

This report includes historical photographs of Aboriginal people who may have died, which may cause sadness and distress to their relatives.

Care and discretion should be used when viewing these images.

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

**NAME:** Manunka Mission Site

**PLACE NO.:** 26458

**Address:** off Manuka Road, Forster, South Australia

### SUMMARY

The place may have cultural significance to local Aboriginal people apart from the operation of Manunka Mission, however this is outside the scope of this assessment and it is covered under different legislation (i.e. the former occupation of the land and Aboriginal burials on site), that being the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 (SA)*.

The Manunka Mission Site is not considered to meet any of the heritage significance criterion under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993 (SA)*, and is not recommended for State Heritage listing. Whilst the story of how Janet Matthews operated the non-sectarian mission after her husband's death along with her family is of some historical interest, her story is recorded in historical accounts and the site is not considered to have sufficient integrity to demonstrate important cultural or historical associations with the Manunka Mission.

### BRIEF HISTORY OF PLACE:

The Manunka Mission Site is located on the eastern side of the River Murray in the area of Forster, about 70km by river north of Mannum (Figure 1). A mission for Aboriginal people operated there from 1902 to 1912.



Figure 1 – Aerial view of Forster [labels added by author] [Source: Google Maps 2017]

In 1874, Daniel and Janet Matthews opened a private mission for Aboriginal people at Maloga near Barmah on the River Murray in New South Wales. It was officially non-sectarian, but Daniel was a Methodist with a background as a temperance campaigner. The mission was successful in its early years and attracted government funding from 1883. However, Daniel was a headstrong man who clashed with both the Victorian and New South Wales Aboriginal Protection authorities and the local landholders. His austere regime alienated many of his Aboriginal flock and when the Aborigines Protection Association established a rival mission nearby, many were attracted there (Cato 1974).

The Maloga mission had collapsed by 1899 and Daniel and Janet Matthews travelled as itinerant lay preachers for a time, then shifted their missionary efforts to the South Australian Riverland in 1901. Their first mission site was at Metco, near Mannum, but they soon moved on. Different accounts say that the police ordered the mission closed or that local white residents resisted an Aboriginal presence close to the town, but Janet Matthews later said that they voluntarily moved further from town to get away from 'drink and vice'. The mission briefly relocated to Craignook near Bowhill, but this was only a temporary measure (Woolmer n.d:1; Vickers 2015; Yea Chronicle 19 March 1903:2).

In 1902, land was leased further north at Manunka, near Forster (subject site), and work commenced on building a new mission on a picturesque site in view of passing riverboats. Daniel fell ill and died in Mannum soon after, but Janet persisted with the mission, running it with the assistance of her children until 1911. Her son, John Kerr Matthews, became Overseer of the Mission, gave instructions to the men onsite for their work, and was the head teacher at the school until around 1905 when he left to undertake mission work in England and North America (The Advertiser, 1 Sep 1903, p.6; Chronicle, 5 Sep 1903, p.32; The Port Augusta Dispatch, 10 Nov 1905, p.3; Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record, 4 Feb 1927, p.4).



Figure 2 – Janet and Daniel Matthews, c1880 [Source: Portion of original image, State Library of SA, Image No. 422/13/1]

Daniel Matthews and Janet Matthews (nee Johnston) had five children, John, Daisy, Gretta, Margaret Mary and Alma Janet (Norman Family 1979, State Library of SA 'Notes').

A Miss Cartwright, trained in church and missionary work, also assisted (Cato 1974; Vickers 2015; Register 17 November 1904, p. 9). Anglican clergy visited irregularly by riverboat (Observer 24 December 1904:38; Chronicle 10 November 1906:39). A government school opened at Manunka in mid-1903, an event publicised by Janet Matthews. Far more skilled at public relations than her late husband, she wrote regular newspaper columns reporting enthusiastically on developments at the mission (Chronicle 5 September 1903:32). The school building was described as 'a temporary erection of pine' (Advertiser 4 December 1903:6).

There was little money available, and the early settlement was rudimentary:

Our people on the mission have shown themselves capable and desirous of improving, by transforming their original "wurlee" into canvas huts with stone chimneys, and rudely constructed furniture such as tables and benches etc, made of rough timber and boxes. Canvas huts do not last long, so we are very anxious to see them in still better dwellings - either nice little pine or stone cottages (*Yea Chronicle* 19 March 1903, p. 2).

In 1904 the Protector of Aborigines reported on the new mission:

Manunka, Mrs Matthews' private mission, occupies 40 acres [16ha], held under a lease of 21 years, at a rent of 20/- per annum. The number of Aborigines averages 56, composed of - Men, 17; women, 14; boys, 13; girls, 12; of whom 25 are black, and 20 half-caste. No money grant from the State is paid to this mission. The usual depot supplies from the Aborigines Department, of rations, clothing, medicine etc, are annually given at an average cost of £121.

