

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORT

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**NAME:** Glenelg North Migrant Hostel – Gateposts **PLACE:** 26495  
and Nissen Hut

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**ADDRESS:** Lot 8 Warren Avenue, Glenelg North

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### DESCRIPTION



Glenelg North Hostel Gateposts, August 2018  
Source- DEW

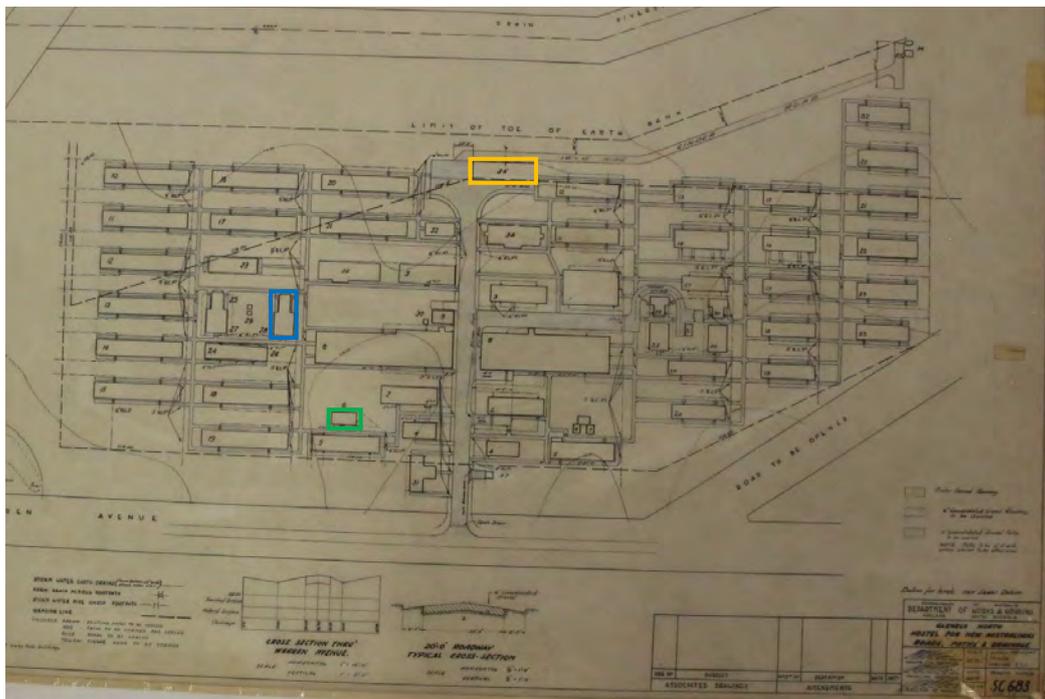


Glenelg North Hostel Nissen Hut, August 2018  
Source- DEW

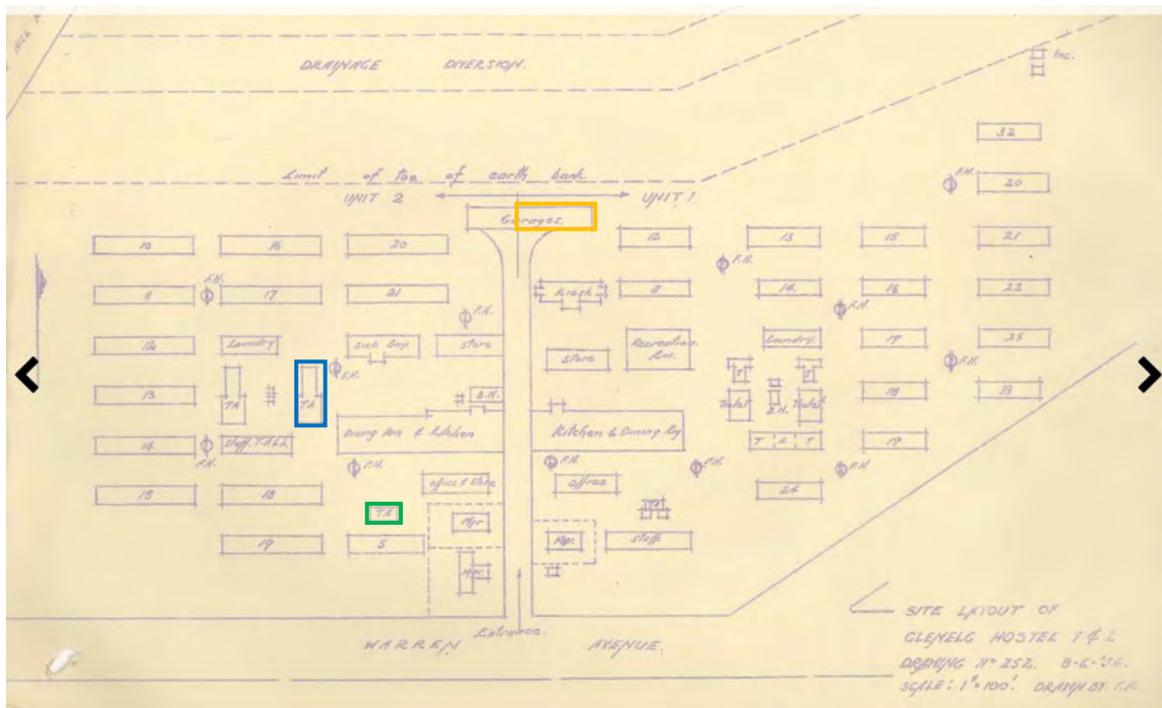
The site of the former Glenelg North Migrant Hostel is located on Commonwealth land at Warren Avenue in Glenelg North, adjacent to the Adelaide Airport. At the time of its operation, access to the Hostel was gained via a driveway - this remains on the site. The land to the east of the driveway is currently disused, with land to the west being used as the Metro Show Jumping Club Inc. including stables and a riding arena.

During its operation the site had around 50 structures, including self-contained accommodation, meeting halls, toilets, grocery stores and a garage. The structures ranged from large Nissen huts to corrugated sheds and simple transportable weatherboard buildings.

The nomination of the Hostel stipulated the Nissen hut and gateposts as places of interest. Other structures were found on the site which relate to its use as a migrant hostel and a site analysis has been undertaken to establish how much original fabric remains.



Site plan of Glenelg North Migrant Hostel (26 May 1950). Note building 35 (orange) at the top of the plan that corresponds with the remaining Nissen hut as pictured below. Two other buildings survive on the site of the former Migrants Hostel – Building 6 (toilet block outlined in green) and Building 28 (laundry and ablution block outlined in blue).  
Source- National Archives<sup>1</sup>



1954 map of the Glenelg Migrant Hostel. The site was divided into two units (Unit 1 was stage 1 (1949) and Unit 2 was stage 2 (1950)). Note the location of the Nissen hut, toilet block and ablution, w/c and laundry.  
Source- National Archives<sup>2</sup>

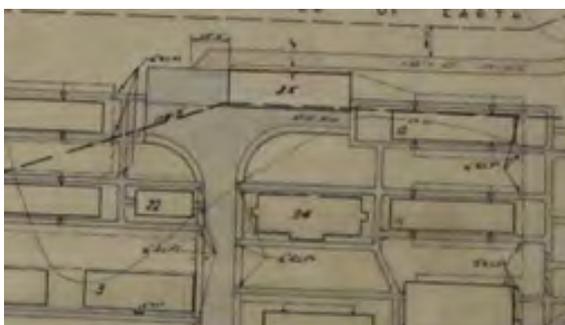


Aerial photo of the site of the Glenelg North Migrant Hostel. Note the remaining nominated Nissen hut - building 35 pictured above, toilet block - building 6 pictured above and ablution, w/c and laundry – building 28 pictured above.  
Source- Location SA

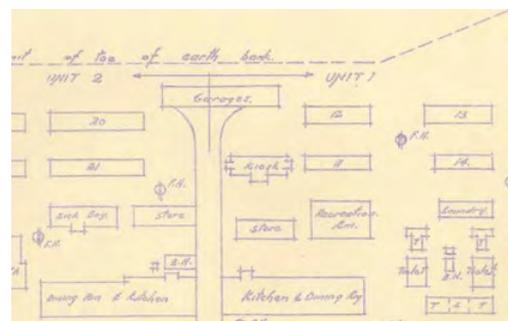
The Hostel was built in two phases. Phase one took place in 1949 on the east side of the driveway and phase two took place in 1950 on the west side of the driveway. Phase two also included the addition of building 34 (kiosk) on the east side. In a 1950 estimate for the erection of phase two, all existing buildings and buildings that were proposed were identified except for building 35, which is the nominated Nissen hut. Despite the omission of building 35 in the estimate document, it can be assumed that the subject Nissen Hut was erected sometime during phase 2 in 1950 at the same time as building 34 (kiosk) was erected.

