

Doonside - Timeline

Before the settlement of New South Wales by Europeans, the Blacktown district was inhabited by the Darug Aboriginal people, who are the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of the land. We pay our respect to elders past and present, and acknowledge the Aboriginal people for their custodianship of the land.

Early settler Robert Crawford (1799–1848) named his 2,000-acre (approx. 810 ha) grant after his home town in Scotland.

Pre 1788	The present suburb of Doonside is home for a clan of 30-50 men, women and children from the Darug tribe. The Aborigines called the district 'Bungarribee'. One explanation for the name is 'Burial ground of a King' while another is 'The creek (bung) of the cockatoos (garribee).'
1789	Captain Tench leads a party of European explorers through the area on June 26, following the present Western Highway route.
1802-1822	The Doonside area was the home of the Government's sheep and cattle, as well as for the convict herdsmen who looked after them. Government Stock Reserve headquarters was based at Rooty Hill.
1821	John Campbell, Commissioner for Crown Lands, comes to Australia along with his wife and 13 children. He takes up a 2,000 acre grant of land on the southern part of what is now the suburb of Doonside. 'Bungarribee', as he called it, was to have many different owners. Robert Crawford arrives in Port Jackson from Scotland, as a free settler, on 7 November.
1823	Governor Brisbane grants land on the northern portion of what is now the suburb of Doonside to Robert Crawford. Crawford receives 2,000 acres as land grants to a new settler, 1,000 acres in return for supporting more than 10 convicts and 3,000 acres, which he had bought. He names his home 'Hill End', after his father's home in Scotland and uses the land, known as 'Crawford', for farming.
1826	John Campbell starts building 'Bungarribee House', using bricks imported from England and convict labour. He dies on 10 October 1827, and his wife dies shortly after. The house was neither completed, nor occupied by Campbell. Many of the homes' later occupants believed the house to be haunted.
1828	Thomas Icely, a well-known landowner and stockbreeder, buys 'Bungarribee', with the assistance of John Macarthur, who allowed him to take over Campbell's original mortgage.
1832	Charles Smith, known as the 'Sporting Butcher' of George Street, buys 'Bungarribee' and uses it as a breeding base for his bloodstock horses. The estate became a leading stud and he spent a considerable sum on improvements including brick stables and outhouses that remained until final demolition in 1957.
1840	Henry Herman Kater buys 'Bungarribee', and continues to use it as a horse stud for his thoroughbred horses and for Durham cattle.
1841	Veterinarian Joseph Armstrong occupies 'Bungarribee'. He makes a respectable living there, buying horses for resale to agents in India as well as establishing a sheep - boiling down works. It is not known if Armstrong was a tenant or an owner.
1845	The East India Company acquires 'Bungarribee', which they use to sell their regimental horses, and for breeding. Numerous opulent, well-attended gatherings were held at Bungarribee House during this time. 'Bungarribee' is featured in newspapers when the body of Major Frederick Hovenden was found on an isolated part of the estate.

Doonside - Timeline

1846-1849	Bungarribee is purchased by Benjamin Boyd, a large landowner. He imported natives of the New Hebrides and Loyalty Islands in 1847 to create a supply of cheap labour for his pastoral holdings. Thirty five of these were destined for 'Bungarribee'.
1848	Robert Crawford dies, but his family remains at the 'Hill End' estate.
c1850	The Australian Agricultural Company uses 'Bungarribee' as a depot for its horses.
c1860	Mr and Mrs Cleeve own 'Bungarribee' until the late 1870s.
1880	Doonside Railway Station is built on Robert Crawford's property. The railway construction camp was known by the Aboriginal name of 'Wolkara'. The station was known as Doonside until 1921 when it was briefly called 'Wolkara' before reverting to Doonside.
1885	The Crawford family subdivide and auction their land (approx. 200 acres) into 435 lots. This area constitutes the main suburban area of Doonside nearest to the railway station.
1886	'Crawford' is re-named 'Doonside' after Robert Crawford's ancestral home beside the River Doon, in Scotland.
1901	Major John James Walters acquires the Bungarribee Estate. He used the property for sheep and cattle and shared the early owners' interest in horse breeding. After 17 years, Major Walters sold 'Bungarribee' to Mr Tom Cleaver, who used it to spell thoroughbreds.
1903	A 'provisional' Public School opens, but is closed in 1909 due to a lack of support. The school re-opened in 1911 and closed again in 1913.
1906	Major Walters was a member of the 'temporary' council, which met to plan the establishment of the Shire of Blacktown.
1910	'Bungarribee' is subdivided into farms, made up of three, five, six and eight hectare sites.
1918	Porter and Galbraith acquire part of the Crawford property and erect a tile works. Herbert Stratford Wood buys 40 hectares of land in Knox Road. The area is now 'Woodcroft Estate'.
1920	Mrs L Crawford is in charge of the new 'Wolkara' receiving office (a non-official post office). The name 'Wolkara' was used to avoid confusion with the 'Downside' post office at Wagga. It was re-named 'Doonside' in 1929. Charles William Hopkins buys Bungarribee and spends a large sum restoring the house.
1929	Electricity comes to Doonside.
1933	Population at the census is 324. The number of occupied dwellings is 96.
1937	The present Doonside Public School opens. The Doonside Church of Christ is established in a hall opposite the present-day 'Featherdale Wildlife Park'. The current site, in Kildare Road, was purchased a year later.
1938	Church of Christ in Kildare Road opened on 14 December.
1941	Local pioneer, Mr Arthur Francis opens a general store which included a taxi rank. He changes the store to a hardware business in 1954. Mr Francis was President of Blacktown Shire Council in 1929 and 1930 and again from 1936 to 1938.
1942	American armed forces build a 1,500 metre sealed runway for emergency landings on the Bungarribee Estate.
1946	By 1946 most of Robert Crawford's land was subdivided into smaller building blocks for a new population growth.
1949	The Overseas Telecommunications Commission acquires 'Bungarribee' with

