



**HERITAGE  
COUNCIL**  
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## **REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES**

### **Assessment Documentation**

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

Cultural heritage significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for individuals or groups within Western Australia.

In determining cultural heritage significance, the Heritage Council has had regard to the factors in the *Heritage Act 2018* and the indicators adopted on 14 June 2019.

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

- 3.26 Providing health services
- 4.3 Developing institutions
- 4.4 Living with slums, outcasts and homelessness
- 7.6.6 Providing services and welfare
- 7.6.7 Enforcing discriminatory legislation
- 7.6.8 Administering Indigenous Affairs
- 9.7.1 Dealing with human remains

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

- 103 Racial contact and interaction
- 108 Government Policy
- 408 Institutions

#### **11(a) Importance in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Western Australia's history**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* demonstrates the consequences of colonial settlement on the population and health of Aboriginal people in North Western Australia, including the establishment of health care facilities to manage the catastrophic impacts of introduced disease and illness on Aboriginal people.

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* represents measures undertaken by the Western Australian government to deal with the spread and treatment of infectious disease, in particular venereal disease, amongst Aboriginal people in the North-West of the state.

The presence of a separate Burial Ground near the site of the Lock Hospital is representative of the Government policy regarding treatment of venereal diseases

in the Aboriginal population from the late 1900s, which focused upon isolation of sufferers.

The use of the place as a lock hospital, burial ground, native hospital, and nursing home for Aboriginal patients is representative of the official government policy of treating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients in separate medical facilities, a policy which remained in place until the 1960s when the Commonwealth policy of assimilation was adopted.

The creation of Moorgunya Hostel for Aboriginal children on the site of the *Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* demonstrates the 1960s and 1970s change in Western Australian government policy towards assimilation and provision of educational services and assistance to Aboriginal families

**11(b) Importance in demonstrating rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Western Australia's heritage**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* provides evidence of the policy of the State and Commonwealth governments concerning the treatment of venereal diseases in Aboriginal people, which was a concern in the north of Western Australia in the early twentieth century. The control of these diseases and the integration of Aboriginal patients into mainstream health care in the mid to late twentieth century, has meant that *Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is a rare extant example of a type of hospital no longer in use, and is the only remaining example of a lock hospital in Western Australia.

**11(c) Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Western Australia's history;**

The archaeology of the place has considerable potential to yield information contributing to a wider understanding of the management of venereal and other diseases in the early to mid-twentieth century in the North West of Western Australia.

The archaeology of the place has the potential to comprise archaeological artefacts or deposits that may provide further information regarding segregation of males and females in a medical context in Western Australia.

**11(d) Its importance in demonstrating the characteristics of a broader class of places;**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is representative of health facilities constructed in the early twentieth century for Aboriginal people, and demonstrative of official government policy of treating Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal patients in separate medical facilities, a policy which remained in place until the 1960s when the Commonwealth policy of assimilation was adopted.

The former Moorgunya Hostel is representative of the change in government policy in the late twentieth century with the provision of accommodation assistance to Aboriginal school students in Western Australia.

**11(e) Any strong or special meaning it may have for any group or community because of social, cultural or spiritual associations;**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is an important place with considerable significance for Aboriginal people who were treated or stayed at the facility, and their descendants.

The place has been associated with community services in the town since the 1960s and is of particular significance to the Aboriginal community in Port Hedland who are associated with the former Moorgunya Hostel, the former Jumbardhi Kindergarten or the community radio station and gymnasium still in use on site.

The former Moorgunya Hostel is valued for its role in the education of Aboriginal children and youth from the surrounding districts.

**11(g) Any special association it may have with the life or work of a person, group or organisation of importance in Western Australia's history;**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is of historic significance for association with many Aboriginal people from across the State and the Northern Territory who were removed from their families and treated for medical purposes (particularly venereal disease) at the facility. These groups of people are historically significant, representing those immediately affected by government policy and community attitudes of the day.

**12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**12.1 CONDITION**

Four buildings associated with the Lock Hospital phase remain; the Matron's Quarters (now in use by Hedland Community Radio), former Quarters, former Ward and Nursing Home (now in use as a gymnasium) and the Mortuary (now used a stock room) and are all in fair to good condition.

The former Moorgunya Hostel suffered significant damage during Tropical Cyclone Christine in 2013. Some works to make the place safe for the following cyclone seasons have been undertaken, but the building remains in poor condition. The associated Former Dormitories building is also in poor condition.

**12.2 INTEGRITY**

Although the Matron's Quarters (now in use by Hedland Community Radio) has been partially refurbished to be used as a radio station, the original residential function is still discernible. The place has moderate integrity.

Although elements of the original interiors of the former Quarters, the former Mortuary (now used a stock room), and the former Isolation Ward (later used as Nursing Home, and now in use as a gymnasium) are still visible, the places have low to moderate integrity.

The function of the former Moorgunya Hostel and associated Former Dormitories buildings are still clearly discernible, despite the poor condition of the building. As it is unlikely the buildings could be returned to use as dormitories, the places have low to moderate integrity.

### **12.3 AUTHENTICITY**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* retains a high proportion of original fabric, however several of the buildings have been used for multiple functions and some are in poor condition. The place has a low to moderate level of authenticity.

### 13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage report completed on behalf of the Department for Child Protection and Family Services by Palassis Architects in association with Dr Robyn Taylor, professional historian in October 2014, with amendments and/or additions by the State Heritage Office and the Register Committee

#### 13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* comprises a complex of single storey timber and metal framed buildings clad in metal and compressed fibre cement sheeting first established in 1919 to provide hospital and isolation nursing for Aboriginal people suspected of having venereal diseases, and later used as a hospital and nursing home.