When comparing the 1950 and 1954 site plan with an aerial photo of the area today it can be established that there are four structures from the Hostel remaining. These include the gateposts, a Nissen hut, one toilet block and one ablution, w/c and laundry building. A description of each follows:

### Nissen hut (building 35)



Enlarged section of May 1950 map showing the nominated Nissen hut (building number 35)



Enlarged section of 1954 map showing location of nominated Nissen hut, labelled as Garage.

The only remaining Nissen hut at the Hostel is located on the north end of the driveway. The 1954 site map indicates that the nominated Nissen hut was used as a garage for storage and a workshop for cars and motor bikes. Reports at the time suggest some residents had expensive motor cycles, in addition there are photos taken at the hostel, which feature motor cycles.<sup>3</sup>

The Nissen hut is a curved steel-framed structure. The main curved section of the Nissen hut is clad in corrugated galvanised iron (CGI), which dates from its original construction in 1950. Both ends of the hut are clad in galvanised 'Trim-deck' sheets and have galvanised roller doors dating from the late 1960s to early 70s.

The north side of the hut includes a skillion-roofed lean-to, which was also a later addition to the Nissen hut. This is timber-framed and is supported by the steel frame of the Nissen hut. This structure is clad in galvanised flat-deck and is painted brown and cream on two sides with the roof of the lean-to clad in CGI. Towards the west end of the northern side of the lean-to there is a small window. The western end of the lean-to includes a tilt-up garage-style door and a standard size hinged-door. The south side of the Nissen hut includes three dormer-style doors and one window, all covered with sheets of corrugated iron. All sides of the structure are covered in graffiti.



Looking towards the east end of the Nissen hut. Note the lean-to on the north side. August 2018  
Source- DEW



Southern elevation of the Nissen hut. CGI cladding and dormer-style doors. August 2018.  
Source- DEW



Western side showing the lean-to. Note tilt-up door. August 2018  
Source- DEW



Northern side showing flat-deck cladding. August 2018.  
Source- DEW

Internally the main body of the Nissen hut has exposed curved steel framing with steel battens attached on the southern side, which are used to fix the CGI sheeting. The northern side of the structure is framed in exposed timber. The interior space is open except for a small section at the western end of the lean-to, which is partitioned off to create a separate room. Having been used as a garage, it is unlikely that the building was ever lined or had dividing partitions. The floor of the Nissen hut is an exposed concrete slab that is contemporary to the building.

The hut is currently being used for storage of farming, building and horse stud equipment. There is no furniture or equipment that would date from the building's use as a Migrant Hostel.



Inside the hut looking towards the east end. Note curved-steel frame for the Nissen hut and timber frame of the lean-to, concrete slab and CGI cladding. August 2018  
Source: DEW



Inside the hut looking west towards the end. Note internal partition and stored building and farming equipment. August 2018.  
Source- DEW

### Gate posts

The gate posts that remain at the site of the Hostel are not marked on the 1950 or 1954 site plans. The gates are constructed using a style typical in the mid-1900s suggesting they could have been built sometime during the early establishment of the Hostel. A photo taken in 1969 (below) shows the gate posts with a decorative steel arch over the top including the words 'Glenelg Hostel'. This, in addition to the fencing and other signage evident in the photo, no longer remain.



Entrance gate at Glenelg Migrant Hostel (1969)  
Source- A12111 Immigration Photographic Archive 1946 - Today.

The gateposts, pictured below, are located on each side of the entrance to the bituminised driveway. These structures are made from nine courses of square-cut sandstone constructed on a concrete footing. The posts have square bases and taper to a flat top. Hung between the posts are two gates that swing in and away from the street. The gates are made from tubular steel with cyclone wire strung over the frame, and the top of the gates has a row of steel spikes. On the west side of the western post is a pedestrian gate made of tubular steel and cyclone wire. On the east side of the eastern post is a fence which is 1m high and is also framed in tubular steel and cyclone wire. A row of Cyprus trees is located behind the east fence.



Eastern post, August 2018  
Source- DEW



Western post, August 2018  
Source- DEW

### Toilet block (building 6)

The toilet block is pictured in the 1950 and 1954 site map of the site and is located on the west side of the driveway. Its construction is typical of a lightweight 1950s structure and it appears to have been unaltered or cared for since the site was closed down in 1972.

The small rectangular structure is clad on all sides with cream-painted flat-deck cladding. The skillion-style roof pitches down towards the back and is clad in CGI. The fascia and bargeboards are painted green and are rotting in places. The roof overhangs the front and rear walls to create eaves and is lined with asbestos sheets. A free-standing screen stands in front of the structure and is framed using treated pine posts, clad in flat-deck and covered with graffiti.

The front (south) elevation of the building includes a central door with windows on either side. Above each of the openings is a frosted-glass transom light. To each side of the central door and windows there is another door and transom light in addition to a louvre window at the top of the wall. The rear, north wall of the toilet block includes a central, triple-sashed window that is blocked in with particle board with high louvre windows on both sides. The east and west sides of the building both include one central louvre window. All of the doors and window frames are made of timber and are painted green.

Internally, the toilet block retains most of the fixtures including the toilets, showers and sinks. All of the toilet fixtures date from c1950s.



Front/south elevation of the toilet block,  
November 2018.  
Source: DEW



Rear/north elevation of the toilet block,  
November 2018.  
Source: DEW



Inside the toilet block showing showers and sink, November 2018.  
Source: DEW



Inside the toilet block showing toilet, November 2018.  
Source: DEW

### **Ablution, w/c and laundry (building 28)**

The Ablution, w/c and laundry is pictured in the 1950 and 1954 site maps of the site and is located on the western side of the driveway. The building is typical of a lightweight 1950s structure and has similar style and construction techniques to the toilet block.

This building is a large rectangular structure clad on the north, east and south sides with cream-painted flat-deck cladding. The west side is clad in sheets of painted particle board or asbestos. The skillion roof pitches down towards the west side and is clad in CGI. The fascia and bargeboards are painted green and are rotting in places, and the roof overhangs the front and rear walls to create eaves. Attached to the west side of the building is a large verandah framed in steel and clad in CGI.

Fenestration of the east side of the building includes a door on each end with a small double sash window to the side of each. Louvre windows run along the length of the wall under the eaves. The north and south sides of the building include one single door. The west side of the building includes aluminium framed sliding doors, which were probably installed in the 1980s.

Access was not obtained to the interior of the building. However, the space under the western verandah is filled with chairs and items associated with horses and show-jumping.



West side of the ablation, w/c laundry,  
November 2018.  
Source: DEW



East side of the ablation, w/c laundry, November  
2018.  
Source: DEW

## HISTORY

In the first years of the Colony, the majority of the settlers arriving in South Australia were from southern England. The colony's first influx of migrants from Germany occurred in 1838 with the financial assistance of George Fife Angas, and people born in Germany made up a tenth of the South Australian population by the end of the nineteenth century. By the 1850s most of the newly arrived colonists came from the British Isles (England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales), however, they were joined by smaller numbers of people from Poland, Italy and Switzerland. During this period, people of European descent were considered appropriate colonists, however government policy actively prevented people from non-European backgrounds (such as Chinese) from settling permanently in South Australia.<sup>4</sup>

On 1 January 1901, the six Australian colonies federated under the Constitution of Australia and the new Federal Parliament met for the first time in Melbourne on 9 May 1901. The introduction of legislation pertaining to immigration was high on the government's agenda as it viewed the creation of a framework to guide national immigration for the following decades as a constitutional responsibility. The *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Island Labourers Act* were passed in 1901 and were followed in 1903 with the *Naturalization Act*. These three new laws provided the legislative framework for what eventually became known as the 'White Australia Policy' and restricted immigration to people coming primarily from Britain. In 1901, 78 per cent of Australians born overseas were of British origin.<sup>5</sup>

Following World War One, people from countries that had fought against the British Empire were not allowed to immigrate to Australia. This included people from Germany, Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria until 1926, and Turkey until 1930. Immigration from Greece and Malta, whose allegiance was uncertain, was prohibited until 1920.

