

Cape Pallarenda: The last 200 years

summary of talk given at Pallarenda Quarantine Station, 15 August for the 2021 North Australian Festival of Arts



source: Nick Harvey

Nick Harvey

Talk outline

1. Early European exploration
2. Isolation and quarantine
3. Early settlers
4. Army and WWII fortifications
5. Settlement and growth of suburb
6. Telecommunication and radar
7. Conservation and recreation



source: Nick Harvey



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What happened more than 200 years ago?

~300 million yrs ago

'Many Peaks', volcanic in origin

~6,500 yrs ago?

rising sea creates 'Many Peaks' island

~3-6,000 yrs ago?

coastal sediment joins 'Many Peaks' island to mainland

< 3,000 yrs ago?

Aboriginal rock art ('Many Peaks') middens ('Town Common')

251 yrs ago

Cleveland Bay, Cape Cleveland & Magnetic(al) Island named by James Cook

202 yrs ago

first European sets foot on land, Cleveland Bay

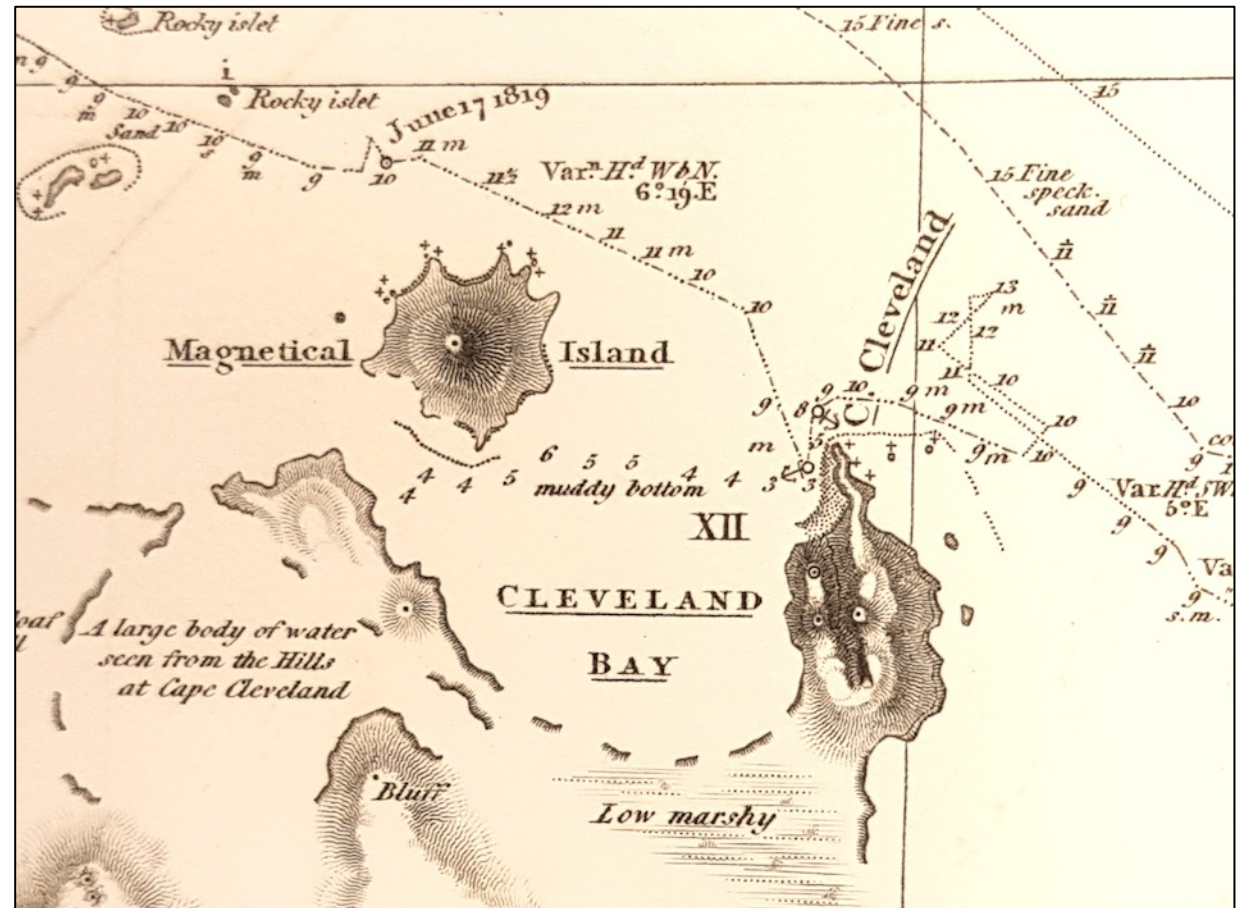


source: State of QLD

Arrival of Europeans

Survey of Cleveland Bay, 1819

- first Europeans didn't set foot near 'Many Peaks'
- Only landed at Cape Cleveland, climbed hills
- 'Many Peaks' (not then named) seen in distance
- body of water seen (today's 'Town Common')
- soundings taken offshore from unnamed cape

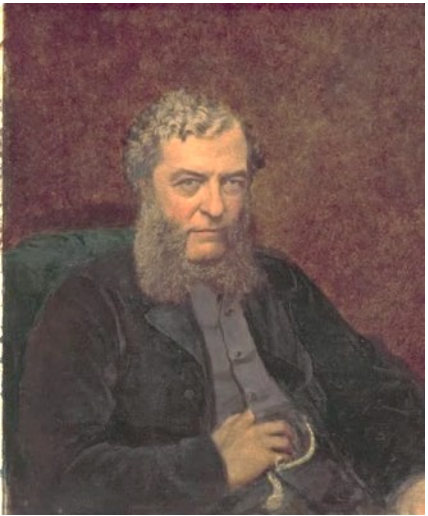


Extract from 1819 Chart, surveyed by Lieutenant Phillip Parker King, source: JCU Library Special Collections

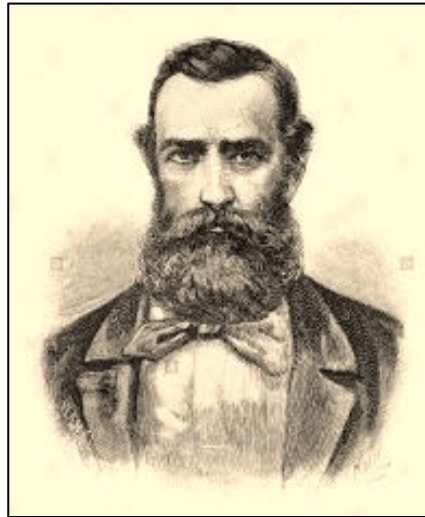
First Europeans to climb 'Many Peaks'



source: Nick Harvey



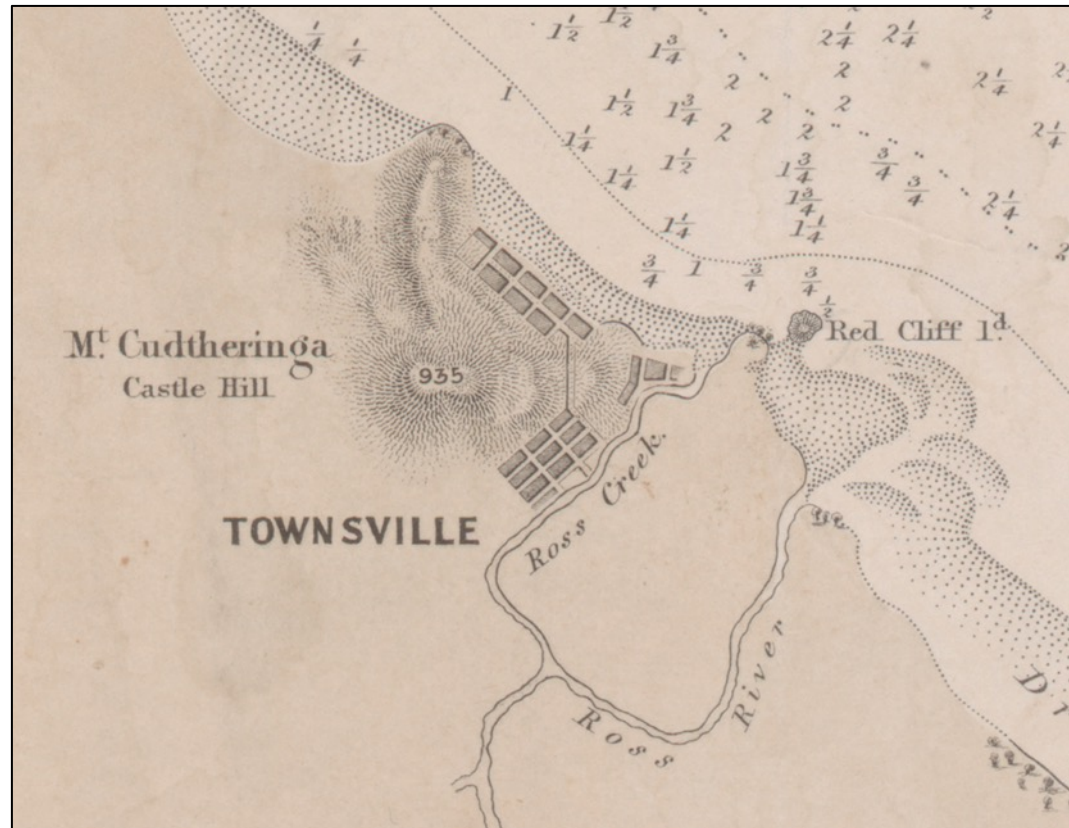
- Lieutenant John Stokes on board *The Beagle*
- climbed hills in 1841 and surprised an Aborigine
- first record of indigenous encounter