Lock Hospitals were originally established in the eighteenth century by British administrators to manage the outbreak of venereal diseases. The term 'lock' is generally understood to derive from the French *une loque*, for rag, referring to the use of the term for leper hospitals where patients used bandages to cover their lesions and sores, although other sources suggest it is derived from the Gallic *un loquat*, for latch.<sup>1</sup> In comparison with other hospitals, lock wards or hospitals compulsorily treated and detained infected patients who were unable to leave the hospitals without official consent.<sup>2</sup> In London, Glasgow and other British colonial lock hospitals in China and India, the majority of detained patients were local prostitutes, while men, locals and British military, were treated as outpatients.<sup>3</sup>

Although lock hospitals established in Britain were originally associated with the treatment of those afflicted with leprosy and/or venereal disease<sup>4</sup>, by the time lock hospitals were in operation in Australia, they were established for the purpose of treating venereal disease alone.<sup>5</sup> In Queensland, two hospitals established in the nineteenth century in Brisbane and Rockhampton held only white women, again primarily prostitutes, suffering from venereal disease.<sup>6</sup>

In comparison, in Western Australia, the establishment of lock hospitals demonstrated the first Western Australian government attempt to systematically manage Aboriginal health.<sup>7</sup> Medical care for the Aboriginal population in the North West region of Western Australia had been haphazard and minimal throughout the nineteenth century. Pastoral settlements expanded across Western Australia, and some Aboriginal groups were coming into contact with the new settlers for the first

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1 Levine, P, 2003, *Prostitution, Race and Politics*, Routledge, New York, pp. 70-71; Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 3.

2 Levine, op cit., pp. 70-71.

3 Levine, op cit., pp. 71, 74-75.

4 There was often some difficulty in distinguishing syphilis from leprosy, and some doctors erroneously considered the two might be linked.  
Levine, op cit., pp. 65, 67, 70-71.

5 Leprosy, or Hansen's disease, was treated in individual hospital wards, or purpose built structures known variously as 'leprosarium', 'leper station', 'lazarette', and 'lazaret'.

6 Levine, op cit., pp. 71-72.

In the mid-twentieth century, both a lock hospital and lazaret hospital was established at Fantome Island, Palm Island, in Queensland that were used for the isolation of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander patients or inmates. Prior to the establishment of Fantome Island, Aboriginal sufferers of venereal disease were sent to isolated Aboriginal reserves for treatment.

*Lock Hospital and Lazaret Sites (former)*, — Queensland Heritage Register

7 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 3

time, with a vast array of consequences.<sup>8</sup> Settlement pressure and a range of new diseases had a catastrophic impact on Aboriginal population, customs, and behaviour.<sup>9</sup>

Management of Aboriginal affairs fell under the Aboriginal Protection Board from 1887, and later the Chief Protector of Aborigines from 1897.<sup>10</sup> Under the *Aborigines Protection Act 1886*, which regulated the employment of Aboriginal people, their employers were responsible for their medical care and the level and quality of treatment varied.<sup>11</sup> If employers failed to provide the medical care to their Aboriginal workers, or the patients were destitute, medical expenses were covered instead by the Aborigines Department, although there was no guarantee of access to hospitals for treatment.<sup>12</sup>

At the turn of the twentieth century, the State Government became concerned about the spread and treatment of 'granuloma' (venereal disease) in the Aboriginal population.<sup>13</sup> In addition to concerns regarding the level of suffering, it was believed that the diseases were highly infectious and there was a danger the effects could severely impact the Aboriginal and white workforce.<sup>14</sup> The *Aborigines Act 1906* effectively made Western Australian Aboriginal people wards of the state, and in 1907 lock hospitals were established on the isolated Bernier and Dorre Islands for the segregation and cure of Aborigines suffering from sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>15</sup>

Only Aboriginal patients were treated at Bernier and Dorre Islands.<sup>16</sup> Patients from all over the Northwest were rounded up and deposited on the islands. Originally Dorre Island held males, with females occupying the hospital on the smaller Bernier Island, although this was reversed after the number of female patients was consistently higher than males.<sup>17</sup> As seen with the management of lock hospitals elsewhere across the British Empire, attitudes towards sexuality meant that women, and in Western Australia Aboriginal women, were blamed as purveyors of the disease.<sup>18</sup> Male Aboriginal stockmen were highly valued by employers as 'cheap' workers and less likely to be identified and sent to lock hospitals, with the result that a considerably higher proportion of women, usually of middle age, were sent for treatment.<sup>19</sup>

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8 Briscoe, G, 2003, *Counting Health and Identity. A history of Aboriginal health and demography in Western Australia and Queensland*, Aboriginal Studies Press, p. 80.

9 Briscoe, op cit., p. 80.

10 Palassis Architects op cit., p. 3.

11 Sue Graham-Taylor, 'Aboriginal Health' in *Public Health 1975-1996*, draft provided to SHO Nov 2014, pp.187-188.

12 Briscoe, op cit., p. 95; Walter E. Roth, 29 December 1904, 'Royal Commission on the Condition of the Natives: Report', pp. 24-25.

13 'Granuloma' is a fairly general medical term referring to a small area of inflammation of tissue. Granuloma inguinale is a venereal disease characterised by genital ulcers.

14 Briscoe, op cit., pp. 98-99; Palassis Architects op cit., pp. 3-4.

15 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 3

16 VD clinics were established in Perth and Fremantle after 1915, which catered for other patients afflicted with sexually transmitted diseases, the vast majority of which were returned servicemen. Levine, op cit., p. 7; Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 3.

17 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 4.

18 Levine, op cit., pp. 71, 74-75; Stingemore, J.L, 'Surviving the "Cure": Life on Bernier and Dorre Islands under the Lock Hospital Regime', Ph.D thesis, University of Western Australia, 2010, p. 18.

19 Stingemore, op cit., p. 30.

The two hospitals operated from 1909 to 1918, at which point the patients were transferred to Carnarvon for temporary treatment prior to transfer to purpose built facilities in Port Hedland and Derby.<sup>20</sup> At the time of closure, there were approximately 35 females and 15 males undergoing treatment on the islands.

