



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NOTRE DAME**  
A U S T R A L I A

# Media Release

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## Possible remains of 187-year-old gaol uncovered in Albany

A team of staff and students from the University of Notre Dame Australia believe they have uncovered the underground remains of an 187-year-old gaol at a historic site in Albany, in Western Australia's south.

Led by Archaeology and History Senior Lecturer Shane Burke, a group of 14 students recently spent three days in Albany exploring the early European settlement area of Lawley Park with ground penetrating radar.

They believe they found the structural remains of the 1836 town gaol about 0.8m below ground.

Records show the brick gaol measured 5.6m by 11.6m in 1852, and was probably demolished in the 1870s.

Dr Burke said Lawley Park - now a recreational area that provides breathtaking views over Princess Royal Harbour – was a fascinating site that had many different uses over thousands of years.

He said the fieldwork revealed that physical evidence of Albany's history and prehistory that was yet to be discovered still existed.

"Lawley Park has had much heritage significance, having been used by the British as a store, commissariat and gaol in the 1830s," he said.

"Our students set out to find historical and archaeology evidence of how the site has been used by the people who lived in the region over the years.

"What they uncovered was that just below the ground's surface are the reminders of previous people's use of the area going back thousands of years.

"The gaol was a small structure that was occupied by police constables and prisoners before it disappeared, probably in 1870.

"We also found surface artefacts of different dates at the base of the hill that showed the area was also possibly used for recreation and military functions."

The team covered 300sqm at Lawley Park with ground penetrating radar and pedestrian transects and were given access to historical records at the local library during the trip.

They gathered at the library each day for debriefing sessions, which were open to the public and gave residents the chance to witness discussions about the day's discoveries.

The findings will be compiled in a report that will be provided to the City of Albany to help guide future developments in the area.

The students who took part in the fieldwork are studying archaeology and history majors at Notre Dame in Fremantle. They were joined by PhD candidate and tutor Lauren Tomlinson, as well as Dr Burke.

Dr Burke and students found the remains of what is believed to be WA's oldest colonial building – a 190-year-old commandant's quarters - about 1.2m underground at a park on Parade Street in Albany in March 2019.

The quarters were built when Albany was a military outpost of NSW between 1826 and 1831.

The University would like to thank the City of Albany for supporting the Lawley Park fieldwork.

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