



History of Croydon

Early land use

In the 1840s land in the area now known as Croydon was used for grazing cattle by early settlers from Melbourne and neighbouring areas. It was not used as a campsite by aborigines because it lacked a permanent water supply.



The area was originally called White Flats after the silvery-white, coarse grass that grew there called 'White Top'.

The first constructed road through the area led to Mount Dandenong and was known as Sawmill Road, probably named after a nearby sawmill that produced building timber. This road was later called Oxford Road, then given its current name of Mount Dandenong Road. The area became better known as bullock teams heading for the gold fields in Woods Point and the Great Dividing Range used this new road.

After parts of White Flats were surveyed in 1868 many parcels of land were bought and the first shelters built. These were usually wattle and daub huts with hessian lining with later houses being constructed from sawn timber. Once the early pioneers had established their dwellings, they were often joined by their families.

Industry

The land in White Flats supported sheep, beef cattle and dairy farming. Pea crops grew particularly well and orchards produced excellent cherries, apples, pears, plums and peaches.

Early industries included extraction of clay that was suited to ceramics, production of charcoal which was carted to Melbourne and the production of brooms at a factory that made use of the

local sword grass.

Transport

In 1874 Cobb & Co ran horses and carts between Melbourne and Brushy Creek and mail arrived daily, a vast improvement from the once-a-week delivery by horsemen up until this time. When the railway was constructed through White Flats to Lilydale in 1882, people were able to travel to Melbourne in an hour and a half. Electric trains were in service between Ringwood and Croydon in 1924 and in 1925 the service was extended from Croydon to Lilydale.



Name change

The first railway station at Croydon would probably have been named White Flats if most of the white plants hadn't disappeared, ploughed in by farmers. It was first known as



Warrandyte station as it was the first station in Warrandyte Parish, then South Warrandyte and finally Croydon after consultation within the community. 'Croydon' was selected, after the home town in England of the wife of the original owner of the land on which the station was built.

Shopping

The first shops in Croydon were built on land in Main Street from 1885. There was a general store, which later had a wine licence, a butcher, baker,



grocer and timber merchant. The station-master had managed the

Post Office until it was relocated to one of these shops.

1920 saw the beginning of a market where livestock was auctioned and household items could be purchased on 'Market Mondays'. From 1921 shops were no longer built from timber as Main Street was declared a 'brick' area.

Severance

Croydon was part of the Shire of Lillydale's South-West Riding.

Unlike some neighbouring towns, it had not been planned and proclaimed a town by the Department of



Crown Lands and Survey, but resulted from the private subdivision of crown land in the Parishes of Warrandyte, Mooroolbark and Ringwood.

Severance of Croydon from Lillydale Shire was requested in 1957 since it was no longer a rural area and was the most densely populated part of the shire.

A poll in 1958 showed overwhelming support by ratepayers for a separate Shire of Croydon, as did another poll in 1960, but it was not until 1961 that breakaway was achieved.



[Shire of Croydon Presidents and City of Croydon Mayors \(Pdf, 90kb\)](#)

Then in 1994 the Shire of Croydon became part of the new City of Maroondah with the amalgamation of the Cities of Ringwood, Croydon and parts of North Ringwood, Lilydale and Kilsyth South.

Reference: 'A History of Croydon' Volumes 1 (1961) and 2 (1969) by Muriel McGivern

Maroondah City Council 1300 88 22 33 or 03 9298 4598 PO Box 156 Ringwood 3134