



**CITY OF PERTH**  
City of Light

**CONVICTS COLONIALS**

BARN BIDI  
**WALKING TRAIL**

**2 HOURS**

**This self-guided trail will take up to two hours. You can join in or depart from the trail anywhere along the way.**

The trail intersects with the city's free CAT buses servicing East Perth, Northbridge, West Perth, central Perth and the foreshore (except Good Friday, ANZAC Day and Christmas Day).

The iCity Visitor Service in Murray Street Mall (near Forrest Place) offers a free guided tour of this trail, led by our qualified iCity volunteer tour guides. For further information and bookings, email [tours@cityofperth.wa.gov.au](mailto:tours@cityofperth.wa.gov.au) or phone 08 9461 3333.

Other self-guided walking trails can be accessed by going to [www.visitperth.com/walking-tours](http://www.visitperth.com/walking-tours)

**Acknowledgement**  
The City of Perth acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land we are situated on, the Whadjuk people of the Nyooongar nation and Aboriginal people from other lands.

We celebrate the continuing traditions, living culture, and the spiritual connection to Boorloo and the Derbal Yerrigan.

We offer our respects to Elders past and present.

**Contact Us**

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**1 PERTH TOWN HALL**  
CORNER HAY & BARRACK STREETS

Between 1850 and 1868, nearly 10,000 male convicts were transported to Western Australia to overcome a drastic labour shortage that was holding back the development of the Swan River Colony. Many were specially selected to come to Western Australia because of their artisan skills and, with good behaviour and backbreaking labour, could receive their ticket-of-leave and eventually a conditional release. The Perth Town Hall was built by these men between 1867 and 1870, to a design by Richard Roach Jewell and James Manning. It is said that a team of 15 convicts worked every day for three years to complete the building. As the only convict-built town hall in Australia, colourful stories exist about special messages encoded in the building's design. The small windows of the tower are said to resemble the broad arrows emblazoned on the convicts' uniforms and a hangman's rope design surrounds the Hall's clock faces. These convict messages are a hoax—the broad arrow merely signified government property—but the tales are still told.

A ticket-of-leave was granted to a convict after a specified period, depending on his behaviour. Ticket-of-leave men could travel to the district of their choice, but had to report to the town magistrate on arrival and twice a year after that as well as carrying a pass from the magistrate to leave the district. Although they were allowed to work for themselves and others, own land and property and marry, they had to be indoors after 10pm and carry their ticket at all times. A conditional pardon could be granted after half the original sentence was served, allowing the former convicts to leave the colony if they wished, while a certificate of freedom at the end of the full sentence ensured the former convicts could live as free men.

Walk south down Barrack Street, turn left at St Georges Terrace and head towards Pier Street.



**2 THE DEANERY**  
CORNER ST GEORGES TERRACE & PIER STREET

In the 1830s the Government installed a public whipping post and stocks on this site for criminals to be exposed to mockery, with the aim of reducing crime through public humiliation. The mildest of offences were deemed punishable; in 1833 two children who had been caught stealing fruit from the Government gardens were placed in the stocks and their parents were ordered to flog them publicly. It was also briefly the location of Perth's first gaol, a temporary lock-up, prior to the completion of Perth Gaol on the corner of Beaufort and Francis Streets in 1856. However this temporary lock-up was constantly mocked, as the inmates escaped easily from the mud walled structure. The romantic style gothic house now seen here was built in 1859 by ticket-of-leave men and housed the Anglican Deans of Perth until 1953.

Many convicts had elaborate tattoos. John Butcher, a convict who arrived on the Pyranees in 1851, had a multitude of body art including a soldier; a woman; the date 1st June 1845; a bracelet on his right arm; a crucifix; a mermaid; two hearts; three barrows; a rose; a thistle; an olive and a reed. The crucifix was a popular tattoo for convicts to have on their backs, as if they were flogged it gave the appearance that Christ himself was being punished.

Cross St Georges Terrace at the Pier Street lights to view Government House.



Although the Swan River Colony was established as a free settlement in 1829, convict transportation was introduced in 1850 to answer the demand for a cheap and plentiful supply of labour for the small population. The introduction of these reluctant immigrants caused much debate and controversy amongst the residents, who feared that their free colony would be forever tainted by the convict class. Whilst convict transport lasted only 18 years, the legacy of this period is embedded in the streets of the city and the folklore of the State.

