



FACT SHEET

Arnotts Biscuit Factory Homebush

The Arnotts Biscuit Factory operated at Homebush from 1908 to 1997, when it was relocated to Huntingwood. However, the administrative offices of Arnotts are still located in Homebush.

Arnott's Biscuits were originally established in Newcastle. The first Sydney factory was opened at Forest Lodge in 1894. In 1905, the Arnott family wanting to expand their business, decided that a larger factory was required. Requiring access to the railway for transportation, the Arnott's purchased a six and half acre site at Homebush in 1906. The factory was designed by architect Charles Slatyer and built in 1907 at a cost of £10,400.

The purchase was known as 'Arnott's Folly' as the site was considered too far from the City to attract workers. However, the Homebush factory which opened in 1908 became the largest in the Southern Hemisphere and exported biscuits from Homebush to the rest of the world.

The Homebush factory had little difficulty in finding workers in the local district. It was often commented that there were few families in Homebush who didn't work for Arnotts. Arnotts were regarded as good and fair employers. During the economic Depression of the 1930s, Arnotts reduced the operational hours of the factory rather than dismissing their workers, which was the usual practice.

Many members of the Arnott family were residents of the Strathfield area, including the founder William Arnott.

The original Homebush factory expanded with increased production, requiring a new building on the western side of George St. The two factories were connected by an overhead walkway. By 1933 the number of employees peaked at 2,500 and annual production exceeded 10,250 tons.

Deliveries were originally made by horse and buggy, but these made way for the famous red delivery vans in the late 1920s.

The Homebush factory covered three floors. The bottom level had an ingredients preparations section and processing department where icing, chocolate coating and cream filling were made. The middle level had a mixing room, Bakehouse and wafer and packaging department. The top floor had packaging facilities, office areas and workshops.

Arnott's Biscuits were originally delivered in tins. Tins were returned and recycled. However, biscuit tins which were damaged or broken were crushed. Many were buried under the car park and Arnott's Bowling Green (which is now part of the Powell's Creek Corridor).

Some tins were melted and used for land reclamation in nearby Mason Park. Albert Mason was the Mayor of Homebush and chief electrician of Arnott's Biscuits. The park is named after him.

The Arnott's factory was relocated to Huntingwood in 1997 and the Homebush factory was closed.

The former factory has been readapted into the Bakehouse Quarter. This site provides many references to its Arnott's history ranging from the SAO sign to small Arnott's Parrot emblems woven into building facades. George St has been recast with a cobblestone road and Edwardian style-lighting harking back to the days in the early twentieth century when the Arnott factory was first built.

Written by Cathy Jones 2018. For more information, visit www.strathfieldheritage.org