



## Victoria Barracks: 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010



It was great to have members from the Central and South Coast Chapters join us for another most interesting and enjoyable outing.



Volunteer Guides greeted us at the Barracks Entrance Gate and we were offered a very welcome cup of tea or coffee. This was followed by a pleasant surprise – the Army Band members are off to Afghanistan next week would be entertaining us. The timing for our visit was spot on as the Band only plays every 6 weeks or so!

When the band marched onto the oval through the Royal Engineers Arch they certainly got our toes tapping and the piper who is on exchange was an added bonus.



We were then divided into small groups of 4 or 5 and with our guides enjoyed a two hour comprehensive tour of the 32 acres. I'm sure we were all impressed by the extent of the complex, its beautiful sandstone buildings and long history.

Building commenced in 1841 using local sandstone and imported Welsh slate for the roof. It was built to house 650 men and was completed in 1848. The many buildings throughout the grounds included Officer's quarters, hospital, chapel, court room, prison, drill and mess halls and kitchens.



Original Officer's Quarters

The barracks were first occupied by the 11<sup>th</sup> (Nthn Devonshire) Regiment of Foot and the English troops vacated in 1870. During WWI and WWII the barracks were the Administrative Headquarters of the Australian Forces.

We concluded our visit with a wander through the Barracks Museum which is housed in the former Military Prison.

Adjacent to the Barracks complex is the Paddington Town Hall and across the road is the 'PADDO' RSL where we enjoyed lunch. Beside the Town Hall is the site of the old water cistern which has been creatively transformed into a two level park. This has retained the integrity of the cistern remains while becoming a pleasant retreat in the heart of the busy suburb.



### Did you know?

\*\* The main barracks building is 742ft long, approximately 100ft shorter than the Titanic.

\*\* The main barracks is the largest stone building still in use in the Southern Hemisphere.

\*\* The Wallabies use the Barracks Oval for training sessions prior to Test Matches played in Sydney.