**3 GOVERNMENT HOUSE**  
ST GEORGES TERRACE

Government House is the only vice-regal residence in Australia built in the style known as 'Jacobean' after King James I of England. Built by convicts and free men, the foundation stone was laid in 1859, but the building was not fully complete until 1864. The grounds of Government House are well-known for their beauty and much of the original layout from the 1850s and 1860s has been preserved. The gardens of Government House are open to the public most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12noon to 2pm. Telephone: 08 9429 9199.

In 1923 Audrey Jacob met Cyril Gidley on a ship bound for Western Australia. He was a charming young engineer and they became engaged upon arriving in Perth. In 1925, while in Singapore on business, Cyril overheard a man using Audrey's name in 'bar conversation'. He swiftly broke off their engagement despite Audrey's distress. When Audrey saw Cyril at a Government House dance several months later, he rejected her effort to speak to him on the dance floor. Publicly humiliated, Audrey pulled a gun from her purse and shot him point blank. Despite dozens of witnesses, the shooting was treated as an accident and Audrey was not charged with murder. Cyril was found to have been a schemer with a collection of engagement rings from previous affairs, while Audrey went on to wed a wealthy American in Melbourne.

Walk west along St Georges Terrace towards Barrack Street and enter the Stirling Gardens at the path before the bronze kangaroos. Follow the pathway towards the Supreme Court.



**4 OLD COURT HOUSE LAW MUSEUM**  
STIRLING GARDENS

The Old Court House Law Museum is one of only a few law museums in the world and is housed in the City of Perth's oldest building, constructed in 1836. The Court oversaw trials relating to criminal and civil law, as well as cases arising from the clash of cultures during settlement and ensuing frontier conflict as British laws were imposed on Aboriginal people and their country. As the largest public building in colonial Perth, the Old Court House served not only as a court house, but also a Church for all denominations, a school room,

a recital hall and public meeting hall. In February 1849, the Old Court House was the location of the meeting which resolved to bring convicts to Western Australia and, in August 1856, 400 settlers crammed into the building to demand representative government from the Crown. The building served as a court throughout the 19th century and in 1905 was renovated to become the Arbitration Court of Western Australia. In 1965 it was converted into the offices of the Law Society of Western Australia, eventually becoming the Old Court House Law Museum. The museum is open Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

The Swan River Colony received 234 juvenile male convicts from the Isle of Wight's Parkhurst Prison between 1842 and 1849. Once in the colony the boys were pardoned on two conditions: that they began apprenticeships with local employers; and, during the term of their sentence, they were unable to return to the country in which they were convicted.