A school, under the Education Department, was opened on July 12, 1903, and placed in charge of Mr J.K. Matthews, a son of Mrs Matthews. The usual attendance of scholars is about 20. (*Observer* 24 December 1904, p. 38)

Thereafter the Protector's reports had very little to say about Manunka, simply recording its name on a list of missions without further comment. Physical descriptions of the mission are scarce, but Janet Matthews published an irregular report aimed at private donors, *The Story of the Manunka Aborigines Mission Home*. It was largely concerned with spiritual matters, but gave an occasional insight into the fabric of the settlement.



Figure 3 – Janet Matthews laying the first stone for the first building at Manunka, 1904 [Source: State Library of SA, Image No. 142/4/2/12]

Her first report in 1905 described the mission:

The Mission is beautifully situated in a bend of the river Murray, and stands close to the



water's edge .... The hills and all along the bank of the river are studded with eucalyptus and pine trees, giving a comfortable, homely appearance to the Mission Station.

The tent occupied by Mrs Matthews and her faithful workers (Miss Cartwright and the Misses Matthews), is nearest to the cliffs, having the schoolroom alongside. A little to the South stands the Native camp, nestling among the trees. One or two of the more aspiring have mud and pine cottages, of two rooms. The others are made with pine sticks, and covered with bags, forming one room .... Under the guidance and help of the missionaries, each of the natives have made nice little vegetable gardens, fenced around to keep out the fowls and rabbits. (Matthews 1905, p. 13)

A feature of the mission was the 'Big Bell', a ship's bell donated by the Seaman's Institute at Port Melbourne, which had been in use at Maloga, and went with Janet Matthews to her three sites. At Manunka it was hung in a large gum tree in the centre of the settlement, and announced the times of school lessons, meals and prayers (Matthews 1905:3).

Two years later when she described the settlement again, her tent was replaced by a stone house:

There is not much to be seen ... a few cottages occupied by natives, a few camps by those who have not been promoted to cottages, a superintendent's stone house, and overseer's iron and tent cottage, a hill fenced in for garden (Matthews 1907:1).

Manunka received no direct financial support from the government, but was assisted by its status as a rations station, distributing food and blankets provided by government. Aboriginal people supplemented their diet by fishing and hunting, and the mission garden grew vegetables. Some worked for local farmers. In the early years there had been enthusiastic plans for 'building, irrigation and cultivation of the land' (*Register* 1 September 1903, p. 6), but in fact cultivation never went beyond small vegetable plots. Janet Matthews appealed for funds to teach trade training classes, but nothing eventuated (*Register* 12 July 1910, p. 11). A tiny income was derived from activities such as basket-making and rope-making from local rushes, but most of the mission's money came from charity. Philanthropic donations came from Adelaide citizens, among whom the Angas and Bonython families were prominent.

Janet Matthews' last report from Manunka was written in 1910. By then she was ageing and unwell. George and Jennie Smith had joined the mission, George as Overseer and School teacher and Jennie as Matron, around 1905, as she wound down her involvement (Vickers 2015:4). Manunka seems to have been struggling financially in its last years.

George and Jennie Smith had previous associations with Daniel Matthews, as he had installed them as managers of the proposed Aboriginal children's home at 'Coonowrin' in the Glass House Mountains in 1897, however the home was never established. The Smiths had four of their five children there before they left in 1905 to head to Manunka, offering their services as missionaries to Janet Matthews (Vickers 2005:35).

Figure 4 shows a view of several buildings close to the riverbank around 1909.



Figure 4 – View of Manunka Mission, c1909 [Source: Matthews 1910:2]

An account of the Manunka Mission around 1905 was noted by Vickers (2005:36):

The Matthews' large stone house was at the top of a cliff overlooking the campsite where Aboriginal families lived in tents. On the hill above, German families had built stone huts. Lower down, a creek marked the boundary between these houses and the mission site. The Smith family also lived on the river flat, in a slab hut with an earthen floor adjacent to the Aboriginal people's camp. A storehouse and schoolhouse were part of the site and for about 18 months the government supplied a teacher.

1911 was the year of crisis. Two of Janet Matthews' daughters left the mission to marry. Janet felt physically unable to carry on without them, and she finally retired. She may have expected that the state or one of the churches would find staff to carry on the mission, but on the contrary soon afterwards the government announced that Manunka would no longer be a rations station. Aboriginal people wanting to receive rations from the state would have to relocate to Point McLeay (Raukkan) (McLisky 2015:41).

By 1912 the people remaining at the mission were in a bad way. Janet Matthews wrote accusingly to the papers:

The natives of the Aboriginal mission station at Manunka are having a rather hard time of it. The government rations are finally stopped, and the old and decrepit, together with the poor little children, are now deprived of the common necessities of life. It is without doubt both cruel and disgraceful on the part of those who are paid and supposed to look after the natives to neglect the duty of seeing that they get at least the food they are entitled to (*Renmark Pioneer* 13 December 1912:3).