There seemed to be unanimity of opinion that the establishment, however well-conceived, and however useful it might have been at the outset, was no longer other than inefficient and dreadfully extravagant...It was expected that the alteration would reduce the annual expenditure by upwards of £3000, as well as securing better treatment for the natives.<sup>21</sup>

The new proposed facilities were to be managed by the Aborigines Department, and were 'not to be hospitals in the ordinary sense of the word, but reception homes for the diseased natives, who will be allowed to live, as far as possible, their own lives under outdoor conditions'.<sup>22</sup> Treating Aboriginal patients within European medical wards was considered not preferable, as it had 'been proved a mistake, as any doctor who has had experience of them will tell you'.<sup>23</sup>

In 1919 Reserve 17014, Lots 211 and 217 were gazetted for the purpose of a lock hospital.<sup>24</sup> The site was located on the 'outskirts' of the Port Hedland townsite on an area known as Finlay's Camp.<sup>25</sup> At the time of planning 'Finlay's Old Well, and an eight foot windmill with a 1000 gallon tank on a stand was located in the middle of the proposed site, and appears to have been intended to supply water to the Hospital, Wash Houses and Quarters buildings.<sup>26</sup> The plans indicate that the Lock Hospital was designed with regard to best practice hospital design of the period.

In January 1919, it was noted that the material for the hospital had arrived in Port Hedland, but no attempt had been made to erect the building, despite the fact 30 patients were already in transit to Port Hedland from Carnarvon.<sup>27</sup> By May, reports said that the erection of the lock hospital was proceeding slowly<sup>28</sup>, although it was near completion by October<sup>29</sup> and operating by April 1920.<sup>30</sup>

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- 20 *The West Australian*, 9 November 1917, 'Lock Hospitals. Closing of Island Establishments. A Government Economy', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27460003>; *The West Australian*, 2 December 1919, 'Aboriginal Population, Chief Protector's Annual Report', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27669268>, Accessed 8 April 2016.
- 21 *The West Australian*, 9 November 1917, 'Lock Hospitals. Closing of Island Establishments. A Government Economy', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27460003>, Accessed 8 April 2016.
- 22 Chief Protector of Aborigines, extensive letter to Under Secretary, 25 October 1917, Chief Secretary's Department: Aborigines, 'Derby Native Hospital', (file), SROWA Cons 653 Item 1925/0544.
- 23 Chief Protector of Aborigines, extensive letter to Under Secretary, 25 October 1917, Chief Secretary's Department: Aborigines, 'Derby Native Hospital', (file), SROWA Cons 653 Item 1925/0544.
- 24 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 4.
- 25 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 3; *The Pilbara Goldfield News*, 21 January 1919, 'Local and General', <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/146331566>, Accessed 8 April 2016
- 26 Block Plan 'Port Hedland Native Hospital – Removal from Bernier Island'.
- 27 *The West Australian*, 25 January 1919, 'North-West News', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27503328>, Accessed 8 April 2016.
- 28 *West Australian*, 1 May 1919, 'Port Hedland News', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27603170>, Accessed 8 April 2016
- 29 *West Australian*, 21 October 1919, 'Local and General', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/146333080>, Accessed 8 April 2016.
- 30 *The Daily News*, 17 May 1920, 'North-West Trip', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/79521814>, Accessed 8 April 2016.

The intention to avoid the sense of confinement appears to have been followed in the retention of post-operative patients in wards, after which they apparently lived in 'bush type shelters possibly similar to those set up on the islands'.<sup>31</sup>

Despite this freedom, the men and women were supposed to be segregated although it was not until after 1925 that this was effectively enforced by the erection of barbed wire fencing. Prior to that, there were accounts of patients moving between the wards.

Under the present Aboriginals Act, there was no power to imprison natives suffering from venereal disease. The natives were aware of this and if they did not like the hospital they cleared out.<sup>32</sup>

Patients who died were buried in unmarked graves outside the fenced area of the hospital. The graves were reportedly situated to the east of the hospital boundary where Micklejohn Street now runs adjacent to St Cecilia's Church and Primary School<sup>33</sup>, and to the north of the boundary in the current location of Moorgunyah Hostel.<sup>34</sup> Plans of the Port Hedland townsite indicate that the Burial Ground extended to the north of the Lock Hospital. The remainder of the town's dead were buried at Cemetery Hill, located further to the east, also on Sutherland Street.<sup>35</sup> A distinct Native Cemetery was located to the west of that.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the erection of barbed wire fencing, works to the site in the 1920s included the installation of a new kitchen and new shelters for men and women.<sup>37</sup>

By the 1930s, STDs had decreased significantly as a health issue, and the Lock Hospital became a general 'Native Hospital' for Aboriginal people, treating a range of issues.<sup>38</sup> In 1936 a new kitchen and compound was constructed for male patients, and a new cyclone fence with barbed wire was erected, suggesting involuntary retention of some patients was still occurring.<sup>39</sup>

In 1948, the Department of Native Affairs complained that it was still responsible for the administration of the native hospitals at Port Hedland, Broome, Derby and Wyndham, although Aboriginal people would be served better if the hospitals were under the control of the Department of Public Health. Further, none of the Native Hospitals were in a satisfactory condition. With the exception of Port Hedland, all of the hospitals were described as ill-planned and unlikely to have been subjected to approval from any medical source.<sup>40</sup> In 1949, administration of the four Native