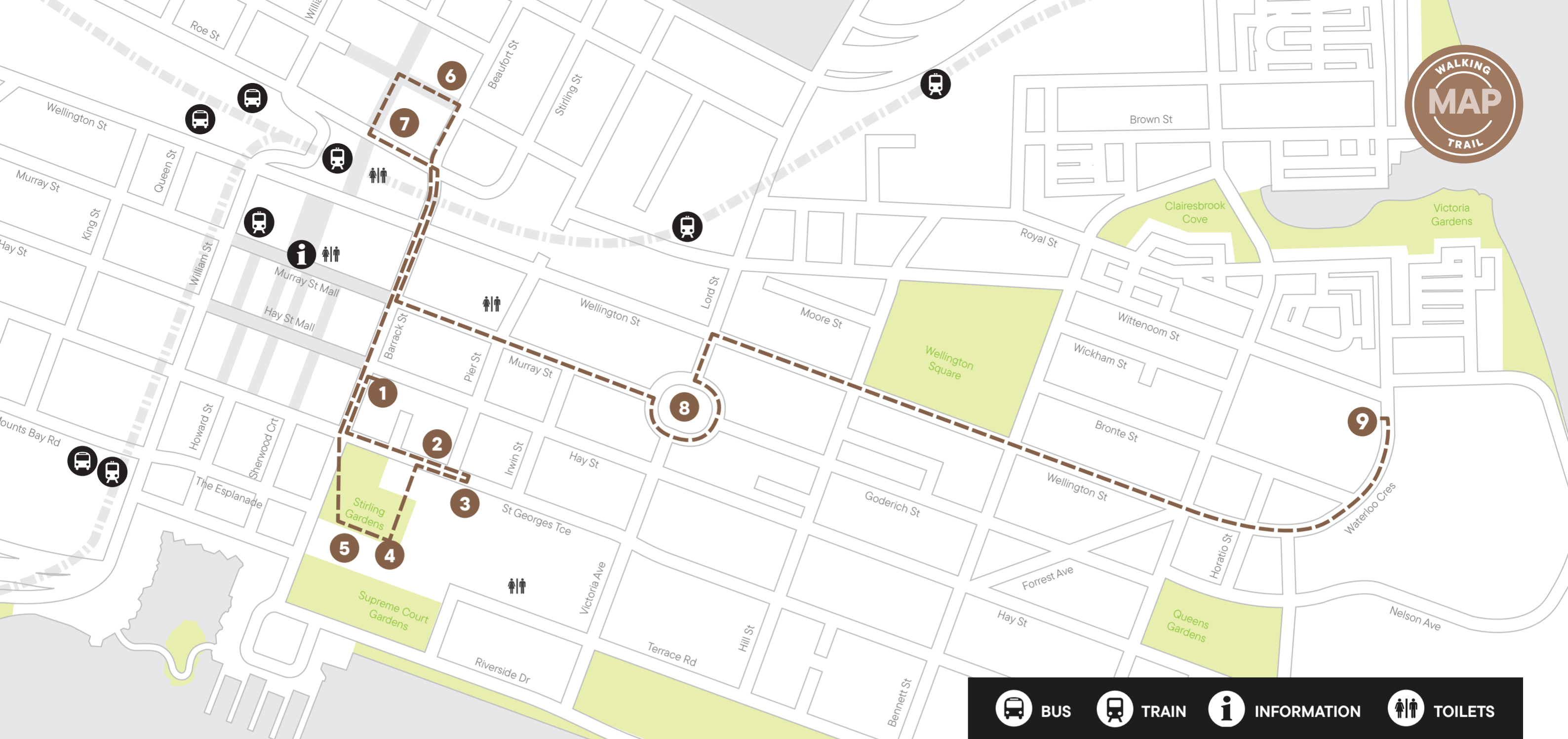


**5 SUPREME COURT**  
STIRLING GARDENS

Convicts who had served their term and were now free men may have been one reason for an increase in crime in Western Australia during the late 19th century. The Supreme Court building was opened in 1903 and the first case heard there resulted in Robert Palin, an ex-convict, being sentenced to death for robbery with violence. Eric Edgar Cooke, the last person hung in WA, was tried and convicted for murder at the Supreme Court in 1964. The elaborately decorated foyer and some courtrooms are open to the public.

Convicts transported to Western Australia were more likely to be guilty of crimes against other people than transportees to other Australian colonies. They were also more likely to have come from an urban background, be artisans and literate. Britain started retaining its less violent criminals at home, causing the number transported to Australia for committing violent crimes to increase.

Walk out through the gardens to Barrack Street and continue north on Barrack Street until it changes into Beaufort Street over the railway line. Turn left to enter the Perth Cultural Centre after crossing Roe Street.



**6 WA MUSEUM BOORLA BARDIP  
PERTH CULTURAL CENTRE,  
JAMES STREET MALL**

Perth is the only Australian capital city with a cultural centre developed around an old prison. At the very heart of the Western Australian Museum is the gaol built by convicts in 1853-54, where hangings were first held in 1855 in an execution yard on the south side. Hangings were public exhibitions with an audience of all ages and sexes until 1884 when the front and sides of the scaffold were boarded in because of complaints. Today, the museum exhibitions tell of Perth's social, political and natural history.



**7 ART GALLERY OF WA  
PERTH CULTURAL CENTRE,  
JAMES STREET MALL**

The Art Gallery of Western Australia's long low administration block, directly facing the WA Museum, was designed by Hillson Beasley and completed in 1905 as a barracks for unmarried constables. It later housed police divisions including the Special Branch, which was set up to investigate "possible rebellious activities by suspected Communists and others". The elegant French-style courthouse next door on Beaufort Street, designed by Beasley and George Temple Poole, once hosted a daily parade of drunks and trouble-makers. The former courthouse is now the Centenary Gallery with a display of colonial-era arts and crafts and the cells and dock remain intact. The Art Gallery of Western Australia is open 10am to 5pm daily (except Tuesdays). Telephone: 08 9492 6600.

At this courthouse on the evening of April 23, 1907 disgruntled former police officer Frederick Tyler exploded into Commissioner Fred Hare's office firing a pistol. With his gun blazing, the first shot missed however an ensuing struggle resulted in the Commissioner being shot in the shoulder. Luckily the defective ammunition and the Commissioners' heavily starched shirt deflected the bullet. Tyler was promptly taken into custody and imprisoned for 10 years.