This was the final blow and the Manunka Mission closed at the end of 1912. While missionary work stopped, the government continued to support the school. A Royal Commission Progress Report into Aborigines in the State in 1913 stated that since the Manunka Mission closed there were '50 to 70 blacks living along the River Murray between Mannum and Morgan' (Royal Commission No. 26: v).

The Manunka school operated until 1945 when it and the Swan Reach school were closed, and a new government school opened at the United Aborigines Mission settlement at Gerard in 1946 (Woolmer n.d.; Gerard Mission website).

The first aim of the Manunka mission was religious education and conversion, but there was also an ongoing utopian aim of establishing a 'Christian village' independent of white society

'based on married family units and secure from alcohol, white violence and sexual molestation' (Carey 1995:242). Unfortunately for Janet Matthews' legacy, she never found the financial resources to make her vision sustainable.

The mission was remarkable in being operated for twelve years, at Metco (1901) and Manunka (1902-1912), by a woman supported by her family and a small staff. Janet Matthews was the 'primary founder and sole director' of both missions (McLisky 2015:32). It is probably the only case in Australia of a mission headed by a woman, although many others performed the same role in a husband-and-wife team. Janet Matthews' story is known through her own writing and the work of modern historians (Carey 1995; Vickers 2005; Grimshaw 2011; McLisky 2015).

## **DESCRIPTION**

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At the time of operation (1902-1912), the Manunka Mission included several buildings: overseers hut (Smith's house), Matthews' house, store house, school house and a jetty. A mature tree known as the 'Bell tree' was apparently situated near the site of the jetty, where a bell hung to announce the time of school lessons, meals and prayers. Aboriginal people camped on the River Flat in tents.

Figure 5 shows a mud map of the approximate location of site features by the nominator. During the site visit these features could not be verified and information available in historical accounts did not fully clarify the location of former mission structures or features. Only one structure on the site, Residence 1, could possibly date to the period of the operation of the Mission, however it is located on the eastern side of the creek. Smith's House/School House is noted in the nominators mud map on the western side of the creek. The stone building under construction in Figure 3 in the History (above) appears to be somewhat inland from the River, and possibly on the eastern side of the creek, noting the vegetation in the background. However, this photograph dates to c1904 and the history states that Mrs Matthews tent was replaced with a stone house c1907. It is likely however that this is the same place as Residence 1, which is extant on site, although it has been altered and added to.

Other remnant structures on the site (noting the area inspected may have been larger than the Mission site) appear to post-date the operation of the mission or were not associated with its operation. The school operated from 1903 to 1945, however during the period of the mission's operations (1902-1912) it appears from historical accounts to have been housed in rudimentary structures.

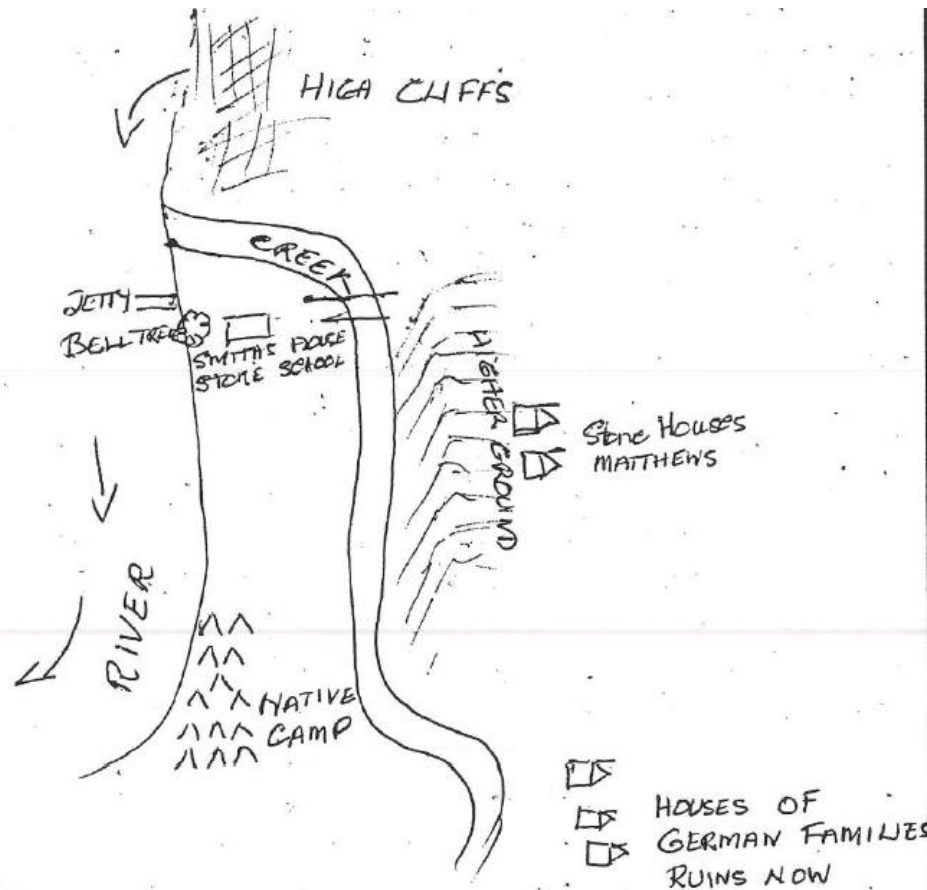


Figure 5 – Mud map of former Manunka Mission Site [Source: State heritage nomination 2015]

