



## 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)

- 8.5.2 Helping other people
- 8.5.3 Associating for mutual aid
- 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

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

- 408 Institutions

#### 11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE\*

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#### 11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is indicative of the development of the Country Women's Association throughout Western Australia since 1924, and its importance in the community life of isolated country districts when few other services were available. (Criterion 2.1)

*Hyden CWA Rooms*, together with the adjacent hall, is one of the few places in the town that remain mostly intact to provide evidence of the history of Hyden, and is in a prominent location on the major road junction in the town, opposite the railway reserve. (Criterion 1.4)

*Hyden CWA Rooms* was constructed in 1950, and is illustrative of the contribution made by women to life in country districts as well as their involvement in the wider community. (Criterion 2.2)

*Hyden CWA Rooms* has been associated with the CWA in Hyden since its construction in 1950, and more recently with the Lions Club. (Criterion 2.3)

#### 11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

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

#### **11.4 SOCIAL VALUE**

*Hyden CWA Rooms* has particular value to the people of the Hyden district as a venue of social interaction and community activity involving the CWA, various Churches and Lions Club. (Criterion 4.1)

*Hyden CWA Rooms* contributes to the sense of place of the local community for its associations and prominent position in the townscape. (Criterion 4.2)

### **12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **12.1 RARITY**

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#### **12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS**

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is a representative example of post-war vernacular architecture often used by community organisations as an economic means of establishing their facilities in the post war period. (Criterion 6.1)

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is a good representative example of the importance of the CWA in rural areas, as indicated by its prominent position in the town. (Criterion 6.2)

#### **12.3 CONDITION**

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is in fair condition. Some maintenance takes place but it is on an adhoc basis, and several issues including cracks in the walls and floors and rising damp, require urgent attention.

#### **12.4 INTEGRITY**

*Hyden CWA Rooms* has adapted to changing needs of the local members of the Country Women's Association who have continuously used the place since its inception. *Hyden CWA Rooms* has a high degree of integrity.

#### **12.5 AUTHENTICITY**

Although there is considerable evidence of the original fabric of *Hyden CWA Rooms*, a number of changes have taken place including replacement of the roof, the original front windows and painting the exterior block walls. It has a moderate degree of authenticity.

### **13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The documentary evidence has been compiled by Irene Sauman, Historian. The physical evidence has been compiled by Laura Gray, Conservation Consultant.

#### **13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE**

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is a concrete-block and corrugated iron building constructed as a meeting and service venue for the Hyden branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA). The place was built in 1950.

The first Europeans who occupied the wheatbelt district of Hyden were sandalwood and mallet-bark collectors. The area was described as arid and inhospitable by explorers through the region, but pastoral leases were taken up with sheep pastured under the care of shepherds. As part of Government policy to encourage agricultural land settlement, railway lines were established across the southwest and central areas of the State, pushing further east into the marginal lands. In 1913, a line was built to Lake Grace,

sixty miles to the southwest, and a railway line was constructed from Yillminning to Kondinin between 1912 and 1915, but this was still at least fifty miles (80kms) west of the Hyden area. Agricultural lands were surveyed in the Hyden region in the mid 1920s, and settlement began to spread further east. In 1930, construction began on a line that was planned to link Lake Grace with Southern Cross. As well as serving the intervening farmland, the line provided employment for sustenance workers. Construction was terminated in 1933, when the line reached Hyden, which had been gazetted a townsite on 4 March 1932.<sup>1</sup>

The Public Works Department had established a water catchment and dam at Hyden Rock during construction of the line. The dam provided water for the railway and the town. Cooperative Bulk Handling (CBH) wheat receival bins were installed in 1937. An airfield was constructed after World War Two and the town and district has developed with the construction of churches, saleyards, business premises, residences and a Memorial Hall. The railway line from Lake Grace to Hyden was closed in 1957, and road transport took over. Although this resulted in the upgrading of the road, it proved unsuitable for heavy haulage and the railway line was eventually reopened for use on a seasonal basis for the movement of wheat, wool and superphosphate, while passenger transport continued to be provided by bus.<sup>2</sup>

In 1933, a branch of the CWA was established at Lake Carmody, east of Hyden, and a number of the members were women from Hyden. During World War Two, the branch ceased to operate as attention turned to fundraising for the Red Cross. In 1945, the Hyden branch of the CWA was formed when twelve women met for the purpose in the Hyden Pavilion.<sup>3</sup>