After the 1920s, acceptance of people emigrating from Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece substantially increased<sup>6</sup> and migrants from these countries who were experiencing economic hardship were allowed to come to Australia. In particular, a

number of immigrants from Italy arrived in South Australia during the 1920s.<sup>7</sup> However, the majority of immigrants at that time continued to come from Britain.

### **Post World War Two immigration.**

During World War Two, Australia felt somewhat vulnerable due to its small population and distance from Europe. This fear was realised in 1942 when Japan invaded Darwin. This was the largest single attack ever mounted by a foreign power on Australia and due to the inadequate defence in place at Darwin Harbour at the time, hundreds of people were killed.<sup>8</sup> It had become clear that Australia needed to increase its protection and to do this it needed to boost its population. Therefore, Australia's Prime Minister, John Curtin, expressed his belief that Australia should commit itself to an immigration programme when the war ended. As early as 1942, an Interdepartmental Committee on Migration was set up by the Australian Government foreshadowing Australia's acceptance of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons following the end of the war.<sup>9</sup>

On 13 July 1945, two months after victory in Europe but one month prior to victory in the Pacific, the Department of Immigration was formally established with Arthur Calwell as its first minister. The aim of the Department was to strengthen the nation's manufacturing and industrial capacity and boost its population through planned migration so that if Australia ever went to war again, it would have the population and resources to defend itself. In order to boost numbers, people were encouraged to move to Australia. This included ex-British service personnel in addition to Displaced Persons (DPs) from many areas in Britain. As the popular catch-phrase from the time indicated, Australia was to "populate or perish".<sup>10</sup>

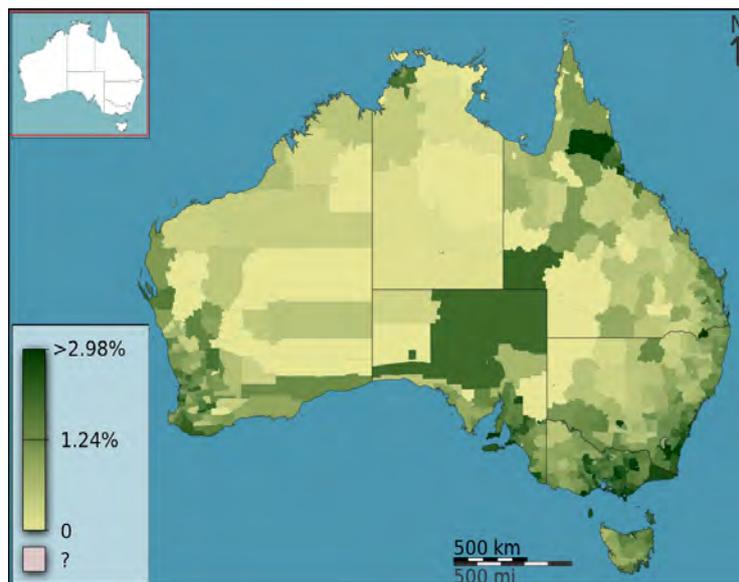
In 1947, Calwell visited Europe where the Assisted Passage Scheme was negotiated between Calwell and the British government. This offered subsidised passage to British ex-servicemen and their families with the hope that the British immigrants would help build a new Australia.<sup>11</sup> Although Australia made an active effort to encourage immigrants from Britain, it was soon realised that this was not going to fill quotas and other countries would need to be targeted. An obvious solution was for Australia to provide a home for the thousands of Europeans fleeing their homes after the Second World War. Many of these Displaced Persons (DPs) ended up in camps in Germany.<sup>12</sup> As a result, in 1947, Calwell worked with the International Refugee Organisation to develop the Empire and Allied Ex-servicemen Scheme, which offered assisted migration to Australia for former soldiers who had fought with the Allied forces during the war in addition to the huge number of European DPs. Other schemes that operated concurrently with the Empire and Allied Ex-servicemen Scheme and the British Assisted Passage Scheme included the Irish Assisted Passage Scheme from 1948, the Maltese Assisted Passage Scheme from 1948, the Netherlands Scheme from 1948, the Italian Scheme from 1949, the German Scheme from 1952 and the Greek Scheme from 1953.<sup>13</sup>

The result of these migration schemes was a massive increase of arrivals. Between 1947-1948 arrivals to Australia exceeded departures by 29,365. By 1949 arrivals exceeded departures by 118,800. From commencement in 1947 until discontinuation in January 1954, 170,700 persons were moved to Australia under these schemes.<sup>14</sup> The nationalities of the people who moved to live in Australia

included British, Italian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Irish, New Zealander, German, Greek and Yugoslavian.<sup>15</sup>

Mass immigration to Australia continued until the mid-1980s. From the commencement of the post-war immigration schemes in 1945 until 1985 some 4.2 million immigrants had arrived in Australia.<sup>16</sup>

Of the hundreds of thousands of people who immigrated to Australia, many chose South Australia as a place to call home. The map below shows that from 1951-1960 of the total number of people living in South Australia, around 2 percent were new arrivals. Of the South Australian population of 934,424 in 1959, around 187,000 were new arrivals. This is significantly higher than in other Australian states.<sup>17</sup>



1951-1960 Immigrants who arrived in Australia (by decade of arrival) as a percentage of the total population. Source - Fact Sheet 2 - Key Facts in Immigration". Department of Immigration and Citizenship (Australia). 2008.

### **Australian Migrant Hostels**

Due to limited resources and labour as a result of the war, there was a severe housing shortage in the years that followed. This was problematic because DPs were potentially moved from one country, only to be homeless in another. In order to establish a scheme to temporarily house the massive influx of people coming to the country, the Commonwealth Government established the Department of Works and Housing in 1945 (replaced by the Department of Works in 1952). The Department developed a housing program, which aimed to accommodate the 'new Australians', as they were referred to in an effort to dissuade more derogatory names.

Initially, hostels were opened in existing military barracks, munition workers accommodation and woolsheds. However, in 1949 the Federal Government announced a £11 million building program that provided hostel accommodation for 53,000 DPs. The hostels were operated by the Migrant Workers Accommodation Division of the Western Region of the Department of Labour and National Service and were located on land either owned or leased by the Commonwealth government. They had a 'camp character' with huts, mess rooms and large

kitchens.<sup>18</sup> By the late-1950s there were more than 30 hostels in operation in Australia.<sup>19</sup>

In 1951, the functions of the Migrant Workers Accommodation Division was absorbed by Commonwealth Hostels Limited, an Australia-wide and Commonwealth-owned company incorporated in Victoria. In South Australia the company's functions included the provision and maintenance of, and catering for, hostels and similar accommodation for newly arrived migrants.<sup>20</sup>

### **South Australian Migrant Hostels**

In a Memorandum dated 25 November 1949, the Department of Works and Housing confirmed that South Australia was to receive 4,500 migrants as a result of the post-war immigration policy. 3,000 were to be housed by the end of that year with accommodation for a further 1,500 to be provided by March 1951.<sup>21</sup> As a result, from 1949 until 1950, nine Commonwealth government and four State government hostels were established. The hostels were built in Finsbury/Pennington, Gawler/Willaston, Gepps Cross, Glenelg, Mallala, Rosewater, Smithfield, Whyalla, Woodside, Elder Park, Hendon, Semaphore and Woodville. The hostels were generally located close to industrial areas to provide access to suitable work for the residents and help build the population of these industrial centres.<sup>22</sup> Residents paid a weekly tariff to stay at the hostels, which included their accommodation and food.

In 1950 the Good Neighbour Councils and Australian Citizenship Conventions were established by the Commonwealth Government. The aim was to 'Australianise' migrants and refugees in a short time and allow them to assimilate into Australian society quickly.<sup>23</sup> As part of this initiative, the hostels provided a wide range of services to help migrants settle into Australia. Services included child-minding centres; English language classes; youth recreation activities; welfare; and, assistance in obtaining permanent accommodation. For two years after their arrival, the people living in the hostels were required to work on construction sites, for government utilities and in factories. Once they completed their contracts many of the DPs moved into more skilled occupations, allowing them to find independence for themselves and their families and the means to move away from the hostels.<sup>24</sup> However, while the hostel accommodation was only intended to be temporary, some migrants continued to live in their hostel for up to five years.<sup>25</sup>

The term of people's residence in hostels was determined by how quickly they could save sufficient money to become independent. In 1953 the *Advertiser* reported that a Glenelg hostel resident claimed that '*The Commonwealth is trying to keep hostels like concentration camps.... If migrants pay the full tariff they can never save enough to leave the hostels*'. At the time residents had threatened to pull down the recreation hall due to their frustration about the tariffs imposed.<sup>26</sup> Reports such as this gave an insight into the difficult conditions the DPs were faced with while living in the hostels and their inability to save enough money to leave the camps.

