Castle Hill township from Brisbane Road, 1906.

HISTORY OF THE SHIRE

It is believed that the first white visitors to the Hills area were members of an expedition led by Governor Phillip from Parramatta in April 1791. The group was in search of a new area for settlement and farming to support what was then a struggling colony in Sydney. The Castle Hill area had been selected as a Government Farm settlement for convicts.

In 1794, William Joyce, a pardoned convict, was granted the first parcel of land in Baulkham Hills and others began to follow, stocking their land with cattle and sheep and clearing bushland to plant crops of wheat and maize. The Hills District began to thrive with more settlers moving to the area and establishing viable farms.

The Government Farm at Castle Hill began operation in 1801. Convicts were housed at the farm and sent to work on crops to support the growing colony.

The farm was about 14,000 hectares and extended northwards towards the areas of Dural and Glenorie.

When George Suttor arrived in Baulkham Hills, he brought with him citrus trees. These proved a more worthwhile crop than wheat or maize.

Fruit orchards began to spring up around the District and by 1887, land from Parramatta to Castle Hill was being used to grow oranges, apples, plums, peaches and apricots.

Throughout the 1800s, residents established schools and businesses. The first police constables were stationed at Baulkham Hills in the 1920s.

Transport to Sydney was initially by horse and wagon. Discussions about a railway service began in 1881, but it was not until 1902 that a tramway service from Parramatta to Baulkham Hills opened. The line was extended to the Post Office in 1910.

In 1923 the tramway was replaced by a train service, but due to the increased use of cars and a decrease in the citrus export market, the railway was closed in 1928.

Electricity came to the District in 1925 with a new electric lighting service from Northmead to Castle Hill.

The Baulkham Hills area was proclaimed a Shire on 6 March 1906. A temporary Council was put in place before the first Council elections later that year.

The temporary Council had their first meeting on 16 June 1906 at Matthew Pearce's property on New Windsor Road, Baulkham Hills.

The first elected Council took office on 8 December 1906 and Councillor Bruce Purser was elected as the first President of the Shire of Baulkham Hills.

Over the years, Council moved its Council Chamber three times to cater for increases in population and the need for more services and infrastructure. Council moved into Showground Road, Castle Hill in 1982 and into its present location in Columbia Court, Norwest in 2013.

On 1 July 1993, the State Government passed a new Local Government Act, an Act of the State Parliament, which set out many of the rules about how Councils must operate.

The Act deleted the word "Shire" from Council's identity.

Council was to be known as Baulkham Hills Council. However, because the majority of land within the Council boundaries was rural, an application was made to the State Government to have "Shire" reinstated in Council's official name.

On 22 October 2008, the NSW Governor approved Council's application to change its name from Baulkham Hills Shire Council to The Hills Shire Council.

On 12 May 2016 suburbs south of the M2 were incorporated as part of The City of Parramatta Council.

Following a constitutional referendum held in 2012, the 2017 Council elections changed the way the Mayor is selected. For the first time, instead of their fellow Councillors electing them, the Mayor was voted in for the full term of office by the people.

In 2019 Australia's biggest public transport project, the Sydney Metro Northwest, officially opened to customers.

THE **HILLS**
Sydney's Garden Shire