

NORTH HEAD SANCTUARY, MANLY



FREE MAP
Bush tracks.
Coastal views.
Historical landmarks.

NORTH HEAD — SANCTUARY MANLY — Harbour Trust



North Head Sanctuary Visitor Centre

Overview

Discover a different side to Sydney! Located within North Head, on the Manly peninsula, North Head Sanctuary is both a scenic nature refuge and a former defence site, steeped in history.

A series of dedicated paths and bike tracks guide visitors to popular landmarks including the Third Quarantine Cemetery, Australia's Memorial Walk, the former Army School of Artillery, the Hanging Swamp and North Fort – a remnant artillery battery that defended Sydney's coastline during the Second World War.

North Head Sanctuary is managed and protected by the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust (Harbour Trust). It is bordered by Sydney Harbour National Park, which is maintained by NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Upon arriving at North Head Sanctuary, head to the visitor centre (*Map ref 5F*), located within the North Fort Precinct. A friendly visitor services volunteer will share tips for a great day out.



View visitor centre on Google Maps.



Underground tunnels, North Fort

Plan your trip

Ferry

Catch the Manly Ferry from Circular Quay. Refer to 'Bus' or 'Walking' for guidance on reaching North Head Sanctuary from Manly Wharf.

Car and bike

From Manly, head to Darley Road and ascend the hill. At the top, bear right onto North Head Scenic Drive and head through the sandstone archway. Continue along this road and keep left at the Q Station roundabout to reach the North Fort Precinct. See map for parking locations. A bike rack is located outside the visitor centre.

Eat and drink

Bella Vista Cafe

(*Map ref 5F*)

Located near the visitor centre at North Fort, Bella Vista Cafe marries traditional and modern Italian cuisine with sweeping views of Sydney Harbour and the Pacific Ocean.

Yorky Coffee Caravan

(*Map ref 5C*)

Located in the Barracks Precinct next to the WOTSO coworking space, Yorky Coffee serves takeaway coffee, beverages and snacks out of a retro caravan.



Yellow-tailed black cockatoo

Top walks

Australia's Memorial Walk

(*Map ref 6F*)

Enjoy a stroll along a paved pathway inscribed with the names of those who defended Australia. The path also features monuments to the major conflict periods in Australia's history.

Avenue of Honour

(*Map ref 6D*)

The Avenue of Honour was commissioned in 1928 to provide public access to the headland and memorialise locals killed in the First World War. When it opened in 1933, this cobblestone path was lined with plaques as well as Norfolk Island Pines – a plaque and a pine for each lost soul. Today, only part of the original path is accessible.

Fairfax Walk

(*Map ref 6G*)

Located within Sydney Harbour National Park, this short trail offers epic views from Burrigula and Yiningma Lookouts.

Hanging Swamp

(*Map ref 7D*)

Follow a tranquil wetland trail through the Hanging Swamp and engage with nature, including a chorus of frogs.

Sanctuary Loop

Complete this circuit trail of North Head Sanctuary in under an hour. Highlights include Australia's Memorial Walk, the Hanging Swamp, the Third Quarantine Cemetery, North Fort's remnant No 2 Gun Emplacement and the Barracks Precinct. See map for route.

Top views

Burrigula Lookout

(*Map ref 6H*)

Harbour Lookout

(*Map ref 4E*)

Northern Lookout

(*Map ref 4E*)

Third Quarantine Cemetery

(*Map ref 5F*)

Sanctuary Lawn

(*Map ref 6F*)

Yiningma Lookout

(*Map ref 7G*)



Plotting Room, North Fort

Guided tours

Book a guided tour of North Head Sanctuary to walk in the footsteps of soldiers, explore nature and delve into the area's quarantine history. Each tour is run by a knowledgeable Harbour Trust volunteer.

Defence of Sydney Tour (1hr 45 mins)

Explore North Fort, above and below ground, and learn how this historic Army base once defended Sydney's coastline.

When: Runs Sundays. Check website for times.

