

GRAYLANDS: THE EVOLUTION OF A SUBURB

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Bachelor of Arts in History

STATEMENT OF PRESENTATION

This thesis is presented as part of the requirements for
the Honours degree of Bachelor of Arts in History
at Murdoch University

2013

I declare that this is my own account of my research

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ABSTRACT

'Where is this Graylands?' A journalist posed this question in 1950 and answered by pointing out that the bus company misspelled the name as Greylands; the postal address was Claremont; the railway station was Karrakatta; and the area fell under the Nedlands Road Board. This thesis endeavours to answer the question by describing the unrecognised importance of this small, seemingly inconsequential locality and explaining themes relevant to its history.

The original colonial owners of land in this area were pioneers in the mid-nineteenth century. The first, Captain Harding, bequeathed it to his wife and it was eventually owned by her sister, Maria Gray, who gave her name to the suburb. However, although Graylands was recognised locally as a name from 1896 when land sales began, only a road was gazetted in 1902 until the postal district was recognised in 1959.

The area was a long-term site for housing the unwanted. Psychiatric patients were moved to Graylands in 1903; federal and state governments settled migrants from Britain and refugees from Europe in a large hostel immediately post-war and state housing tenants soon after.

Education also played a significant part in the Graylands story. The development of the primary school from 1917; the coming and going of the teachers' college between 1955 and 1979; and the move of

John XXIII College from Claremont in 1986, all influenced the local population and the evolution of the suburb.

The demolition of the hostel, the teachers' college and part of the psychiatric hospital in the 1980s was the catalyst for change. Private housing growth accelerated and the demographic of the suburb changed permanently. This development led to the change of name from Graylands to Mount Claremont, and consigned Maria Gray's story to the proverbial dustbin of history.

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