



North Head Sanctuary Foundation Inc

Custodians of North Head

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2026 March general meeting

Thank you to all who attended the recent general meeting at Bandicoot Heaven. Karen Smith, who has been the Education Officer at the Aboriginal Heritage Office (AHO) for the past 16 years, but is now due to retire, was our guest speaker.



Karen, in conversation with our President, Matthew Taylor, spoke about aspects of North Head and its history before and since the arrival of the First Fleet. Karen will be sorely missed. We wish her well in her retirement!

The AHO provides assistance to partner Councils to protect Aboriginal sites and provide educational activities to schools and local communities. Its museum is located at 29 Lawrence Street, Freshwater and is open Tues-Thurs 9am-3pm.
E: aho@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Nursery Update

Wendy Marceau

Nursery volunteers continuously propagate trees, shrubs and ground cover from seed and cuttings, prepare ground and transplant ready cuttings into newly reclaimed areas within the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust's area of management on North Head, while also weeding, replanting and generally maintaining the more established areas as needed.

Two areas of more recent plantings include the extension of bush along St Barbaras Road, and along the new swale area, built behind houses on Scenic Drive, both flourishing some months later.



St Barbaras planting, 13 months on!

The swale past and recent plantings.

Getting around North Head Sanctuary Parklands

Toni Stevenson

The Sydney Harbour Federation Trust has done a great job in building high standard tracks, car park spaces, an accessible and informative website and a volunteer run visitor centre which opens daily. At the weekend volunteers with the North Head Sanctuary Foundation open another visitor centre, *Bandicoot Heaven*. Even so, many visitors don't seem to know where they are, and much time is spent squinting at a mobile phone. My insights might be just what you, or a friend, need.

Take a **printed map** of the Sanctuary area, available from North Fort Visitor Centre and Bandicoot Heaven. The map, together with the on-site signage, will keep you oriented. Another tip might be to remember that North Fort is at the southern end of Harbour Trust land.

If walking from Manly, (1) Head straight up Darley Road and along North Head Scenic Drive to Sanctuary entrance: OR (2) via Collins Flat and along North Head Scenic Drive to Sanctuary entrance: OR (3) via Shelley Beach and the National Park, through the Hole in the Wall and onto Blue Fish Road, where across the road a Sanctuary track leads through bushland to the Barracks Precinct.

If travelling by bus, take route 161 from Manly Wharf. You have the choice of 3 stops: (1) On North Head Scenic Drive, the bus stop closest to the road leading up to the former Army Gate House and Parade Ground (northern end of the Sanctuary). Explore the Barracks Precinct, then link up with bush tracks and North Fort. (2) On North Head Scenic Drive, bus stop close to Quarantine Station roundabout. Follow National Park Bush Track entrance signage. It connects with Sanctuary Loop Track, which climbs up through bushland growing on old dunes, then winds its way past the City Lookout and down to Loop Track. From here the entrance to the 3rd Cemetery is easily seen. (3) North Fort: A high activity area, and hard surfaces make it friendly for wheelchairs and strollers. If you want to visit the Yiningma and Burragula Lookouts, stay on the bus for the next stop.

By Car: Parking is available at: (1) At North Fort (Memorial Walk, Third Cemetery etc): (2) Gunner's Car Park (via Blue Fish Road) where a wide track leads to the former Oval or, further along, to the wall opening. Take the wall opening for the Avenue of Honour and the wetland (Hanging Swamp):

(3) Barracks Precinct Car Park, accessed via North Fort Road, turn right at the child care centre corner. Car park is at the back. From here link up with the Sanctuary Loop.

By Bike: Cyclists should follow the marked Bike Track - a shared zone for people and vehicles.

Those of us who walk regularly know there is something for all seasons. In very hot weather perhaps go in the early morning or late afternoon. Stroll along or stride out, do enjoy the day.

