



Centennial Parklands fun facts

did you know...

- Centennial Park was established in 1888 to commemorate the centenary of European settlement in Australia.
- Centennial Park was originally a catchment area of swamps, sand dunes and springs fed by underground waterways.
- In 1827 John Busby, city surveyor and civil engineer, began construction on a subterranean aqueduct to gravity feed water to the township of Sydney. The 3.5 kilometre aqueduct was bored using convict labour from Hyde Park, under Oxford Street and across to the Lachlan Reserve. Completed in 1837, this aqueduct is now known as Busby's Bore, one of Sydney's most important pieces of early industrial development.
- Lachlan Swamps, as Centennial Parklands was then known, served as Sydney's main water supply from 1837 to 1859 when a combination of the growth of industry, poor maintenance, livestock grazing and garbage dumping gradually polluted the swamps. These were turned into the ornamental ponds we know today in Centennial Park.
- Under the *Centennial Celebrations Act 1887*, hundreds of unemployed men were enlisted to turn swamp, scrub and rock into a grand Victorian Park in the European tradition including formal gardens, ponds, statues and grand avenues.
- Moore Park was opened in 1869 and was the site of Sydney's first zoo. It was also the place where the first polo match was played.
- Between 1895 and 1899, Queen's Park contained an 11 hole golf course.
- Centennial Park's main road, Grand Drive, was Sydney's first public suburban drive.
- All eight sets of entrance gates into Centennial Park were built between 1887 and 1900. With their massive carved stone pillars and ornate design, the Paddington Gates are the most imposing. These gates were built for the Park's official dedication in 1888.
- On 1 January 1901, over 250,000 people gathered in Federation Valley in Centennial Park to celebrate the union of six independent colonies into the Federation of Australia. The ceremony included a twenty-one gun salute, a 1,400 strong choir, and the signing in of Australia's Governor-General and new Federal Ministers. The Federation Pavilion marks the site of these events.
- Centennial Parklands extends over 360 hectares and encompasses Centennial, Moore and Queens Parks.
- Centennial Parklands is home to over 15,000 trees.



- The paperbark trees in Paperbark Grove in Centennial Park were originally intended to act as windbreaks to shield exotic and more sensitive plantings from the winds but have now grown into one of the most photographed sites in the Parklands.
- Centennial Parklands is home to 124 species of native land and water birds and 18 introduced species of land and water birds.
- Centennial Park has a 3.6km horse track and 2 hectares of fenced equestrian grounds. It is also one of the few Parks in the world that offers horse riding right in the heart of the city.
- The jogging track around Centennial Park is 3.5km.
- The columns in the Rose and Column Gardens were donated to Centennial Parklands from the Australian Museum. The statues Sunrise and Sunset that sit on top of these columns bear the manufacturer's mark of Villeroy and Boch.
- Originally there were 31 statues in the Park and now there are only three.
- Centennial Park formed part of the route for the Olympic marathon in the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games and the 2000 Sydney Paralympics.
- The Superintendent's Residence was designed by James Barnet, who also designed the Australian Museum.

For further information on any of the above, please contact Centennial Parklands on (02) 9339 6699.