Figure 6 is an aerial map of the former Manunka Mission Site with labels added with references to photographs of features identified on the site and included in this report. Over 200 photographs were taken on site, focused in areas where the history and nominator’s mud map indicated may contain former mission structures. Many of these features are thought to post-date the mission.

The overall site is generally flat with a tributary creek through the middle that forms a larger water body to the south. There are high cliffs north of the creek and land generally slopes up towards Detloffs Road. Eucalypts and reeds generally line the banks of the Murray and the tributary creek. Some trees and small bushes are scattered throughout the rest of the site. The western and southern area of the site is overgrown with grasses and infested with numerous rabbit holes. The overall form of the land is different to that noted in the mud map, although it was of assistance to focus the site investigation.

Historical accounts mention the Matthews’ stone house on higher ground, which may refer to Residence 1 on the eastern side of the creek. Residence 1 is on relatively flat land that is only slightly more elevated than on the western side of the creek. There was no evidence of the Smiths’ slab hut that was noted on the river flat (and indicated on the western side of the creek in the mud map).

The history and mud map indicate that German families lived in stone houses further up the hill, however it is not known if there was any relationship with these families and the Manunka Mission. The extant ruins that may be the houses of the German families are located on higher ground on the eastern side of Detloffs Road (outside the site) (Figure 17).

The 1903 school that opened on the site was initially noted as a ‘temporary erection of pine’. It is not known how long the school operated from this building and if and where a purpose-built school building was located on the site. A store house was also noted as a rudimentary structure of which nothing appears to remain on site or indicate where it may have been.



There are two residences in the northern area of the site today. Residence 1 is a c1910-1920s masonry building, which has a rear addition, possibly an altered front verandah with later masonry pillars and possibly later rendered walls. Residence 1 is situated on the eastern side of the creek and northern side of Manuka Road (Figure 8 and 9). There is a line of remnant timber fence posts from Residence 1 down to the creek (Figure 23). As previously noted, this may be the c1904-7 Matthews house, however this could not be confirmed with limited historical research.

Residence 2 is a masonry c.1960s dwelling situated on the northern side of Manuka Road. There is a third residence on the eastern side of Detloffs Road, however this is not considered part of the subject site (Residence 3). A caravan is situated in the south-west area of the site. Residence 2 and 3 either post-date the operation of the mission or do not appear to have any direct association with the mission. There are two late twentieth century or early twentieth-first century open sheds on the site, both with steel support posts and galvanised iron roof, one on the south side of Manuka Road, and one off Detloffs Road near the quarry (Figure 10). There is also a shed on the western side of Residence 1.

There is a quarry next to a tree line in the northern area of the site (Figure 11), which would likely have been the source for the early twentieth century stone Mission buildings. Remnant building fabric and wire fencing is scattered on the cliff top south of the quarry (general area is indicated in Figure 5, and illustrated in Figure 12). This fabric may relate to the former other mission structures and/or later occupation of the site. The material is difficult to interpret as it is not associated with any building footprints and it is partly covered with vegetation. There is remnant metal farming equipment in this area, however the history indicates there was no intensive agricultural land use during the time of the mission. There are two timber posts in situ at the top of the cliff, of unknown use (Figure 13).

Rob Agius advised that a timber bench was added in the area of the former jetty within the last 5 years (Figure 14). There are no visible remains of the former jetty in the water or on land. Rob Agius advised there are several areas of Aboriginal burials on the site. These areas have not been identified on the aerial map for cultural reasons.

The exact tree, which was known as the 'Bell tree', could not be determined. Numerous mature trees were photographed during the site visit and none showed signs of where a large bell may have hung. The location of 'Bell tree' in the nominator's mud map and photograph were different; the first noted next to the River near the jetty on the western side of the creek, and the latter on the eastern side of the creek, further to the south. The ship that the bell is from is not mentioned in historical sources, nor how it came into the Matthews possession. The location of the bell today is unknown.

To the south of Manuka Road and east of the creek there are several late-twentieth century shelters that Mr Agius advised were used by school groups who visit the site (Figure 15). In the same area there is a remnant stove and large timber roller (Figure 16) – this is located further south on the site than historical descriptions of the Matthews and Smiths' houses, therefore its context is not clear.

