

Explore North Head Sanctuary, Manly

Discover a different side to Sydney Harbour. Visit North Head Sanctuary for epic views, scenic walks and historical landmarks.



Welcome to North Head Sanctuary

A nature refuge, bordered by dramatic cliffs, North Head Sanctuary, Manly, is located on the peninsula at the northern entrance to Sydney Harbour.

Defined by coastal bushland, the area holds significance for its Traditional Owners and Custodians, who know it as Car-rang-gel. We acknowledge the Gayamagal people and pay our respects to their Elders past, present, and emerging.

A series of dedicated walking and bike tracks are an opportunity to discover military fortifications from the Second World War as well as visible evidence of the nation's early quarantine practices and diverse native flora and fauna, including endangered species.

Popular landmarks include the Third Quarantine Cemetery, Australia's Memorial Walk, the art deco Barracks Precinct, the Hanging Swamp and North Fort – a remnant military complex that once defended Sydney from the threat of invaders.

Were it not for the unspoiled harbour views, it would be hard to believe you are only 11 km from Sydney's CBD.

Upon arriving, head to our Visitor Centre, located near North Fort. One of our friendly visitor service volunteers will be there to greet you and share tips for a great day out. The Visitor Centre is open seven days a week except Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and Good Friday.



Visitor highlights

Plan your trip

Car and bike

From Manly, follow Darley Road up the hill (note: steep incline) to North Head Scenic Drive, bear right at the fork of the road and go through the sandstone archway. Follow this road to reach North Fort.

Ferry

Catch the Manly Ferry from Circular Quay. On arrival, make your way to North Head Sanctuary by following the directions below. (see: 'Bus' and 'Walking').

Bus

Bus services run from Manly Wharf to North Head Sanctuary. For public transport information, including timetables, visit the Transport NSW website.

Walking

The walk from Manly Wharf to North Head Sanctuary takes approximately 45 minutes. Walking tracks link to North Head Sanctuary from Shelly Beach and Collins Flat Beach.

Epic views

As you explore North Head Sanctuary, you'll discover lookouts that offer incredible vantage points encompassing the Pacific Ocean, Sydney Harbour and the city skyline. Highlights include:

Harbour Lookout

(Map ref 4E)

Northern Lookout

(Map ref 4E)

Fairfax Walk and Lookouts

- *Yiningma Lookout* (Map ref 7G)

- *Burrugula Lookout* (Map ref 6H)

Third Quarantine Cemetery

(Map ref 5F)

Sanctuary Lawn

(Map ref 6F)

Defence of Sydney Monument

(Map ref 6F)



Australia's Memorial Walk.

Featured walks

The Sanctuary Loop

The Sanctuary Loop is a circuit trail of North Head Sanctuary, which visitors can complete in under 2 hours.

Australia's Memorial Walk

(Map ref 6F)

Enjoy a walk along the paved pathway and discover monuments to the major conflict periods in Australia's history. Australia's Memorial Walk is maintained by the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company, relying on grants, tax deductible donations and volunteer support.

The Hanging Swamp

(Map ref 7D)

Engage with nature, including a chorus of frogs, at the Hanging Swamp – a scenic landmark, with a walking trail, on the eastern side of North Head Sanctuary.

Avenue of Honour

(Map ref 6D)

This cobblestone avenue was created as a memorial to local soldiers killed in the First World War. Originally lined with Norfolk Island pines that were planted in 1933, it was intended to provide a circuit around the area's eastern boundary.

Bondi to Manly Walk

Feeling ambitious? Embark on the 80km Bondi to Manly Walk, a massive network of public tracks spanning the foreshore between two of Sydney's most iconic surf beaches. By the time you reach North Head Sanctuary, you will be on the cusp of completing a one-of-a-kind odyssey. Well done!

Eat and drink

Yorky Coffee Caravan

(Map ref 5C)

Located in the Barracks Precinct next to WOTSO, Yorky Coffee serves takeaway coffee, beverages and snacks out of a charming 1976 retro caravan on weekday mornings.

Bella Vista Café

(Map ref 5F)

Located near the Visitor Centre at North Fort, Bella Vista Café marries traditional and modern Italian cuisine with sweeping views of Sydney Harbour.



Bella Vista Café.

Guided tours

Want to walk in the footsteps of those who once defended Sydney or learn about the nation's early quarantine practices? Book a volunteer-led tour of North Head Sanctuary.

Defence of Sydney Tour

Explore North Fort and discover the crucial role this former Army base once played in the defence of Sydney. You'll discover gun emplacements and descend into underground facilities; namely, the mysterious Plotting Room and a 200-metre-long tunnel complex.