Doonside - Timeline

	plans to build a radio transmitting station. Money order facilities were provided at Doonside Post Office on February 1. Doonside State Tile Works officially opened by Premier McGirr on 21 October.
1950	St John's Anglican Church, Doonside is established with services held in the open air until a hall is erected in 1953. The land, (about 1 acre on the corner of Hill End Road and Cameron Streets), was donated to the Church of England by Mr Hughie Crawford, a descendant of Robert Crawford. Mr Arthur Francis helps to establish the first Doonside Rural Fire Service in a small tin shack behind his hardware shop.
1953	Doonside Rural Fire Service (RFS) established.
1957	Bungarabee House is demolished amongst loud protests. During its demolition, an older dwelling, believed to be an overseer's slab is discovered incorporated in the house.
1964	Doonside High School opened in January
1966	The post office becomes an official office on 24 January.
1967	Official opening of Doonside Church of Christ Chapel.
1969	Official opening of Mountain View Adventist College on 17 May.
1971	Doonside Community Centre opens
1972	The first local Girl Guide meeting, conducted by Captain Josie Ryan and Lieutenant Gaul is held on 23 February and is attended by eight girls. Featherdale Wildlife Park opens in Kildare Road, Doonside on land owned by Mr and Mrs Charles Wigg. Minister for Public Works, Mr Davis Hughes officially opens the State Brickworks on 6 December.
1976	Assembly of God Church opens. Population 7,025 (Census). The number of dwellings is 1,952.
1977	The last remaining outbuilding of Bungarabee, a barn that once housed convict workers, crumbles after a violent storm in January. Crawford Public School opened in January.
1978	La Valette Social Centre/Club officially opened and blessed on 26 November.
1979	The first Doonside Village Festival is held. The festival celebrates the town's unity after the closure of the railway level crossing, which divided the town centre in half. 1 st Doonside Scout group formed.
1980	Official opening of the Robert Crawford Bridge on 12 July. Railway crossing at Doonside closed the same day.
1981	Population 7,202 (Census)
1985	The Hill End Road Children's Centre officially opened on 29 June. The Astral Drive Children's Centre officially opened on 6 July.
1986	Population 11,029 (Census)
1987	The present St Johns Church is opened by the Archbishop of Sydney on the 29 March. Doonside Post Office building opens for business 29 June. Jim Lynch Memorial Garden at Nurragingy Reserve, officially opened on 18 March.
1988	Nurragingy Reserve officially opens on 26 November. Nurragingy was a member of the local Darug Aboriginal tribe who was given a land grant by Governor Macquarie in 1819. The State Brickworks, in Richmond Road closes its doors in November to make way for housing development.
1989	Doonside High School becomes Doonside Technology High School.
1991	Population 13,530 (Census).

Doonside - Timeline

1993	Western Blacktown Presbyterian Church is established. Acting Prime Minister Brian Howe officially opens the \$3.6 million Power Street bridge.
1994	The Fred Hollows Sensory Garden at Nurragingy Reserve officially opened on 26 February.
1996	Featherdale Wildlife Park is purchased by Amalgamated Holdings. Population 13,633. (Census).
1999	PGH site at Doonside to be rezoned for residential purposes. Duplication of Eastern Road at Doonside officially opened on 27 August.
2000	Doonside Railway Station is used as a staging point for transporting people to western Sydney venues for the 2000 Olympic Games.
2001	Doonside Rural Bushfire Service closes after 50 years of operation. Population at the census is 13,226.
2002	Charlie Bali Reserve assigned on 27 December 2002. Named in honour of former Councillor and Deputy Mayor Karoly (Charlie) Bali, who was also involved in charity work, the Hungarian Senior Citizens Club and was a former Blacktown Citizen of the Year in 2000.
2003	Plaque unveiled on 9 August commemorating Doonside RFS 50 years of service to the community.
2004	NSW Government announces the plan to incorporate the OTC/Bungarribee site in the Western Sydney Parklands.
2005	Featherdale Wildlife Park wins the prize for the best major tourist attraction in NSW.
2006	NSW Government announces it will rezone part of the Western Sydney Parklands to residential. Doonside and Rooty Hill Roads and the Great Western Highway border the land in question. Population 12,668 (Census).
2007	Featherdale Wildlife Park celebrates its 35 th birthday.
2008	The Department of Planning proposes releasing 700 housing lots on 55 ha of bushland, next to the Western Sydney Parklands on the historic Bungarribee Precinct in Doonside.
2010	Residential development commenced on Bungarribee.
2011	Population 13,087 (Census).
2015	Community and council campaign for installation of a list at Doonside railway station.
2016	Population 13,451 (Census).
2019	Aboriginal Heritage Garden officially opened on 19 October.
2021	Population 13,614
2022	Featherdale Wildlife Park celebrated 50 years of operation. Grace's Place, world's first residential trauma recovery facility for children impacted by homicide, officially opened in November. The centre is named in honour of Grace Lynch, mother of Anita Cobby. In June, first sod turned on the construction of new inclusive adventure playspace for people of all abilities at Nurragingy Reserve. Construction of Doonside Station upgrade began in January.