

# HAMILTON

## NEWCASTLE

WALKING TOUR 2.5KM | 50 MINS | EASY

Discover how a 19th century settlement of immigrant coal miners transformed into the vibrant multicultural suburb of Hamilton.



Celebrating the addition of a second storey to the Hamilton Fire Station, 1906 (Ralph Snowball, courtesy Cultural Collections, University of Newcastle)

We respectfully acknowledge the Awabakal people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land known as Hamilton.

You can download this brochure with links to stories at [www.visitnewcastle.com.au/attractions/walks-and-rides](http://www.visitnewcastle.com.au/attractions/walks-and-rides)

### FURTHER AFIELD

**A** Hamilton Railway Station and signal box an excellent example of a late 19th century suburban railway junction **P**  
**H**

**B** Sydney Junction Hotel an art deco look and an unusual Oatmeal Stout clock **P**  
**H**

**C** Old Hamilton flour mill the towering silos were a prominent Hamilton landmark until demolished in 1990 after the earthquake **P**  
**H**



Hamilton mill silos, 1982 (Courtesy McIntyre family)

**D** The Bennett Hotel traces its licence back to 1865 **P**  
**H**

**E** Hamilton Public School Hamilton children have sought knowledge from this school since 1858 **P**  
**H**

**F** St Peter's Anglican Church the unusually shaped bell turret has been a Hamilton landmark since 1885 **P**  
**H**

**G** Hamilton Hotel built in 1872, one of 11 hotels lining Denison Street, once the main road to Newcastle **P**  
**H**

**H** Steam tram war memorial in memory of transport workers who served in World War I **H**

**I** Ambulance Station built in 1923 and still a fully operational ambulance station of NSW Ambulance **P**  
**H**



Earthquake damage, Newcastle Ambulance Station, 1989 (Courtesy Cultural Collections, University of Newcastle)

The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce uses place-making projects and major street events to enrich Hamilton's vibrant main thoroughfare.

Through the Hamilton Heritage Project, the Chamber welcomes contact from owners of sites or buildings of historical significance who are interested in installing a heritage plaque. Email the President at [info@hamiltonchamber.com.au](mailto:info@hamiltonchamber.com.au) to start the discussion.

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

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Email: [info@hamiltonchamber.com.au](mailto:info@hamiltonchamber.com.au)

Web: <http://www.hamiltonchamber.com.au>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonNow>



The Roxy Theatre, once at 99–101 Beaumont Street, began as a picture theatre around 1913. It was the home of the Newcastle Dramatic Art Club, from 1955–1971. (Courtesy G. and S. Ray)

Historical sources used for this brochure include:

Ruth Cotton, 2014. *Hidden Hamilton: Uncovering stories of Hamilton*, NSW, Hunter Press, Hamilton.

Ruth Cotton, 2016. *More Hidden Hamilton: Further stories of people, place and community*, Hunter Press, Hamilton.

The Hidden Hamilton stories can also be read online at <http://hiddenhamilton.blogspot.com.au> and <http://facebook.com/hiddenhamilton>

Design and artwork by [www.lazysuzan.com.au](http://www.lazysuzan.com.au) | June 2016

1

**Hamilton Post Office**

83 Beaumont Street (cnr Lindsay Street)

H

Hamilton's postal service began in 1861. This was the site of Hamilton's first purpose-built post office, built in 1888. Living accommodation for the postmistress was provided upstairs. The building suffered substantial damage in the 1989 earthquake but its replacement has been designed in a modern but sympathetic manner.

2

**The Kent**

59-61 Beaumont Street

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The Kent Hotel was built in 1924 to provide 'a higher class of accommodation' for visiting teams involved in electrification of the Newcastle tramways. Like the Exchange Hotel, The Kent became a favourite gathering place for Italian migrant workers in the 1950s. Despite devastating earthquake damage, and with the resilience typical of Hamilton businesses, The Kent was rebuilt and recovered.