The Country Women's Association was first formed as a non-sectarian and non-political organisation in New South Wales in 1922. Its foundation was prompted by the formation of the Women's Institutes, first in Canada in the late 1890s, and then in Britain from 1913. The motto of the Association was initially: 'Honour to God, Loyalty to the Throne and Empire, Service to the Country through Country Women for Country Women by Country Women', but this was eventually changed to: 'For Home and Country'. The main aim of the Association was to provide services for country women and children. To this end, the CWA established rest rooms and baby health centres in country towns; holiday homes at the seaside or in mountain districts; hostels for children attending school away from home; aged-care homes; instruction in first aid, home nursing and handicrafts; library services, music and drama groups, emergency housekeeping services, hospital visiting, and support for elderly citizens.<sup>4</sup>

The CWA formed in Western Australia in 1924, following a talk at the Karrakatta Club by Lady Forster, wife of the Governor General, on the development of the Association in New South Wales. Mrs Mabel Craven-

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<sup>1</sup> Webb, A., *Kondinin-Kalgarin-Hyden: Community, Time and Place*, Shire of Kondinin, 1988, pp. 2-10; Gunzberg, Adrian & Austin, Jeff *Rails Through the Bush*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Melbourne, 1997, p. 208; Glynn, Sean, *Government Policy and Agricultural Development: A study of the role of government in the development of the Western Australian wheat belt, 1900-1930*, UWA Press, 1975, pp. 119-133; *West Australian Government Gazette*, 4 March 1932, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup> Webb, A., op cit, pp. 12-36.

<sup>3</sup> 'History of the Hyden CWA Branch: 1945-1995,' Part 1, typescript provided by Hyden CWA, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> West Australian Country Women's Association (Inc), *Annual Report*, 1952, [p. 5].

Griffiths, MBE, was Secretary Treasurer of a Provisional Committee and a driving force in the formative years of the Association in Western Australia. The first State conference of the CWA was held in Perth on 10 March 1925. By 1934, there were 124 branches and 26 rest rooms in the State. Twenty years later, the CWA had 113 rest rooms, ten seaside homes, five hostels and two clubs, one in Perth and one in Albany. There were 312 active branches in the State in 1974, and another 136 that had formed and disbanded over the period. The number stood at 220 in 1998.<sup>5</sup>

Some early meetings of the Hyden CWA were held under a pepper tree in town 'where the BankWest premises are today'. The Branch began fundraising for *Hyden CWA Rooms* almost immediately. Mrs Thelma Walton made pastries and pies that were sold on Wednesday shopping day when the train came in from Lake Grace. A building site was acquired in a central position opposite the railway station yard, and on 14 December 1949, the foundation stone for *Hyden CWA Rooms* was laid by Mrs Watson, who was president of the Branch at the time. Cost of the building was put at £1,500, raised entirely by fundraising and subscription, although the State Housing Commission 'Consent to Commence Building Operations' stated that the building was not to exceed £500 for labour and material.<sup>6</sup> Consent to build had to be obtained from the State Housing Commission at this time as they controlled the supply of building materials until June 1952, due to shortages following World War Two.<sup>7</sup>

Cement blocks for *Hyden CWA Rooms* were supplied by the Denaro Concrete Block Company. Incorporated in *Hyden CWA Rooms* was a room for the Infant Health Sister and a room for the Doctor, both of whom visited for regular clinics. The place was opened on 3 May 1950, by Roe Division President, Miss McGuire. Dr Stang, from the Infant Health Centre in Perth, opened the Infant Health Sister's room.<sup>8</sup>

*Hyden CWA Rooms* was a focal meeting place for the district, being used for all church services until churches were built in Hyden. The Doctor travelled from Kondinin once a week and afternoon tea was provided at every clinic, CWA members being rostered for the job. It is remembered that the police officer and bank managers who were in town would always arrive at *Hyden CWA Rooms* at afternoon teatime on clinic days. In 1953, the President, Secretary and three members of the Hyden Branch were invited by the Municipality of York to attend a reception for Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. In 1955, *Hyden CWA Rooms* was used as a schoolroom while the school was undergoing repairs and additions. The Education Department paid £3 a week rent which assisted the Branch considerably with its fundraising.<sup>9</sup>

Catering and fundraising were ongoing activities of the Branch, raising funds for projects by work with their own hands rather than asking for donations.

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<sup>5</sup> Erickson, Rica, Gibbings, B. & Higgins, L., *Her Name is Woman*, CWA, Perth, 1974, pp. 2-6, 109-113; Kelly, Barbara, Haywood, Rona & Smeeton, Patricia, *A Continuing Story: A continuation of the history of the Country Women's Association of Western Australia 1974-1999*, CWA, Perth, 1999, pp.177-181.

<sup>6</sup> Gray, Laura, Whelans & Shire of Kondinin Steering Committee, *Shire of Kondinin Municipal Inventory of Heritage Places*, March 1997, Place no. 75; State Housing Commission, Consent to Commence Building Operations, permit No. 30444, 9 March 1949.