Cost: \$15 per adult, \$11 per child/concession/senior.



BOOK TICKETS

North Head Discovery Tour (45 mins)

Get a taste for North Head Sanctuary on this bite-sized tour, ideal for new visitors! Plus, explore our recently restored WW2 era Observation Post, off limits to the general public.

When: Select dates/times. Check website for details.

Cost: \$11 per adult, \$8 per child/concession/senior.



BOOK TICKETS

Third Quarantine Cemetery Tour (60 mins)

Discover a scenic, heritage-listed landmark that reveals Australia's early quarantine practices. Plus, hear stories of those buried here.

When: Select dates/times. Check website for details.

Cost: \$15 per adult, \$11 per child/concession/senior.



BOOK TICKETS

Some tours are available, by request, for private group bookings. To learn more, visit: harbourtrust.gov.au/private-tour-form



Northern Lookout, Sanctuary Loop



Short-beaked echidna



Third Quarantine Cemetery



Australia's Memorial Walk



Parade Ground, Barracks Precinct

Gayamaygal land

North Head is a place of special significance for its Traditional Owners. The Gayamaygal people first ventured onto the headland about 40,000 years ago and their Koradgee (medicine men and women healers) once performed ceremonies and rituals here. Further, some of the earliest interactions between First Nations peoples and colonists occurred locally. Rock engravings, rock art, campsites, burials and middens speak to the Gayamaygal people's enduring connection to the area.

Unique geology

North Head is a 'tied island', linked to the mainland by Manly's sandspit. It formed during the late Cretaceous Period, 90 million years ago, when its landmass was separated from the Hornsby Plateau. This geological occurrence was the result of tectonic forces as well as climate change, and both the erosion and deposition of soils.

Important information

In an emergency

Phone Triple Zero (000) – or 112 if mobile coverage is limited – and state your location. Then contact:
Ranger (7am - 4pm) 0434 652 152
Security (4pm - 7am) 0433 631 689

Tick bite awareness

When you leave, check your clothes and body for ticks. If you have been bitten, seek medical advice.



Protect our bandicoots

Bandicoots are at their most active at dawn and dusk. For their protection, check under your car before leaving and scan the road for wildlife.

Plants and animals

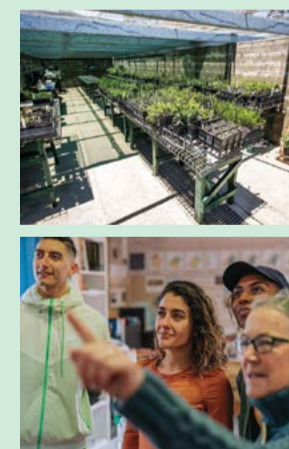
North Head is home to a vibrant but vulnerable mix of plants and animals.

There are more than 650 plant species, including about 500 natives. Notably, the area's ancient sand dunes support Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS), which is a critically endangered ecological community in NSW and nationally.

Another prominent feature of the landscape is the Hanging Swamp (*Map ref 7D*). A walking track weaves through this tranquil wetland environment, providing visitors with an opportunity to engage deeply with nature.

North Head's plant life is a refuge for echidnas, reptiles, frogs, insects and nearly 150 bird species. The area is also home to an endangered population of long-nosed bandicoots, as well as locally extinct species that have been reintroduced – the eastern pygmy possum, brown antechinus and bush rat.

North Head Sanctuary Foundation



The Harbour Trust works with the North Head Sanctuary Foundation to protect and promote the area's delicate ecosystem.

The foundation manages a plant nursery and runs guided wildflower walks in spring. It also operates Bandicoot Heaven (*Map ref 6C*) – an education centre, open to visitors on weekends between 10am and 4pm.

Historic cemetery

The North Head Quarantine Station was established in 1832. By 1837, it had become the first port of call for all ships entering Sydney Harbour with contagious passengers. Until 1925, those who died in quarantine were buried on site at one of 3 successive cemeteries. By the time the station closed in 1984, more than 13,000 people had been quarantined at North Head.

