

EDUCATION GUIDED WALK STOP DESCRIPTIONS

Use these stop descriptions to decide which Tour Stops are relevant and useful to your areas of teaching. Talk to our Education Officer if you need more information.

The Penitentiary Precinct *(included on standard education guided walk)*

In the early days of the penal settlement, convicts were housed in rough timber huts. Later, as convict numbers increased, the flour mill and granary was converted into a four-storey Penitentiary, due to its failure to supply adequate flour for the settlement. The Penitentiary's two lower floors contained 136 cells for 'prisoners of bad character'. The top floor provided space for 348 better behaved convicts to sleep in bunks.

With discussion around punishment and reform, students are encouraged to decide for themselves what they think about the treatment of convicts. Was Port Arthur a place of pure punishment, a place of reform or maybe both?

The Waterfront and Industry *(included on standard education guided walk)*

This area was once a hive of activity with most passengers and goods being directed through the deep, sheltered harbour. At this location see firsthand why Port Arthur was the ideal location for a Penal Settlement and hear tales of convicts that tried to abscond, most of whom were unsuccessful in their attempts.

The settlement was once an industrial site with various workshops where prisoners worked and trained in a range of trades including carpentry, shoemaking, coopering and blacksmithing. While there is no longer any visible evidence above the surface, the evidence of the work undertaken here can be seen in the convict-built structures throughout the site.

The Asylum and Paupers' Depot

In the 1860s it became apparent that many ex-convicts were too old or sick to find work elsewhere in the colonies. This area was purposely built to house the aging population as Port Arthur moved into the welfare stage. The Port Arthur Asylum was built in 1868 to house patients with mental illnesses.

Military District

The soldiers of Port Arthur were responsible for security and for pursuing and capturing escaped convicts. A small number of soldiers were accompanied by their wives who

washed, sewed and provided basic nursing care for the men in their husband's company. Visit this district to discover more about the lives of the soldiers and military officers at Port Arthur.

The Separate Prison *(included on standard education guided walk)*

The Separate Prison was designed to deliver a new method of punishment and reform through isolation and contemplation. Convicts were locked for 23 hours each day in single cells. Here they ate, slept and worked, with just one hour a day allowed for solitary exercise in a high-walled yard. Visit the Separate Prison to view re-created cells and discover what life was like in this 'silent prison'.

The Commandant's House

This house was home to the Commandant, Port Arthur's most senior official. Five of Port Arthur's ten Commandants lived here and each man left his mark on the house and the settlement. Visit this house to find out more about the lives of the Commandants.

The Hospital *(included on standard education guided walk)*

In the Hospital convicts were commonly treated for conditions including respiratory or rheumatic ailments contracted from working outdoors and sleeping in cold cells and wet clothing. Industrial accidents were also common. Visit this site to hear more about the medical care received by the convicts at Port Arthur.

Smith O'Brien's Cottage

This cottage housed one of Port Arthur's most famous political prisoners – Irish Protestant Parliamentarian, William Smith O'Brien. Transported for life, he was sent to Port Arthur after an attempted escape from Maria Island. Visit this cottage to discover why Smith O'Brien was afforded such special treatment.

The Church

The Church represents the important role of religion in convict reform at Port Arthur. Up to 1100 people attended compulsory services here each Sunday. Much of the decorative stonework and joinery in the church was crafted by boys from the Point Puer Boys' Prison. Visit the Church to discover more about the role of religion at Port Arthur.

Civil Officers' Row, Government Cottage and Government Gardens

Civil Officers' Row separated senior officers and their families from the convict population and provided them with housing suited to their status. Discover how the senior officers lived at Port Arthur in the furnished Junior Medical Officer's House. Government Cottage was built to accommodate government officials and the adjoining gardens offered a quiet and beautiful space, free from the unwanted presence of the convicts.