Duration:
1 hour 45 mins

When:
Sundays (10:30am, 11:30am, 1pm and 2pm)

Third Quarantine Cemetery Tour

Discover a heritage-listed landmark that reveals Australia's early quarantine practices. As you hear stories of the poor souls buried here between 1881 and 1925, you'll marvel at the serenity of their final resting place.

Duration:
60 mins

When:
Select dates and times.

Book a tour

Visit harbourtrust.gov.au/whats-on to book tickets or purchase them from our Visitor Centre on the day. Payments are cash free / card only and tickets are subject to availability.

Private group bookings for the Defence of Sydney and Third Quarantine Cemetery Tours – as well as a bespoke Australia's Memorial Walk Tour – are available by request.

Details: harbourtrust.gov.au/private-tour-form

Please note: Tours include bush tracks, steps and uneven ground. A moderate level of fitness and good mobility is required. Visitors must wear enclosed footwear (and wet weather gear if required). Minimum and maximum participant numbers per tour apply. Please allow time to book in prior to the tour start time.



North Head Sanctuary Discovery Day, 2018, First Nations Smoking Ceremony.



Members of the Australian Women's Army Service performing Plotting Room duties (1944).



Hanging Swamp (Map ref 7D).



Sanctuary Lawn (Map ref 6F).



No. 2 Gun Emplacement (Map ref 6E).



North Head Sanctuary Discovery Day, 2018, Weaving Workshops.

Defence of Sydney

North Fort Battery

Established in 1936, the North Fort Battery is a remnant military complex. Strategically placed at the northern entrance to Sydney Harbour, the now-demilitarised fort was part of a defence system that spanned 300km of coastline during the Second World War.

Until 1952, North Fort featured two 9.2 inch calibre guns, capable of firing a distance of 26.4km. These heavy weapons were serviced by a network of underground tunnels (Map ref 5E and 6E) and target coordinates were relayed to them from the nearby Plotting Room.

Located eight metres underground, the Plotting Room (Map ref 6E) was vital to Sydney's coastal defences during the Second World War. The facility's personnel, including members of the Australian Women's Army Service, exchanged enemy craft intel with other artillery batteries along the coast. Due to the highly classified nature of this work, their exploits were kept secret from the general public at the time.



The Former Army School of Artillery.

The Army School of Artillery

After the Second World War, the Army School of Artillery opened at North Head. Gunners lived and trained there from 1946 until 1998, when the school relocated to Puckapunyal, Victoria.

The former School of Artillery occupies the highest part of North Head and includes the Army Barracks. The Barracks Precinct contains a collection of art deco buildings that include a parade ground, service areas and sheds, as well as a large area of remnant bushland.

Flora and fauna

The central area of North Head Sanctuary features dunes made up of wind-deposited sands dating back 140,000 years to the Pleistocene Epoch. These dunes support one of Sydney's few remaining patches of Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. Other vegetation types include heathland, littoral rainforest and wetland as well as ferns and colourful wildflowers.

North Head Sanctuary is a refuge for echidnas, reptiles, frogs and more than 100 species of birds, including the little wattlebird, the New Holland honeyeater and the white-browed scrubwren. It is also home to an endangered population of long-nosed bandicoots, as well as locally extinct species that have been reintroduced through conservation partnerships; namely, the eastern pygmy possum, brown antechinus and bush rat.

The North Head Sanctuary Foundation (NHSF) works with the Harbour Trust to protect, maintain and promote awareness of the park's delicate ecosystem.



Echidna.



Black cockatoo.

This includes running guided tours, including Spring Wildflower Walks. Visit their visitor centre, Bandicoot Heaven, to learn about local flora and fauna. Open Saturdays and Sundays between 10am and 4pm, the volunteer-run centre aims to raise awareness of the sanctuary's natural environment. Bandicoot Heaven is located near the Parade Ground (Map ref 6C).

Keep an eye out

Bandicoots

Bandicoots are at their most active at dawn and dusk. For their protection, please check underneath your car before departing North Head Sanctuary and scan the road for wildlife, including after dark.

Tick bites

When you leave, check your clothes and body for ticks. If you think you have been bitten by a tick, please seek medical advice.

The Third Quarantine Cemetery

North Head Quarantine Station was established in 1833 when Richard Bourke, then the Governor of NSW, declared land within a quarter of a mile of Spring Cove a quarantine area. The construction of the nearby Third Quarantine Cemetery, in 1881, coincided with a smallpox epidemic.