In addition to conflict about tariffs, the living conditions in the hostels were basic. Accommodation was in un-insulated corrugated iron sheds, which were hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Residents were forbidden from cooking in their huts with meal time being a communal occasion. Often communal toilets and bathrooms were used and privacy was limited. In the early years there were

numerous complaints about the standard of food and amenities.<sup>27</sup> The camps were often over crowded, the lack of lining on ceilings meant birds roosted in the huts defecated on the beds and tables and there were no facilities for children to play.<sup>28</sup> One report claimed that the '*premises were in a filthy condition, dysentery was rife in the camp and the food was unfit for consumption*'.<sup>29</sup>

Despite this, thousands of the people who arrived in South Australia during the years following World War Two used the hostels as a place to live while they established themselves in their new homes. Hostels continued to be used well into the 1970s.

Criticism of the outdated nature of the White Australia Policy resulted, in part, in changes to Australian immigration laws in the 1960s. In 1966 the Commonwealth government allowed professional and educated non-Europeans to apply for entry into Australia.<sup>30</sup> Then in 1973 the Universal Migration Policy was passed which allowed anyone to migrate to Australia regardless of race, colour, gender, ethnic origin, religion or nationality. As a result immigration from Asia, Africa and the Pacific increased. However, the number of people coming to live in Australia had slowed and many of those people who did come often had jobs to come to, thereby reducing the need for hostel accommodation.<sup>31</sup>

In 1974 Commonwealth Hostels Limited became known as Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Limited in order to expand its function. By this time all but one of the South Australian migrant hostels closed with most being entirely dismantled and the land allocated to alternative uses and more permanent hotel-style housing for migrants was constructed by the government in Wayville, Ascot Park and Black Forrest.<sup>32</sup> The agency closed all together in 1988 when it was sold by the Commonwealth Government to private enterprise.<sup>33</sup>

Hostels played a vital role in the phase of post-war immigration in South Australia. From 1949 until 1973 hundreds of thousands of people had passed through the gates of the South Australian hostels. While physical evidence of most of the hostels operating in South Australia have been removed, this important phase of Australia's history is evident in the significant contribution the influx of migrants have made to the industrialisation and economic prosperity of South Australia.



Pennington hostel, 1986, formerly Finsbury, prior to demolition.

Source- Migration Museum photographic collection PN03722.



People arriving at the Elder Park Migrant Hostel, 1948.

Source- South Australian Government Photographic Collection GN14994.

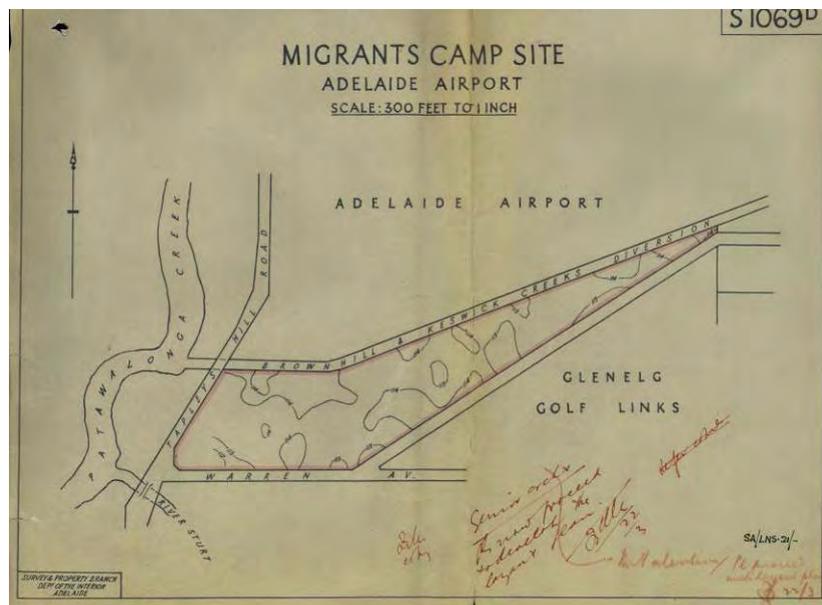


Gepps Cross Migrant Hostel, c1950.

Source- <http://sahistoryhub.com.au/subjects/migrant-hostels-and-work-camps>

### Glenelg North Migrant Hostel

As a result of the Federal Government £11 million hostel building program, nine Commonwealth-run hostels were built in South Australia. One of these was located at Glenelg North. Construction commenced immediately after the November 1949 announcement that South Australia was to receive 4,500 migrants as a result of the post-war immigration policy. The first residents moved in just one month later in December 1949. The hostel was located on 25 acres of Commonwealth/Civil Aviation land at the Adelaide Airport.<sup>34</sup> It was initially referred to as the Airport Hostel or the West Beach Hostel and was officially named the Glenelg North Hostel in January 1950.<sup>35</sup>



Plan of land made available for Glenelg North Hostel.  
Source- Digitised records for [Department of Immigration]

Buildings from the old Royal Australian Air Force station at Port Pirie and Manus Island were recycled to establish the Hostel.<sup>36</sup> These consisted primarily of Nissen huts, Quonset huts and S.A.A.R huts (also known as the Elephant hut, a larger form of a Quonset hut). The first stage of construction on the east side of the main driveway (Unit 1), cost £50,000 and included a recreation hall, administration building, store, managers (caterers) accommodation, staff sleeping quarters, 2 staff toilets, kitchens,

16 sleeping huts, 2 ablution blocks, laundry, one combination ablution/laundry, 2 toilets and boiler house to accommodate and meet the needs of 220 migrants.<sup>37</sup> Early reports suggested the hostel would accommodate 800 people.<sup>38</sup> However, the News reported in October 1949 that the Hostel would accommodate 480 'New Australians'.<sup>39</sup> In addition, a memorandum written by the Director of Works in February 1950 stated that *'the North Glenelg site was originally planned to accommodate 800 people but, half the area is low lying and requires extensive filling and site preparation. Only higher ground has been built on to date.'*<sup>40</sup>

At this time demand for migrant housing was such that a report written in *The Advertiser* stated that migrants would move into new buildings at Glenelg North *'almost as soon as the paint is dry'*.<sup>41</sup> The rush to build accommodation for the influx of migrants to South Australia meant that during its early days, conditions at the Glenelg Migrant Hostel were deficient. A general standard for the alteration to the huts used at the migrant hostels summarised the basic nature of the accommodation provided:

#### Sleeping huts

*'If unlined, lining should be provided to the dado height with wall board, caneite or similar materials. Transverse partitions only to a height of approximately 6ft. should be provided, lined on one side only. Longitudinal partitions should be omitted except where allocated to married quarters, otherwise curtains strung longitudinally will be provided.'*

#### Mess Halls

*'Where unlined under service conditions, mess halls should remain in that condition.'*

#### Recreation Halls

*'Reading and Rest Rooms should be lined but otherwise the building should remain as under service conditions.'*<sup>42</sup>

In addition, building restrictions and the lack of building materials in the decade after the War meant the buildings were poorly constructed and often missed vital elements such as down pipes and gutters, resulting in water damage and problems with drainage at the hostel. There was no grass or landscaping so the site was dusty in the summer and muddy in the winter. In addition, like most other hostels, the buildings were poorly insulated making living in them unbearable in South Australia's extreme weather conditions. Early in 1950, the manager was still sleeping in a partitioned area off the dining room and staff were housed in dormitories while they waited for quarters to be built.<sup>43</sup>

By March 1950 stage two of construction was approved<sup>44</sup> and included Nissen, Quonset and S.A.A.R huts imported from England and installed on the western side of the main driveway (Unit 2). Structures proposed for stage two included a recreation hall, administration building, store, manager's accommodation, staff quarters, staff toilet and laundry, staff kitchen, dining hall, boiler house, 12 sleeping huts, casualty room, laundry, combined ablution/WC/Laundry, 2 toilets, 2 ablutions, calorifier/hot water service, group managers residence, bed sick bay and the addition of another sleeping hut at Unit 1.<sup>45</sup> Some existing structures were altered to bring them into line with newly-established standards for Commonwealth hostels around Australia. The total cost of the hostel was £100,439.<sup>46</sup> Despite efforts to

improve the conditions at the hostel, in 1951 an inspection found that the kitchen and toilets were unclean, there were fly infestations, and the floor was littered with razor blades and broken windows.<sup>47</sup>