Note: Maps can also be found and printed from the following websites:

<https://walkingvolunteers.org.au/walks/north-head-circuit/>

<https://www.harbourtrust.gov.au/media/fbefeui0/visit-north-head-sanctuary-brochure.pdf>

Flowering plants to look out for at this time of the year include:



Grevillea buxifolia



Epacris longiflora



Banksia integrifolia

Breaking News

Kaye Lee

With the collaboration of the Office of Australian War Graves and the Sydney Harbour Trust, work has begun on the installation of new headstones for the World War 1 military personnel buried in the Third Cemetery. Work is anticipated to be completed by the end of April. For more information see:

<https://www.dva.gov.au/recognition-and-commemoration/office-of-australian-war-graves/current-projects-and-announcements>

Third Cemetery – A Curious Case

Kaye Lee

One of the most puzzling stories of those buried in the Third Cemetery is that of Jawai Lin or Lam. The Quarantine Station's record of deaths shows that he was buried on 4 December 1918 the same day as Military Nurse Annie Egan and Italian Reservist Lorenza Spinoza, who both died on 3 December 1918. This was at a time when pneumonic influenza was being held at bay from Sydney and beyond by the maritime quarantine restrictions of the day.

Jawai's death record, No.207A is squeezed in between nurses Annie Egan, No.207 and Elizabeth MacGregor No.208⁽¹⁾, as though entered after the fact. Each column is completed with ditto marks under Annie Egan's details, except for date and registration of death, which are blank. This implies that Jawai's death was from pneumonic influenza, the same as Annie's, but was his record an afterthought entered later which covered up something more devious? Reasons to doubt include the following:

1. There is no publicity found to date concerning his death or burial, although both Spinoza and Egan received publicity, the latter in particular, because she was unable to receive the last rites of the Catholic Church⁽²⁾. Nor is there any evidence of Jawai's death being registered with the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages⁽³⁾.
2. The ship on which Jawai was a passenger – the SS Ooma – which berthed in Spring Cove at 4.30 pm on 2 December 1918⁽⁴⁾, was repeatedly reported in newspapers to have had no influenza on board⁽⁵⁾. This was officially confirmed in Director of Quarantine JHL Cumpston's very comprehensive report on the influenza epidemic⁽⁶⁾.
3. The SS Ooma's list of crew and passengers arriving in Sydney from Ocean Island on 2 December 1918 describes a Lam, Jawai as one of 36 'Chinese coolies' in transit to China⁽⁷⁾. In a second report relating to the release of the Ooma from quarantine, Customs personnel George S Bradley noted on 8 December in red copperplate hand, that Jawai had died in quarantine **about** 3 December 1918⁽⁸⁾.
4. There is no record of a Jawai Lam or Lin, or indeed anyone from the SS Ooma, being admitted to quarantine from 2–5 December 1918⁽⁹⁾.
5. There were Company representatives on board this particular voyage of the Ooma, including Company Manager WE Edwards and AH Gaze⁽⁸⁾.



Given there is no record of quarantine admission for Jawai, was he already dead when the ship berthed in Spring Cove? If his death did occur on board the Ooma, perhaps it was covered up by his fellow travellers, or the Company executives aboard, or the ship's Master, anxious to keep the ship's movements on track. Was the cause of his death more sinister than pneumonic influenza? We may never know, but further research might just give us a clue.

1. NAA: C526, <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=314138> Page 68
2. Catholic Press, Thu 5 Dec 1918 P.23 <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/105966756>; et al, retrieved 16/03/2026
3. Many searches of NSW Births, Deaths & Marriages, including global search of deaths registered at Manly 2-5/12/1918
4. NAA: C528, North Head Quarantine Station diary 26/8/1917-4/1/1919 [box 5]
5. SMH Tue 3 Dec 1918 p.7 <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/15813744?searchTerm=influenza%20another%20soldier%20dead> et al retr'd 16/03/2026
6. Cumpston JHL, Influenza and Maritime Quarantine in Australia 1919 p.15 <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-192064587/view?partId=nla.obj-192087758#page/n19/mode/1up/search/ooma+> Retrieved 6/03/26
7. Mariners and Ships in Australian Waters <https://marinersandships.com.au/1918/12/007oom.htm> scan retrieved 16/03/2026
8. NAA: SP83/11NN, <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1606378> retrieved 16/03/2026
9. NAA: C525, ROLL <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=10971462> retrieved 26/03/26
10. NAA: R32, CIPC 4/53 <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=6425044> Image of Ooma retrieved 11/02/2026