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- 31 Government photographs of the structures built on the two islands are reproduced in M.A. Jebb's article 'The Lock Hospitals Experiment'; cited in Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5.
- 32 The West Australian, 10 August 1925, 'Legislative Assembly', Source: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31875142/2746796>, Accessed 8 April 2016.
- 33 P18431 St Cecilia's Catholic Church, on Town of Port Hedland Municipal Heritage Inventory
- 34 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5; P5948 Lock Hospital and Burial Ground, Shire of Port Hedland Municipal Inventory, Source: <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/a9d0cebf-49d0-48ae-b718-eb17f22cdf0f?preview=true>, Accessed 8 April 2016.
- 35 SRO Cons 5698 1434 (Item 1434 - Port Hedland District Sheet 2 [Tally No. 502389])
- 36 SRO Cons 5698 1431 (Port Hedland Sheet 4 [Tally No. 505031])
- 37 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5.
- 38 This included another prevalent disease afflicting Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, Hansen's Disease, more commonly known as Leprosy.
- 39 PWD Plan Drawing 21984 'Port Hedland Native Hospital', SRO; cited in Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5.
- 40 Report on Survey of Native Affairs (1948)



Hospitals at Port Hedland, Broome, Derby and Wyndham were handed over to the control of Department of Public Health.<sup>41</sup>

In the 1950s the Matron's Quarters (now Community Radio Station) and a new ward, resembling a Nissen hut, (Former Isolation Ward/Nursing Home) were constructed.<sup>42</sup>

A block plan drawn up by the Public Works Department in 1962 reveals the following buildings were on site: Matron's Quarters; office; laundry, store; power house; garage; 2 tanks; bitumen tennis court, clothes hoist, laundry, two WCs, kitchen and area to be converted into staff quarters; fowl run; ablution block; isolation hut wards, recreation hut, and an unidentified large building which would have been the main hospital and medical doctor/surgery rooms.<sup>43</sup>

In 1967 the function (and boundary) of Reserve 17014 was amended to include Lot 841 and reflect the construction of the single storey Moorgunya Hostel facing Sutherland Street.<sup>44</sup> The government-run hostel for Aboriginal children was one of several established in the North West region, which aimed to provide accommodation for children of Aboriginal station workers in order that they could attend high school in town.<sup>45</sup>

In 1972 the management of Moorgunya Hostel was transferred from the Department of Native Welfare to Department of Community Welfare. The former Lock Hospital had continued to operate as a general Aboriginal hospital up to this time, with a nursing home established in the former Isolation Ward building. In 1973 a new Nursing Home was opened adjacent to Port Hedland's District Hospital, located further west on Sutherland Street, and all the remaining patients treated at the former Native Hospital were transferred to the new nursing home, (and presumably the hospital if required).<sup>46</sup> The entirety of the site was handed over to the Department of Community Welfare.

In 1975 the facility was upgraded with some structures demolished, so by 1977, only three buildings remained from the Lock Hospital phase of the site's history. The former Matron's Quarters building (now Community Radio Station) was known as Boab House and was used as emergency accommodation for Aboriginal families.<sup>47</sup> The former Isolation Ward, later Nursing Home building, was in use as a drop in nursing home (now China's Gym). The former Mortuary building was in use as a store-room. A transportable unit was also present in the southern portion of the site, and in use as a Kindergarten building.<sup>48</sup>

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41 Report on Survey of Native Affairs (1949)

42 The Palassis Architects report notes that the building is not shown on a 1936 drawing, Port Hedland Native Hospital, New Compound for Males, but is shown on the 1962 Block Plan. Physical evidence suggests the 1950s as an appropriate construction date. Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 8.

43 PWD block plan dated 11 May 1962, SRO, cited in Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5.

44 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5.

45 Other hotels include Oolnayah Hostel, Marble Bar; Weerianna Hostel, Roebourne; and Native Hostel and Gilliamia Hostel, both in Onslow. Olive, N, 2007, *Enough is Enough: A History of the Pilbara Mob*, Fremantle Press, p. 171.

46 SRO Cons 5698 1430 Port Hedland Sheet 3 [Tally No. 505030]. The Port Hedland (Regional) Hospital closed down in 2012 after 35 years of service.

47 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 6.

48 Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 6.

In 1979 Moorgunyah catered for 46 school aged children who came from Koordarrie, Minderoo, Wyloo, Mt Stewart, Yarraloola and Boodarie Stations; from the Pilbara Tin Mine; and from the Onslow, Wickham, Roebourne, or Marble Bar areas.<sup>49</sup>

By 1980, the role of these facilities was becoming more open to community and family involvement: 'The function of the Department hostel in caring for aboriginal children so that they may have regular schooling, is expanding to provide a back-up service for families who may wish to use the facility to provide an occasional meal, a laundry service and provide homework supervision. This is the need that some families have in making the transition into homes of their own in the local township. Greater efforts are also being made to provide children and parents with opportunities to spend more time together by providing camping facilities when the parents come to town.'<sup>50</sup>

By June 1995 Moorgunya Hostel was the only country hostel still operating as education hostel and by 1996 the decision was taken to close the facility.<sup>51</sup>

Several buildings on the *Lock Hospital and Burial Ground* site continue to be used for community purposes. The site is currently managed by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) under a Management Order to the Minister for Community Welfare.

The former Matron's Quarters building is currently used by the Hedland Community Radio. The former Isolation Ward, later Nursing Home building, is now known as China's Gym, and has undergone some modification.<sup>52</sup> The former Mortuary building is in use as a store-room.

In December 2013 Tropical Cyclone Christine caused extensive damage to the roof of Moorgunya Hostel. The place was in poor condition prior to the damage sustained during the cyclone and works were undertaken by the Department for Child Protection to stabilise the building prior to the 2014/2015 cyclone season.

Additional detailed information regarding the *Lock Hospital and Burial Ground* is available in the Heritage Report prepared by Palassis Architects for the Department for Child Protection and Family Services in October 2014.<sup>53</sup>

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The following italicised text has been taken directly from the Heritage Report of P5948 *Lock Hospital and Burial Ground* prepared by Palassis Architects for the Department for Child Protection and Family Services in October 2014.<sup>54</sup>

*Lock Hospital and Burial Ground (1919-1967), a complex of single storey buildings, is located on a lot bounded by Taplin, Sutherland, Mieklejohn and Anderson streets. The complex comprises Moorgunya Hostel (former),*

<sup>49</sup> Annual Report of the Department for Community Welfare, 1979, cited in Department for Community Development, n.d. *Signposts. A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920*, Source: <http://signposts.cdfs.wa.gov.au/facilities/view.aspx?id=268>, Accessed 8 April 2016.