In 1951 European Migrants were moved from the Pennington Hostel in an effort to retain Pennington as a British Hostel. This resulted in Glenelg being predominantly European, with few British migrants. Of the 194 migrants living at the hostel, by November 1953 none were British, 85 were Dutch, 5 were Italian and 54 were German.<sup>48</sup> During this time complaints about the conditions and cost of living in the hostel were rife. In March 1953, Dutch migrants protested about the conditions at the camp and claimed that 75% of them wanted to go home.<sup>49</sup> In July the same year, five migrants were evicted from the hostel for not paying their tariff or obeying the hostel rules.<sup>50</sup>

Despite early unrest, the Hostel had the advantage of being close to existing suburbs and shops and was less isolated than some of the other hostels. Residents were able to access public transport and visit the beach or the local cinema. This meant that residents had an earlier introduction to the wider community and could be more independent in exploring their new surroundings. Many children from the Hostel attended St Leonards Primary School, which had assimilation programs that aimed to improve the children's English and help them socialise with Australian children.<sup>51</sup> A youth club formed at the hostel and organisations including the YWCA were active on site.<sup>52</sup> It was also adjacent to a Housing Trust development at Glenelg North, which was available for the residents to move into once established in their new country. Christmas parties and social events were held at the Hostel and surrounding community halls in an effort to integrate the residents into Australian society.<sup>53</sup>

In general, it appears that people remember the social life of the Hostel fondly, and there are several stories of lifelong friendships formed in the Hostel.<sup>54</sup> An account of one of the resident's experience of living in the Hostel can be found on SA History Hubs web site:

*If it was nice weather, especially in the summer, we'd go down to Glenelg North, to the beach. Mum was working, so then there would be other young girls in the hostel, who we used to meet, and there was a communal place, where we used to play. They used to have dances or play table tennis; I played table tennis every night. There would be movies, the old black and white, real old movies, open air. It was nice. And then we used to get together and just sit there and sing our German pop songs.*<sup>55</sup>

As conditions in the Hostel gradually improved, changes were made to the accommodation and other uses were found for the facilities at the site. For example, in 1965 it was agreed that the Technical Division of the Education Department would use the Hostel kitchen for chef training at a cost of £4 per week;<sup>56</sup> in 1967 families with more than four children were allowed an extra bedroom and the Hostel was awarded Commonwealth Government 'Hostel of the Year'<sup>57</sup>. During the later years of its operation, the cultural mix at the Hostel changed and in June 1969 occupancy was 604 people- 5 Americans, 9 Australians, 113 British, 45 Czech, 2 Danish, 16 Dutch, 7 Finnish, 31 French, 8 Greek, 8 Irish, 1 Portuguese and 146 Yugoslavians.<sup>58</sup>

The Hostel was one of the busiest in South Australia and in the months from 1 November 1968 until 1 May 1969 approximately 1,430 people arrived at the Hostel. The Hostel was operational for 23 years. Based on the number of people arriving over a six month period, it is possible that well over 50,000 people could have lived at the Hostel. At its peak in the 1960s the Hostel could accommodate up to 650 people.

By May 1971 rationalisation of hostel accommodation had begun. The Glenelg and Smithfield Hostels were instructed to run down their occupancy. On 6 November 1971 the last entry to Glenelg is received. By July 1972 there was only a total of 560 residents between the Glenelg and Pennington Hostels with 1900 beds available.<sup>59</sup>

The Glenelg Hostel closed in 1972 due to the diminishing number of people immigrating to South Australia. Some buildings from the Hostel were transferred to the Department of Aviation for use elsewhere,<sup>60</sup> while others were demolished. Due to its location at the airport, the noise levels at the site were deemed unacceptable for construction of more permanent hostel accommodation. The site is currently being used by the Metro Show Jumping Club Inc.



Glenelg Migrant Hostel looking east (c1960s)  
Source- Migrant Museum collection



Glenelg Hostel (c. 1960s). Interior view of the Glenelg Hostel shop.

Source- Migration Museum collection,  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/migrationmuseum/8658580771/in/pool-migranthostels/>



Family arriving at Glenelg Migrant Hostel (1969)  
Source- A12111 Immigration Photographic Archive  
1946 - Today.



Eileen and Rene at the Glenelg Migrant Hostel (1957)  
Source- State Library SA B 69659



Weatherboard structures, Glenelg Migrant Hostel  
looking south (1962)  
Source- State Library SA B15245



Weatherboard structures, Glenelg Migrant Hostel looking  
south/east (1962)  
Source- State Library SA B15246

## Chronology

Year	Event
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1939	World War Two started
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1942	Japanese invasion of Darwin
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**Interdepartmental Committee on Migration was set up by the Australian Government**

1945	<b>On 13 July Department of Immigration was formally established, with Arthur Calwell as its first minister</b>
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Subsidised passage was offered to British ex-servicemen and their families.

The scheme ran from 1945 until 1975.

1947 Calwell visited Europe where he signed a migration agreement with Britain that started a mass immigration program

1947-1948 arrivals to Australia exceeded departures by 29,365

1949 arrivals exceeded departures by 118,800

Announcement that an £11 million Federal building program would provide hostel accommodation at industrial centres within 15 months for 53,000 DPs being brought to Australia

Gawler/Willaston Hostel opens.

**Glenelg North Hostel opens- first resident received in December**

Mallala Hostel opens.

Rosewater Hostel opens.

Smithfield Hostel opens.

Woodside hostel opens.

Elder Park Hostel opens.

Hendon Hostel opens.

1947-1953 Australia received more than 170,000 such migrants under the Displaced Persons program

1950 Finsbury/Pennington Hostel opens

Gepps Cross Hostel opens

Whyalla Hostel opens

**Glenelg Hostel officially named the Glenelg North Hostel**

**March, second stage of building at Glenelg North Hostel was approved**

**European Migrants were moved from the Pennington Hostel to Glenelg North Hostel**

1951 The functions of the Migrant Workers Accommodation Division was absorbed by Commonwealth Hostels Limited,

1952 Wingfield Migrant School opened.

1953 Mallala Hostel closes

Rosewater Hostel closes

Wingfield Migrant School closes

1957 Semaphore Hostel closes

1960 Gawler/Willaston Hostel closes

1963 Woodside hostel closes

- 1965 Gepps Cross Hostel closes
- The Technical Division of the Education Department use the Glenelg Hostel kitchen for chef training.**
- 1966 Government changes its policy to allow professional and educated non-Europeans to apply for entry into Australia.
- 1967 **Glenelg North Hostel was awarded Commonwealth Government 'Hostel of the Year'**
- 1969 Woodville Hostel opens
- Elder Park Hostel closes
- 1971 Smithfield Hostel closes
- Rationalisation of hostel accommodation had begun. On 6 November the last entry to Glenelg is received. By July 1972 there was only a total of
- 1972 **Glenelg North Hostel closes**
- 560 residents between the Glenelg and Pennington Hostels with 1900 beds available.
- Metro Show Jumping Club Inc. established and use the site at Glenelg North for show jumping.
- 1973 Universal Migration Policy passed which allowed anyone to migrate to Australia.
- 1974 Commonwealth Hostels Limited became known as Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Limited
- 1977 Whyalla Hostel closes
- 1978 Woodville Hostel closes
- 1988 Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Limited sold by the Commonwealth Government to private enterprise
- 1989 Finsbury/Pennington Hostel closes

## **ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

### **Statement of Heritage Significance:**

As The Glenelg North Hostel does not appear to meet any of the criteria for State Heritage listing, no Statement of Heritage Significance has been provided at this time.

### **Identification of South Australian Historical Themes:**

Relevant historical themes associated with the Migrant Hostel are:

Peopling South Australia – Migration

Economic Production and working life - Reconstructing a capital city economy

Politics and Government - Expanding the Commonwealth Governing, Administering South Australians, Managing migrants

The social and cultural life of South Australians - Making homes

### **Comparability / Rarity / Representation:**

Migrant Hostels

The Glenelg North Hostel was one of 13 migrant hostels in operation in South Australia during the years after World War Two. Very little physical evidence remains of any of these hostels.

