five acres of land near what is today the junction of Wanneroo and Dundee roads.

## WANNEROO ROAD BOARD

In 1903, Wanneroo was designated a local government area. The inaugural Wanneroo Road Board had seven members, representing 250 people. The improvement of roads both within Wanneroo and to Perth was a major issue. One member recalled leaving the family's farm at midnight to reach the Perth markets in time for the opening at 6am. So the Board carried out the expensive 're-blocking' of parts of the Wanneroo Road with jarrah blocks cut and laid as part of the road's foundation.

## EARNING A LIVING

Wanneroo became a major source of vegetables for Perth as its lake system proved ideal for agricultural purposes. Amongst the market gardeners around Lake Joondalup in the late 1800s, was at least one Chinese plot. From 1900 market gardening in Wanneroo intensified, especially after World War One when migrants from Southern Europe arrived. With the introduction of irrigation in the 1930s/1940s, the market gardens moved from the lake's edge to the higher sandy flats.

Different ethnic groups, and new farming techniques and machinery have meant many changes to planting and cultivation in Wanneroo. The 2000-2001 Agricultural Census quoted the annual value of agricultural commodities in Wanneroo as \$98.3 million.

The first large scale vineyards were planted in Wanneroo in the 1920s by the Parin and the Luisini families. A number of migrant families had kept their country's tradition of producing wine for their own consumption.

The natural bushland of the Wanneroo area led to the formation of a timber industry. In 1921 the Dennis family set up one of the first saw mills in Wanneroo near Lake Mariginiup. This saw mill cut seven-inch (18cm) blocks for use on the road from Wanneroo to Yankeep. The Dennis family also produced the first power saw in Western Australia, using a car engine for the motor. The Villanovas operated the 'Pinjar Saw Mill' until the 1960s.



*WA's first power saw, using a car engine for the motor.*

The lime industry was established in Wanneroo in the 1870s to 1900s, initially to supply the growing needs of the building industry, and later to the Kalgoorlie goldmining industry during the 1890s boom. Production peaked in the 1920s and 1930s with approximately 47 kilns in operation and over 200 people employed.

During late 1934 the population had grown to the point that Crisafulli's picture hall was used for extra space for the school. In 1935 a Catholic school, St Anthony's, was opened. Wanneroo continued to grow and in 1958 work commenced on a new state primary school across Wanneroo Road.

In the 1950s conflict arose between long standing residents and newcomers such as the beach shack leaseholders. As a result of the disputes the Road Board was dissolved in 1950 and again in 1957. This did not stop community improvements from taking place.

In 1954 electricity was extended into part of the Wanneroo town site. In May 1961 the old Road Board Offices became the first home of the Wanneroo Districts Public Library. The first high school was opened in the area at Girrawheen in 1974 and 10 years later the Joondalup Campus of the West Australian College of Advanced Education opened. The Gloucester Lodge Museum opened as Wanneroo's first district museum in November 1979.

## THE CITY OF WANNEROO

The 1980s were a decade of rapid expansion. In 1980 20 new suburbs were gazetted in the Wanneroo municipality.

The City was divided into the Shire of Wanneroo and the City of Joondalup on 1 July 1998. In January 1999, the Shire's urban residency caught up with its rural counterpart and Wanneroo again attained City status with a total population of just over 30,000.

In 2002, the population of the 'new' City of Wanneroo was 83,000, reaching 126,000 in 2007. With an estimated annual growth rate of almost 6% (or approximately 68 new households each week) the City continues to be one of the fastest growing regions in the country.