<sup>50</sup> Annual Report of the Department for Community Welfare, 1980, cited in Department for Community Development, n.d. *Signposts. A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920*, Source: <http://signposts.cdfs.wa.gov.au/facilities/view.aspx?id=268>, Accessed 8 April 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Department for Community Development, n.d. *Signposts. A Guide for Children and Young People in Care in WA from 1920*, Source: <http://signposts.cdfs.wa.gov.au/facilities/view.aspx?id=268>, Accessed 8 April 2016; Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 6.

<sup>52</sup> Town of Port Hedland Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places—Lock Hospital (remains), and Aboriginal burial ground.

<sup>53</sup> Palassis Architects in association with Dr Robyn Taylor, October 2014, Heritage Report of P5948 *Lock Hospital and Burial Ground* prepared for the Department for Child Protection and Family Services.

<sup>54</sup> Additional notes regarding other names are provided in square brackets for clarity.

*power house, dormitories (former), wards (former), mortuary (former), matron's quarters (former), quarters (former), and the footings of several no longer extant hospital buildings.*

*The place is located about 100 metres from the beach front, in an area that comprises residential and institutional development. The lot is characterised by low shrubs, with some areas of mature trees, and a range of small buildings, which include former dormitories and amenities buildings now utilised for other purposes. The buildings, generally, do not display any particular architectural style, and are largely domestic in scale, design and detailing.*

*In 2014 the buildings remaining on the site comprise (approximately north-south across the site, see site plan):*

- *Former hostel, converted to offices, now vacant, 1967<sup>55</sup>;*
- *Power house, n.d;*
- *Store, 1967;*
- *Former dormitories, converted to offices, now vacant, 1967;*
- *Former isolation ward, later nursing home, now China's Gym, 1950s<sup>56</sup>;*
- *Former mortuary, now store, pre-1962;*
- *Garden shed;*
- *Former matron's quarters, now community radio station, 1950s;*
- *Former quarters, 1919<sup>57</sup>; and,*
- *Footings of no longer extant structures, abandoned timber and an abandoned transportable building.*

#### **Former Hostel, 1967 [Moorgunya Hostel]**

*The former hostel is a single-storey metal-framed metal clad structure, linear in plan and oriented east-west, addressing Sutherland Street. The building, currently unoccupied and damaged by recent cyclonic activity, has a low pitched gable roof, portions of which are missing. The roof and external walls are clad in a standing seam Trimdek type metal sheeting, and the building is supported on a concrete foundation. All windows have metal security screens, as do fanlights over the flush panel timber external doors. A small entry porch, under the main roof, is located in the south-east corner of the building. Hot water units and gas bottles are located to the rear, secured behind a chain mesh fence.*

*Internally the hostel comprises bedrooms, a large dining room, kitchen, bathrooms and staff offices. Generally, the rooms have battened ceilings and floors, simple timber architraves, skirting boards and cornices and flush panel timber doors.*

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<sup>55</sup> Proposed Native Hostel at Port Hedland for Dept. of Native Welfare, Site Plan, Drawing Number 1, State Housing Commission of W.A., 6.1.1967; cited in Palassis Architects, October 2014, op cit., p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> Pt. Hedland Native Hospital, Block plan showing buildings as at 11.5.62, Public Works Department. The plan shows buildings believed to be the former ward (now gym), former matron's quarters, former clinic/doctor's quarters, former mortuary, in addition to several other no longer extant buildings; cited in Palassis Architects, October 2014, op cit., p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Port Hedland Native Hospital, Removal From Berniere Island, Public Works Department, no date, but assumed to be 1919. Drawing shows quarters in location of extant building, and a number of other no longer extant structures; cited in Palassis Architects, October 2014, op cit., p. 7.

*The structure is in poor condition, showing signs of lack of ongoing maintenance, in addition to the roof damage sustained in the cyclone.*

#### **Power House, n.d.**

*The power house is a small, single--storey metal--clad structure with low--pitched gable roof. The structure has no windows and a large, sliding door on the southern side.*

#### **Store, 1967**

*The store is a small, simple metal framed structure with both sheet metal cladding and some chain mesh fencing.*

#### **Former Dormitories, 1967**

*The former dormitories are a single-storey metal-clad structure, linear in plan, with a central wing projecting north from the centre of the east-west oriented main wing, and are located behind (to the south of) the former hostel. The building has a low pitched gable roof, clad in a standing seam metal sheeting, as are the walls of the main wing, and is supported on a concrete foundation. The north wing is clad in a compressed fibre<sup>58</sup> panel. All windows and external doors have metal security screens.*

*Internally, the building comprises two large former dormitory spaces, bathrooms and rooms for supervisory staff. Generally, the rooms have battened ceilings and floors, simple timber architraves, skirting boards and cornices and flush panel timber doors.*

*A small metal-clad gabled roof garage is located to the south of the building, adjacent to Meiklejohn Street.*

*The dormitory building is in poor condition, showing signs of lack of ongoing maintenance and vandalism.*

*A basketball court is located to the western side of the building, flanked on two sides by the building, and to the north by a stone retaining wall which accommodates the falling ground levels.*

#### **Former Isolation Ward/Nursing Home, 1950s<sup>59</sup>**

*The former patient ward/nursing home, now operating as 'China's Gym' is a single storey timber-framed and corrugated metal clad linear structure, with low curved roof and separate metal clad verandah roof extending the length of the southern elevation, supported on timber posts. The building is referred to in some documentation as a Nissen hut, but is clearly different in form, having a separate roof and walls, and not the semi-cylindrical form of the traditional Nissen hut.*

*Windows and doors are timber-framed, most with metal security screens.*

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<sup>58</sup> In this context the compressed fibre panel is likely to contain asbestos, although the Heritage Report prepared for P5948 *Lock Hospital and Burial Ground* by Palassis Architects for the Department for Child Protection and Family Services in October 2014 does not explicitly confirm this. In the 1950s, compressed fibre cement sheeting used in building construction most commonly comprised asbestos. By the 1970s it was a combination of asbestos and synthetic materials, and by 1980s, the common material was fibrous cement.