Including the Glenelg North Hostel, nine commonwealth migrant hostels were established between 1949-1950.<sup>61</sup> These include:

Purpose-built:

- Finsbury/Pennington- 220-228 Grand Junction Road (1950-1989). The Pennington Migrant Hostel was one of the largest reception centres in Australia and accommodated up to 1,600 people at a time. Accommodation was mainly in Nissen huts.<sup>62</sup> Part of the site has been converted to a recreational park with interpretive signs and structures which represent the Nissen huts which were once on the site.



Pennington Gardens Reserve, October 2018.  
Source- DEW.

- Gepps Cross, Corner Grand Junction Road and Main North Road. (1950-1951- funded by the Commonwealth program)(1952-c1965- funded by the State) Accommodation was mainly in Nissen Huts. This camp was labelled the 'Luxury Camp' and was reserved primarily for British families. The site is now vacant land.
- Smithfield, Coventry Road. (1949-1971). many of the English migrants who were employed at the Weapons Research Establishment Salisbury or ammunition factories at Smithfield and Salisbury were accommodated at the Smithfield hostel. Accommodation was in Nissen huts with communal toilets, kitchen and dining area. The site is now partially subdivided with residential dwellings built on part of the land with some vacant land remaining.

- Whyalla, Corner of Lacey Street and Milne Street, known as Milpara Migrant Hostel. (1950-c1977). Accommodation was in Nissen huts in addition to some pre-existing structures on the site. Funding was split between the Commonwealth and State governments and BHP. The site is now used by BIS Industrial Logistics. Some early buildings remain on the site which were probably used by the hostel. These include two corrugated gable-roof structures and a large portal-framed corrugated shed.
- Woodside located at the Woodside Army Camp. (1949-1963). Accommodation was in converted Army buildings. Facilities included a midwifery section and infant care. The site continues to be used for military service as the Woodside Army Barracks. Most of the early buildings were replaced with brick structures c1980s.

#### Adaptive reuse of existing facilities:

- Gawler/Willaston (1949-1952) (re-opened 1955-1960). Accommodation was in Pre-existing Air Force buildings. Willaston was selected as there was a railway line nearby to enable migrants to travel to their employment. Accommodation was rent-free until residents found their first jobs. The site has been subdivided for residential use.
- Mallala, located on the war-time RAAF site (1949- 1953), Accommodation was primarily in pre-existing RAAF buildings. The site is now used as the Mallala Motor Sport Park.
- Rosewater, Gray Street. (1949-1953). Accommodation was in the old wool sheds located on the site. This was the most primitive of hostels. It was never intended for British migrants. However, it was believed that the conditions were sufficient for the Displaced Persons from Europe. The wool store building remains and has been largely unaltered since its use as a hostel.

Sites were also proposed for Seaton Park, Mount Barker, Salisbury and Mannum, however, these hostels never eventuated. A school for migrant children was opened at Wingfield in 1952 and operated until 1953, at which time most hostels had their own educational facilities or sent children to the local school.<sup>63</sup>

Four State-administered hostels operated from 1949 and included Elder Park, located on the site of the Festival Centre (1949-1969); Hendon (1949-unknown), located on Tapleys Hill Road and now used as an aged care facility (Eldercare); Semaphore (1949-1957), located on Hart Street and now part of Le Fevre High School; and, Woodville (c. 1969 – c.1978) located on Woodville Road, Woodville South and now the site of the Institute at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.<sup>64</sup> No buildings which were used for the hostels could be found on these sites. The State government also housed migrants in homes or mansions it purchased from private owners. These are difficult to trace as they were only used for a short period and were subsequently sold.<sup>65</sup>

There are no South Australian migrant hostels on the Heritage Register. However, examples of similar hostels can be found interstate and are included on the heritage registers of their respective states or local councils:

Name	Location	Heritage status	
Brooklyn Migrant Hostel	Francis Street, Brooklyn	Vic LHP	One Nissen hut and part of the wool store.
The Former Benalla Migrant Camp	Samaria Road, Benalla	VHR H2358	Light weight dormitory-style accommodation.
Former Maribyrnong Migrant Hostel	Hampstead Road, Maidstone	VHR H2190	Pyrotechnics and explosives factory, also used as hostel from late 1940s.
Former Maribyrnong Migrant Hostel	Williamson Road, Maribyrnong	Vic LHP	Two large lots with numerous buildings.
BLOCK 19 Former Bonegilla Migrant Camp	Bonegilla Rd, Bonegilla	VHR H1835	Collection of timber and corrugated iron army huts.
Balgownie Migrant Workers Hostel: Huts 201, 204 and 210	Squires Way, Fairy Meadow	NSW SHP 01767	Nissen hut (building 204) and the Quonset huts (buildings 201 and 210).
Greta Migrant Camp (Site of Former)	324 Camp Road, Allandale	NSW LHP	Regenerated bushland, remnant gardens and garden structures, and a few sheds, and gravel roads.
Memorials: Migrant Camp & War Service Training	part road reserve Limekilns Road, Forest Grove	Vic LHP	A large gun and brick memorial, dedicated 40,000 immigrants from Bathurst Immigrant centre.
Migrant (Former) Camp	609 Maitland Road, Mayfield West	Vic LHP	The main workshop building, Quonset hut and caretaker's cottage, simple timber cottage.
Westbridge Hostel	Migrant 76 Miller Road, Chester Hill	Vic LHP	Complex of single storey older weatherboard buildings including Nissen huts and 1970s 2 storey brick units.
Migrant Camp (fmr),	Mokine Rd Narrogin	WA SHP	Nissen hut.



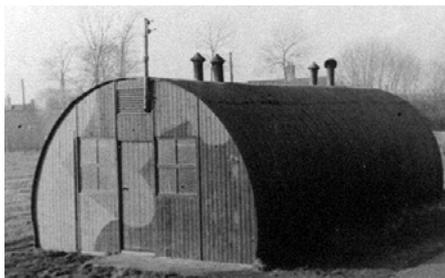
Example of an intact example of a migrant hostel BLOCK 19 Former Bonegilla Migrant Camp. VHR H1835. Source Victoria Heritage Council

## Nissen Huts

During the mass immigration phase in Australia, immediate accommodation was required at a time when housing was in extremely short supply due to limited materials and building restrictions at the end of the war. Due to their abundance after World War Two, the Nissen hut as an obvious solution to this problem.

The Nissen hut was designed in 1916 by Lt Colonel Peter Nissen, an American born, Canadian officer in the Royal Engineers during the First World War. He developed the Nissen hut to house troops in the build-up for the Battle of the Somme. During World War One and World War Two, hundreds of thousands of Nissen huts were mass produced due to their simple and strong arch design and simple framing system, which made them easy to erect. Over the last 100 years, probably more Nissen huts than any other building type have been made.<sup>66</sup>

The prefabricated hut came in two sizes 16' wide and 24' wide and could be as long as required. The success of the hut was largely due to the simplicity of its design. The kits only weighed 3 tons and employed T-shaped ribs set 6 ft apart. Three pieces were bolted together to form each rib, with 24 rib sections comprising each kit. A similar design was developed at Quonset Point by the U.S. Navy in 1941 and was called the Quonset Hut. The Quonset came in 3 types 16', 20' and 24' wide. A larger version the Quonset Warehouse or Elephant hut was 40ft wide (and was known in Australia as the SAAR hut).<sup>67</sup>



English Nissen Hut- the corrugations in the cladding run vertically and the sides flatten out at the bottom.  
Source- Rogers, David



American Quonset Hut- the corrugations run horizontally and the height is slightly lower than the Nissen hut.  
Source- Rogers, David<sup>68</sup>

The Australian Nissen huts were imported from Britain and the Quonsets and SAAR huts came from Manus Island.<sup>69</sup> The huts used at the Glenelg North Hostel included:

Nissen hut	Quonset hut	SAAR
72'x24'	44'x20'	100'x40'
30'x16'	96'x20'	
78'x16'	108'x20'	
36'x24'	60'x20'	
90'x24'		

The nominated hut at the Glenelg North Hostel is a 72'x24' Nissen hut.

There are currently no Nissen huts listed as State Heritage Places in South Australia. There are three Nissen huts listed as local heritage places:

- 20 Crittenden Road FINDON Charles Sturt Clubrooms (RSL Memorial)
- 3635 9 Bennett Avenue MELROSE PARK Mitcham Workshop "Snoop Security"
- 25993 Telford Avenue Section 486 PETERBOROUGH Peterborough

Other surviving examples of Nissen huts have been identified in:

- Port Adelaide
- Loxton historic village – pioneer museum
- Meningie
- Dunbar
- Moonta
- Stansbury
- Summertown
- Robe
- Pt Clinton
- Blanchetown
- Pt Broughton
- Stansbury
- Loxton North
- Millicent
- Munno Para West
- Minlaton
- swan reach
- Yorketown
- Loxton north
- One tree hill
- Bairnsdale
- Mintaro



9 Bennett Ave, Melrose Park LHP  
Source- Google Street View



Telford Avenue, Peterborough LHP  
Source- Google Street View



20 Crittenden Road, Findon wartime Nissen hut with a rendered façade, LHP  
Source- Google Street View



Old Port Road, Port Adelaide  
Source- DEW



Yattalinga  
Source- Google Street View



Mallala  
Source- John Eckermann



Clarendon  
Source- Street View



Dry Creek  
Source- Street View



Blanchetown  
Source- <http://www.sa.scouts.com.au/airactivities>



Carramulka  
Source- Kirsty Campion



Korunya  
Source- John Eckermann



Kanmantoo  
Source- Darren Bald



Mylor  
Source- realestate.com.au



Edwardstown  
Source- Google Street View



Dunbar  
Source- Lisa Linke

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

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

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

The Glenelg North Hostel is associated with the phase of post-war immigration, that occurred in South Australia from 1945 until the early 1970s. This theme was a consequence of a broader Australian post-war immigration program. This cultural phase of post-war recovery and population increase played a significant part in South Australian history because, until this point, immigration to the state was largely dominated by people from British and northern European origins. Due to the vast numbers of people required to meet the government quotas, for the first time in its history, the government cast their net much further into Europe accepting people from countries such as Czechoslovakia, Holland, Netherlands, Finland, France, Greece, Portuguese, Yugoslavia and Italy. Since this time South Australia has become increasingly multi-cultural. Accepting people from different countries/nationalities made a significant contribution to the industrialisation and economic prosperity of South Australia including the expansion of Adelaide and rural centres due to population increase.

In a Memorandum dated 25 November 1949, the Department of Works and Housing confirmed that South Australia was to receive thousands of migrants as a result of the post-war immigration policy. 13 migrant camps were established to provide temporary housing for the newly arrived migrants, the Glenelg North Hostel was one such hostel. The Glenelg North Hostel operated from 1949 until 1972, and provided accommodation to approximately 50,000 people. Therefore, the Glenelg North Hostel has close association with South Australia's post-war immigration and has made an influential contribution to the evolution of South Australia's society.

Despite being difficult to live in due to the basic nature of the accommodation within the hostels, when operational, the hostels became the new home of the migrants. Often coming from war-torn countries, the hostels offered a sense of protection, community and safety for the people who lived there. They offered many facilities such as child-minding centres, English language classes, and youth recreation activities. People ate together, shared bathrooms and often slept together in dormitory style huts; they became a part of each other's lives. The Glenelg North Hostel had over 50 buildings to accommodate these functions and became its own community within the suburb of Glenelg. Therefore, when in full operation, the lives and experiences of the post-war immigrants was evident in the physical fabric of the Glenelg North Hostel.

However, like most other South Australian hostels, since its closure, almost all of the structures at the Glenelg North Hostel have been removed. All that remains is the nominated Nissen hut, gate posts, the ablution building and a small toilet block. These structures have been significantly altered, removing nearly all evidence of their previous functions as the migrant hostel. The structures are

disconnected from each and fail to provide clear association with the phase of post-war immigration in South Australia. Without the evidence of all the other structures, those that remain have lost their context and association to the phase of post-war migration to South Australia. As a comparison Block 19, Bonegilla, survives as a rare example of a post war migration centre and provides a strong sense of the migrant experience. It contains timber framed, corrugated iron World War II 'P' series army huts (used as migrant and staff housing), office accommodation, recreation and dining halls, kitchens, and washing and toilet blocks.

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.**

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

The Commonwealth government opened nine migrant hostels and the State government opened four in South Australia from 1949 until 1950 to provide temporary accommodation for an anticipated 4,500 migrants expected to arrive as a result post-war immigration policy. During the decades that followed the hostels continued to operate and were occupied by hundreds of thousands of people, with around 50,000 spending time living in the Glenelg North Hostel.

South Australian migrant hostels have a clear association with an important phase of immigration that helped form the State's multicultural population. Decreasing rates of migration and changes in the style of accommodation provided for migrants, resulted in the gradual closure of the migrant hostels from the 1970s until the 1980s, including the Glenelg North Hostel in 1972.

The evidence of these hostels, vary depending on the type of accommodation offered and what the site was used for after the hostel closure. Some hostels such as Mallala and Woodside, used existing military buildings as accommodation for the residents. At Rosewater an old wool shed was used. In these cases some of the buildings remain and have been adapted for other uses. In the case of the purpose-built hostels such as Finsbury/Pennington, Gepps Cross, Smithfield, Festival Centre, Hendon, Semaphore and Woodville, temporary structures such as Nissen and

Quonset huts and light-weight shed-like structures were used. Upon the closure of each of these hostels most or all of the structures were removed and the land sold and used for a variety of new uses.

Unlike the purpose-built hostel examples listed above, since the closure of the Glenelg North Hostel, the site has been left vacant and is only used by the Metro Show Jumping Club Inc. Four structures remain including the Nissen hut (former garage), one toilet block and one laundry and ablutions block, and gate posts. Of all the purpose-built hostels that used temporary structures, the former Glenelg North Hostel is one of the few that has any surviving buildings at all. It could therefore be considered rare.

However, the integrity of the site is relatively low. The vast majority of the structures at the site have been demolished, and those that remains have either been left to decay, have had significant fabric removed or have been repurposed for storage. In addition, the elements of most cultural significance are now gone, including the sleeping quarters, kitchens and mess halls. As a result, the distinguishing characteristics of a migrant hostel have been degraded or compromised and the surviving elements cannot be considered to represent the original significant qualities.

If considered individually, the remaining structures no longer demonstrate a clear association with the theme of post war immigration.

The surviving Nissen hut was not one of the residences, but was instead used as a garage. Garages are not rare or in danger of being lost, or of exceptional interest. The Nissen hut does not demonstrate a way of life, social custom, industrial process or land use that is no longer practised. In addition, Nissen huts can be found in a number of places in South Australia and cannot be considered rare or endangered.

The toilet block remains largely unaltered since it was constructed for use in the hostel. However, toilet blocks of this era are common and cannot be considered to have exceptional interest.

The ablution block has been altered since its early construction. Alterations include the replacement of windows with aluminium sliding doors and windows and the construction of a large verandah/pergola. It is used for storage and no longer demonstrates its former use as an ablution block for the western side of the hostel.

The gate posts were once an iconic element of the hostel. They would have marked the entrance to the site, and framed the surrounding decorative fencing and adjacent buildings. However, all of the adjacent structures and the decorative steel arch over the top including the words 'Glenelg Hostel' have been removed. Without the elements that relate to the hostel, the posts no longer clearly demonstrate their original purpose of informing visitors where they have arrived and what lies behind the fence.

The Glenelg North Hostel has important associations with the phase of post-war immigration in South Australia and is probably the only purpose-built hostel with any remaining elements. This means that the place does have some rare qualities and is associated with a theme of cultural significance. However, the extent to which the

surviving elements represent and demonstrate the theme is not considered to be of sufficient quality to justify inclusion on the South Australian Heritage Register. Issues include the fact that so few of the original hostel buildings remain, the relatively low level of significance and integrity of the surviving elements, and the lack of connection between the surviving structures.

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.**

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

The Glenelg North Hostel Nissen hut, toilet and ablution block were erected c1950, while the gateposts were built c1960. After the hostel ceased operation in 1972, all structures apart from the Nissen hut (garage), toilet and ablution block and gateposts were removed or demolished. The buildings erected on the site were temporary structures placed either directly on the ground or on concrete slabs and required minimal if any foundations. Once removed, there is little physical evidence left to indicate where they once stood.

Due to the nature of their construction it is unlikely that any evidence of the migrant hostel remains that would contribute meaningfully to the history of South Australia in a way that cannot be obtained from other sources including newspaper articles, photos and archived government documentation.

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.**

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

The Nissen hut, ablution block and toilet block were built in c1950, while the gate posts were constructed in c1960 as part of a large complex of temporary buildings that formed the Glenelg North Hostel. Together the structures represent the class of place known as a post-war migrant hostel, and on its own, the Nissen hut represents the class of building known as Nissen huts.