Several views of the site are provided: looking south from the top of the cliff (A) (Figure 18); looking north towards the cliff from northern side of contributory inlet (B) (Figure 19); looking south from the southern end of the site (C) (Figure 20); looking north from southern end (D) (Figure 21); looking north towards Residence 1 from Manuka Road (E) (Figure 22); and looking west towards creek and Murray River from front of Residence 1 (F) (Figure 23).



Figure 6 – Aerial view of former Manuka Mission Site [labels added by author] [Source: Google Maps 2017] [Note: The area surveyed is likely substantially larger than the actual mission site.]

## REFERENCES:

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*Renmark Pioneer*

*The Advertiser*

*The Port Augusta Dispatch*

*Yea Chronicle*

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**NAME:** Manunka Mission Site
**PLACE NO.:** 26458

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**EXTENT OF LISTING**


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The Place is not considered to meet any of the criteria under section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*, and as such the extent of listing is not described.

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**ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**


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**Statement of Heritage Significance**

The Place is not considered to meet any of the criteria under section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*, and as such a Statement of Heritage Significance has not been prepared.

**Comparability / Rarity / Representation**

There are several places and structures that are State heritage listed in SA that were used as missions for longer periods than the Manunka Mission:

- Former Hospital, Church and Manse of former **Ernabella Mission** (SHP 18723, listed 2001); Ernabella, established 1937; three remnant buildings (hospital, church and manse), several of which are still used by the Aboriginal community; Presbyterian
- Regional Reserve Headquarters (former **Australian Inland Mission** [AIM] Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home), Innamincka Regional Reserve (SHP 12759, listed 1985); West Terrace Innamincka via Leigh Creek, built 1928 and ceased used c1950s; Presbyterian
- Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of the former **Koonibba Lutheran Mission** (SHP 20759, listed 2007); Mickey Free Lawrie Drive Koonibba via Ceduna; Lutheran Mission established 1898 and closed 1963; 1910 Church remains; School and other buildings no longer standing
- **Killalpaninna Mission** site (Lutheran) (SHP 12618, listed 1984); Killalpaninna, Via Marree; Lutheran Mission established 1867 and closed 1884; no standing buildings
- Dwelling ('The Needles') – an outstation of the **Point McLeay Mission** (SHP 12749, listed 1986); Meningie; c1878 cottage, associated with Mission (c1859-c1914)
- Former **CW Schuermann's Mission** Site (Lutheran) (SHP 12703, listed 1985); Lincoln Highway North Shields; Mission in operation c1840-1852; archaeological remains of a house and well, and several exotic trees
- Ooldea Soak and former **United Aborigines Mission Site** (designated place of archaeological significance) (SHP 14446, listed 1998); Ooldea via Port Augusta; Lutheran Mission (1933-1952); no standing structures remain
- Former **Point Pearce Aboriginal Mission** (SHP 12723, 1985); Government established Mission c1867-c1915; Point Peace; several buildings remain
- Former Superintendent's Residence, former **Poonindie Mission** (SHP 12593, 1985); Lincoln Highway Poonindie via Port Lincoln; no details
- Former Bakehouse Complex & Well, former **Poonindie Mission** (SHP 12595, 1985); Lincoln Highway Poonindie via Port Lincoln, no details
- Former Schoolhouse (supposed), former **Poonindie Mission** (SHP 12596, 1985); Lincoln Highway Poonindie via Port Lincoln, no details
- St Matthew's Anglican Church, former **Poonindie Mission** (SHP 12591, 1990); off Lincoln Highway Poonindie via Port Lincoln, no details.

Manunka Mission was not as large as some of the other Aboriginal Missions in South Australia in 1910 (Figure 7). Manunka did not receive government support to operate, instead relying on charity.

Name of Station.	Total Number of Aborigines on June 30th, 1910.	Number of Children June 30th, 1910.	Births during Year.	Deaths during Year.
Point McLeay .....	250	113	15	12
Point Pearce .....	162	35	7	5
Killalpaninna .....	130	25	1	15
Koonibba .....	112	61	6	8
Manunka .....	45	21	2	4
Total .....	599	255	31	44

Figure 7 – Mission stations in SA, 1910 [Source: Public Works Report 1909-1910, 30 June 1910, p.114]

The following is a list of Missions in SA with approximate dates: <sup>1</sup>

- CW Schuermann's Mission, Lutheran, 1840-1852
- Poonindie, near Port Lincoln, Church of England, Mission operated 1850-1894
- Point McLeay, Aborigines' Friends' Association, Mission operated 1859-1914
- Point Pearce, Mission operated 1867-1915
- Killalpaninna, Lutheran, Mission operated 1867-1884
- Koonibba, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mission operated 1898-1963
- **Manunka, non-sectarian (officially; Matthews were Methodist), Mission operated 1902-1912**
- Swan Reach, United Aboriginal Mission, 1925-1946
- Australian Inland, Presbyterian, Mission operated 1928-1950s
- Nepabunna, United Aboriginal Mission, Mission operated 1931-1960s
- Ooldea, United Aborigines Mission, Lutheran, Mission operated 1933-1952
- Ernabella, Presbyterian, Mission operated 1937-1974
- Umeewarra, Mission operated 1937-1964
- Finniss Springs, United Aboriginal Mission, Mission operated 1939-1961
- Gerard, United Aboriginal Mission, 1945-1961.

