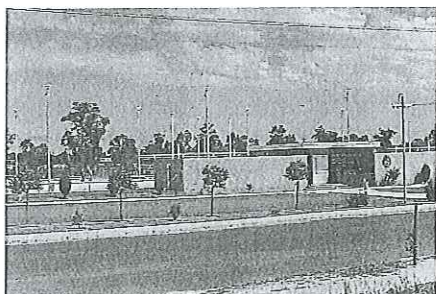




Thornlie Living History Collection Stories from the community

The Thornlie Living History Collection tells the story of the development of Thornlie from the mid 1950s. The collection includes oral history interviews and written memories of current and former residents, house plans, photos, documents, and newspaper articles.



Thornlie Swimming Pool, 1970

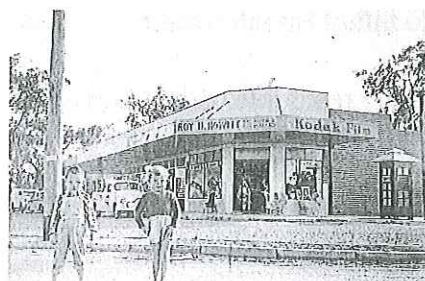
The subdivision of Thornlie was the beginning of suburban development in the City of Gosnells. Many people who moved to Thornlie were first homebuyers taking advantage of the new concept of the house and land package, which was available through the General Agency Company. Other people migrated to Australia from Europe and established themselves and their family in the new community.

In the early years, living in Thornlie was isolating as there were few buses each day into Perth. Because of this, the need for a car to travel to and from Thornlie became important. In 1958 a bus service provided by Metro Buses included Thornlie on the Armadale to Perth route which detoured through Orange Grove.

"Yes...we were a very close knit community. And when people asked you where you lived and you said Thornlie they said where's that, they just didn't know. We were sort of in the sticks."

June Howitt

As there were no local shops to begin with, groceries were bought in neighbouring suburbs and later were delivered door to door. Once the Fremantle Road bridge was built in 1959, access to Gosnells was much easier for people living in Thornlie.



Howitt's chemist on Martindale Avenue, c1961. Courtesy J Howitt.

The development of groups such as the Thornlie Sports Council, formed in 1958, began soon after people moved to Thornlie. Local facilities for tennis, cricket, baseball and darts were established around this time. Through the 1960s other clubs such as junior and senior football, golf and baseball were set up. Golf was played on the nine hole Spencer Park course which was located on Spencer Road, now a shopping area. In 1967 Thornlie's Olympic sized swimming pool was officially opened by then Premier David Brand.

The development of other facilities such as the Infant Health Centre and groups such as Brownies are also recorded, as are the efforts by many residents who worked hard to establish these.

"...The first hundred people or so in Thornlie formed a Progress Association, and we used to have regular dances [and] social nights...we would have cake stalls and fetes and we collected enough money for the first playground equipment at the end of Range View Way in the park. All that was done by the Progress Association and then they gradually went on to do the infant health clinic, and all the other things that came after."

Nelly Maarszen



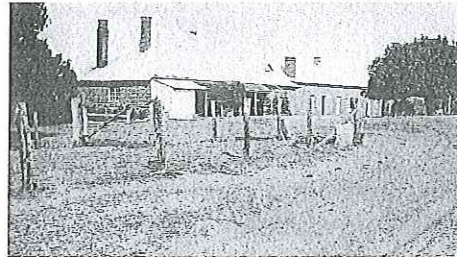
Thornlie Infant Health Centre

For the early residents, the suburb grew as their families did with the establishment of the Thornlie Primary and High School to cater for the local population.

"Our girls were in the first group of students who went to school [at Thornlie Primary School]...I think [they managed] initially to build two classrooms and then each year, subsequently they added one."

Alan & Audrey Drakeford

The information in the collection supplements the existing content in the City's Local History Collection located at the Knowledge Centre. The collection includes information about the earliest European landowners in the area and the establishment of the estate on which Thornlie Homestead was situated. This land was later subdivided, becoming the suburb Thornlie.



Thornlie Homestead, c1925

The City recognises and thanks the members of the Thornlie Living History Group, Dr Gil McDonald, Mrs Patricia Morris AM JP, Mr Doug Corker, Mrs Pam Davies and Mrs Christine McDonald who have done a huge amount of work collecting the memories of early residents, members of various clubs established in Thornlie, and liaising with the local primary school to ensure the history of Thornlie will be retained for the future.

Items are available online through the library catalogue, at Thornlie Library and in the Local History collection at the Knowledge Centre.

For more information, or if you have any information you would like to add to the collection, contact the Heritage Coordinator on 9391 6011 who can put you in contact with a member of the Thornlie Living History Group.

For further information about local history within the City of Gosnells please contact the Heritage Coordinator on 9391 6011.