<sup>7</sup> Housing Commission File, Land resumptions AN150/6 ACC 1654

<sup>8</sup> Certificate of Title Vol. 1102 Fol. 854, 11 July 1947; foundation stone; 'History of the Hyden CWA Branch: 1945-1995,' Part 1, op cit, p. 1; Original sketch plan of building, 1949.

<sup>9</sup> 'History of the Hyden CWA Branch: 1945-1995,' op cit, pp. 2-3.

Afternoon teas at stock and clearing sales, cake stalls in the main street, and raffles were just a few ways of raising funds. As well as financing their own local projects, the branch made contributions to CWA headquarters for the Emergency Welfare Fund, and operation of State projects. Contributions were also made to charities and appeals such as refugee appeals, hospital appeals, Freedom from Hunger, Pennies for Friendship, and disasters such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes and bushfires. Catering for events saw members contributing their speciality, be it sponges, coffee, soup, scones, rice for curries, or chickens.<sup>10</sup>

CWA dances were a popular event, the music being provided by local musicians. Miss Pat Clayton played piano, Ben Mouritz, the piano accordion and Francis Duns, the saxophone. In 1961, the King Rocks Sport Club installed a large brass bell in the corner of *Hyden CWA Rooms* grounds in memory of Francis Dun. A piano was purchased for *Hyden CWA Rooms* in 1966, and the choir, which had been formed in 1962, performed at many events over the ensuing decade, including the CWA Choir Festival held in Perth in 1970 and Nukarni in 1972, the CWA Golden Jubilee dinner at Kulin in 1974, many branch, district and division functions and the State conference. A debutante ball was organised by the CWA and held in the Hyden Hall on 6 September 1969, with the debutantes presented to the Governor Sir Douglas Kendrew and Lady Kendrew. Another debutante ball was held in 1988, with debutantes presented to Commodore Baird and his wife.<sup>11</sup>

In the early 1970s, an interdenominational Sunday school was held in *Hyden CWA Rooms*. After the Medical Centre was built, the Doctor no longer required a room for consultations and the Branch established a library in the room. This is now housed in the Hyden Resource and Telecentre. In 1974, Hyden CWA hosted a visit from Mrs Farquharson, President of Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). The Branch produced a recipe book in the early 1990s, which has gone to three print runs of 300 copies. The promotion of primary products and wool was another project of the 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

Alterations to *Hyden CWA Rooms* have included enclosure of the back verandah in the 1960s, and extensive remodelling of the kitchen in 1987, when the room was extended into the former Doctor's room and an opening put through to the adjoining Hyden Hall supper room. The external cement blockwork has been painted, and the front timber windows replaced with aluminium windows. Painting and maintenance over the years has often been carried out by members' husbands, with the Hyden Lions Club assisting in this work since the inception of the Club in 1978.<sup>13</sup>

Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services have been held in the grounds of *Hyden CWA Rooms* for many years. Other regular events are the annual West Week lunch, attended by 50 people in June 2001, and the Christmas Party. The Infant Health Sister's room is now the Lions Club meeting room, where the Lions hold their monthly meeting. Hyden CWA, with 13 active members, holds monthly meetings in the main room, which is also used as a crèche. The Branch knits outfits for premature babies at King Edward Memorial and Princess Margaret hospitals, and continues to cater for numerous functions.<sup>14</sup>

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10 *ibid.*

11 *ibid.*, p. 4.

12 *ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

13 *ibid.*, pp. 1-7.

14 *ibid.*, p. 7; latest information provided to Laura Gray during physical inspection.

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is fully utilised by the CWA and other community groups and services at Hyden.

### 13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is situated on the west truncation of the corner of Marshall and Lynch Streets in the town of Hyden. The building is set back from the road in line with Hyden Memorial Hall that adjoins on the north side. The forecourt of both buildings is an expansive area of red brick paving, with a low rendered wall topped with bricks, along the front boundary line. The low wall has brick pillars delineating the entry to *Hyden CWA Rooms*. An open recreation area and playground are located on the southeast side of *Hyden CWA Rooms*, separated by a 900mm high chain link fence. The site is otherwise unfenced except for a concrete block wall between the hall and *Hyden CWA Rooms*, along the north boundary. The site is flat and mostly undeveloped except for some plantings at the rear.

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is a single-storey vernacular concrete block construction with a central front porch entry. The symmetrical frontage features central double entry doors under a covered porch supported by brick plinths with half height classical pillars. The entry is flanked by windows each side and there is a marble plaque on the right side of the entry. The plaque reads:

This stone was laid by  
Mrs T.M.Walton  
President C.W.A.  
On December 14<sup>th</sup> 1949.

