

ILLAMURTA SPRINGS CONSERVATION RESERVE

Updated: 7th February, 2002

Illamurta Springs Conservation Reserve, is located approximately 200 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs via the Stuart Highway and Ernest Giles Road. The Reserve is a unique part of the Territory's heritage owing to its historical associations and natural environment

HISTORY

A police camp was established at Illamurta Springs on Tempe Down Station in 1893, primarily to act as a deterrent to cattle spearing.

Mounted Constable Charles Ernest Cowle served at Illamurta Spring from 1893 until his retirement due to ill health, in 1903. He was one of Central Australia's most colourful policemen.

Relations between Aborigines, pastoralists, missionaries and police were turbulent during the late 1800's. Although dispensing white man's justice, Constable Cowle made an effort to understand and respect aboriginal culture.

Cowle was described by pioneer Frank Gillen as "looking more like a Greek bandit than a police officer". "His belt is laden with cartridges, revolver and handcuffs, and altogether he presents a formidable appearance" Gillen wrote. His hard drinking and swearing also earned him a reputation as a "champion cusser".

Cowle was an experienced bushman and acted as a guide to the 1894 Horn Expedition. He also recorded legends and details of Aboriginal life, as well as collecting fauna specimens.

From 1912 when the police camp was closed, the area was part of Henbury Station. In 1936 it was excluded from the surrounding pastoral lease as a proposed Police Reserve.

In 1969 the area became a reserve under the *Crown Lands Act* for the preservation and protection of places of historic interest. In June 1978 it was further reserved under the *Territory Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act*.



The remains of the store at Illamurta

The remaining features at Illamurta include the main yard complex, fencing, well, ruins of the store, residence and detached fireplace and other foundations.

NATURAL HERITAGE

Illamurta Springs also has heritage significance as it provides evidence of the evolution of the landscape, lying at the centre of a thrust fault known as the "Illamurta Structure".

The Reserve also contains a rare species of tropical reed (*Phragmites australis*) as well as the relatively uncommon Acanthaceae species (*Sarajusticia kempeana*) and Juncaceae species (*Juncus kraussii*).

MANAGEMENT

A Conservation Management Plan has been developed in conjunction with the Plan of Management, which spells out the management of the heritage values of the Reserve. The plan established how the historic structures and natural environment should be conserved and interpreted.

Gazetted: 14th September 1994



Northern Territory Government
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment

Heritage Advisory Council

GPO Box 4198
Darwin NT 0801
Phone: (08) 8924 4143 Facsimile: (08) 8924 4053

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

www.lpe.nt.gov.au/heritage