The Third Quarantine Cemetery (1881 to 1925) survives to this day and is protected by the Harbour Trust. It is the largest, most intact and best-preserved cemetery of its kind in Australia. As such, it is included on the National Heritage List together with the former station. Open between 9am and 5pm daily, the cemetery is one of Sydney's most breathtaking landmarks due to its wild beauty and a panoramic view encompassing the Pacific Ocean, South Head and Port Jackson.



A life sacrificed to duty

Between 1881 and 1925, more than 240 people were buried at the Third Quarantine Cemetery, having died from epidemic and pandemic diseases. One of the most notable people buried at the cemetery is Annie Egan.

A member of the Australian Army Nursing Service, Egan fatally contracted the Spanish Flu in 1918 while caring for patients at the North Head Quarantine Station. Her fight for religious freedoms, during her final days, captivated the nation.

North Fort

Due to rising tensions in Europe, the Australian Government began constructing an artillery battery at North Head in 1934. Completed 4 years later, North Fort featured a barracks plus a pair of 9.2-inch Mark X breech loading guns. During the Second World War, it formed part of Fortress Sydney – a network of coastal artillery batteries.

North Fort's heavy weapons could fire up to 26.4 kilometres and were serviced by a tunnel system (*Map ref 5E and 6E*). Firing data coordinates were transmitted to the gunners by the servicepeople who ran North Fort's Plotting Room (*Map ref 6E*) – a bunker concealed in bushland. Plotting Room personnel received their intelligence from North Fort's 2 observation posts (*Map ref 6D and 6E*). In recent years, the Harbour Trust has restored and interpreted parts of North Fort, including the Plotting Room, both observation posts, a gun emplacement (*Map ref 6E*) and the tunnels.

Note: The tunnels, observation posts and Plotting Room are not generally accessible. A relevant tour booking is required.

School of Artillery

Following the Second World War, the Army School of Artillery opened at North Head and began operating out of the barracks that previously served North Fort. Gunners lived and trained at North Head from 1946 until 1997, when the school was relocated to Victoria.

The school was located in what is now called the Barracks Precinct (*Map ref 5C and 6C*). This area contains a collection of art deco buildings as well as a distinctive red gravel parade ground.

Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company (RAAHC)

The RAAHC is a not-for-profit organisation at North Head Sanctuary. Its volunteers operate the Sir Roden Cutler VC Artillery Research Centre. They also maintain Australia's Memorial Walk. Paver inscriptions for this pathway can be arranged through the RAAHC in exchange for a tax deductible donation.

The Harbour Trust

North Head Sanctuary is one of the extraordinary places protected by the Harbour Trust. Located in First Nations countries on Sydney Harbour, the Harbour Trust's destinations are known for their natural beauty. They also feature heritage-listed structures and other remnants from Australia's layered history. For these reasons, they have significance on a national and international scale.

The Harbour Trust's other protected places include Cockatoo Island / Wareamah, Sub Base Platypus in North Sydney and the precincts of Headland Park in Mosman. They also manage Woolwich Dock and Parklands, Macquarie Lightstation in Vaucluse, and the Former Marine Biological Station at Camp Cove. Plan a trip: harbourtrust.gov.au/our-places

Stay connected

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

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1.5 km walk to Manly Ferry Wharf via Darley Road

1.5km walk to Shelly Beach via bush track

Welcome to North Head Sanctuary

Legend

- Free parking (Harbour Trust) 5D, 5E, 6B
- Free accessible parking (Harbour Trust) 5F, 6B
- Paid parking (Sydney Harbour National Park) 3B, 5F, 6F, 6G
- Public toilets 5F, 6C
- Baby change facility
- Accessible toilet 5F
- Emergency Assembly Point 5C, 5E, 5F, 6C
- Defibrillator (AED) 5C, 5F (see inset map)
- First aid 6C
- Food and beverage 5C, 5F
- Lookout 4E, 5F, 6F, 6H, 7G
- Bus stop (Route 161) 4A, 4C, 5B, 5C, 5F, 6G
- Manly Ferry Wharf
- Gates (opening times vary) 4D, 6B
- Visitor centre 5F (see inset map)
- North Fort tunnels entrance (via guided tour only) 5F, 6E
- Ranger/Security office 5C
- Water fountain 5C, 5F
- Cliff
- Harbour Trust boundary