The smooth concrete block walls have been painted. The rear verandah enclosure is timber framed and asbestos clad. The external rear corners of the blockwork are rounded. There is evidence of rising damp in the south front corner of the building.

The hipped roof extends in a skillion to form the front porch. The rear verandah enclosure is also under a skillion extension roof. The roof is clad with colourbond roof sheeting. The colourbond gutters are ogee profile and the downpipes are rectangular. The rear downpipes connect to the rainwater tank at the southwest rear corner. The chimney is square face brick with a corbelled top.

The original timber framed windows at the front have been replaced with sliding aluminium windows within the timber frames, on block sills. The remaining windows are timber framed double hung sashes in sets of two and three. The double front doors are timber framed with three horizontal panels of opaque glass in a vertical format above a timber panel. The other external doors, on the side and rear verandah enclosures, are flush panel. Most of the original internal doors are in place. They have two vertical panels below an obscure glass panel across the top. The door into the lesser hall has been converted to a slider.

The footprint of the building is a square. The front entry door opens into a single space that is the meeting room, with two rooms behind. There are three doors along the west wall. The door furthest left (south) opens into a storeroom that leads through to a verandah enclosure behind. The second door has been infilled and forms a servery through to the kitchen, and the third door opens into the kitchen.

The kitchen is expansive and encompasses the area left and right of the entry from the meeting room. On the right wall, a doorway, and a roller door above the bench, opens directly into the lesser hall that in turn connects to the

main hall of Hyden Memorial Hall. A door in the far left corner of the kitchen opens onto the rear, enclosed verandah that accesses the rear of the property.

All the interior rooms have the original timber floorboards, covered by carpet in the meeting room and vinyl covering in the kitchen. The walls are hard plaster throughout, except the verandah enclosures. The kitchen has three rows of ceramic splash back tiles above all the benches. The ceilings are plasterboard.

The enclosed verandahs have bare concrete floors. The concrete floor in the southwest corner enclosure has a significant crack the length of the floor that is also discernable on the exterior wall. The walls and raked ceilings are lined with asbestos.

The fireplace across the truncated northwest corner (far right) of the meeting room is detailed in face brick with a soldier course near the top and across the base. There is a simple painted timber ledge. The kitchen has an extensive 1987 fitout but has retained the twin Metters stoves set into the original chimneybreast, which has a recessed shelf area.

*Hyden CWA Rooms* is generally in fair condition. The walls and concrete floors evidence cracks that indicate some differential settlement. The place has always, and continues, to fulfil the function of a focus for the CWA in the Hyden area. There have been minimal changes to accommodate not only the changing needs of the members and the community, including the kitchen upgrade that facilitates catering for functions at the hall as well as for the CWA, but also responses to the condition of the place that included the replacement of roof sheeting, painting the external walls and the installation of aluminium framed windows. *Hyden CWA Rooms* demonstrates a high degree of integrity and a moderate degree of authenticity.

### 13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

There are fifty-eight CWA rooms and halls listed on the Heritage Council database. In 2001, the Heritage Council undertook to identify a representative group of CWA halls for assessment, as part of a program to recognise women's history sites in the State. Based on information from CWA histories and Regional Advisers, 12 CWA halls were identified for assessment. These were P8577 *Mundaring Sculpture Park*, P15269 *Baandee CWA Rest Room, Nungarin*, P0618 *Road Board Office (fmr), Cuballing*, P3100 *CWA Rooms, Capel*, P1427 *CWA Rest Room, Kulin*, P10684 *Kalgarin CWA*, P2616 *Victoria Plains Road Board Office, Calingiri*, P6912 *Pingaring CWA*, P12431 *CWA Rooms, Ballidu*, P10936 *Hyden CWA*, P13926 *Walkaway CWA Rooms*, and P13378 *CWA Meeting Rooms, Wonthella*. *Hyden CWA Rooms* was recommended for inclusion in this group as it is an important place within the town of Hyden and therefore a good representative example of the importance of the CWA in rural areas.

Of these, five have since been entered into the Register of Heritage Places (Cuballing, Pingaring, Hyden, Walkaway and Mundaring) and Wonthella has been assessed as Below Threshold for Registration.

Of these: Cuballing CWA occupies the former Cuballing Road Board Office, a stone building, which was constructed as an agricultural hall in 1898; Pingaring (1956) and Hyden (1950) have purpose built rooms constructed of cement block with iron roof; the purpose built rooms at Walkaway were constructed in 1950, in timber and asbestos with iron roof; and Wonthella CWA purchased an existing c.1940s timber and asbestos residence, which has had the interior walls removed to form a hall space.

#### **13.4 REFERENCES**

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#### **13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

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