By the time of the cemetery's closure in 1925, more than 240 people – including Sydneysiders, soldiers returning from the war and their nurses – had been buried there, having succumbed to ravages including influenza, the bubonic plague, smallpox and scarlet fever. One of the cemetery's most famous residents is Annie Egan, a nurse from Gundagai.

She contracted the Spanish Flu in November 1918 while caring for ill soldiers at the Quarantine Station and died within a fortnight, aged 27. Her story captivated the nation because authorities denied her request for a priest to be admitted into the station to administer the last rites. The Federal Government ultimately backed down and permitted clergymen to enter the station to administer to the sick and dying.

The Third Quarantine Cemetery (together with the North Head Quarantine Station) is included on Australia's National Heritage List as a significant example of the nation's evolving quarantine practices.



Harbour and city views from Third Quarantine Cemetery.

About the Harbour Trust

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (Harbour Trust) manages extraordinary places on the world's best harbour and provides the public with access to precious bushland, parks and open spaces. Located in First Nations Countries, our visitor destinations are known for their natural beauty. They also feature heritage-listed structures and other remnants from Australia's colonial, maritime and military history. For these reasons, they have significance on a national and international scale.

Our visitor destinations include Cockatoo Island / Wareaamah, North Head Sanctuary in Manly,

Sub Base Platypus in North Sydney, and the precincts of Headland Park in Mosman – Chowder Bay / Gooree, Georges Heights and Middle Head / Gubbuh Gubbuh. We also protect Woolwich Dock and Parklands, Macquarie Lightstation in Vaucluse, and the Former Marine Biological Station at Camp Cove. Our vision includes making our destinations accessible to diverse audiences, amplifying their heritage and environmental values through storytelling and – through their conservation, remediation and adaptive reuse – fostering a sense of place and belonging.

Be involved

Interested in volunteering, signing up for our e-newsletter or finding out more about the Harbour Trust? Visit us at: harbourtrust.gov.au

Stay connected

Send us an email: info@harbourtrust.gov.au
Or follow us on social media:

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HarbourTrust) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/HarbourTrust) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/HarbourTrust)

@HarbourTrust
#NorthHeadSanctuary

Emergency

In case of emergency, phone Triple Zero (000) or 112 if mobile coverage is limited and state your location. Then contact:

Ranger
0434 652 152 | 7am – 4pm
Security
0433 631 689 | 4pm – 7am



To Bondi Beach via Manly Ferry Wharf

1.5 km walk to Manly Ferry Wharf via Darley Road

To Shelly Beach Manly



Welcome to North Head Sanctuary

Legend

- Sanctuary Loop — Scenic route
- Bondi to Manly Walk
- Public toilets 5F, 6C
- Accessible toilet 5F
- Emergency Assembly Point 5C, 5E, 5F, 6C
- Defibrillator (AED) (see inset map) 5F
- First aid 6C
- Food and beverage 5C, 5F
- Gates — opening times vary 4D, 6B, 6C
- Authorised car access only 4D, 5D
- Lookout 4E, 6F, 6H, 7G
- Parking 5D, 5E, 6B
- Sydney Harbour National Park (NPWS) parking 3B, 5F, 6F, 6G
- Accessible parking 5F, 6B
- Q Station shuttle bus (Use of personal vehicles not permitted) 4D
- Ranger/Security office 5C
- North Fort Tunnel entrance 5F, 6E (via guided tour only)
- Visitor information centre (see inset map) 5F
- Water fountain 5C, 5F
- Buses 4A, 4C, 5B, 5C, 5F
- Manly Ferry Wharf
- Cliff

Site Features

- Parade Ground 5C
- Avenue of Honour 6D
- Hanging Swamp 7D
- Close Defence Battery Observation Post 6E
- No. 2 Gun Emplacement 6E
- Anti-Aircraft Gun Emplacement 6E
- Australia's Memorial Walk (Western entrance) 6F
- Fairfax Walk and Lookouts 6H, 7G
- Defence of Sydney Monument and Australia's Memorial Walk (Eastern entrance) 6F
- No. 1 Gun Emplacement 6E
- Third Quarantine Cemetery 4/5F
- Harbour Lookout 4E
- Northern Lookout 4E
- Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub 5E
- Plotting Room (via guided tour only) 6E
- Bandicoot Heaven (North Head Sanctuary Foundation visitor centre) 6C
- Battery Observation Post 6D

- Main walking routes
- Secondary walking routes
- Shared bicycle/pedestrian path
- Bondi to Manly Walk route
- Harbour Trust boundary
- Harbour Trust sites

150m
Map is approximately to scale