<sup>59</sup> The building is not shown on a 1936 drawing, Port Hedland Native Hospital, New Compound for Males, but is shown on the 1962 Block Plan. Physical evidence suggests the 1950s as an appropriate construction date; cited in Palassis Architects, October 2014, op cit., p. 8.

### **Former Mortuary, pre-1962 (1930s?)**

*The former mortuary is a small single storey timber-framed corrugated metal clad structure with a steeply pitched gable roof, supported on a concrete base which forms the lower portion of the wall. A single door is located in the western gable wall, and a window, with metal screen, in the eastern wall. Internally, the timber framing structure is exposed, with painted panels fixed between the timber studs.*

### **Garden Shed, n.d.**

*The garden shed is a small metal clad mono pitched structure located behind the former clinic/doctor's residence. The shed is clad in corrugated metal sheeting and appears to be of relatively recent construction.*

### **Former Matron's Quarters, 1950s<sup>60</sup>**

*The former matron's quarters is a single storey compressed fibre<sup>61</sup> and metal building, supported on timber stumps, and accessed by a small timber entry porch on the southern façade. The building is located close to the south-west corner of the lot, adjacent to the former clinic/doctor's residence, and addressing Anderson Street. The floor plan is L-shaped, with a hipped roof. External openings are timber-framed, all with metal security screens.*

*Internally, the rooms have battened ceilings and floors, simple timber architraves, skirting boards and cornices and flush panel timber doors. Whilst the place currently functions as a radio station, its former use as a dwelling is clear, with little modification being made to the place to enable its reuse, although the recording studio room has been fully refurbished and equipped to meet its new purpose.*

*The place is in good condition.*

### **Former Quarters, 1919**

*The former quarters is a single storey compressed fibre<sup>62</sup> and metal clad dwelling supported on a low concrete foundation, located close to, and addressing, Anderson Street. The dwelling has a hipped roof, truncated at either side, with verandahs under the main roof extending the length of the front and back elevations, supported on timber posts. The external walls are batten finished, and all openings have metal security screens.*

*Internally, the rooms have battened ceilings and floors, simple timber architraves, skirting boards and cornices and flush panel timber doors.*

*The building is in fair condition.*

*The site contains the footings of a number of no longer extant structures. A comparison of the 1962 block plan and a current aerial image reveal that the footings of the following structures probably exist:*

- *Garage for new hostel, 1967*

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<sup>60</sup> Town of Port Hedland Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places, Review 2007. Place No. 24: Lock Hospital (remains) and Aboriginal burial ground; cited in Palassis Architects, October 2014, op cit., p. 8.

<sup>61</sup> In this context, and particularly given the date of construction, the compressed fibre cement sheeting panel is likely to contain asbestos.

<sup>62</sup> In this context the compressed fibre cement sheeting panel is likely to contain asbestos.

- *Recreation hut, pre-1962*
- *P<sup>63</sup>: Hospital, 1919*
- *Q: Kitchen, pre-1962, 1922/1936?*
- *M: Ablution block, pre-1962*
- *J: Laundry, possibly 1919*
- *H: Power house, pre-1962, and*
- *G: Garage, pre-1962*

### **Archaeology**

The Burial Ground associated with the Lock Hospital appears to have been located to the north and east of the Lock Hospital. It is highly likely that human remains might be present in this location. This site has already been acknowledged as a site of importance under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

There are a number of concrete footings remaining in the southern portion of Lock Hospital site. Although there was some demolition and reconstruction on the lot during the transfer of the site to the Department of Community Welfare, the new buildings are sited in the northern portion of the site. The retention of footings associated with the earlier phase of occupation and the apparent lack of disturbance to the southern portion of the site suggests that there is a moderate to high likelihood for archaeological artefacts and deposits to be present associated with the operation of the Lock Hospital and Native Hospital phases.

There is also moderate potential for sub-surface deposits or artefacts to be present associated with the use of the site as Finlay's Camp, in particular in the vicinity of the original well, windmill and tank stand. If filled in, there is also potential for archaeological artefacts to be recovered from the well, which would range in research potential and significance, depending on provenance and the date of deposition.

There is high likelihood for surface and sub-surface artefacts to also be present associated with the Moorgunya Hostel phase within the vicinity of the relevant buildings.

### **13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION**

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* comprises a complex of buildings first established in 1919 to provide hospital and isolation nursing for Aboriginal people suspected of having venereal diseases, and later used as a hospital and nursing home. In the 1970s the place was used as a hostel for Aboriginal children who lived out of town, to allow them to attend school.

#### **Hospitals for Aboriginal People**

A search of the State Heritage Office database for hospitals returns 215 entries, 19 of which also include the keyword 'Aboriginal'. Of those, 11 places are on the State Register of Heritage Places, and one is on the Assessment Program. The most relevant examples are listed below.

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<sup>63</sup> Letters used to label buildings on 1962 Block Plan; cited in Palassis Architects, October 2014, op cit., p. 9.