**Assessment against Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993*):**

The following significance assessment considers whether the place meets one or more criteria under section 16 of the *Heritage Places Act 1993* (SA). The significance assessment is based on limited history available on the mission, other subsequent occupancy of the site, and that we were unable to definitely identify any remnant fabric on the site (other than possibly Residence 1) as associated with the operation of the mission.

The place may have cultural significance to local Aboriginal people apart from the operation of Manunka Mission, however this is outside the scope of this assessment and it is covered under different legislation, the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* (SA) (an Act to provide for the protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage).

<sup>1</sup> This is not an extensive list of every place used as a mission in South Australia (i.e. it does not include Children's Homes, such as Oodnadatta).

Sources: Long 1970:195; [http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal\\_Missions/Nepabunna](http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions/Nepabunna) and [http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal\\_Missions/MiscMissions](http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/Aboriginal_Missions/MiscMissions) ; info from SAHR listings of former Missions



**(a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the state's history.**

**Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place should be closely associated with events, developments or cultural phases which have played a significant part in South Australian history. Ideally it should demonstrate those associations in its fabric.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if they are of a class of things that are commonplace, or frequently replicated across the State, places associated with events of interest only to a small number of people, places associated with developments of little significance, or places only reputed to have been the scene of an event which has left no trace or which lacks substantial evidence.*

**Assessment**

The Manunka Mission was one of several Aboriginal missions in the State. Many of the missions already listed on the South Australian Heritage Register were established earlier and/or they operated for a longer period of time than Manunka Mission. Whilst Manunka Mission was established as non-sectarian and it was essentially operated by a woman, Mrs Janet Matthews, the operation of the Mission is not considered to have played a 'significant part in South Australian history'. Women worked on and played major roles in the operation of other South Australian missions.

Other South Australian missions were Presbyterian, Lutheran or Anglican. While Manunka was officially a non-sectarian mission, the Matthews would have practiced their Methodist beliefs. This fact alone is not considered to be of historical significance to the State, as all missions essentially had a similar function and purpose.

Schools were commonly associated with missions. Furthermore, except for one dwelling, which may have been the Matthews early twentieth century stone dwelling, the site does not retain sufficient integrity to demonstrate an important cultural phrase in the State's history.

The Aboriginal graves on the site may provide further knowledge in relation to the Manunka Mission, however their assessment is outside the scope of this assessment and it is covered under different legislation, *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* (SA).

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (a).

**(b) it has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.**

**Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place should demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use which is no longer practised, is in danger of being lost, or is of exceptional interest. This encompasses both places which were always rare, and places which have become scarce through subsequent loss or destruction.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion if their rarity is merely local, or if they appear rare only because research has not been done elsewhere, or if their distinguishing characteristics have been degraded or compromised, or if they are at present common and simply believed to be in danger of becoming rare in future.*

**Assessment**

The Manunka Mission is not considered to be rare or uncommon, as it was one of several in the State, with a similar purpose and operation. Manunka Mission was smaller in comparison to other government supported missions. While the fact that it was founded and directed by a woman is notable, women worked on and played major roles in the operation of other South Australian missions. Little information is written on the mission in government publications, as it did not receive government financial assistance. The School would have likely received some government support – this was established on the site a year after the mission began and it continued to operate after the mission closed. Historical information in relation to the mission is mostly from written accounts by Janet Matthews, and it does not provide any evidence to suggest that the operation of the mission had any rare or endangered qualities of cultural significance.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (b).

**(c) it may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the state's history, including its natural history.**

### **Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place should provide, or demonstrate a likelihood of providing, information that will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the past. The information should be inherent in the fabric of the place. The place may be a standing structure, an archaeological deposit or a geological site.*

*Places will not normally be considered under this criterion simply because they are believed to contain archaeological or palaeontological deposits. There must be good reasons to suppose the site is of value for research, and that useful information will emerge. A place that will yield the same information as many other places, or information that could be obtained as readily from documentary sources, may not be eligible.*

### **Assessment**

There are numerous historical accounts in relation to the operation of Mission sites in SA, including primary sources, such as government records, and secondary sources, such as in local history books and university thesis. Whilst there may be archaeological potential on the site of the former Manunka Mission in relation to various former structures that may provide further information about its operation, such as early temporary housing, the store house and school house, it is unlikely that such information would be of State significance. Furthermore, the site's archaeological potential is somewhat compromised by rabbit holes and overgrown grasses, and would likely have low integrity.

