

Area: Geraldton	Place Number: 406	Category: 1
Assessment Date: 24/06/2010	Last Revision Date: 19/03/2012	
HCWA Number: 16442	Asset ID: MCH127139	

PLACE DETAILS

Name:	HMAS Sydney II Memorial
Other Names:	Brede Street
Type of Place:	War Memorial
Address:	Brede Street
Suburb:	Geraldton

LOCATION

Map Reference:	GPS Northing: 6814793.00	GPS Easting: 267243.000
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Photo Description:

24/06/2010

Tanya Henkel

The Dome of Souls and the symbolic ships' prow at left.

SITE DETAILS

Lot No.:	Lot 3003	Assess No.:	15748
Reserv No.:	43181	Vol/Fol:	1004/116
Dia/Plan:	223044		

USE OF PLACE

Original Use:	Park and Lookout		
Current Use:	Memorial and Park		
Ownership:	City of Geraldton-Greenough		
Public Access:	Yes	Occupied:	Unknown Occupancy

DESCRIPTION

Walls:	CGI	Roof:	CGI
Condition:	Good	Integrity:	
Original fabric:	Largely intact		
Modifications:			

Located on a high vantage point at Mount Scott overlooking Geraldton, the HMAS Sydney II Memorial Precinct comprises a large grassed and landscaped area with an adjacent carpark and a network of pathways leading through and around the site. The main section of the circular plan memorial is known as the 'Sanctuary' or 'Dome of Souls' and features a large steel dome composed of 645 stainless steel seagulls representing all the lives lost on the HMAS Sydney II. The dome is supported on 7 white pillars over a circular floor made from WA granite. Hanging from the dome is the eternal flame while a ships propeller is centred at ground height and serves as a ceremonial wreath laying altar. To the south west of the dome are two semi-circular walls referred to as the 'Wall of Remembrance'. Faced with black granite the walls are engraved with the names of all those who died on the HMAS Sydney II. The walls also contain some history, historic photographs and explanation of the memorial's symbolism which assists with interpretation of the site. Beyond the walls, 4 flag poles are located at the main entrance to the memorial precinct. To the north side of the dome is a tall stainless steel element representing the prow of a ship with a flag pole rising from the top. This imposing and symbolic structure is a major focal point for the memorial and is visible from many kilometres away. On the western side of the dome overlooking the escarpment is the bronze statue - the Waiting Woman - representing all those left behind.

HISTORY

Construction Date: 2001 **Source:** Commemorative Booklet
Architect: J. Walsh-Smith & C. Smith
Builder: Alf Couch?

The 6,830 tonne HMAS Sydney II was built at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the keel being laid down in 1933 as HMS Phaeton. She was one of three light cruisers of the British Modified Leander class, but was subsequently purchased by the Commonwealth of Australia and renamed HMAS Sydney II. She was launched on 22 September 1934 and taken over from the builders on 24 September 1935. HMAS Sydney II was ordered to the Mediterranean when the Second World War broke out. Her first action was to bombard the Libyan port of Bardia on the 21 June 1940. On 27 June she went to sea in company with a cruiser squadron to provide convoy cover. On 28 June 1940 HMAS Sydney II sank the Italian Destroyer Espero. HMAS Sydney II again came under fire on 19 July 1940, but it was the events of 19 July 1940 which added to her fame. In a tactical battle HMAS Sydney engaged and disabled the extremely fast Italian Cruiser, Bartolomeo Colleoni. Following this HMAS Sydney II set off in pursuit of another Italian Cruiser Giovanni Delle Bande Nere, but was forced to give up chase when the faster ship was out of range and HMAS Sydney II was nearly out of ammunition. HMAS Sydney II returned home to Australia in triumph. She saw further action escorting convoys overseas, and also participated in convoy escort duties in Western Australia. Geraldton was privileged to host three visits of HMAS Sydney II, the last being from 18 to 20 October 1941. On 19 November 1941, HMAS Sydney II was returning from the Sunda Straits after escorting the Hired Transport Zealandia to a handover with HMS Durban. That evening HMAS Sydney II encountered the German Raider HSK Kormoran and became involved in an engagement that led to the loss of both ships. (Information taken from Memorial) While 317 of HSK Kormoran's complement of 390 were rescued, all 645 of the HMAS Sydney II crew perished at sea. This remains the Royal Australian Navy's largest tragedy.

In 1998 the Rotary Club of Geraldton took on the project of establishing a suitable nationally significant Memorial to be dedicated by the sixtieth anniversary of the loss of the ship. A Steering Committee was established and fundraising commenced with funding sourced from Local, State and Federal Governments, Lotterywest, public donations and more. The Memorial Site Dedication Ceremony was held on 19 November 1998, with a sunset service conducted at the Mount Scott site. During the service a bronze plaque was laid as commitment to work towards a Memorial in that location in 3 years time. The foundation stone and plaque remain in place today. The Memorial was designed by world renowned sculptors, Joan Walsh-Smith and Charles Smith, who also designed the National Memorial to the Australian Army in Anzac Parade, Canberra, ACT. The official opening and dedication of the HMAS Sydney II Memorial took

place on 19 November 2001 - this being the 60th anniversary of the tragedy. A special ceremony held in 2002 saw the Rotary Club of Geraldton officially hand over the Memorial to the City of Geraldton. Meanwhile efforts to find the location of the sunken vessel gathered momentum with the formation of the Finding Sydney Foundation in 2001. On 12 March 2008, approximately 207 kilometres west of Steep Point, the wreck of HSK Kormoran was located. Four days later, on 16 March, the wreck of the HMAS Sydney II was located. The HMAS Sydney II Memorial received national classification status in 2009. In 2010, planning is well underway to construct the next stage of the Memorial to acknowledge the discovery of the wreck and will include a "Reflection Pool".

HISTORIC THEMES

HCWA: 501 World wars and other wars
AHC: 8.9 Commemorating significant events and people
 8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The HMAS Sydney II Memorial has high social significance as a National Memorial which is dedicated to the memory of all 645 men who lost their lives during the engagement with HSK Kormoran off the Western Australian coast. The symbolism of the Memorial portays an historic event as well as conveying the emotion surrounding the tragedy. The Memorial is a landmark feature of Geraldton located on a high point overlooking the City. Furthermore the place is a popular tourism destination and is held in high esteem by the local community.

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY

Management Category: 1
Level of Significance: EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE: Essential to the heritage of the locality.
Management Recommendation: Conservation of the place is considered essential. Any proposed change should not unduly impact on the significance of the place and be in accordance with either a Conservation Plan or Heritage Impact Statement.

OTHER LISTINGS

Heritage Council of WA - Register, 13/05/2005

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

"HMAS Sydney II Commemorative Booklet", VF GLLSC.

OTHER PHOTOS



Photo Description:

24/06/2010

Tanya Henkel

The Waiting Woman statue looking out to sea, the Dome and the Wall of Remembrance.