- P02339 *Roebourne Hospital Group (RHP)*: Roebourne Hospital Group was the second purpose-built public hospital and the first Bungalow Hospital to be constructed in Western Australia in 1874. It was largely used as a hospital for non-Aboriginal people, although formal segregation did not occur until the early 1950s when a Nissen Hut was erected and used as a native isolation ward.
- P03130 *Mt Margaret Mission Hospital (ruin) (RHP)*: Mt Margaret Mission was a United Aborigines Mission relocated from Mt Morgans in the 1930s. It was the first hospital to care for all Aboriginal groups on the goldfields and particularly notable for the establishment of maternity wards. The place is important to the local Wongi people as many were born there in the first western style maternity ward available to Aboriginal people. This was influential in reducing the extreme high rates of infant mortality in the area.
- P03635 *Wiluna District Hospital Group (fmr) (RHP)*: Constructed in 1934 to cater for the influx of people that arrived to work on the Wiluna Gold Mine. In the mid-1950s the hospital had almost double the amount of Aboriginal patients to 'white' patients. *Wiluna District Hospital Group* illustrates changing hospital and medical practices as well as the institutionalised racism through separate wards for 'Natives'. It is a good example of a highly intact inter-war period hospital facility in the State and is significant to the former staff, patients and Wiluna Community.
- P13516 *2/1 Australian General Hospital (ruins), Merredin (RHP)*: During World War II the 2/1 Australian General Hospital was established in Merridan for military use. It was used quite extensively from 1942 to 1944 for war related injuries. In 1948 part of the reserve where the hospital was located was used as an Aboriginal camping reserve and the hospital was a government run facility. It was the only medical facility between Northam and Kalgoorlie to accept Aboriginal patients. The place is significant in being a rare remnant of a World War II mobile hospital installation on Australia soil.
- P09581 *Native Hospital & Matron's Quarters, Wyndham*: The 1920s constructed Native Hospital was used as a rehabilitation area for patients from the main hospital in Wyndham that had been released. It was also a place for older Aboriginal people to reside.

The above examples demonstrate the continued provision of separate hospitals or wards for the care of Aboriginal people in Western Australia for much of the nineteenth century. The treatment of Aboriginal patients varied across the state, often depending on the nature of the illness. Confusion and inconsistencies between Government departments also created confusion and in some cases, poor quality care.

Although sexually transmitted and other infectious diseases such as Hansen's disease were issues across Australia in the late 1900s, epidemics in the Aboriginal population were a particular concern for the Western Australian Government. The preferred solution was the relocation and complete isolation and segregation of Aboriginal sufferers, particularly in the North West.

In addition to *Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland*, two other significant former lock hospital sites were established in Western Australia, both of

which are on the State Heritage Office database, as well as a series of lazaret sites.<sup>64</sup>

- P25544 Lock Hospital Ruins, Dorre and Bernier Islands (Assessment Program): Established in 1907, the Lock Hospitals on Dorre and Bernier Islands were the first to provide care to Aboriginal people suffering from venereal disease in the North West. By 1912 it was found that the scheme had been successful in reducing the occurrence of 'syphilis', however it was criticised for being too costly. The hospitals were abandoned in 1919 and the patients moved *Lock Hospital and Burial Ground, Port Hedland*. No extant buildings remain on the sites, although both are considered to comprise highly significant archaeological deposits and artefacts. In 1986, Bernier and Dorre Islands were registered as protected areas under Australia's Aboriginal Heritage Act for the skeletal remains and burials on the islands associated with the operation of the lock hospitals.
- P09743 Numbala Nunga (Assessment Program): originally the first Government Residency in Derby in 1883, the site of Numbala Nunga was utilised as a lock hospital and general Aboriginal hospital from the 1890s for many years. In 1925 the Lock Hospital portion, which had been used for Hansen's disease (leprosy) patients was burnt as a disease control measure when the patients were relocated from the site. No elements of these places remain extant in 2016. New buildings were constructed and used as a Native Hospital until 1965 when it became the Numbala Nunga Nursing Home.
- P02980 *Bungarun (Leprosarium), Derby* (RHP): Constructed in intervals since 1936, Bungarun, was the only government facility in Western Australia where Hansen's disease patients were able to live whilst undergoing long-term medical treatment. The establishment of the place ended mandatory transfer of Hansen's disease patients from Western Australia to the Northern Territory allowing more Aboriginal people to be closer to their own country. While it is no longer used as a leprosarium, it is the only facility of its type that survives in Western Australia and is a benchmark place for the potential to contribute to an understanding of the conditions that leprosarium patients endured. The graveyard is important to the Aboriginal community as it contains the remains of numerous patients who died at the leprosarium.
- P05368 *Community Health Services, Broome* (RHP): Constructed in 1938, Community Health Services has been associated with a variety of medical services for the Broome Community. It has been particularly important for its role in the campaign to control and reduce the incidence of Hansen's disease and the fight against malaria in the Kimberley region. Since the 1970s it has been particularly significant to the Aboriginal community of Broome who have greatly used the facility as clients for child health care and preventative

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Although lock hospitals and lazarets (leprosariums etc) performed the same isolation function, they they were distinct types of hospital in Western Australia. In Western Australia, the issue of venereal disease had abated somewhat by the time leprosy became a significant issue in the 1910s. Again, the Government saw that isolation was the only means of controlling the disease, and Hansen's disease (leprosy) sufferers were initially taken to existing facilities such as the Quarantine Station (fmr), Woodman Point and Wooroloo Sanatorium, but later, purpose-built facilities were constructed for treatment, isolation and detention.

Davidson, W, 1978, *Havens of Refuge: A History of Leprosy in Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands: pp. 15, 17, 23; P9743 Numbala Nunga, Derby — Draft Assessment p. 30.



medicine. The various uses of the building illustrate the evolution of health services in the region.