One of the masonry dwellings on the site, located on the northern side of Manuka Road and eastern side of the creek, may be the Matthews stone house, built in the early twentieth century. The exact date and use of this dwelling, if built during the period of the Mission's operation, is not clearly defined in the history. Much of the history is written from accounts by Janet Matthews and does not provide much detail about the buildings on site, nor the ship's bell, which hung in a tree and was used to announce the time of school lessons, meals and prayers. Various alterations and additions, such as the altered front verandah and rendered walls, have reduced the integrity of this dwelling. The extent to which this building displays attributes associated with an early twentieth century dwelling and associated with the operation of the mission is diminished. It is unlikely that further analysis of this building would contribute further information that would be of State significance.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (c).

- (d) it is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.**

**Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place should be capable of providing understanding of the category of places which it represents. It should be typical of a wider range of such places, and in a good state of integrity, that is, still faithfully presenting its historical message.*

*Places will not be considered simply because they are members of a class, they must be both notable examples and well-preserved. Places will be excluded if their characteristics do not clearly typify the class, or if they were very like many other places, or if their representative qualities had been degraded or lost. However, places will not be excluded from the Register merely because other similar places are included.*

**Assessment**

While Manunka Mission was a privately run mission, the aims were similar to other missions in South Australia, and the types of buildings associated with their operation were also similar. Whilst one of the dwellings on the site may be the home of Janet Matthews the building does not retain sufficient integrity, due to its visible external alterations, to demonstrate features of an early twentieth century dwelling. A clear association was also not identified in the history to confirm the association of the residence with the mission.

Other Aboriginal missions that operated in South Australia have extant buildings that are better representative of the operation of a mission, such as **Poonindie Mission** (SHP 12593) near Port Lincoln which operated c1850-1894 (44 years), **Point Pearce Aboriginal Mission** (SHP 12723), which operated c1867-1915 (48 years), and **Ernabella Mission** (SHP 18723), which operated c1937-1974 (37 years).

As there are no other remains or features on the site that appear to relate to the operation of Manunka Mission, it is not considered to be an outstanding representation of a Mission site.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (d).

- (e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.**

**Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place should show qualities of innovation or departure, beauty or formal design, or represent a new achievement of its time. Breakthroughs in technology or new developments in design would qualify, if the place clearly shows them. A high standard of design skill and originality is expected.*

*Places would not normally be considered under this criterion if their degree of achievement could not be demonstrated, or where their integrity was diminished so that the achievement, while documented, was no longer apparent in the place, or simply because they were the work of a designer who demonstrated innovation elsewhere.*

**Assessment**

One masonry building on the site may be associated with the operation of the Manunka Mission – the dwelling located on the northern side of Manuka Road and eastern side of the creek may be the Matthews stone house, built in the early twentieth century. The exact date and use of this dwelling cannot be clearly defined due to limited historical evidence. Due to its various alterations and additions, the building is not considered to demonstrate a high degree of creative or aesthetic accomplishment for its period, and it is not considered to be an outstanding example of an early twentieth century dwelling.

There are no other buildings or structures on the site that appear to relate to the operation of Manunka Mission. The school house and other mission buildings, such as other dwellings and the store house, are no longer extant. The context of other features, such as the remnant building material on the cliff top and the remnant stove and roller on the east side of the tributary creek and south side of Manuka Road, is unknown and therefore cannot be confirmed to be associated with the mission. The site does not have any identified features of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (e).

- (f) it has strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.**

#### **Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place should be one which the community or a significant cultural group have held in high regard for an extended period. This must be much stronger than people's normal attachment to their surroundings. The association may in some instances be in folklore rather than in reality.*

*Places will not be considered if their associations are commonplace by nature, or of recent origin, or recognised only by a small number of people, or not held very strongly, or held by a group not widely recognised, or cannot be demonstrated satisfactorily to others.*

#### **Assessment**

The site of the Manunka Mission may be of cultural heritage significance to local Aboriginal people excluding the operation of mission. Any such assessment would be outside the scope of this report and it is covered under different legislation (i.e. the former occupation of the land and Aboriginal burials on site) that being the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988* (SA) (an Act to provide for the protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage). We did not identify other known strong cultural or spiritual associations with the community, or a group within it, to the Manunka Mission site.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (f).

- (g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.**

#### **Guideline**

In considering this criterion, we have had regard to the Guidelines for State Heritage Places, that note:

*The place must have a close association with a person or group, which played a significant part in past events, and that association should be demonstrated in the fabric of the place. The product of a creative person, or the workplace of a person whose contribution was in industry, would be more closely associated with the person's work*

*than would his or her home. Most people are associated with many places in their lifetime, and it must be demonstrated why one place is more significant than others.*

*Places will not generally be considered under this criterion if they have only a brief, incidental or distant association, or if they are associated with persons or groups of little significance, or if they are associated with an event which has left no trace, or if a similar association could be claimed for many places, or if the association cannot be demonstrated. Generally, the home or the grave of a notable person will not be entered in the Register unless it has some distinctive attribute, or there is no other physical evidence of the person's life or career in existence.*

### **Assessment**

The story of Janet Matthews, the primary founder and sole director of Manunka Mission, is known through her own accounts and the work of modern historians. Similarly, the story of George and Jennie Smith, missionaries who worked at Manunka, are documented in historical sources. Both the Matthews' and the Smiths' worked at several mission sites, both in South Australian and New South Wales.

