

Tennant Creek Telegraph Station Historical Reserve



Fact Sheet

The Overland Telegraph Line was built along a 3,600 km route from Adelaide to Darwin, which had been successfully traversed in 1862 by John McDouall Stuart's expedition party. Completed in 1872, it was Australia's first telegraphic link to Britain through the colonial telegraph system.

A temporary bush timber building was erected and by 1875 a permanent building was made out of stone quarried from a site nearby.

The Telegraph Stations not only ensured the operation of the line but also acted as important points for water and supplies to the early explorers, pastoralists and travellers opening up the unknown country.

The discovery of gold by a linesman in 1925 quickly led to the establishment of the present Tennant Creek township. By 1935 a post and telegraph office was operational in the thriving town of Tennant Creek, leading to the closure of the old Telegraph Station. However the station continued to play an important role in the development of the region, supplying meat to the new town and water from its bore until 1966.

Aboriginal Perspective

Warumungu Aboriginal people were the first occupants of the region. Development of the Overland Telegraph line and pastoral activities in the region caused a major upheaval in their lives. During the severe droughts of the 1880s some Aboriginal people chose to camp near the Station to take advantage of the

water supply from the well.

In 1890 the Telegraph Station became a rations store with staff distributing flour, sugar, tea and blankets to Aboriginal people. By 1892 the Warumungu Aboriginal Reserve was established and this lasted until 1934 when a mining permit was issued over the area. Renowned pioneering anthropologists Spencer and Gillen used the Telegraph Station as a base, setting up a dark room to process photographs and observing ... *'Warumungu people at the station perform such a variety of ceremonies that both researchers are quite exhausted keeping records.'*

Access

The Reserve is situated 10 km north of Tennant Creek along the Stuart Highway.

When to visit

The Reserve is accessible all year round. The cooler months (April to September) are the most pleasant.

What to do



Walking - There is a self guided walk around the Telegraph Station buildings. An information sheet is available at the information shelter. To access the buildings visitors may

Safety and Comfort

- Observe park safety signs.
- Carry and drink plenty of water.
- Wear a shady hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, suitable clothing and footwear.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the heat of the day.
- Consider your health and fitness when choosing a walk.

Please Remember

- Keep to designated roads and tracks.
- All historic, cultural items and wildlife are protected.
- Fires are not permitted in the reserve.
- Bins are not provided, please take your rubbish with you.
- Pets are permitted on a leash in the car park only.
- A permit is required for Drone use – conditions apply and it must be obtained prior to your arrival in the Reserve.

borrow a key from the Battery Hill Visitor Centre on Peko Road (identification and a fully refundable deposit required).



Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

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