- George Dalrymple on board *The Spitfire*
- climbed hills in 1860 saw 3 Aboriginal camps
- hostility forced Europeans to retreat

1860s important for settlement of area

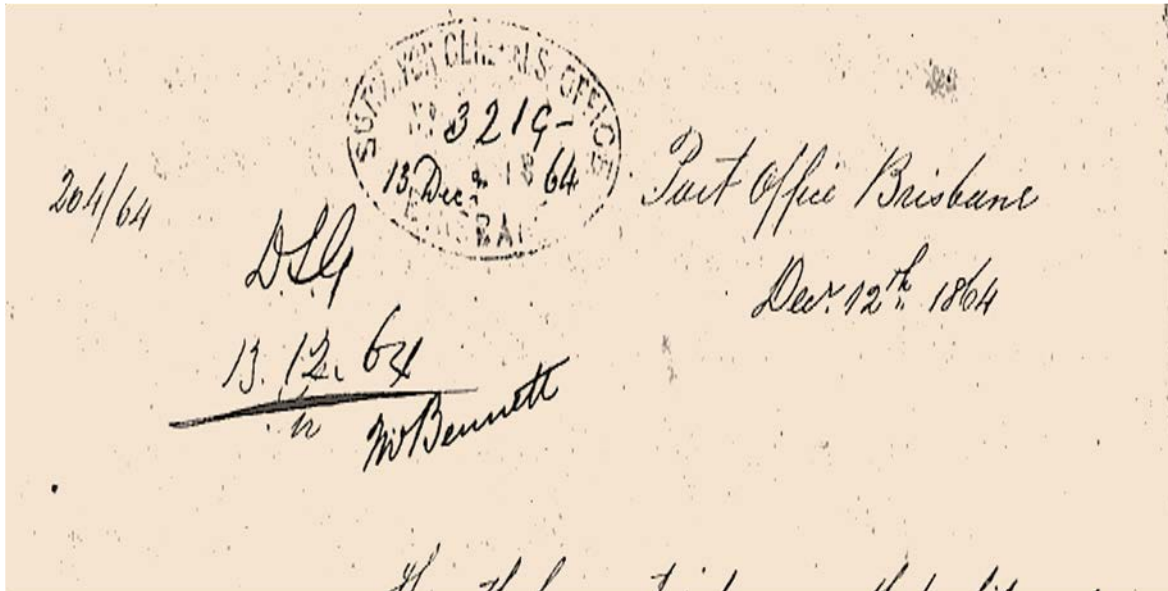
- 1859 Queensland declared a separate colony from NSW
- 1864 Ross Creek identified as suitable port for region and first settlers arrived
- 1865 first allotments sold in Cleveland Bay and port of entry declared
- 1866 Townsville declared a municipality



source: National Library – Johnson, British Admiralty charts special collection
Extract from Commander Nares chart after survey on board HMS Salamander 1866

Naming of 'Cape Pallarenda'

- survey of Cleveland Bay 1864
- commanded by Lieutenant George Poynter Heath
- James Morill (aboriginal expert) on board
- Heath named Cape Pallarenda (according to Mathews)
- 'Pallarenda' probably of Aboriginal derivation



People taking up an anchorages here should however be careful
 not to bring the South point to the Eastward of Heath, as from that
 point of Magnetical Island (Point Bingenmander) a dangerous
 reef - the outer limits of which must be just across at S. W. Springs
 - runs off towards the point on the mainland (Cape Pallarenda)
 which forms the N. W. limit of Cleveland Bay extending
 about 1/3 of the distance across the Channel. - There
 however appeared to be, as far as the examination went, a
 clear passage between this reef & the Cape: with 8 or 9 feet at
 Low Water. -
 Surge General

The rise & fall of tide at Cleveland
 Bay may be estimated at from 5 to 10 feet. -
 Have the honor to remain
 Sir
 Yr. Obedt. Servant
 G. P. Heath
 Lieut. Comd.
 Major. Smyth

First Chart showing names of Cape Pallarenda & Many Peaks, 1866

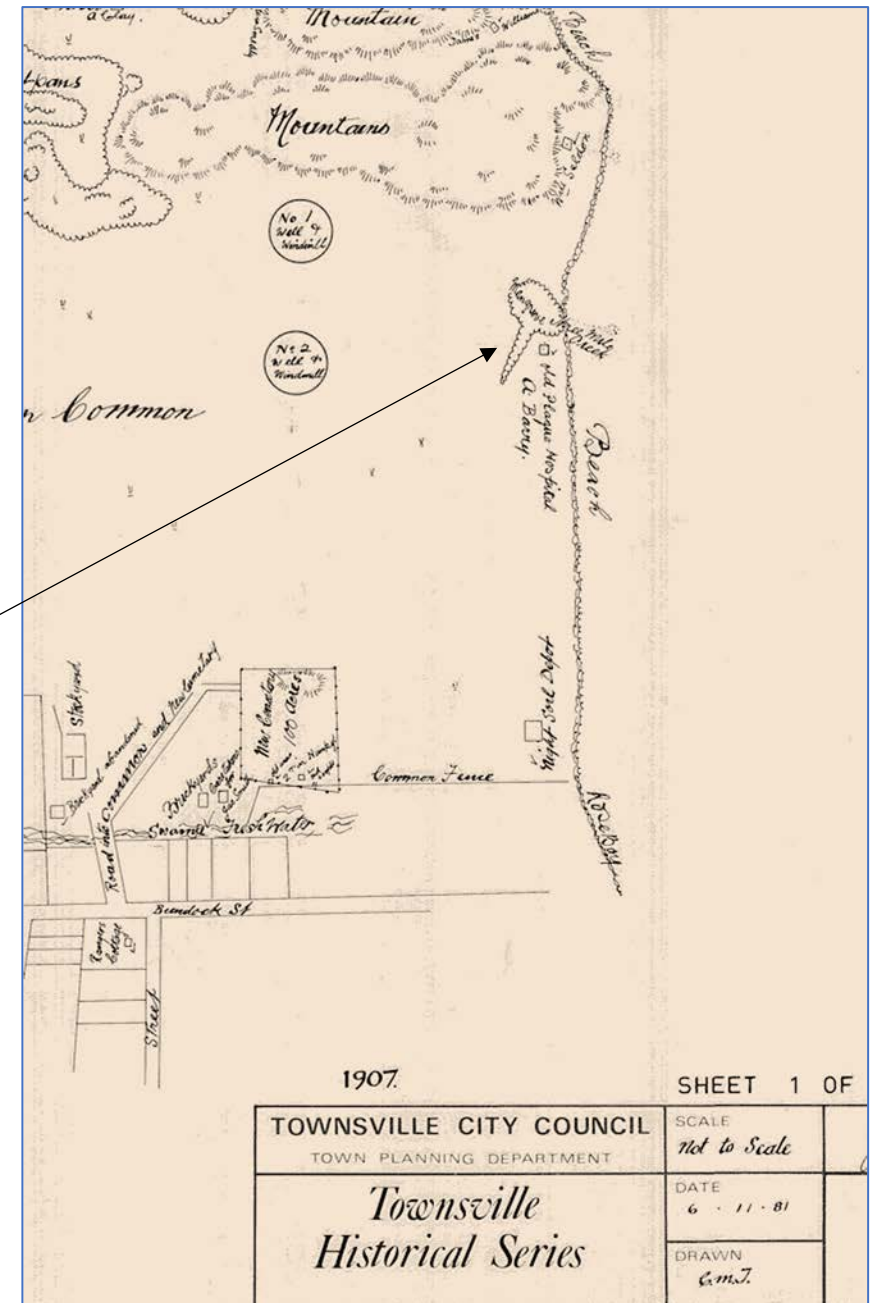
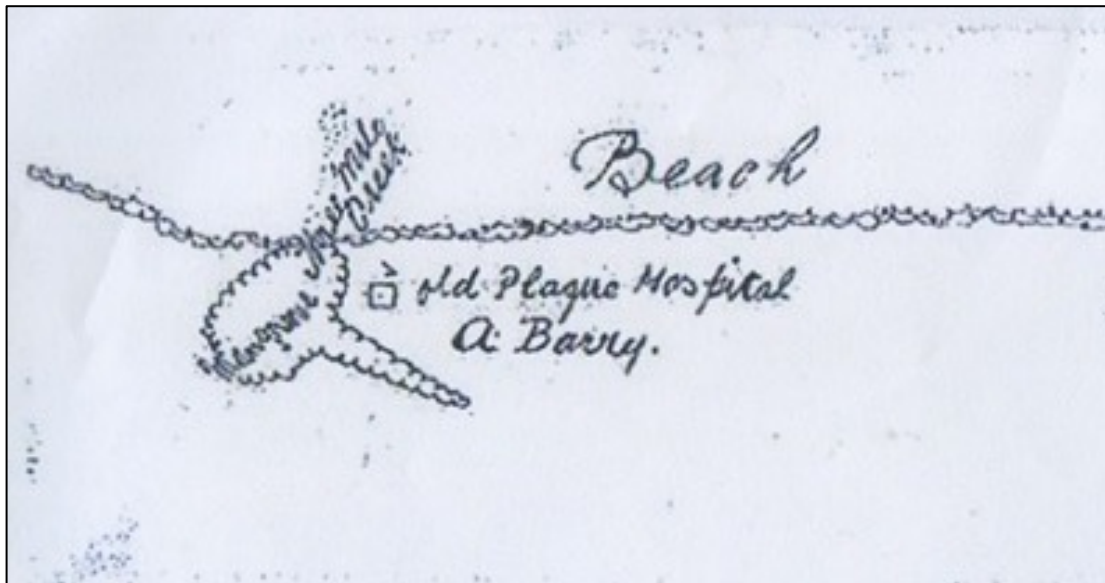


source: National Library – Johnson, British Admiralty charts special collection, Extract from Commander Nares chart after survey on board HMS Salamander

Isolation and quarantine

Isolation Hospital for Bubonic Plague 1900

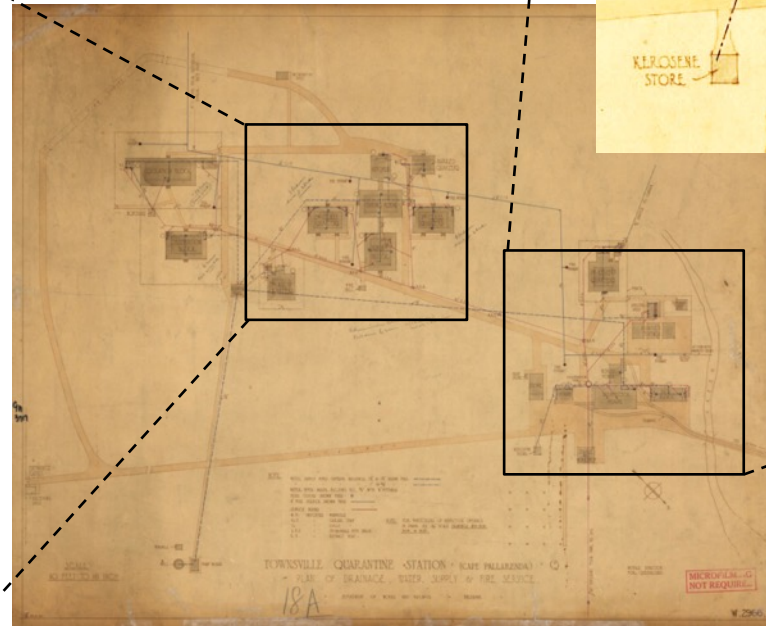
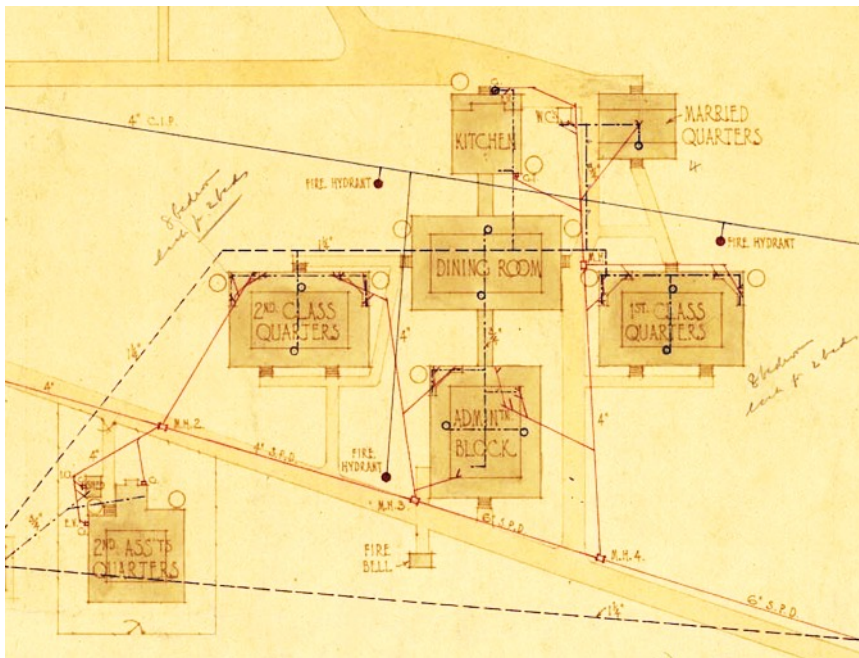
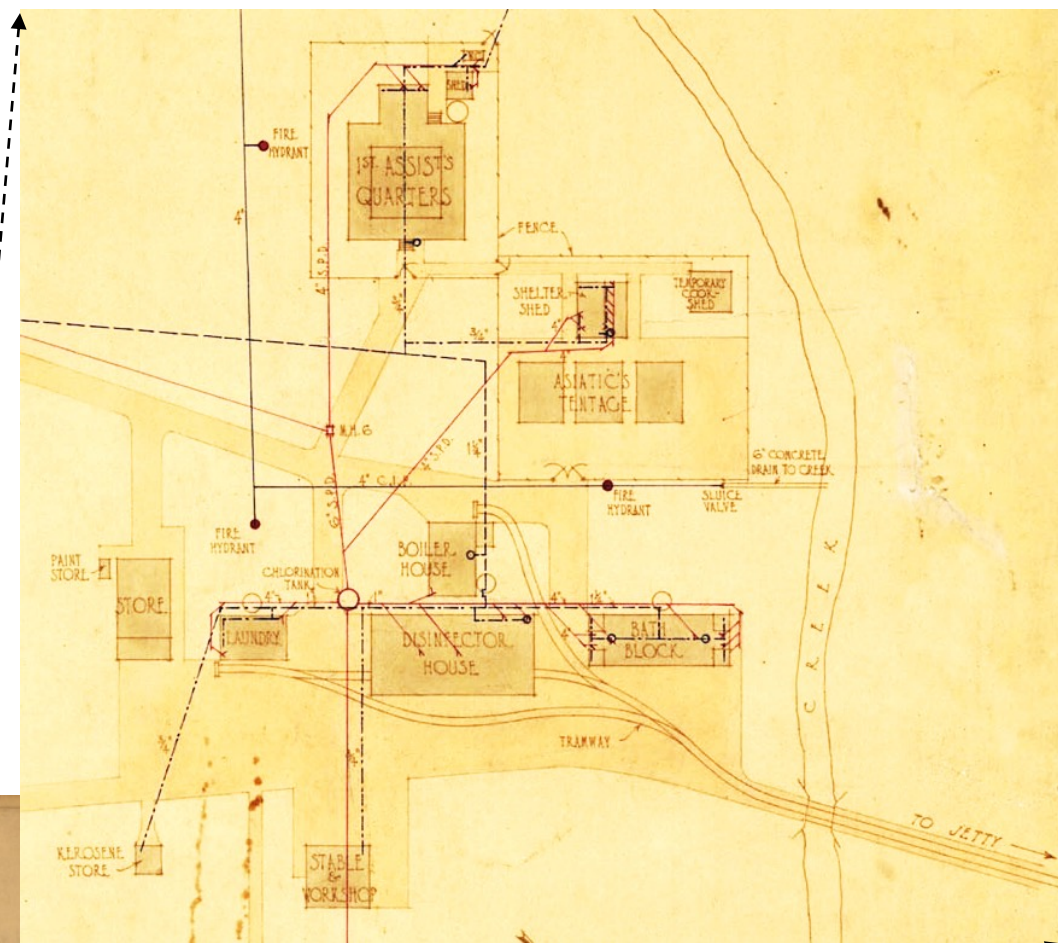
- outbreak of Bubonic Plague in Townsville
- dramatised in Ian Townsend's novel 'Affection: There is no Cure'
- isolation hospital established near 3 Mile Creek
- 9 patients died from plague (7 buried at hospital)
- location map unreliable, cemetery not gazetted (Fielding, 2011)
- Cyclone Leonta destroyed hospital 1903



source: Townsville City Council

Commonwealth Quarantine Station Plan

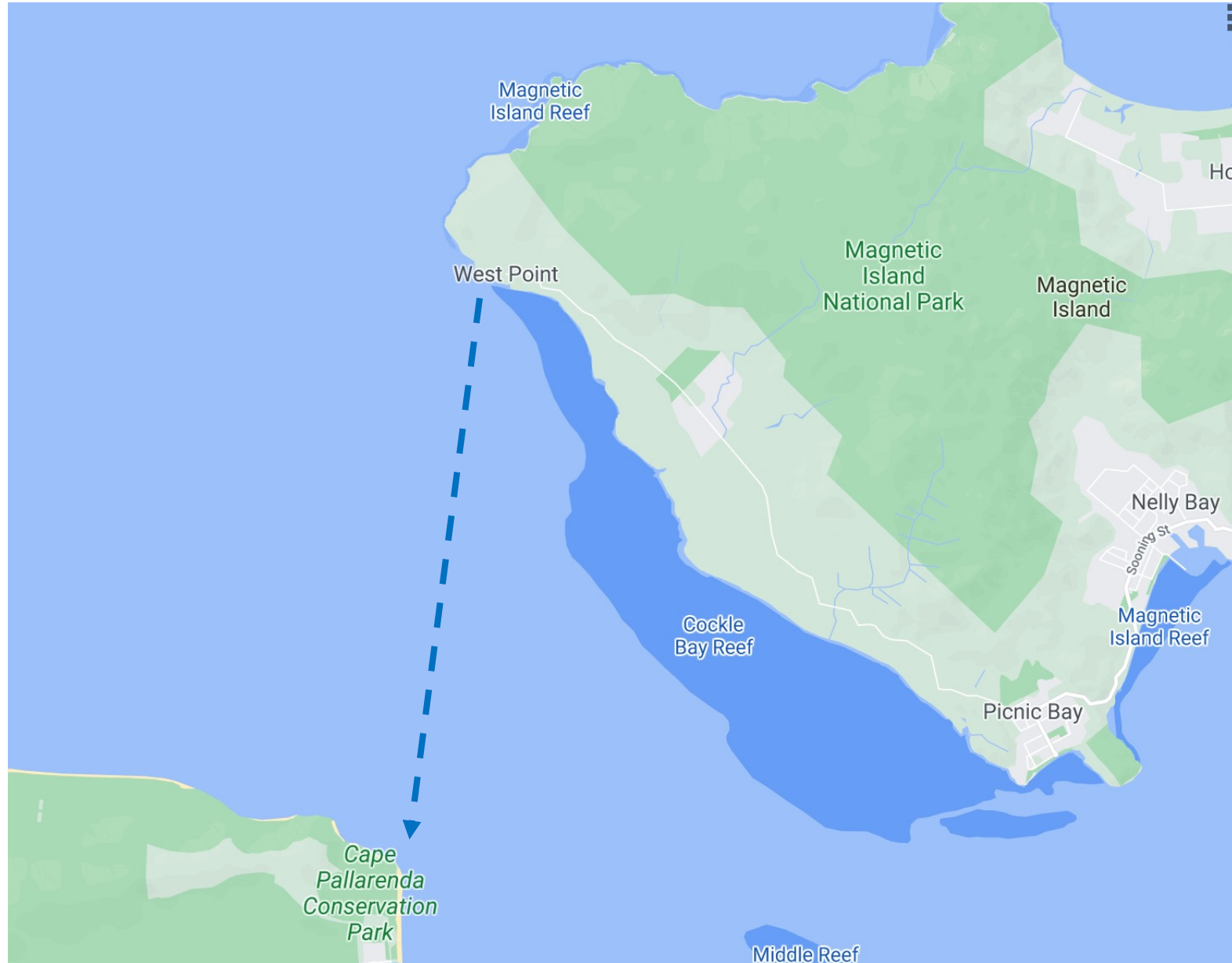
- Government identified Pallarenda site 1912
- separate dining/living facilities 1st and 2nd class passengers
- segregated area (tents/hammocks) Asiatic seamen & passengers
- Administration Block, Bath Block, Laundry, Incinerator Shed
- tramway to jetty for unloading luggage from boats
- tramway passed directly inside Disinfector House



source: National Archives of Australia – NAA Series J2774, item W2966

Pallarenda Quarantine Station buildings

- Most from West Point, Quarantine Station
- Buildings dismantled on Magnetic Island
- Transported by barge 1915 – 1916
- Re-assembled at Pallarenda
- Repaired, re-roofed
- Other new buildings constructed



source: Google Maps

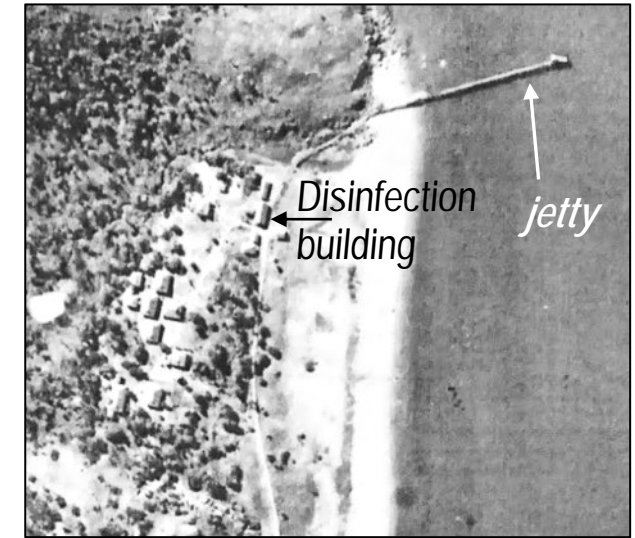
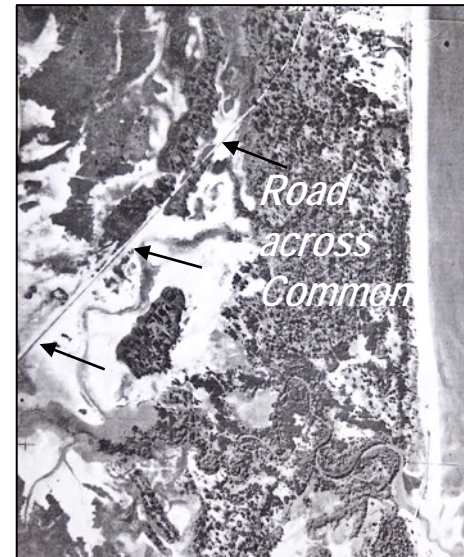


Commonwealth Quarantine Station, 1917

- road built across Town Common 1915, Jetty constructed
- Quarantine Station operational 1917
- disaster in 1920, 13 Vietnamese die on site of meningitis
- jetty destroyed by Cyclone Althea 1971
- last case smallpox referral in 1973
- closed after Melbourne Infectious disease unit opened



source: Townsville City Council



source: State of QLD

Quarantine Station disaster, 1920

- Steamer *Roberto Figueras* carrying 1,000 Vietnamese
- 32 ill suspected typhus
- sick transferred to quarantine station
- diagnosed with meningitis rather than typhus
- 13 died and buried in graves behind hospital

source: Nick Harvey



Vietnamese graves



Pallarenda Quarantine Station, 1955

Italian migrants wait for clearance at Quarantine Station

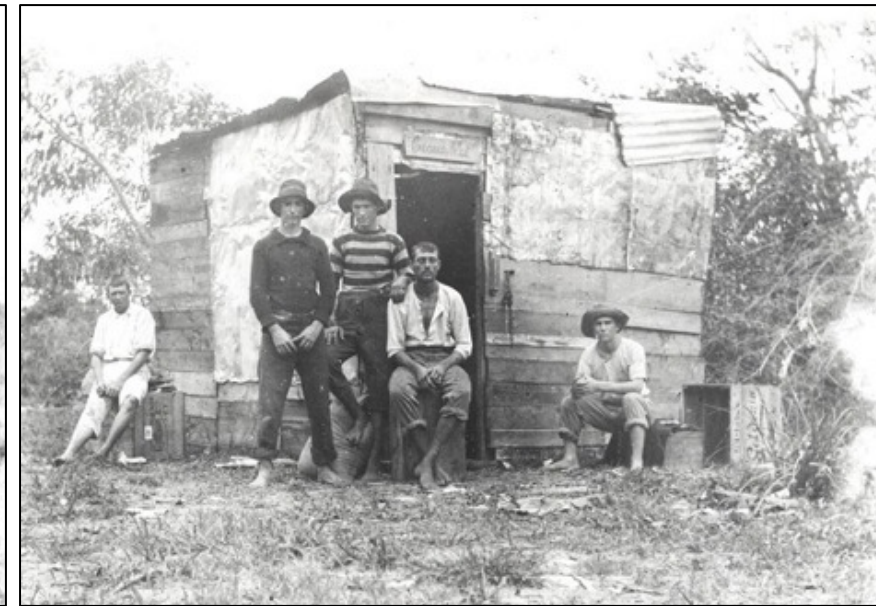


Early settlers

Start of settlement early 1900s

- transport along beach by horse & dray (low tide)
- beach shacks appear south of Quarantine Station
- beginnings of a fishing village

source: JCU Library Special Collections



New access road to Pallarenda

- Old Town Common road unsatisfactory
- new coast road constructed 1930s



source: JCU Library Special Collections

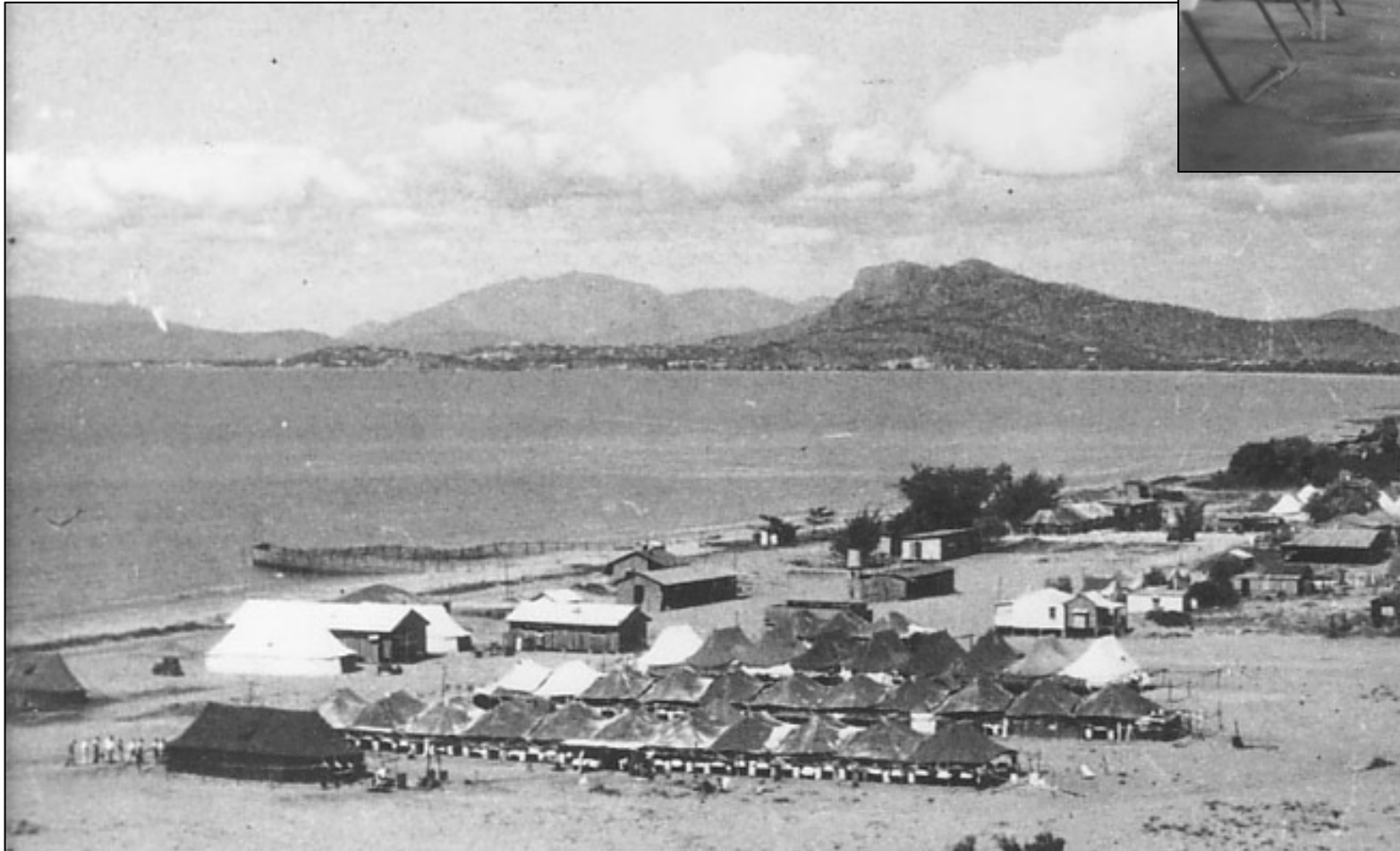
The Australian Army and World War II

The Australian Army 1940 - 1974

- Army 2/14 tent hospital near Pallarenda Beach, 1942
- cyclone damaged hospital 1944
- Army hospital 1966-1974 occupied some Quarantine buildings



source: JCU Library Special Collections



World War II

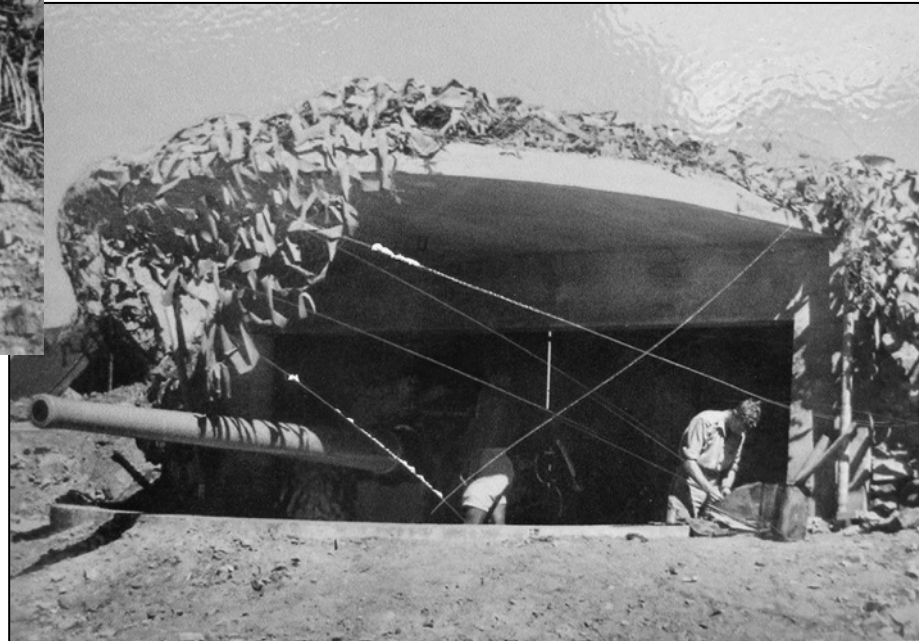
- Japanese dropped 8 bombs near Many Peaks Range, 1942
- Fixed defence fortifications built Many Peaks Range, 1943

searchlight housing



source: Australian Archives Melbourne

gun emplacement



bomb crater



source: RAAF Museum, Townsville

Historical remains



source: Nick Harvey



Remains of fortifications, Many Peaks Range

- command post building (top right)
- two gun emplacements for 4.7 inch guns (middle right)
- machine & anti aircraft (40mm Bofors) gun pits (bottom right)
- searchlight installations (bottom left)



Quarantine Station today

- rock groyne where Jetty used to be
- many buildings of heritage value remain
- steam steriliser housed in historic building
- Vietnamese graves site, 101 yrs old
- 1981 QLD purchased site
- 1982 declared an Environmental Park
- 1994 regazetted as QLD 'Conservation Park'



Entrance road

source: Nick Harvey



Old buildings



Old steam steriliser

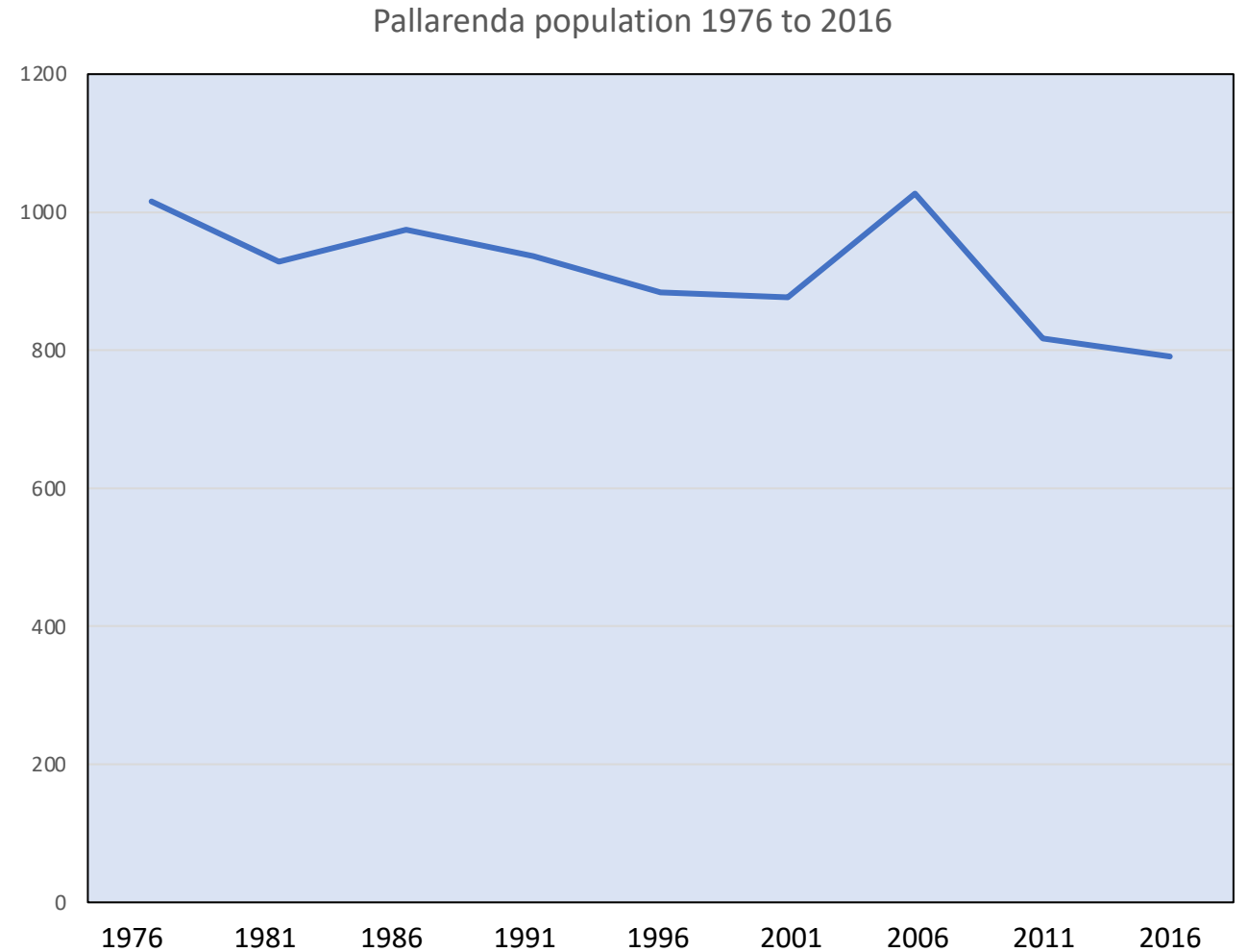


Vietnamese graves

Pallarenda population, people and development of suburb

Pallarenda – population

- 1941 at least 20 shacks
- 1961 at least 50 dwellings
- 1965 to 1975 major increase in dwellings to 330
- Population decline 1,000-800 people (1976-2016)
- 2021 census?



source: Australian census data

Pallarenda – people

1940s



source: Townsville City Council



source: V David

1950s



source: V David

1960s



source: V David

1960s



source: Townsville City Council

2020s



source: Nick Harvey

1941

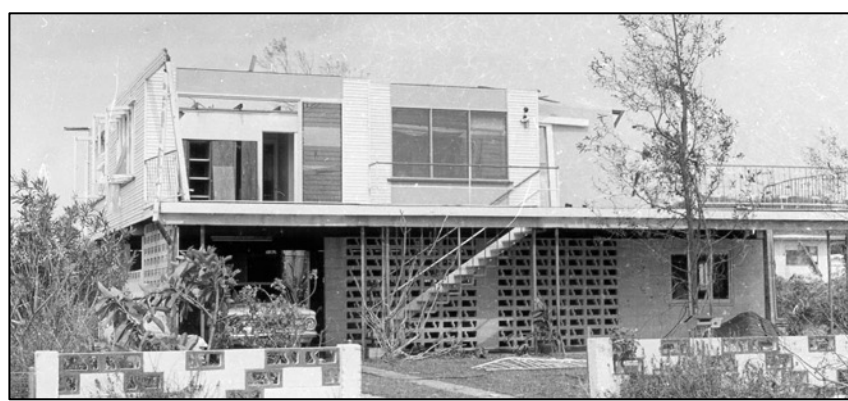
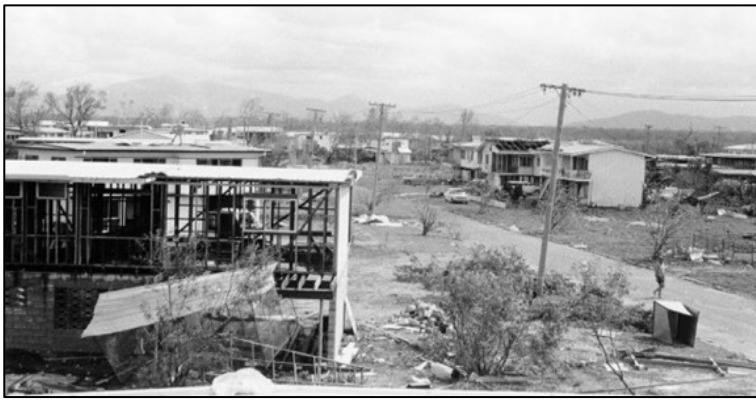


1961



1965





Tropical Cyclone Althea, December 1971

- intense storm 582 mb central pressure wind gusts >200km/hr
- Althea produced a storm surge of 2.85 m at Townsville
- waves and storm surge destroyed Pallarenda coast road
- bridge at 3 Mile creek severely damaged
- Pallarenda one of worst affected suburbs 30-40% homes written off

source: David Whitehouse
JCU Library Special Collections



Photo: Townsville Bulletin

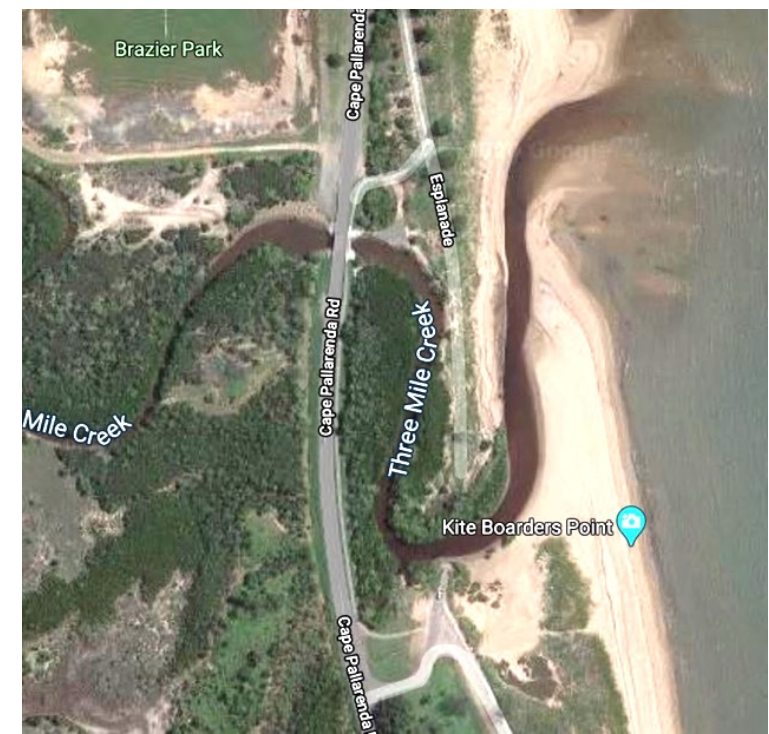
construction of
new road 1972

New Pallarenda road

- old bridge beyond repair
- levee constructed through mangroves
- new bridge across 3 Mile Creek (old bridge dismantled)
- new bitumen road



source: Nick Harvey



Source: Google Maps



1974

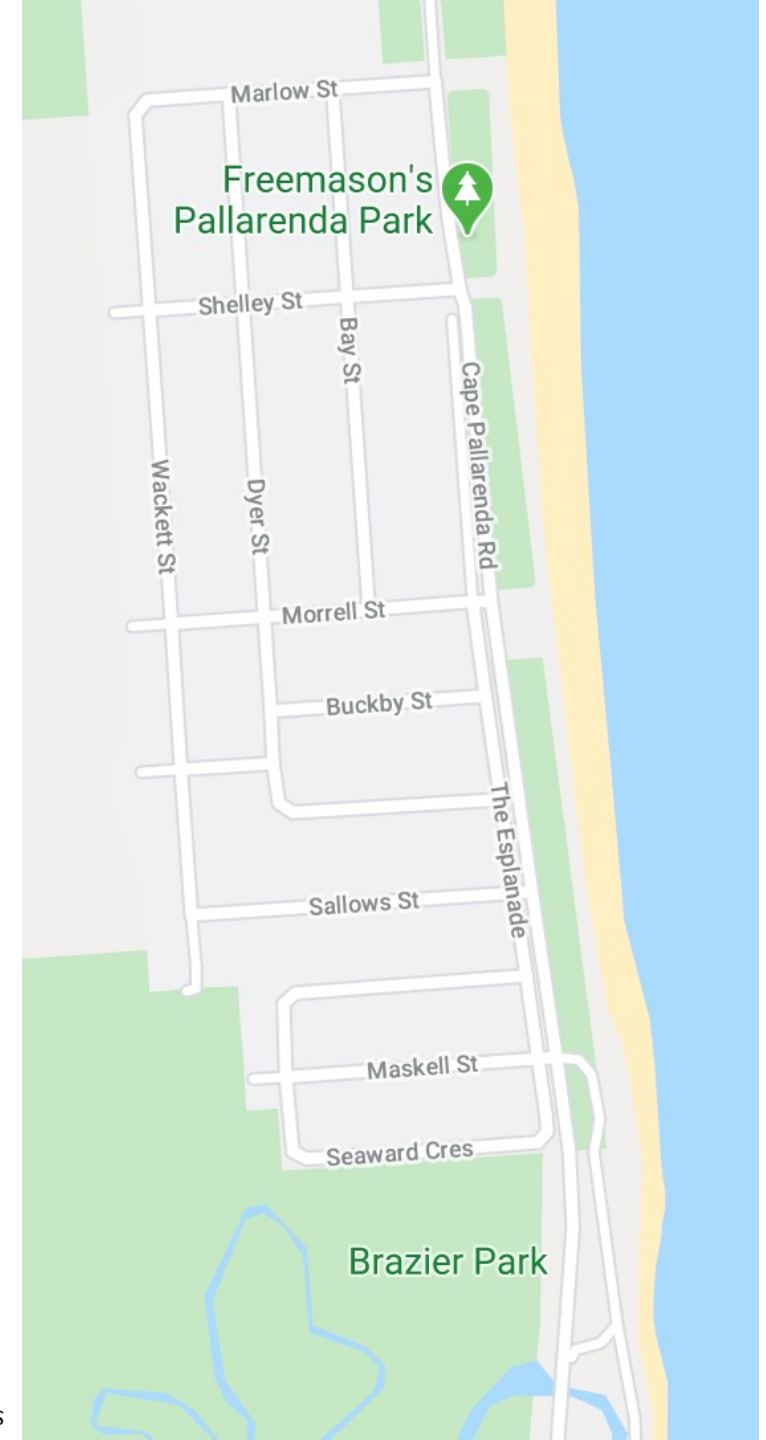


1976



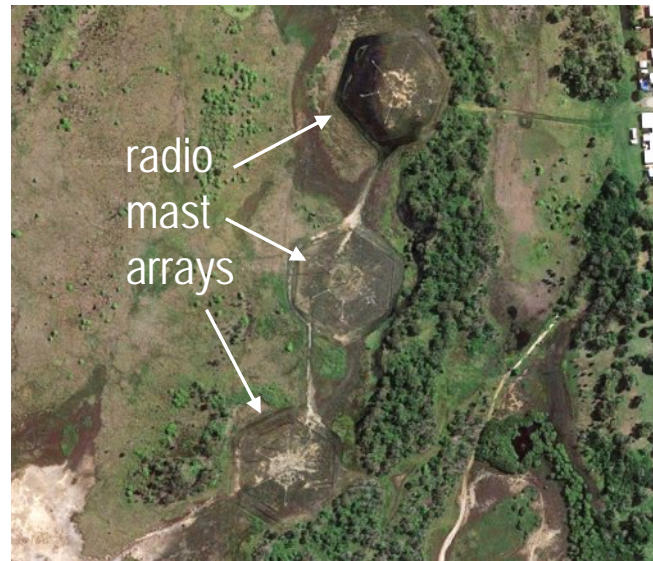
Pallarenda street names

- street names documented by Mathews in his book '*Place Names of Townsville*'
- *Fox, Maskell, Rankin* and *Seaward* named after residents who signed petition in 1865 requesting Government to establish a municipality in Townsville area
- *Buckby* and *Cripps* named after early residents of the area
- *Dyer* named after town surveyor
- *Sallows* after member of Land Administration Commission
- *Marlow, Morell, Wackett* named after prominent north Queenslanders
- *Bay* and *Shelley* named after Bay Rock and Shelly Beach respectively



Radio and Telecommunication

- Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC)
- 1960-1997, OTC radio station, 20 Wackett St
- old radio equipment now in Townsville museum
- Australian Communication Authority (ACA)
- 1997, ACA site south of Quarantine Station, Lot 1
- unmanned High Frequency Direction Finder
- superseded by new technology
- Lot 1 sold in 2005



source: Google Maps



source: Nick Harvey

Old ACA site



source: Google Maps



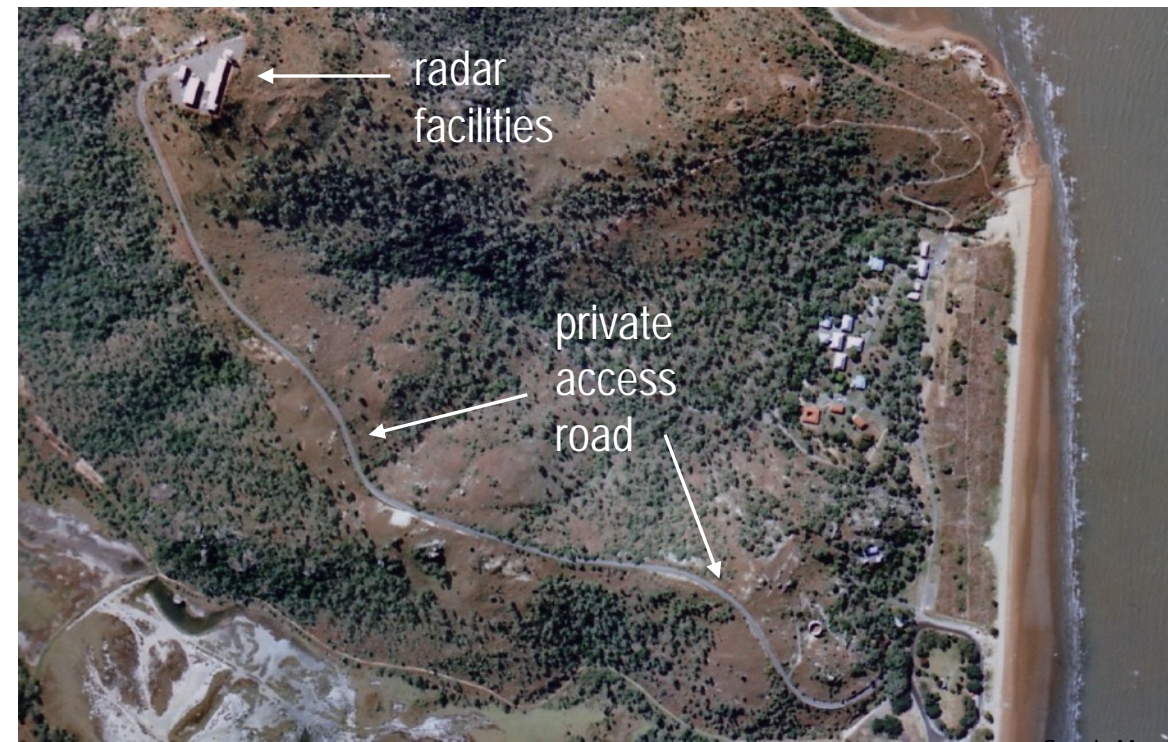
Old OTC site in Wackett St, radio masts and equipment



RAAF Radar, Many Peaks Range

- RAAF owns 83.74 hectares site on Many Peaks Range
- 1976 installed radar and communication towers
- used for RAAF and airport air traffic control
- access via a private bitumen road
- radar dome now a visible feature of landscape

source: Nick Harvey

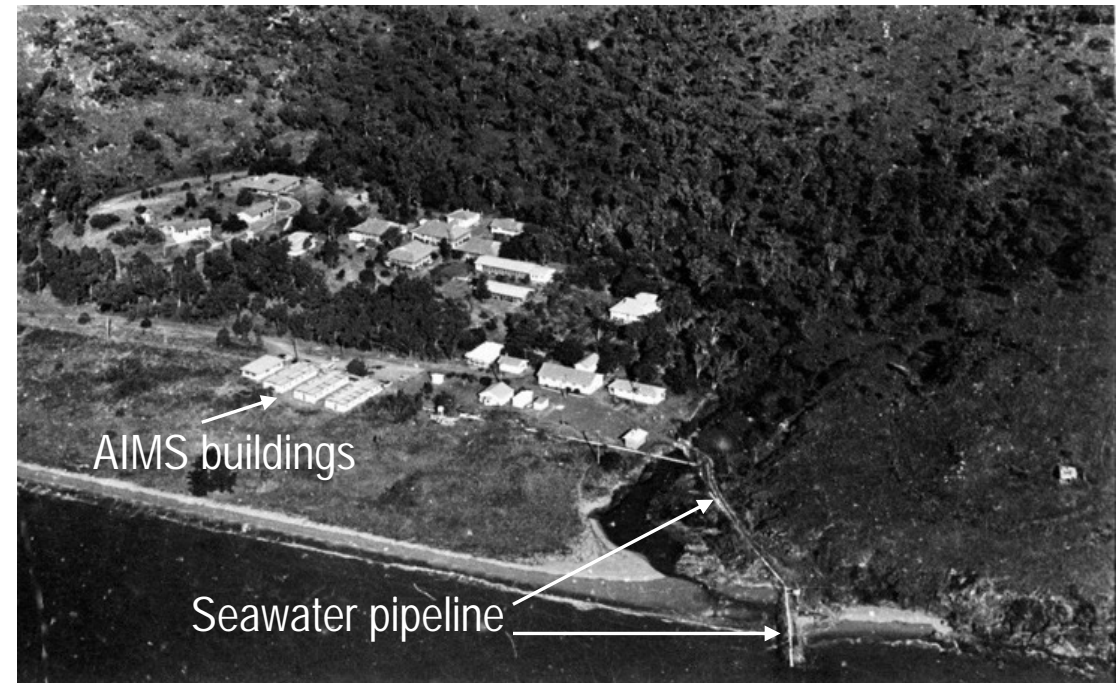


source: Google Maps



Government use of old Quarantine Station

- 1974-77 Commonwealth Australian Institute of Marine Science
- transportable buildings plus seawater pipeline for laboratories
- 1977 Commonwealth Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- 1981 QLD Government purchased site from Commonwealth
- 1991 QLD Department Environment and Heritage Regional Office



source: State of QLD



source: Google Maps

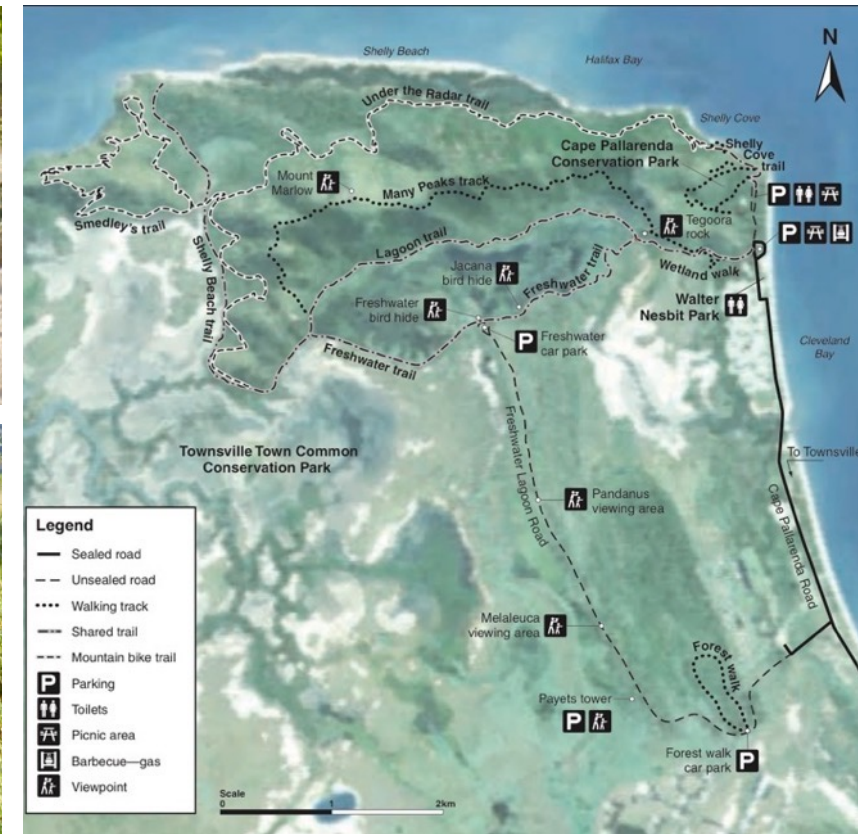


source: Charlie Veron

The Town Common

- 1869 originally 4,900 ha for Pasturage Reserve
- 1927 part of reserve declared a Fauna Sanctuary
- stock excluded 1975
- up to 280 species of birds recorded
- gazetted as 'Conservation Park' (now 3,300 ha)
- access road, 3 walking plus 6 walking/cycle trails

source: Nick Harvey



Rowes Bay Golf Club, Town Common

- 1965 created by Rowes Bay Country Club
- 1967 unofficial opening of first 9 holes
- 78 members played first golf game 4 November 1967
- official opening Prime Minister Gorton 31 August 1969
- 1974 final 9 holes completed for 18-hole course (Par 72)



source: Google Maps



source: Nick Harvey



source: Google Maps



source: State of QLD

Garden Settlement Pallarenda

- aged care facility developed in 1960s
- 1965 number of buildings constructed
- 132 bed capacity on completion
- 2017 facility closed



source: Nick Harvey

Pallarenda foreshore



beach access points

source: Nick Harvey



cycle and walking track from Rows Bay

sunrise over Magnetic Island



view north to Magnetic Island



view south to Castle Hill



Pallarenda coastal parks

Walter Nisbet Park

- BBQs
- playground
- sheltered seating



Freemason's Pallarenda Park

- BBQs
- playground
- sheltered seating
- adjacent toilets and swimming enclosure

source: Nick Harvey



Brazier Park

- no facilities
- open area beside 3 Mile Creek
- flooding at very high tides



Robertson Park

- seating
- toilets
- adjacent to kite-boarding beach launch site



(source: Google Maps)





Pallarenda Beach

- fishing, particularly old Quarantine jetty and around 3 Mile Creek
- walking, jogging, shell collecting
- walking the dog, especially early morning and evening

source: Nick Harvey





Pallarenda swimming enclosure

- old steel structure 1935-2011, destroyed Cyclone Yasi
- new stinger net, 2011 (used November to March)
- patrolled weekends and school holidays



source: Nick Harvey





Pallarenda water sports

- boat ramp for small dinghies, sailing boats
- jet skis, windsurfers, kayaking, sailing, kite boarding



source: Nick Harvey





Pallarenda fitness sports

- bootcamps and fitness
- cycling (road racing) half-marathons, triathalons
- marathons (Townsville Marathon 2nd oldest in Australia since 1973)

source: Nick Harvey





source: Nick Harvey

Pallarenda: A colourful and varied history

- early Aboriginal occupation nearby
- European explorers landed 180 years ago
- isolation and quarantine, 1900 and then 1917-1973
- Army 1940-1974 – WWII bombing and fortification
- settlement/development of suburb 1900s to 1976
- major cyclone damage, Althea 1971
- radio, telecommunication and radar 1960, 1997 and 1976
- deli, PO, fish & chip shop, petrol supply, aged care all closed
- conservation parks *Town Common* and *Quarantine Station*
- cycling, swimming, water sports, beach activities, ecotourism

acknowledgements: P Bell, D Close, V David, T Fielding, K Pittock, I Townsend