



Local History Factsheet:

A brief history of the suburb Tennyson

Tennyson is a small beachside suburb wedged between Grange and West Lakes. The Tennyson sand dunes are a prominent feature of the suburb, and are cherished as the remnants of an important dune system that once stretched 30kms along the coast. Modern day Tennyson also comprises former settlements Northcote and Ramsgate which were located to the north of original Tennyson. It is presumed to be named after Lord Tennyson, Governor of South Australia 1899 -1902 (and then Governor-General of Australia 1903 -1904). It was named in 1905.

Estcourt House has been a key landmark since its construction in 1882 by Frederick Estcourt Bucknall. He built the house in anticipation of being able to view a proposed inland harbour in the upper reaches of the Port River, connected to the sea by a canal through the sand hills. Bucknall, his wife and their 11 children were accommodated comfortably in the 17 room mansion. Eight servants helped maintain their lifestyle. In 1894 Estcourt House was purchased by the James Brown Memorial Trust and began a long history as a home, under several different ownerships, for convalescing children, the visually impaired, polio victims, and adults with intellectual disabilities.

In 1920 a heated debate occurred between Woodville Council and Sir Josiah Symon, owner of land at Northcote. Symon was criticised for failing to provide for an Esplanade in his plans for subdivision of the land. Woodville Council hoped that Symon “would see the reasonableness of their request and lend his support to securing a boulevard from Marino to Outer Harbour”. In January 1921, Symon defended his plans in a letter to *The Advertiser*, stating “A good many years ago I unfortunately became owner at a ruinous price of some land near the Grange with frontage to high water mark”. Rates and taxes charged for the land had caused him to lose money and this motivated his plan to subdivide and sell. He claimed incorporating an Esplanade would only cost him more money.

Northcote Home, a home for mothers and babies, opened in 1928. Sir Josiah Symon and Misses M and E Symon donated funds for the building of the home. In 1941 the home became a ‘Tuberculosis preventorium’, a shelter for children whose parents were recovering from the disease. The home closed on 24 December 1973.

A 1936 street map shows an Esplanade running the length of the beachfront from Grange to Moredun St, Tennyson.

In late August 1931, *The Advertiser* newspaper reported the discovery by a horse trainer of the body of a fully clothed man covered with seaweed on the beach at Tennyson. Suicide was suspected.

Woodville Council introduced charges for camping along the foreshore between the Northcote Home, Tennyson, and Fort Glanville in December 1938. Five shillings was charged along with a £1 deposit as a guarantee that campers would leave the grounds in a clean condition.