



The Cammeraygal People: The Cammeraygal people of the Guringai nation lived in the Willoughby area until the 1820s and are recorded as being in the northern parts of the Sydney region for approximately 5,800 years. By 1830 there were no Aboriginal people following a traditional lifestyle in the area. Flat Rock Gully in Naremburn was more than likely known to local Aboriginals as a good source of fresh water and the area nearby, known as 'Flat Rock' was the last recorded encampment of Aborigines in the local area.

Geography: Naremburn is a landlocked residential suburb, 6 kilometres northwest of the Sydney central business district in the Willoughby local government area. It is located to the south of formerly deep Flat Rock Gully and adjoins the North Sydney LGA.

Demographics: The population in 2011 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population was 5,474 residents in Naremburn, 62.8% of residents were born in Australia. The most common other countries of birth were England 24.9 %, Australian 22.5% Irish 8.7% and Chinese 6.8%.

Name: The exact origin of the name Naremburn is unknown, although a number of theories have been proposed. One such theory is that the term is a corruption of Merrenburn, the name of the home of Alexander Dodds, who was an early landowner in the area. There has also been speculation that Naremburn is a variation on the Scottish term 'near a burn', alluding to the proximity of Flat Rock Creek.

Yet another theory is that Naremburn is an anglicised version of the Aboriginal terms 'narra', referring to forks, forking or forked, and 'burren', which means creek or a similar feature. Prior to development, Flat Rock Creek in Naremburn was joined by another creek creating a 'fork', so the Aboriginal terminology would have aptly described a significant geographical feature. This theory is strengthened considering that Naremburn referred to the entire district from the late 1800s, as opposed to just the town. Naremburn was originally known as Central Township.

Settlement: The earliest land grants in the area were granted to Humphrey Evans and Peter Dargan in 1794 with some small grants of land settled in the area from 1853. From the 1880s to the 1910s there were small houses constructed; some of weatherboard, some of bark or wattle and daub, and some from local sandstone. These days the worker's cottages have either been demolished for apartments, or are being lovingly "restored" to a luxury they had never known. Naremburn Post Office opened on 20 March 1882 and closed in 1986

Early Transport: Originally the main road through Naremburn, to the ferry terminus at Milson's Point, crossed Flat Rock Creek which was prone to flooding. Flat Rock Bridge was built in 1868 but it was demolished in one of the regular flash floods. A new bridge was built in 1886 and strengthened in 1896 to support a tramline, which ran to the corner of Penshurst Street and Victoria Avenue. The bridge is still in use as part of Willoughby Road.

The Cammeray Bridge: The Cammeray Bridge is on the Naremburn/Northbridge/North Sydney boundary. It was built in 1892 by the North Sydney Investment and Transport Company. It rapidly deteriorated and in 1912 the company offered it to the State Government on condition that they remove the toll and repair the bridge. In 1936 the bridge was designated "pedestrians only" for safety reasons. The government planned to demolish the original bridge and rebuild a modern bridge. After local protest the original stanchions were kept and a new concrete arch was added. The Cammeray Bridge was finally re-opened in 1939.

The Warringah Freeway: The section of the Warringah Freeway, linking the Harbour Bridge to Willoughby Road, was completed in 1978. In 1992 the additional Gore Hill Link was opened from Naremburn to Lane Cove.



Industry: Early businesses included piggeries, slaughterhouses, dairies, horse breakers, and plasterworks. At one time stone from the quarries of Naremburn was transported to a wharf on Flat Rock Creek on Long Bay. The site of one former quarry is on Willoughby Road where an apartment block, “Castlevale”, now stands.

Retail: The earliest shops in Naremburn were on Central Street, Slade Street, Wilson Street and Garland Road. There are still buildings in Central Street and Slade Street which retain the original shop fronts. By 1880 the main shopping area was in Market Street (hence the name). With the arrival of the trams through Naremburn, the shopping area moved to the western side of Willoughby Road (near Quiamong Street) in 1907.

Churches: St Cuthbert’s Church of England was opened in 1883 at 53 Market Street to be replaced in 1916 with a new building on the corner of Willoughby Road and Merremburn Avenue. The larger St Leonard’s Catholic Church on the corner of Willoughby and Dalleys Roads opened in 1913, but its grand spire was not completed until 1955. St. Leonard’s Catholic Church in Naremburn turns 100 this year and six refurbished bells (originally cast in 1866) from Wales have been installed. A local group of parishioners are being trained in the art of bellringing, a first for this congregation.

Naremburn Church of Christ occupied a site in Central Street from 1925-1985 and the Congregational Church occupied a site on the corner of Glenmore and Quiamong Street from 1907 to 1973.

Schools: Until the 1990s, there were two primary schools operating — St Leonard’s Catholic Primary School, and, Naremburn Public School — both on Willoughby Road. St Leonard’s Catholic School operated from 1894 to 1996 on the corner of Donnelly and Willoughby Roads. Naremburn Public School operated from 1887 to 1990 on the corner of Dalleys and Willoughby Roads. The Catholic school shared the same site as the adjacent Catholic church and the public school was located opposite on Willoughby Road. Changing demographics and corresponding lack of demand led to both schools being closed within five years of each other. The former Catholic school is now a creative arts learning centre. The former public school is now a housing development.

Parks and Reserves: Parks and Reserves in Naremburn include Naremburn Park, Talus Street Reserve and West Street Reserve. Ella Street Reserve is opposite Naremburn Park and is linked to Talus Street Reserve by a pedestrian track which runs alongside the railway line.

Talus Street Reserve is at the headwater of Flat Rock Creek. A path with night lighting runs through the reserve, and the southern end of the park near St Leonard’s railway station.

A plaque marking the beginning of “Wilksch Walk” is located in the reserve. This walking path to Middle Harbour begins at St Leonards Station and passes through Talus Street Reserve, Naremburn park, Artarmon Reserve, Bicentennial Reserve, Flat Rock Gully and Tunks Park. The mosaic inlays in the path were created by Suzie Bleach. The Path is named after Eric Wilksch (1918 – 2002) in recognition of his contribution to the environment in Naremburn and his tireless work with numerous community organisations throughout his life.

The present Flat Rock Bridge spanning the creek of that name, which demarks the boundary with the suburb of Willoughby, was built in 1886. It still carries traffic along Willoughby Road today. Downstream of the Flat Rock (and the bridge subsequently built here) the creek plunged plunged some 15 metres into a deep waterhole, the ‘Devil’s Hole.’

Further reading: THE NAREMBURN STORY by Eric Wilksch 994.411WIL

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