Landmarks and attractions

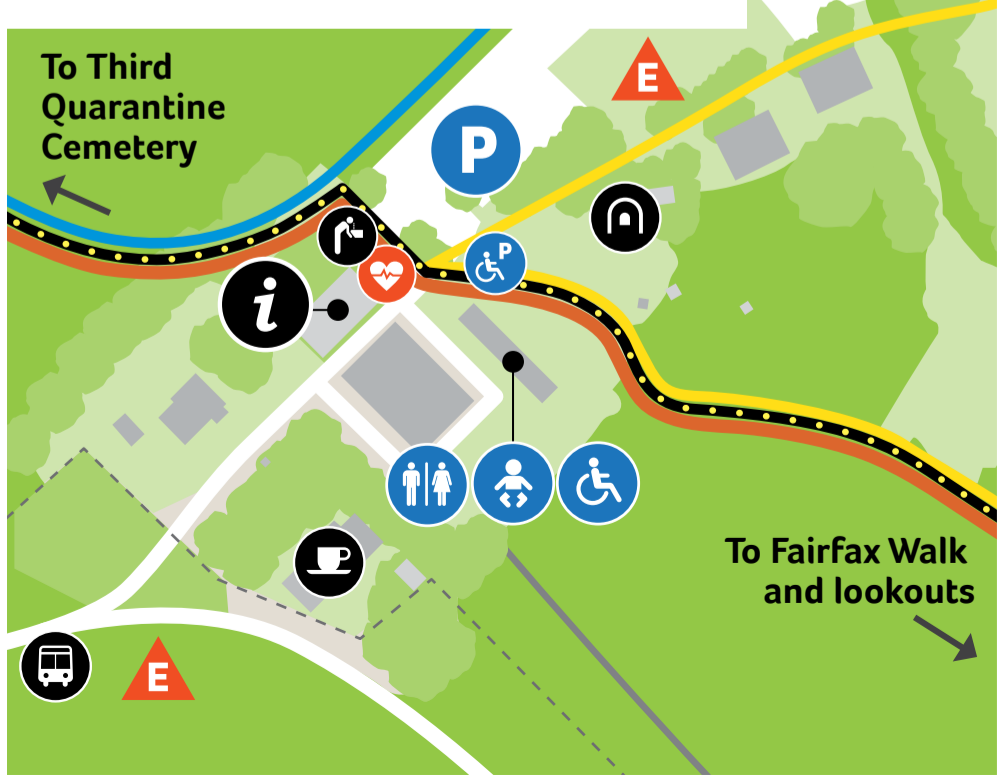
- Parade Ground 5C
- Bandicoot Heaven (North Head Sanctuary Foundation visitor centre) 6C
- Battery Observation Post 6D
- Hanging Swamp 7D
- Plotting Room (entry via guided tour only) 6E
- Close Defence Battery Observation Post 6E
- No 2 Gun Emplacement 6E
- Third Quarantine Cemetery 4/5F
- Australia's Memorial Walk (Western entrance) and Defence of Sydney Monument 6F
- No 1 Gun Emplacement 6F
- Australia's Memorial Walk (Eastern entrance) 6F

Walking/bicycle routes

- Sanctuary Loop (highlights route)
- Primary pedestrian spine
- Secondary walking routes
- Shared bicycle/pedestrian path
- Bondi to Manly Walk

250m
Map is approximately to scale

NORTH FORT PRECINCT



NORTH FORT PRECINCT
See inset

FAIRFAX WALK AND LOOKOUTS