- P02971 *Shenton Park Rehabilitation Hospital (RHP)*: Perth's first purpose-built hospital for the treatment of infectious diseases. Established in 1894 to provide segregated treatment after an outbreak of smallpox in 1885. The hospital was well used into the twentieth century when venereal disease, amongst other infectious diseases, became more common. The place is also important in the establishment of its paraplegic rehabilitation unit, the first of its kind in Australia. The planning of the hospital allows for natural light and ventilation. In association with this, the avenue to the administration and wards block, lined with trees, creates an attractive area.
- At least three lock hospitals were also established in Queensland, two primarily for white prostitutes, one located adjacent to the gaol in Dutton Park, Brisbane, and another in Rockhampton<sup>65</sup>. *Fantome Island Lock Hospital and Lazaret Sites (former), Palm Island, Queensland* (Queensland Heritage Register), off the coast of Queensland, was the site of an isolated lock hospital between 1928 and 1945 and a lazaret (or leprosarium) between 1939 and 1973. Both facilities were used for the isolation of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander patients or inmates. *Fantome Island* comprises extensive archaeological remains of the former lock hospital and lazaret and is a place of significance to the state of Queensland<sup>66</sup>.

There is little evidence to suggest where, if at all, other lock hospitals were located in Australia. Further research may identify other locations, however, it appears that *Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is a rare Australian example of an extant lock hospital, particularly one established for the care of Aboriginal patients.

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* was also briefly used as a Nursing Home for Aboriginal people. As discussed above, P09743 Numbala Nunga (Assessment Program) also fulfilled this function for many years.<sup>67</sup> No other nursing homes catering to Aboriginal clients are listed on the State Register.

*Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is an excellent representative example of a hospital created for the management of Aboriginal patients, including those with infectious diseases, and in aged care. It is the only extant example in Western Australia, and possibly Australia, of a lock hospital.

### **Aboriginal Hostel**

In 1967 Moorgunya Hostel was established on the site of the *Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* in the southern portion of the site, facing Sutherland Street.<sup>68</sup> The government-run hostel for Aboriginal children was one of several established in the North West region, which aimed to provide accommodation for children of Aboriginal station workers in order that they might

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<sup>65</sup> Anderson, K, n.d., *The Process Of Change In Queensland: A Worker's Perspective*, Source: [http://aic.gov.au/media\\_library/publications/proceedings/14/anderson.pdf](http://aic.gov.au/media_library/publications/proceedings/14/anderson.pdf), Accessed 22 June 2016, p. 124; Levine, op cit., pp. 71-72; *Lock Hospital and Lazaret Sites (former)*, — Queensland Heritage Register

<sup>66</sup> *Lock Hospital and Lazaret Sites (former)*, — Queensland Heritage Register

<sup>67</sup> The adjacent facility to P09743 Numbala Nunga, Juniper Numbala Nunga, also continues this service, as provided by the Uniting Church.

<sup>68</sup> Palassis Architects, op cit., p. 5.

attend high school in town.<sup>69</sup> Other hostels established around the same time include Oolnayah Hostel, Marble Bar; Weerianna Hostel, Roebourne; and Native Hostel and Gilliamia Hostel, both in Onslow.<sup>70</sup>

It is difficult to determine how many comparable places are still extant as it is probable the vast majority have not been included on heritage lists such as municipal inventories and have therefore not been entered in the State Heritage Office database. However a combined word search of the database returned the following relevant entries:

- P1673 *Pallottine Monastery*, Tardun (RHP): constructed in 1938 as ecclesiastical housing. By 1948 Pallottine Monastery began operation as a boarding school, primarily for Aboriginal children whose families worked on Murchison sheep stations and in the Mullewa area.
- P2650 Our Lady of Lourdes Convent, & St Joseph's Old Primary School (fmr), Wagin (Assessment Program): comprises a Convent and school constructed in 1914 which includes 1925 and 1959 additions. The school closed in the 1970s, the Convent was transferred to the Diocese of Bunbury and for a time the place was run as a Hostel for Aborigines until its sale in 1986.
- P5025 Bay View, Esperance (Assessment Program): also known as Fairhaven Native Girls Hostel, the place was constructed as a residence in 1903 and later used as a mission for young Aboriginal girls.
- P5687 Alvan House, Mount Lawley (Assessment Program): an established house purchased by the State government in October 1950 and the first property in the metropolitan area purchased by the State for conversion for hostel purposes by the Department of Native Welfare in line with newly introduced state policy of assimilation via the mainstream educational system during the 1950s.
- P9959 McDonald Residence, Mount Lawley (Assessment Program): originally located at 11 Carr Street, West Perth from 1952 to 1963, McDonald House was the 'brother' institution to Alvan House. This location was established in 1975 to enable a metropolitan community setting to assist acclimatisation of Aboriginal boys in the hostel environment.
- P9817 Coinda House, Mount Lawley (Assessment Program): the first 'Employment' hostel established by the State in the metropolitan area in line with a shift in resourcing institutionalised housing for Aboriginal people from the late 1950s to early 1970s.
- P18575 Ardross House (Assessment Program): originally a private residence transferred to the Department of Native Welfare in 1970 and converted to a hostel.
- P18580 Medina Education & Employment Hostel (Does not warrant Assessment): A single storey brick and tile 1950s suburban home in good condition, representative of government policy to establish state residential care institutions hostels within a suburban context.

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<sup>69</sup> Olive, N, 2007, *Enough is Enough: A History of the Pilbara Mob*, Fremantle Press, p. 171.

<sup>70</sup> Olive, op cit., p. 171.

- P18581 Myara Hostel (Does not warrant Assessment): operated from 1973 by Department of Community Welfare as an 'Education and Employment Hostel'. The place is representative of government policy to purchase established residential properties for conversion into hostels within a suburban context.

The above list demonstrates the presence of several examples of Aboriginal hostels in the Perth metropolitan and regional areas, which also demonstrate different phases in the provision of accommodation services for Aboriginal school-age students. *Lock Hospital (fmr) and Burial Ground, Port Hedland* is a representative example of the government policy of providing accommodation assistance to Aboriginal school students in North Western Australia.

#### **13. 4 KEY REFERENCES**

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#### **13. 5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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