Retrace your steps southwards along Barrack Street and turn left onto Murray Street. Walk eastwards to Victoria Square.



**8 ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL  
41 VICTORIA SQUARE**

By 1854, Catholics made up to 18 per cent of the colony's population, partly due to the number of Irish convicts sent to Western Australia. The oldest Catholic church in Western Australia, the Pro-Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, was built in 1846. This is where the Sisters of Mercy started Mercedes College, the oldest existing girl's school in Australia. It wasn't long before the Pro-Cathedral was felt to be too modest for the growing Catholic population, and in 1863 work commenced on St Mary's Cathedral at Victoria Square, which was constructed in the Gothic style. Substantial additions were made to the Cathedral in the 1920s, but it was never fully completed due to lack of funds. In 2006 work began to complete the Cathedral by adding a new North-West tower and nave section in a contemporary design. The Cathedral underwent a \$32.9m refurbishment in December 2009.

In contrast to many other buildings on this trail, Benedictine monks provided the main labour for St Mary's Cathedral. Like the convicts, they were a cheap source of labour, walking six miles a day between their quarters in Subiaco and the building site and working every minute of daylight. However, the monks, with a great deal of masonry experience, were far more skilled than the convict labour available. The new cathedral was the envy of the strong Anglican population.

Walk down Lord Street, turn right onto Wellington Street and follow it around to Waterloo Crescent. Alternatively take the Yellow CAT Bus from Wellington Street.



**9 EAST PERTH CEMETERIES  
WATERLOO CRESCENT**

Saints or sinners, death gets us all in the end. The East Perth Cemeteries is the final resting place of a cross-section of society including judges, lawyers, criminals and ex-convicts. Up to 10,000 people may have been buried here but only about 800 identified graves remain. Some of the graves were disrupted when the former Perth Girls School was situated on the grounds. The East Perth Cemeteries is open from 2pm to 4pm Sundays. Telephone: 08 9321 6088.

George William Steel was born in 1825 in England and lived in a notorious slum area in London known as "Devils Acre", working as a tinsmith. He was convicted of assaulting a man in a drinking house and robbing him and was sentenced to 20 years transportation, arriving in Perth in 1851. George was granted his ticket-of-leave within two years of arriving and in 1854 married Anne Lowham in the Wesley Chapel, Perth. He continued to work at his trade in Perth and was granted a conditional pardon in 1858. He died on 11 November 1865 and was buried in the East Perth Cemeteries.

In the late 1860s the British Government reviewed its policy of transportation and the last convict ship, the Hougoumont, arrived in the Swan River Colony on 10 January 1868 with 229 convicts aboard. Convict labour continued to be used for some time in Western Australia, relying on local prisoners and convicts yet to serve the remainder of their sentences. About a third of the convicts left the Swan River Colony after serving their time but many settled down to make a life for themselves in the Colony. Their descendants can proudly point out the important work these men did in building the city, including buildings that still stand today.

Joseph Bolitho Johns, better known in Western Australian folklore as Moondyne Joe, arrived aboard the convict transport Pyrenees in April 1853. In 1861 on his ticket-of-leave, Joe stole a horse and added insult to injury by using the local magistrate's brand new saddle and bridle to ride it. He continued a colourful career of crime and escape, spending time in the Mount Eliza Convict Depot, as well as lawful work assisting a carpenter in Perth and Fremantle. Well into his 70s, having been granted his freedom years before, Joe was found wandering the streets of South Perth and taken into custody for "being of unsound mind". He was ordered to the Mount Eliza Invald Depot for medical attention but escaped, possibly not realising in his confusion that the site was no longer a place of detention. He died in August that year at the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum.

*Excerpt From*  
**THE BALLAD OF  
MOONDYNE JOE**

In the Darling Ranges, many years ago,  
There lived a daring outlaw,  
by the name of 'Moondyne Joe'.  
He stole the squatter's horses,  
and a sheep or two or three,  
He loved to roam the countryside,  
and swore he would be free.  
The troopers said we'll catch him,  
but we know it's all in vain,  
Every time we lock him up  
he breaks right out again.  
'Cause in he goes, and out he goes,  
and off again he'll go,  
There's not a gaol in W. A.  
can keep in 'Moondyne Joe'.