Post-war migrant hostels were built to accommodate the thousands of migrants who moved from Britain and Europe after World War Two. The post-war migrant hostels were constructed to provide temporary accommodation for the migrants upon arrival in South Australia until they had saved to either rent, build or purchase their own homes. Migrant hostels played a significant role in South Australia, supporting the post-war, 'populate or perish' phase in Australia, and more specifically, contributing to the industrialisation and economic development and recovery of South Australia in the decades after World War Two.

The buildings erected in the Glenelg North Hostel were typical examples of temporary accommodation of the era. If examples of the principle characteristics of the hostel remained such as the buildings used for sleeping, socialising, cooking, eating and day to day activities, the Glenelg North Hostel would be considered a notable example of migrant hostels. However, the remaining buildings relate more to ancillary activities such as car and motor bike repair and washing. Removal of all but four of the hostel structures means the principal characteristics of the class are no longer evident in the physical fabric of the place.

When considering the class of building known as a Nissen hut, these structures were designed to provide shelter and services in a structure which was portable, easy to erect, cheap and functional. Such structures were perfectly suited for emergency accommodation after the war, and were therefore widely used for migrant hostels throughout South Australia. Once the use of the hostel was no longer required, most of the Nissen huts were demolished, sold off or re-purposed. Despite the temporary nature of the structures, a number of Nissen huts remain, this assessment has found 25 which are listed in the comparison section above. Therefore, the nominated hut is one of many remaining examples of this class of place. The nominated Nissen hut has been altered since its original erection in the 1950s, including re-cladding of the ends and the addition of a substantial side lean-to. Overall, the nominated Nissen hut is not considered to be a notable example of its class in South Australia.

In summary the buildings that best demonstrate the function of migrant hostels are the sleeping quarters, kitchens and mess halls in which the residents would carry out their day-to-day lives. While the nominated Nissen hut, toilet and

ablution block and gate posts were erected at the time of the establishment of the Glenelg North Hostel, their use was ancillary to the main function of the hostel, therefore the principal characteristics of the class, that being accommodation for migrants, is not evident in the physical fabric of the place.

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.**

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

Four structures remain on the site of the Glenelg North Hostel. These include a Nissen hut, ablution block, toilet block and gate posts.

The remaining Glenelg North Hostel toilet and ablution block are lightweight, timber-framed structures. Their construction techniques and design characteristics were very common at the time of their construction in the 1950s and continue to be used today. This construction method does not represent a new achievement or breakthrough in technology.

The gateposts are constructed using courses of square-cut sandstone and the posts are constructed on a concrete footing. The base of the posts are square and they taper to the top to form a pyramid-shaped post. Coursed stonework and tapered posts are construction techniques common to the bungalow-style houses commonly built in from the 1920s until the 1950s and do not demonstrate a high standard of design skill or new achievement.

The design for the Nissen hut was originally completed in 1916 by Lt Colonel Peter Nissen to provide large-scale temporary accommodation for troops at war. During World War One and World War Two, hundreds of thousands of Nissen huts were produced due to their simple, strong design; ease of construction; and uncomplicated framing system that enabled mass production. At the time of their conception, the design was an innovation and a new achievement.

However, while the original 1916 design of the Nissen hut was a new achievement for that time, the nominated hut was erected at the Glenelg

North Hostel in 1950, at which time its design and use was commonplace throughout the world. Therefore, it does not demonstrate a technical achievement for the time in which it was built. In addition, while the Nissen hut has retained its original frame and roof/wall cladding, it no longer demonstrates a high degree of integrity due to the substantial lean-to addition along its side and its partial recladding at each end.

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.**

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

The Glenelg North Hostel was the first home for thousands of people who immigrated to South Australia as part of Australia's post-war immigration policy. Many of these people came to Australia to escape a war-devastated Europe, and were looking for a new beginning. This phase of immigration changed the face of South Australia, playing a central role in the industrialisation and economic development of the State, influencing the expansion and development of Adelaide and rural centres, and resulting in the creation of South Australia's multi-cultural community today.

Reports from the time suggest that some residents of the North Glenelg Hostel complained about the conditions in the hostel and the cost to live there, resenting the government's expectation that they should earn their residency in Australia. However, other residents remember their experience in the hostel fondly. It represented a new home and a new start. It was a place where they made new friends and built connections with the surrounding community.

Most residents stayed in the hostel for the first two years after their arrival, during which time they were required to work on construction sites, for government utilities and in factories. Once they completed their posting, they would find their own independent accommodation. However, some people struggled to raise the funds it took to move away from the hostels and stayed for up to five years.

It is likely that surviving immigrants who lived at the Glenelg Hostel would have strong cultural associations with the place that was their first home in a new country. It represented the beginning of a new life. However, most of the structures that would represent these association are now gone (including sleeping quarters, kitchen and dining hall), with the only remaining evidence of the strong and direct association between the hostel and the people who lived there being the gate posts, toilet and ablution block and the remaining Nissen hut (former garage). Without any evidence of the main hostel buildings that were integral to its operation, it is unlikely that the surviving elements of the Glenelg Hostel would have such strong associations with former residents. Therefore, the remaining structures are not considered to demonstrate a strong cultural or spiritual association at the State level.

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.**

In considering this criterion, I 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.*

The Glenelg North Hostel has associations with the Commonwealth Government's Department of Immigration and Arthur Calwell as its first minister.

On 13 July 1945, two months before the war ended, the Department of Immigration was formally established, and a planned migration scheme was established with the aim of increasing Australia's population to give it better protection in the event of another war. In 1947, Calwell visited Europe where he signed a migration agreement with Britain that started a mass immigration program inviting refugees to come to live in Australia. Between 1947 and 1953 Australia received more than 170,000 such migrants under the Displaced Persons Program, with a large proportion coming to South Australia.

In order to provide housing for the huge number of people expected to arrive in the country in 1949, it was announced that an £11 million Federal building program would provide hostel accommodation at industrial centres within 15 months for 53,000 DPs being brought to Australia. The accommodation would be of 'camp character' with huts, mess rooms and large kitchens. The Glenelg North Hostel was one such camp and therefore is associated with Department of Immigration and Arthur Calwell.

While the Department of Immigration and Arthur Calwell played an important role in post-war development of Australia and its associated population growth, the Glenelg North Hostel is one of nine commonwealth migrant hostels erected in South Australia from the late-1940s, and one of approximately 30 in the country. There is no suggestion that the Glenelg North Hostel is more significant than any others and a similar association could be claimed for any of the other remaining migrant hostels in Australia.

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

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**NAME:** Glenelg North Hostel

**PLACE NO.:** 26495

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**SITE RECORD:**

**FORMER NAME:** Glenelg North Hostel

**DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:** Nissen hut (former garage), toilet block, ablutions block and sandstone gate posts

**DATE OF COMPLETION:** c1950 (hut, toilets and ablution block) and c1960 (gateposts)

**REGISTER STATUS:** **Description:** Nominated  
**Date:** 2 June 2018

**CURRENT USE:** **Description:** Storage  
**Dates:** 1972-present

**PREVIOUS USE(S):** **Description:** Garage  
**Dates:** 1950-1972

**ARCHITECT:** **Name:** Unknown

**BUILDER:** **Name:** Department of Immigration  
**Dates:** 1950

**SUBJECT INDEXING:** **Group:** Group(s)  
**Category:** Category(s)

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:** **Description:** City of West Torrens.

**LOCATION:** **Street No.:**  
**Street Name:** Warren Avenue  
**Town/Suburb:** Glenelg North  
**Post Code:** 5045

**LAND DESCRIPTION:** **Title Type:** CT  
**Volume:** 6137  
**Folio:** 606  
**Lot No.:** Lot 1  
**Section:** 186  
**Hundred:**

## SITE PLAN

NAME: Glenelg North Hostel

PLACE: 26495



-  Nissen Hut (former garage)
-  Toilet block
-  Ablution block
-  Gate posts

Site Plan

Glenelg North Hostel

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## PHOTOS

NAME: Glenelg North Hostel

PLACE: 26495



Internal view of the Nissen hut (former garage)

Source- DEW



View of the Nissen hut from Warren Avenue

Source- DEW



View showing the relationship between the gateposts and Nissen hut

Source- DEW



Side of Nissen hut showing the original sheets of CGI and dormer windows

Source- DEW



Franz and Richard, both Austrian migrants, with their motorbikes, Glenelg North Hostel (c1960)  
Source- Migration Museum photographic collection PN05818.



A couple on their motor bike at Glenelg North Hostel (c1960)  
Source- sahistoryhub.com.au

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