Manunka was a small mission that relied on charity rather than government funding to operate, however it was assisted by its status as a rations station, distributing food and blankets provided by government. Janet and Daniel Matthews, along with their children, worked on other mission's, including 25 years at Maloga (NSW) and around a year at Metco (SA), therefore their time at Manunka was brief (11 years). Janet Matthews role at Manunka is therefore not considered 'special' or of State significance.

It is recommended that the nominated place **does not** fulfil criterion (g).



**NAME:** Manunka Mission Site**PLACE NO.:** 26458**SITE RECORD:**

<b>FORMER NAME:</b>	N/A			
<b>DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:</b>	Potential c1910-1920s masonry dwelling of Mrs Janet Matthews; archaeological potential of former mission structures and jetty, 'Bell tree' (although the exact tree could not be determined, it is likely still on the site)			
<b>DATE OF COMPLETION:</b>	c.1902			
<b>STATE HERITAGE STATUS:</b>	Nominated 2015			
<b>LOCAL HERITAGE STATUS:</b>	N/A			
<b>CURRENT USE:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	Rural housing		
	<b>Dates:</b>	Post-1912		
<b>PREVIOUS USE(S):</b>	<b>Description:</b>	Aboriginal mission (1902-1912) Government School (1903-1945)		
<b>ARCHITECT:</b>	<b>Name:</b>			
	<b>Dates:</b>	N/A		
<b>BUILDER:</b>	<b>Name:</b>			
	<b>Dates:</b>	N/A		
<b>SUBJECT INDEXING:</b>	<b>Group:</b>	Religion		
	<b>Category:</b>	Mission		
<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:</b>	<b>Description:</b>	Mid Murray		
<b>LOCATION:</b>	<b>Unit No.:</b>	-		
	<b>Street No.:</b>	-		
	<b>Street Name:</b>	Off Manuka Road		
	<b>Town/Suburb:</b>	Forster		
	<b>Post Code:</b>	5238		
<b>LAND DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>Title Type:</b>	CR	CR	CR
	<b>Volume:</b>	5533	5533	5533
	<b>Folio:</b>	301	302	303
	<b>Title Type:</b>	CL	CL	CL
	<b>Volume:</b>	684	1323	1340
	<b>Folio:</b>	36	8	26
	<b>Lot No.:</b>	-		
	<b>Section:</b>	-		
	<b>Hundred:</b>	Forster		
<b>LAND DESCRIPTION:</b>	<b>Title Type:</b>	CT	CR	

**Volume:** 5910 5427  
**Folio:** 787 572  
**Lot No.:** -  
**Section:** -  
**Hundred:** Forster

**NAME:** Manunka Mission Site

**PLACE NO.:** 26458

**SITE PLAN**



**Manunka Mission Site**  
Off Manuka Road, Forster

N ↑  
[Source: Google Maps 2017]

Site plan generally indicating the boundary and important components of the place (if relevant).

**LEGEND**

- - - - - Extent of area surveyed
- . . . . . Likely area of Manunka Mission site

**Note:** A boundary was not provided with the nomination. A boundary for State Heritage listing is not proposed for the place, as it is not considered to be of State Heritage significance.



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**NAME:** Manunka Mission Site

**PLACE NO.:** 26458

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**SITE PHOTOS**



Figure 8 – c. 1910s-20s residence on eastern side of creek, looking east (Residence 1), possible Matthews house, 2017



Figure 9 – c. 1910s-20s residence on eastern side of creek, looking south (Residence 1), possible Matthews house, 2017





Figure 10 – Shed off Detloffs Road near quarry, looking north, 2017



Figure 11 – Quarry on top of cliff, looking north, 2017





Figure 12 – Remnant building fabric and fencing scattered on the cliff top south of quarry, looking north, 2017



Figure 13 – Timber posts on cliff top, looking west, 2017





Figure 14 – Timber bench in the area of former jetty, looking east, 2017



Figure 15 – Modern structures used by school's groups who visit the site [advised by Rob Agius], looking south, 2017





Figure 16 – Remnant stove and roller on site, looking north-west, 2017



Figure 17 – Ruins on eastern side of Detloffs Road, looking east (not within site), 2017





Figure 18 – View of site from top of cliff (A), looking south, 2017



Figure 19 – Looking north towards cliff from northern side of contributory inlet (B), 2017





Figure 20 – View of site from southern end (C), looking south, 2017



Figure 21 – View of site from southern end (D), looking north, 2017





Figure 22 – View towards Residence 1 and cliff from Manuka Road (E), looking north, 2017



Figure 23 – View towards River from Residence 1 (F), looking west [note remnant fence posts], 2017