3

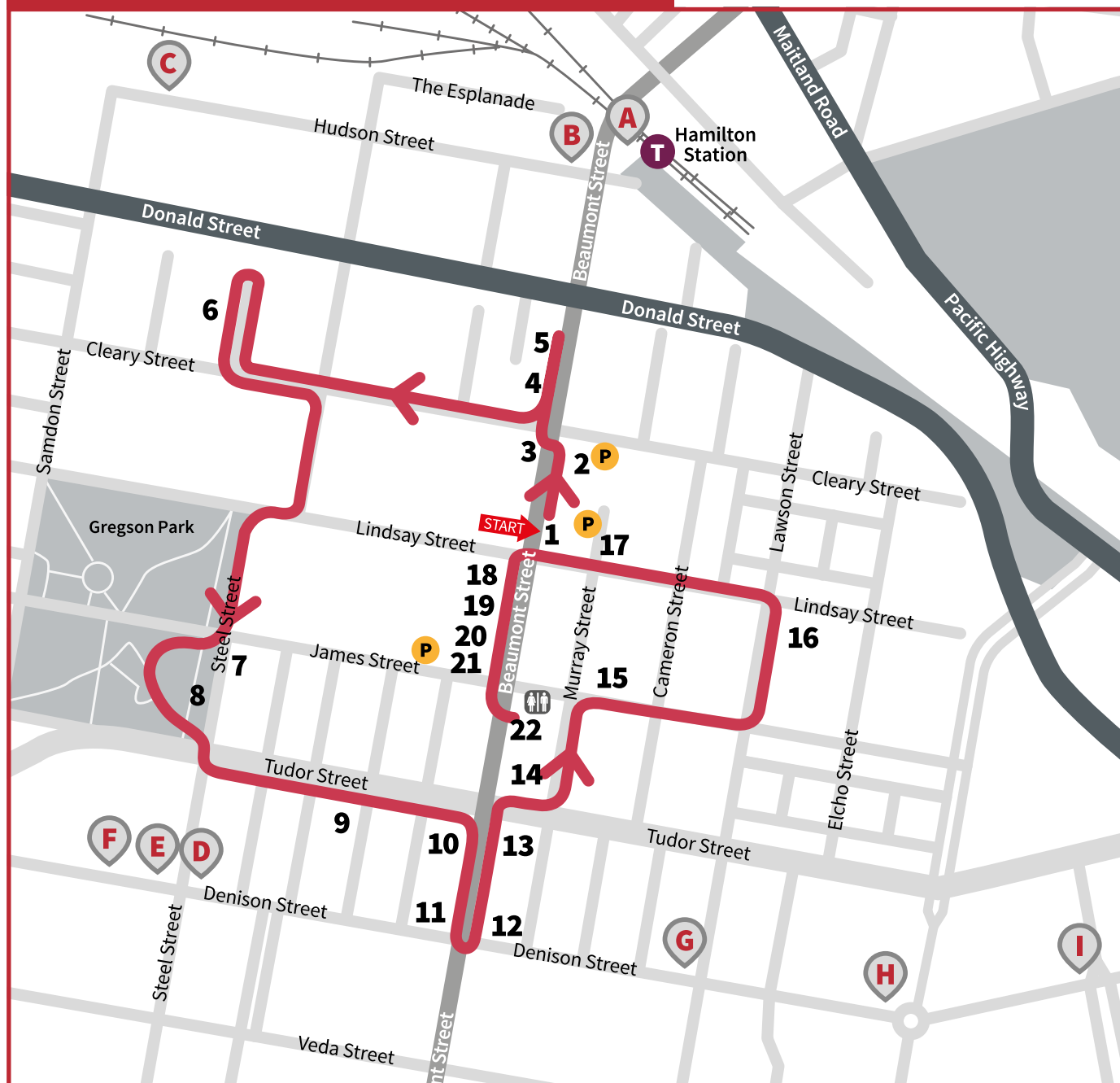
**Gow's Drapery**

60 Beaumont Street

This site is where Gow's Drapery once stood. A Hamilton institution from the 1920s, it rivalled city department stores as 'the place to shop'. Established by Raymond and Frances Gow, the store enabled them to become prosperous entrepreneurs, building the stately home 'Fettercairn' which still can be seen in Lindsay Street. As the world of retailing changed, Gow's Drapery closed in the 1960s and the building was eventually demolished.



Gow and Co. Store, corner of Beaumont and Cleary streets, Hamilton, 1898 (Ralph Snowball, courtesy Cultural Collections, University of Newcastle)

**HAMILTON WALKING TOUR MAP – 2.5KM | 50 MINS | EASY**

Further Afield – more historic sites



Parking



Toilets



Plaque with longer description



NSW State Heritage Inventory Hamilton has over 60 listings.

4

### Gelateria Arena

50 Beaumont Street

The tiny café Gelateria Arena had space for just 15 chairs. For 20 years from 1970, Italian migrant Silvia Saccaro cooked meals for shifts of up to 60 hungry workers, many of them single, surging off the buses after the day's work in Newcastle's industries. With her husband Rigo, the couple changed a typical Australian café to one loved for its home cooked Italian meals – and of course, gelato.

5

### Italian Centre

42–44 Beaumont Street

The Italian Centre, established by the Scalabrini Fathers in 1966, was purpose built with fund raising and volunteer labour from the Italian community. For decades it was the focus of social and spiritual life for Italian-Australians in Hamilton and nearby. In 2002, when the Scalabrini Fathers announced that their Order was leaving Newcastle and selling the Centre, the community was devastated. Efforts to save the Centre failed, but essential aged care services were relocated to Broadmeadow.

6

### Eddy Street residences

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A group of free standing, single storey late Victorian residences is a heritage feature of this short street. Originally built c.1890 to the same design, each has an Italianate façade and an unusual Dutch gable at the front. Despite changes to some of the houses, most of the design features have been preserved.



Eddy St  
Residence

7

### Hellenic Community and Cultural Centre

11–17 Steel Street

The Hellenic Community and Cultural Centre was built in 2002 by Newcastle's Greek community, next to the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Apostles.

8

### Gregson Park

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Once a swampy, weed infested watercourse, today Gregson Park beats as the green heart of Hamilton. Dating from 1889, loosely based on a design by eminent Newcastle landscape architect Alfred Sharp, it was to be devoted solely to the recreation of workers and their families. This traditional Victorian park, with recreational areas, gardens, spreading trees and a children's playground has several heritage monuments – the memorial entrance gates, a war memorial, the Donald Fountain, two 1840s Walker cannons, and more.

9

### Mechanics Institute/Anzac House

117 Tudor Street

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Designed by prolific Newcastle architect F Menkens and built in 1888, the Mechanics Institute was an important resource for young working men keen to educate themselves. In the 1940s the building was bought by the Hamilton RSL Sub Branch and became Anzac House. In recent years, without a function, it deteriorated badly until purchased in 2015 for redevelopment as part of an apartment complex. Heritage aspects will be conserved.



Mechanics Institute, Hamilton, 1892 (Ralph Snowball, courtesy Cultural Collections, University of Newcastle)

10

### First Wesleyan Church, Bank of NSW and the Greater Bank

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The Wesleyan Church was the earliest building on this corner, established in 1869. The former Bank of NSW built this neo-classical heritage building on the site in 1929. It was acquired by the Greater Building Society in 1976. Footings of the western wall of the Wesleyan church have been preserved for view in the foyer of the Greater. Storyboards line the walls of the adjacent café.

11

### Wesley Uniting Church

150 Beaumont Street

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By 1928, Hamilton's population was 19,000 when this second Wesleyan Church was built, taking just three months. Described as 'the cathedral of NSW Methodism', it could seat 600 people. Wesley Church was threatened with demolition after the 1989 earthquake, but was saved in a dramatic bid by its Minister, