



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES ASSESSMENT DOCUMENTATION**

### **11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

#### **PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)**

- 3.4.3 Mining
- 3.5.1 Grazing stock
- 3.10.1 Encouraging Indigenous people into the cash economy
- 3.26.2 Providing hospital services
- 5.1 Working in harsh conditions
- 6.5 Educating people in remote places
- 7.6.1 Developing local government authorities
- 8.10.2 Creating visual arts

#### **HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)**

- 106 Workers (incl. Aboriginal, convict)
- 301 Grazing & pastoralism & dairying
- 303 Mining (incl. mineral processing)
- 307 Intellectual activities, arts & crafts
- 401 Government & politics
- 404 Community services & utilities
- 601 Aboriginal people
- 701 Other – Women

#### **11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\***

The Main Hospital Buildings (fmr), Tjukurba Art Gallery, Morgue (fmr), and Hospital Quarters (fmr) have aesthetic significance as identifiable representative examples of interwar period regional vernacular architecture. (Criterion 1.1)

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is a distinctive hospital environment that contributes to the townscape of Wiluna. (Criterion 1.3)

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\* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is a landmark as a substantial group of buildings on the outer edge of the townsite. (Criterion 1.3)

## **11.2 HISTORIC VALUE**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* was constructed in 1933 to service the needs of the people of the Wiluna district following the re-establishment of large-scale mining in the town, which resulted in the growth of Wiluna when comparable regional centres were in decline. (Criterion 2.2)

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* was used from c.1903 to 1970 as the community's medical centre, the existing buildings replacing the earlier c.1903 hospital facility. The Morgue is a relatively intact example of a building from the first stage of development. (Criteria 2.1 & 2.2)

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* illustrates changing hospital and medical practices, and institutionalised racism through the provision of a separate ward for 'Natives'. (Criterion 2.2)

## **11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* has the potential to provide information on the occupation of the site and on the c.1903 hospital and later buildings that have been removed. (Criterion 3.2)

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* has the potential to provide information about medical practices, and social and cultural interaction in such facilities during the early twentieth century (Criterion 3.1)

## **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* has significance for generations of local people who have had associations with the place as a hospital and more recently as the administrative and community centre of the town. (Criterion 4.1)

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is significant for the contribution of women to the district, in the form of the nursing and domestic staff who lived and worked in an isolated and male dominated environment. (Criterion 4.1)

The Tjukurba Art Gallery is a particularly fine example of an Aboriginal art facility and has social significance for those involved and for the community in general. (Criterion 4.1)

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* provides a significant sense of place as the most substantial group of buildings in the town. (Criterion 4.2)

## **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

### **12.1 RARITY**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is a fine and rare remaining hospital of its type in the State. (Criterion 5.1)

### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is a good, intact example of an interwar hospital in the State. (Criterion 6.1)

### **12.3 CONDITION**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is generally in fair to good condition, with regular maintenance taking place.

### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* has a moderate degree of integrity as it continues to be used, with a relatively minimal degree of intervention and alteration to facilitate the current functions.

### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

A number of changes have taken place to *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* over the years to facilitate previous and current functions. The alterations – predominantly the re-cladding of exterior walls, the removal of some walls in the Administrative Wing, Apartment and Art Gallery, the re-roofing of the Adult Training Centre and Art Gallery, and the slate and tile treatment to the verandah floors of the Administrative and Accommodation Wings – have had some impact on the authenticity of the place. The Morgue (fmr) demonstrates intervention with the 1950s interior wall and ceiling cladding and new doors. *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* demonstrates a moderate degree of authenticity of the original remaining fabric.

## **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment completed by Irene Sauman, Historian and Laura Gray, Heritage and Conservation Consultant, in July 2007, with amendments and/or additions by HCWA staff and the Register Committee.

### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* comprises the Morgue (c.1900s), the Main Hospital Buildings (1933) including a Centenary plaque (c.1996), Hospital Quarters (c.1900s or 1933), Tjukurba Art Gallery (former Maternity Ward, 1936), four Staff houses (three transportables c.1980s, and a house c.2003), Wiluna District War Memorial (c.1996; rock, plaque and two flagpoles), wagon shed and carparks. The Main Hospital Buildings are a group of four single storey buildings enclosing a central grassed courtyard consisting of: Administrative Wing (former consulting rooms and operating theatre), Adult Training Centre (former Men's and 'Native' Wards), Apartment (former Kitchen Wing), and Accommodation Wing (former Women's Ward). The place was designed by the Public Works Department.<sup>1</sup>

The Murchison district was initially occupied in the 1870s by Europeans moving inland from Geraldton and taking up pastoral lands, but they did not reach as far east as the Wiluna district. The Ngaiawongga people occupied the area around Lake Way and Lake King known as 'Weeloona'. The discovery of gold in the district in 1896 brought dislocation and disease to the local populations with the influx of prospectors. Today, the people of Wiluna refer to themselves as Mardu.

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<sup>1</sup> It has not been possible to ascertain with any certainty if the existing residence is the c.1900s Doctor's Residence or the 1933 Nurse's Quarters (though the latter is favoured), so the place has been referred to as Hospital Quarters.

They are part of a linguistic group who are principally Manyjilyjarra speakers and belong to the Western Desert cultural block.<sup>2</sup>

The township of Wiluna was gazetted in 1898, to provide for the growing number of miners arriving in the area. Although some prospectors worked for themselves, many of the local mines were established by companies. As smaller operations could not afford the transport costs for machinery from the closest railhead at Nannine some 120 miles to the west, Gwalia Consolidated Mines became the major operator, with the Gwalia Consolidated, Bulletin and Moonlight mines.<sup>3</sup>

The first hospital in Wiluna was located on the current site, which was gazetted Reserve 8468 for hospital purposes in December 1903. The hospital was known as the Lake Way Hospital and the buildings were timber-framed and iron-clad with canvas ceilings.<sup>4</sup> A Morgue, claimed to have been built by the Road Board, and a Doctor's House, most likely also provided by the Road Board, were part of the original Hospital complex.<sup>5</sup> The Hospital was run by a Hospital Board of Management of locally elected members.

The Hospital operated by subscription. There was a two-tier membership: a Subscriber, paying one guinea (£1 1s 0d) a year (in advance), could be treated as an in-patient at the rate of three guineas (£3 3s 0d) a week, while a Member, who paid one shilling a week, was charged one guinea as an in-patient and was treated free as an outpatient, 'unless their ailment was caused by personal misconduct or insobriety'.<sup>6</sup> Those under subsidy conditions, such as government employees or the indigent, were charged £2 12s 6d, while for everyone else, the weekly hospital rate was four guineas (£4 4s 0d).<sup>7</sup>

In 1923, the average hospital occupancy rate was one person per night, and there was no resident doctor, as the population had dwindled to less than 200.<sup>8</sup> In 1924, Claude de Bernales' Wiluna Gold Corporation acquired the old Gwalia Consolidated Mine and renamed it the Wiluna Gold Mine. By 1931 the Mine was in production and employing hundreds of men. The population of the town had increased to 3,044 by mid 1933 and plans were drawn up for new Hospital buildings.<sup>9</sup>

The Health Department offered £2,000 on a pound for pound basis for the new Hospital, but the proposal submitted by the Wiluna Hospital Board was estimated to cost £5,500. Included in the plan were new Nurses' Quarters, which the Department did not consider were needed. The existing Quarters had been damaged by fire and the Department planned to convert the old women's ward into quarters when the new buildings were completed, but that meant boarding

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2 Tindale, Norman B, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*, Canberra, ANU Press, 1974; Lange, Christina, *Local governance in remote regions: models & issues of governance and service delivery in Wiluna*, ANU, 2005, p. 2.

3 Shire of Wiluna, *A History of Wiluna*, 32 page brochure, [1981], pp. 3-7; Shire of Wiluna, *Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places*, 1995, (np). The readily available sources do not clarify whether Gwalia Consolidated established these mines or bought them from smaller companies.

4 *West Australian Government Gazette*, 18 December 1903, p. 3298; *A History of Wiluna*, op cit, p. 9.

5 Correspondence 1 September 1955, Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003, Item 1952/5102.

6 Health Dept, Lake Way Hospital, Rules & Regulations, March 1907, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003, Item 1907/1328.

7 Health Dept, Item 1907/1328, op cit.

8 Health Dept, Item 1924/0500, op cit; *A History of Wiluna*, op cit.

9 Health Dept, Item 1924/0500, op cit; *A History of Wiluna*, op cit, pp. 9, 12-13.

out the nurses in the interim at £10 a week, or having them occupy the hospital verandahs. This situation, together with the immediate need of a new Men's Ward, prompted the Hospital Board to take matters into its own hands. In May 1933, the Board called tenders for a Men's Ward to be located behind the existing hospital buildings. The contract was awarded to T. Lees at £1,325. The following month the Board called tenders for erection of Quarters to house five nurses. The building cost £680.<sup>10</sup>

The Health Department called tenders for the rest of the Hospital buildings, comprising the Administrative Wing with consulting rooms, dispensary, offices and operating theatre, the Women's Ward, and the Kitchen Wing, which included a staff dining room and two maid's rooms. These buildings made up three sides of a quadrangle, with the recently built Men's Ward making up the fourth side. The buildings were linked by concrete floored verandahs. A contract for the three buildings was awarded to Todd Bros in November 1933 for £4,380 6s 6d.<sup>11</sup> During the building process, the Hospital reserve was cancelled and the land, comprising 20 acres, was granted to the Hospital Board. The Board then applied for, and received, permission to subdivide and sell part of the land to raise extra funds.<sup>12</sup>

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* was officially opened on 2 June 1934 by W.B. Philippson, Chairman of both the Wiluna Road Board and Hospital Board of Management. As part of the opening ceremony, an Honour Avenue of 17 trees was planted by the wives of Board members, members of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Returned Servicemen's League, and the oldest residents. Nineteen soldiers' name plates were installed by the wives of returned soldiers. It is not clear whether these represented men who had enlisted in World War I or those who had not returned. In his opening remarks, Mr Philippson thanked fellow Board member J.A. Carpenter for the work done in establishing lawn and garden beds in the Hospital quadrangle.<sup>13</sup>

The Lake Way Hospital buildings were sold by public auction for £488 17s 6d, except for the former women's ward, which was used for domestic staff accommodation.<sup>14</sup>

Historical photographs indicate that the Main Hospital Buildings were only lined internally, with the timber framework evident on the exterior. In 1934 the Administrative Block was clad externally with Fibrolite. New quarters were also built for the Matron at this time, at a cost of £251. This building is referred to as 'Matron's Flat' and is understood to have consisted of three rooms.<sup>15</sup>

By 1936, the population of Wiluna had reached 6,000, with over 1,000 men employed at the Wiluna Gold Mine. The daily average number of patients at *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* had reached the maximum bed number of

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10 Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, WAS 268 CONS 1003, Item 1933/0703; *Wiluna Miner*, 28 January, p. 2, 15 April, 6 & 13 May, p. 3, 17 & 24 June, 1 July, p. 2.

11 *Wiluna Miner*, 21 October 1933, p. 3, 18 Nov 1933, p. 2; *West Australian Government Gazette*, 1933, p. 1777. Wiluna Hospital Plan Book could not be located at State Records and may have been retrieved by the Health Department and sent to the Shire prior to their occupation of the buildings in 1980.

12 Certificate of Title Vol. 1035 Fol. 460, 8 Feb 1934 & Governor's consent to sell gazetted 7 June 1935.

13 *Wiluna Miner*, 9 June 1934; Health Dept, Item 1933/0703, op cit.

14 Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003 Item 1945/0679. Appears as building no. 1 on the 1949 sketch plan.

15 Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003 Item 1935/0913.

thirty. Staff comprised the Matron, seven nurses, six nursing assistants, a cook, kitchen maid, three ward maids, a laundress, orderly and a part-time gardener. The Hospital Board wanted extra maternity accommodation as the Women's Ward was overcrowded. Funds were provided by the Lotteries Commission and the Health Department, and the Maternity Wing was built for £1,246.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of 1936, the Hospital Board had a bank overdraft and building loan with the Union Bank and a debt of £1,800 with the Health Department for medicines. The Department refused further credit and Wiluna Road Board called on it to investigate the financial state of the Hospital. In an eight page report by investigator H.E. Thurkle, it was noted that the Hospital was in debt for £3,219 and that the major problem was an inefficient Hospital Board Secretary and a tendency for the Board to give the Hospital staff everything they asked for, whether warranted or not.<sup>17</sup>

Lack of scrutiny of accounts meant that supplies were being purchased from outside sources for up to twice the price they could be bought through the Health Department; there was no follow-up on patient's accounts resulting in considerable outstanding debts; the Hospital was overstaffed and all the nurses were paid as Sisters regardless of their training, experience or responsibilities; brandy seemed to be a great fix-all, with the doctors ordering it for many patients, resulting in four times the amount used at Wiluna than in another hospital of comparative size; and, proprietary medicines, costing between eleven and seventeen shillings, were being dispensed at the subsidised rate of eleven pence. These, and many other issues, were detailed in the report with proposed savings on operating costs of £1,880 a year.<sup>18</sup>

A meeting of hospital fund members requested that the Health Department take over management of the Wiluna Hospital for six months. The Board was duly dismissed and a managing secretary appointed. When a new Board was constituted the method of forming it was altered, with only two members elected, two appointed by the Department and a fifth selected by the other four, rather than all members being elected as previous. With ongoing advice from the Department, the Hospital got its financial affairs on a more solid footing.<sup>19</sup>

In 1938, the Night Nurse's Quarters were constructed to the rear of the Main Hospital Buildings. This consisted of a one-room building with surrounding verandah.<sup>20</sup>

During the 1930s, Wiluna Gold Mine had contributed significantly to the national economy and it reached peak production in the late 1930s. During World War II it was the only mine to stay open when others were closed because it was supplying the Commonwealth with arsenic.<sup>21</sup>

In the early 1940s, the Hospital had difficulty acquiring a doctor and the population of the town was dwindling due to World War II and decreased production at the Wiluna Gold Mine. The Mine closed in 1946. Staff at the

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16 Health Dept, Item 1935/0913, op cit, includes photographs of the construction process; Certificate of Title Vol. 1035 Fol. 460 & Vol. 1046 Fol. 488, 10 February 1936.

17 Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003 Item 1937/0457 & Item 1935/0913, op cit.

18 Health Dept, Items 1937/0457 & 1935/0913, op cit.

19 Health Dept, Items 1937/0457 & 1935/0913, op cit.

20 Health Dept, Item 1937/0457, op cit.

21 Considine and Griffiths Architects with Robin Chinnery (2001) *The Lodge Wiluna Conservation Plan*, prepared for Normandy Mining Limited, November 2001. pp. 34, 40, 103.

Hospital at this time comprised the Matron, one nurse, two nursing assistants, cook, laundress, two ward maids and an orderly. Average bed occupancy was 7.8 patients per night.<sup>22</sup> A report on closure of some sections of the hospital for economy and efficiency included the recommendation that the air-conditioned nursery located beside the Maternity Wing be used as a room for Aboriginal female patients – once the air-conditioning had been removed to a new nursery in the (white) Women's Ward.<sup>23</sup>

In October 1950, Dr Ekstein occupied the Doctor's House. The place had been rented out for a time to a State Battery employee, and there were questions as to the ownership of the place. It was ascertained that the Doctor's House was not a Public Works Department building, but whether it had been funded by the Road Board or the Health Department was unclear.<sup>24</sup>

Sometime between 1954 and 1958, the Matron's Quarters and the Night Nurse's Quarters were removed, presumably sold by the Hospital Board. The Health Department had no record of their disposal, except to note that they had gone sometime during that period. The Matron was then occupying two rooms in the Women's Ward.<sup>25</sup> In the mid 1950s, Hospital occupancy was down to an average of six and the Matron was the only qualified nursing staff. The Hospital admitted 296 Aboriginal patients in 1956, compared to 156 'white' patients, and the former Men's Ward was completely occupied as the 'Native' Ward, while the Men's Ward had been moved to the former Maternity Wing. There were few female patients. Further suggestions of closing some sections of the Hospital were objected to by the Hospital Board chairman because Aboriginal patients 'and their non-patient adherents would be too closely in contact with white patients'.<sup>26</sup> This attitude was typical of the period.

The Morgue required extensive work and in 1956 it was renovated at a cost of £381 9s 0d, which included new window, door and frames, internal lining, painting interior and exterior, connection of water service, basin, drainage and electrical power.<sup>27</sup>

By 1962, the Hospital buildings were deteriorating and the cost of maintenance increasing. The Hospital Board realised it could not continue to maintain the place and wanted a new building, more compact, to entice qualified staff and to better serve the outlying pastoral properties and the rapidly increasing Aboriginal population.<sup>28</sup> In 1966, tenders were called for major renovations, but the contractor was slow to start work and in the meantime there was a 'rapid dispersal' of the Aboriginal population, for reasons not mentioned or not known. With daily bed occupancy down to 1.5, the Hospital closed in December 1967 and a two-bed Nursing Post was established in the Administrative Wing. Patients requiring hospital treatment were transported to Meekatharra by ambulance or by the Flying Doctor Service.<sup>29</sup> From November 1969, the rest of the Main Hospital

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22 Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003 Item 1945/0679.

23 Report and 1949 sketch plan, Health Dept, Item 1945/0679, op cit.

24 Health Dept, Item 1952/5102, op cit.

25 Report 20 November 1958, Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 268 CONS 1003 Item 1956/5816 & 1966 plan, WAS 82 CONS 1867 Item 1966/0328.

26 Health Dept report 20 November 1958, Item 1956/5816, op cit.

27 Health Dept, Item 1956/5816, op cit.

28 Health Dept, Item 1956/5816, op cit.

29 Health Dept, Item 1966/0328, op cit; Heydon, P.R., *Wiluna: Edge of the desert*, Wiluna Mines Ltd, Shire of Wiluna & Hesperian Press, 1996, p.152.

Buildings were leased to J.J. Parr of Golden Mile Orchards, Queensland for accommodation of some dozen employees involved in the establishment of a fruit-growing operation in the district, known as Desert Farms.<sup>30</sup>

In 1970, a new Nursing Post was built in Thompson Street, Wiluna by the Silver Chain Association. Emergency medical services for the region were provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Parr's Desert Farms orchard project was successful and was taken over by the community in 1974. The site of *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* was designated Wiluna Lot 1459 and gazetted Reserve 32988 for Shire accommodation & storage purposes.<sup>31</sup> In 1975, the Shire took the decision to have the Administrative Wing converted to a Council administrative centre. The building was refurbished and opened on 5 June 1980 by June Craig MLA, Minister for Local Government.<sup>32</sup>

The entrance statement to *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is a pergola style structure commemorating George Lukin, who was a local pastoralist and owner of the Lake Way Station. George Lukin was elected a member of the Shire Council in 1961, and served as Shire President from 1974 until his death in an aeroplane accident in 1983.<sup>33</sup>

Some time in the 1980s three transportable houses were located on site to provide staff housing for council employees.<sup>34</sup>

In 1992, the purpose of Reserve 32988 was altered to civic and community centre, and the area of the reserve was reduced from 3.98 ha to 1.90 ha as Wiluna Lot 1486.<sup>35</sup> The Wiluna local government area was divided in two in 1994, with the creation of the Ngaanyatjaraku Shire in the eastern portion, and over ensuing years *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* has been developed as the headquarters of the Wiluna Shire and community services.<sup>36</sup>

The remaining Hospital Quarters was occupied by the Wiluna Shire Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as his residence. It is not entirely certain whether this house is the former Doctor's House (c.1900s) or former Nurse's Quarters (1933), but it is considered most likely to be the latter, built in mirror image to the proposed plan according to the location and style of the chimney.<sup>37</sup> Confusion as to which house this is dates to as early as 1949, as the sketch plan of that date shows the building marked no. 11 listed as Nurse's Quarters and later amended to 'Drs. Residence'. Locally the place is thought to be the Matron's Quarters, but this is known to have been removed in the mid 1950s and in any event was a much smaller structure.<sup>38</sup>

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30 Health Dept, Item 1966/0328, op cit; *West Australian Government Gazette*, 1966, p. 1869.

31 Health Dept, Wiluna Hospital, SROWA, WAS 455 CONS 2506 Item 1970/5359; Landgate, Reserve Enquiry, Reserve 32988.

32 Plaque located in the Administrative Wing.

33 Heydon, P. R., op cit, pp. 362, 506, 509.

34 Information from site visit. No further information regarding the construction or use of these residences has been located

35 Landgate, Reserve Enquiry, Reserve 32988.

36 Heydon, P. R., op cit, pp. 497-506.

37 1933 plan of proposed Staff Quarters, Health Dept, Item 1935/0913, op cit. The consultant was not allowed access to the CEO's House at the time of the site visit and the CEO has not responded to a request to identify whether or not the plan of the Nurse's Quarters fits the residence he occupies.

38 Information provided by Wiluna Shire CEO at time of site visit; 1949 sketch plan, Item 1945/0679, op cit.

In 1996 a Memorial in the form of a large rock with attached plaques and two flagpoles, and a memorial plaque on the wall of the former hospital building, were installed. The Memorials were unveiled by the Governor of Western Australia Major General Michael Jeffery, to celebrate 100 years since gold was first discovered in the Wiluna Region, the World Wars, and to commemorate the Wiluna Centenary Celebration held on 21-22 September 1996.<sup>39</sup>

Eastman and Poletti Architects were involved in renovations and refurbishment of parts of *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* in 2003. The room currently in use as a lecture room in the Adult Training Centre (original Men's Ward, later Native Ward) was converted for use as the Council Chamber. Other internal changes included installation of toilets in a storeroom in the Administrative Wing, upgrading of disabled access and repairs to concrete verandahs, which included re-surfacing with slate.<sup>40</sup> An additional staff house was also constructed at this time.<sup>41</sup>

On 13 December 2005, the Tjukurba Art Gallery was opened in the refurbished former Maternity Wing and the Council Chamber was relocated to this area. The Gallery was opened by Local Government and Regional Development Minister John Bowler MLA. Wiluna Shire developed an art program with Geraldton TAFE, where local artists could achieve accreditation and the Gallery offered financial opportunities for the sale of their work.<sup>42</sup>

There is no evidence of the Honour Avenue planted in 1933. None of the existing plantings date from as early as seventy years ago.

In 2007, *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* comprises the Administrative Wing occupied as Shire offices, an Apartment in the former Kitchen Wing, Accommodation in the former Women's Ward, the Adult Training Centre<sup>43</sup> facility in the former Men's Ward, and the Tjukurba Art Gallery in the former Maternity Wing. The Hospital Quarters are occupied as the residence of the Shire CEO. The former Morgue is unused. There are four later dwellings for Shire staff on the site.

## 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)*, a group of single storey buildings, comprises: the four Main Hospital Buildings that enclose a central grassed courtyard, consisting of Administrative Wing, Adult Training Centre, Apartment, and Accommodation Wing; Art Gallery; Morgue (fmr); Doctor's House (fmr); four Staff houses (three c.1980s transportables, and a c.2003 house); Wiluna District War Memorial (c.1996; rock, plaque and two flagpoles); wagon shed; and, carports.

Located on Scotia Street, on the southeast boundary of the Wiluna townsite, *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is bounded by unsurfaced roads to the north (Jones Street) and south (Hospital Street), with Scotia Street forming the western

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39 Memorial Plaque. No newspaper article relating to this event could be located.

40 Correspondence & photographs, Eastman & Poletti Architects, July 2003, HCWA Place file.

41 Information from site visit. No further information regarding the construction and use of this residence has been located.

42 Dept of Local Government, *Local government update*, December 2005, p. 1.

43 The Adult Training Centre is a community run facility for locals to gain skills in practical subjects, such as computer use. It is also used for meetings and conferences. Conversation between HCWA officer and Shire of Wiluna officer, 17 September 2007.

boundary and access to the site. The main vehicular entry is located at the south end of the Scotia Street frontage. It is a road base driveway that extends in a circle around the Wiluna District War Memorial, in the centre front setback, and along the entire south side of the site where it forms an expansive area between the former hospital buildings and the staff houses. Pedestrian access is identified by a timber trellis on the Scotia Street boundary, centrally aligned with the Main Hospital Buildings and the Wiluna District War Memorial. The entire site is fenced around the perimeter with a 1.5 metre high chain link fence on a galvanised pipe frame. The site is flat. The entire north side is grassed, with the Morgue (fmr) central in the grassed area. There are grassed areas and plantings in the front setback area, with plantings associated with the Wiluna District War Memorial, and a grassed area to the northeast at the rear. There are no significant plantings. The area to the east of the staff houses is undeveloped.

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is typical framed construction regional vernacular architecture in the basic bungalow design of the Federation period that does not correspond to any specific architectural style guides. *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* consists of single storey timber framed structures predominantly clad with fibro-cement wall linings, with some corrugated iron lined dados, and painted corrugated iron and pre-painted steel roof sheeting. The original hospital building made use of the stack ventilation system and most roofscapes retain roof-mounted vents that were part of this system.

#### Administrative Wing (former consultation, X-ray and operating theatre)

The building is raised off the ground on a rendered brick plinth with slate finished concrete verandahs. A broad slate staircase is centre front, and small concrete steps on the east side, access the grassed courtyard. There is no balustrade or railing to the north and west verandahs, although there is a 0.9 metre high metal clad dado on the east side to the courtyard, and a double steel grill gate opening on the north-east corner. The verandahs are supported by simple square timber posts that are in pairs about the gable frontage, and the front corner (north-west). A plaque, carrying the engraving '1896 to 1996.....To Celebrate 100 years since Gold was First Discovered in the Wiluna Region and to Commemorate the Wiluna Centenary Celebration held on 21-22 September 1996.....', is fixed to the wall on the verandah. The hipped roof is clad with short sheets of corrugated iron roof sheeting that has been painted green consistent with the other former Hospital buildings on the site. The roof has a number of original roof ventilators protruding above the roofline. The roof features a gable, central on the west frontage (main frontage: Scotia Street). The gable is detailed with vertical timbers over fibro-cement and has the words 'Shire of Wiluna' painted on the valance. The exterior cladding is fibro-cement sheeting (asbestos) above a recent vertical pre-painted corrugated steel sheet dado. Reference to documentary evidence reveals that the walls were originally battened on the exterior in geometric pattern of contrasting colour, with a dado only delineated by a series of three horizontal rectangular panels with vertical sections above. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes with the lower sashes obscure glazed. The single doors have two vertical lower panels and nine-pane glazing above. The French doors have two panels with six-paned glazing.

The floor plan is rectangular with verandahs to three sides (not the south end). There is one front entry and two rear entries and the rooms are mostly interconnected. There is evidence of wall removal, particularly in the entry reception area, and reference to plans shows that walls have also been removed

in the CEO's office and the meeting room. Otherwise the layout is as constructed. The interior demonstrates a significant degree of original fabric in the tongue and groove timber floorboards throughout, the battened fibro-cement wall and ceiling linings, the glazed former dispensary partition wall, and the original dispensary varnished jarrah cupboard fitout. There are lighting and air-conditioning to these spaces.

#### Adult Training Centre (former Men's and 'Native' Ward)

The building is raised off the ground on a rendered brick plinth with surrounding concrete verandah with a slate finish to the south and west sides, and the original concrete on the remaining sides. The verandahs, supported by square timber posts, are at ground level at the east end. There are no accesses other than to connect to the north and east verandahs of the office, and the west verandah of the Apartment. The north and west verandahs are enclosed with the original ripple iron dado with diagonal timber lattice above. On the south side facing the central grassed courtyard, there is a ripple iron balustrade. The verandah on the east end forms a breezeway to the brick ablutions and store across that end of the building. The hipped roof is clad with long sheets of pre-painted steel roof sheeting in a green colour that is consistent with the other former Hospital buildings on the site. Unlike the other roofs of *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)*, the Adult Training Centre roof has vented gables with only three ventilators protruding above the roofline. The exterior cladding is battened fibro-cement sheeting (asbestos) in vertical configurations. The windows are timber framed double hung sashes. The doors and French doors are all panelled with multi-paned glazing above.

The floor plan is a simple rectangle with a main space, and two rooms across the east end. The interior demonstrates a significant degree of original fabric in the tongue and groove timber floorboards throughout, and the battened fibro-cement wall and ceiling linings. There are lighting and air-conditioning fitouts.

#### Apartment (former kitchen & dining room)

The building is raised off the ground on a rendered brick plinth with a concrete verandah along the west, facing the grassed central courtyard. The verandah is supported by square timber posts and has a ripple iron balustrade. There is also a verandah at ground level on the south end. The hipped roof is clad with short sheets of painted corrugated iron in a green colour that is consistent with the other former Hospital buildings on the site. The main roof continues as a skillion over the south verandah, and over the brick chimney on the east wall. The exterior cladding is battened fibro-cement sheeting (asbestos). The windows are timber framed double hung sashes. The doors are mostly recent flush panel replacements.

The floor plan is roughly a rectangle, and has an extension at the north end. There is evidence of partial wall removal between the kitchen and the living room, and reference to plans also reveals that walls have been removed in bedroom 1 (formerly 2 bedrooms opening onto the south verandah), and bedroom 2 (formerly the pantry and store), and a doorway in the north wall of the kitchen leads to the extension that is ablution facility. The interior retains a degree of original fabric in the tongue and groove timber floorboards throughout, the battened fibro-cement wall and ceiling linings, and the 'flywire' vents high on the walls of the former pantry. The original brick fireplace is also evident, although

the stove has been removed. There is a modest kitchen fitout, and lighting and air-conditioning fitouts.

#### Accommodation Wing (former Women's Ward)

The building is raised off the ground on a rendered brick plinth with ceramic tiled verandah finish used on the original concrete. The verandahs, supported by square timber posts, are at ground level at the east end, opening into the gallery courtyard. There are concrete stairs central on the south side, with a pair of steel gridded gates at the verandah access in that location. The verandah also connects to the east verandah of the Administrative Wing, and the west verandah of the Apartment. The south and west verandahs are enclosed with the original ripple iron dado with diagonal timber lattice above. On the north side facing the central grassed courtyard there is a ripple iron lined balustrade. The verandah on the east end forms a breezeway to the pan room in the south-east corner and opens to the Art Gallery courtyard on the east. The hipped roof is clad with short sheets of painted corrugated iron in a green colour that is consistent with the other former Hospital buildings on the site, and has a number of protruding roof ventilators. The exterior cladding is battened fibro-cement sheeting (asbestos). The windows are timber framed double hung sashes. The French doors have two vertical panels with six-paned glazing above, and fanlights above each set of doors.

The floor plan is a rectangle with surrounding verandahs. There are six rooms; three facing north and three to the south, all opening onto the respective verandahs. The rooms are not interconnected. The interior has a significant degree of original fabric in the tongue and groove timber floorboards throughout, and the battened fibro-cement wall and ceiling linings. There are some vanity basin installations in the accommodation rooms, and lighting and air-conditioning fitouts.

#### Art Gallery (former Maternity Ward)

The building is raised off the ground on a rendered brick plinth. The verandahs around the perimeter of the north wing are entirely enclosed, forming the exterior walls and reading the two-stage 'gallery' as one building. The entry on the west is accessed off a courtyard space that is almost enclosed by the east end of the Accommodation Wing, the south part of the Art Gallery building, and the south end of the Apartment. A short concrete ramp leads to the double door entry into the Art Gallery central on the west wall. The hipped roof is clad with long sheets of pre-painted steel roof sheeting in a green colour that is consistent with the other former Hospital buildings on the site, and has a small number of protruding roof ventilators. The exterior cladding is battened fibro-cement sheeting (asbestos). The windows are timber framed double hung sashes. The doors appear to be recent interventions.

The floor plan comprises two rectangles, forming an 'L' with the original building (former labour ward extension) along the south comprising the office, store, workshop and ablutions (in the west end). All rooms, except the ablutions, are accessed off the former south verandah of the adjoining extension (former male recreation) that is aligned at right angles. The extension is a rectangle with a single space with surrounding verandah. The verandah is entirely enclosed to the exterior (north, west and east), and the interior walls of the inside rectangle, that were originally only lined on the interior (reference to documentary evidence)

have been removed except for the structural posts and short nib walls at each corner, and central along each wall. The interior retains a significant degree of original fabric in the tongue and groove timber floorboards throughout, and the battened fibro-cement wall and ceiling linings. Windows on the north wing are aluminium framed sliding glass. There are storage, lighting and air-conditioning fitouts.

#### Morgue (fmr)

The morgue is located some distance north of the main hospital group within a grassed area along an expansive north side of the site. The single room building is at ground level with a concrete floor. The timber-framed structure is clad with vertical sheets of corrugated iron. The gable roof is similarly clad with corrugated iron. There is a wire mesh ventilator strip around the top of the walls. There are no windows, and a double entry on the east side. The doors are recent interventions. The interior is simple with recently clad gyprock interior walls and the ceiling lined on the rake, concealing the wall ventilation along the top of the side walls.

#### Hospital Quarters (fmr) and Staff Houses

The five staff houses form a line from north to south, all facing west, at the rear of *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)*, on the east side of an expansive hard stand area. The Hospital Quarters (fmr), at the north end of the group, was inaccessible at the time of the site inspection and mostly concealed from view by plantings within the delineated fenced boundary of the place. It seems to be a square building with a verandah on at least two sides and a corrugated iron clad hipped roof, painted to match the other Hospital buildings. It is likely to be timber framed and fibro-cement clad as for the other Hospital buildings on the site.

The three c.1980s transportables and c.2003 house were not inspected. The 1980s houses are all of the same design and orientation, side by side, between the Hospital Quarters (fmr) and the c.2003 house.

#### Wiluna District War Memorial (rock, plaque and two flagpoles)

The Wiluna District War Memorial comprises a large rock with three brass plaques commemorating the wars. One of the plaques reads 'The Wiluna District War Memorial was officially Dedicated on 21 September 1996 by His Excellency Major General Michael Jeffery AC AO (MIL) MC, Governor of Western Australia' so it may reasonably be assumed the memorial dates to 1996. However, another of the plaques commemorates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War II (1995) so the memorial may have been established earlier than its 1996 dedication date. The rock is flanked by flagpoles and faces east. It is set within a circular garden area that is edged by rocks, and surrounded by a road base driveway. The Wiluna District War Memorial is aligned with the gabled entrance to *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)*, and also with the trellised entry statement on the front boundary.

#### Wagon shed

The wagon shed is located to the north of the Wiluna District War Memorial, on the edge of the circular driveway. It is a steel framed open sided structure with a gable roof at break pitch along both sides. It appears to be used to shelter a large timber wagon.

## Carports

Carports are located on the south boundary adjacent to the main entry, and also on the north side of the gallery building. They are steel-framed open sided structures with flat steel clad roofs.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

#### Hospital complexes

There are 186 places on the Heritage Council database that are or were hospitals, 18 of which were constructed between 1930 and 1939 but few are of fibro and iron construction. Hospital complexes that are of fibro and iron construction, or include some buildings of those materials, include Mount Magnet, Norseman and Denham.

No firm date has been located for P01643 Mount Magnet Hospital (fmr) but it is likely a 1930s construction and is of similar style to *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* with the buildings forming a U-shape, and the entry building having a porch statement and verandahs. Whereas the external dado at *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is of iron, that at Mount Magnet is weatherboard. Mount Magnet Hospital closed in 1976. The buildings do not appear to be maintained.<sup>44</sup>

P00780 Norseman Hospital, Administration & Outpatients was built in 1936, as a fibro and iron construction. It occupies a site adjacent to the site of the original 1907 hospital. Norseman Hospital is a ten-bed hospital that also provides community health services. The buildings at Norseman include a morgue of similar size and style to that at *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)*. Two of the original 1907 buildings have been relocated to other sites.<sup>45</sup>

P11706 Old Hospital, Denham was built in 1935. Originally built as a two-room structure in weatherboard and iron with surrounding verandah and gable roof, it has been enlarged to the rear, verandahs partly enclosed, and the weatherboards replaced with fibro sheeting. The building is used by community groups such as the Country Women's Association (CWA). The morgue is a 'shed' at the rear.<sup>46</sup>

*Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is a fine and rare remaining hospital of its type in the State.

#### 'Native' wards

The provision of separate wards for 'natives' in hospitals, such as that at *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr)* is representative of the segregation of service provision in Western Australia, as influenced by early legislation and community attitudes at the time. After the introduction of the Aborigines Act in 1905, Aboriginal people were denied access to many services, including being refused admission to hospitals.<sup>47</sup> The scenario did not abate until the 1950s, when assimilation policies encouraged access to schools, housing, employment and other essential services including medical care, although discriminatory

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44 HCWA database; Day, Lorna, *Drawn to Mt Magnet*, Shire of Mount Magnet, 1995, pp. 218-219.

45 HCWA database; 'Norseman Hospital', *Norseman Today*, 30 December 1999, pp. 11-12.

46 HCWA database; Max Hipkins & Associates, *Survey of the built environment of Shark Bay*, Dept of Planning & Urban Development, 1991, pp. 23-24.

47 Haebich, A., *For their own good, Aborigines and government in the south west of Western Australia 1900-40*. University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, 1988, pp. 144, 236.

legislation was only progressively amended and not entirely removed in Western Australia until the 1970s.<sup>48</sup>

In terms of health, epidemics of leprosy and venereal disease in the early twentieth century encouraged the segregation and isolation of Aboriginal people, as the prevailing attitude to Aboriginal people at the time was that they would never become part of Australian society and would 'die out' as a race. Detention and isolation was therefore the primary means of 'treatment'. Little attention was given to rehabilitation or the psychological cost of being forcibly removed from home and family. In the most extreme form of segregation, several islands were selected in the north west to incarcerate 'diseased' Aboriginal people, whereas non-Aboriginal people with the same conditions were sent to Perth for treatment.<sup>49</sup>

Leprosy in particular, generated much fear in the non-Aboriginal community. The condition was prevalent in the Aboriginal population due to the poor living conditions in reserves and settlements, and an understandable reluctance to seek medical assistance, among other factors. The prevalence of it, combined with beliefs about the degree of contagiousness of leprosy, created a culture of alarm and apprehension in the non-Aboriginal community.<sup>50</sup>

In the early twentieth century, the provision of health care to Aboriginal people was an obligation for those charged with their 'protection', but confusion about responsibility between administrative departments, and discrimination at a staff level, meant that adequate care was not always forthcoming. In hospitals, separate wards were allocated for Aboriginal people, sometimes outside the main hospital because they were considered 'unclean', and because they made the white patients 'uncomfortable', however when bed space was in demand the beds allocated for Aboriginal people were usually given to white people. The demand on 'native' bed space increased as Aboriginal people left the reserves in the 1920s and increasingly sought medical assistance at hospitals.<sup>51</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain how many regional hospitals had 'native' wards and how many of those may be extant. In many cases it is likely that the 'ward' was a tent or other temporary structure. Some comparable places include Narrogin Hospital, which had a four bed 'native' ward; Gnowangerup Hospital which provided a tent; and Quairading, which had a small wooden structure with room for one bed only.<sup>52</sup> The Heritage Council does not identify any other hospitals with wards specifically allocated to Aboriginal people.<sup>53</sup>

#### 13.4 KEY REFERENCES

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- 48 Haebich, A. and Delroy, A. *The stolen generations, separation of Aboriginal children from their families*, Western Australian Museum, Perth, 1999, p.43.
- 49 Hutchinson, D. and Suba, T, *Cossack, the cultural significance of the lazaret*, Unpublished heritage study, 1992, pp. 2-4.
- 50 Briscoe, G *Disease, Health and Healing: aspects of indigenous health in Western Australia and Queensland, 1900-1940*. A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the Australian National University, September 1996 (chapters 4, 5, 6). Available at: <http://histrsss.anu.edu.au/briscoe/>
- 51 Briscoe, G *ibid*
- 52 Briscoe, G *ibid*.
- 53 While it does not identify wards, the HCWA database does identify three hospitals that were for the separate treatment of Aboriginal people - P09581 Native Hospital & Matron's Quarters at Wyndham and P09743 Numbala Nunga (Derby Native Hospital) and P03130 *Mt Margaret Mission Hospital* (ruin) (registered).

Health Department files on Wiluna Hospital held at State Records Office, as referenced.

### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Further investigation of the Hospital Quarters would ascertain if it is the 1933 Nurse's Quarters or the older Doctor's Residence, based on the existing plan of the Nurse's Quarters.

Further research could identify other hospitals with extant 'native' wards.

Further research may provide evidence regarding the origins and use of the wagon shed, about which no information could be located.

Further research may establish the exact date that the Wiluna District War Memorial was constructed.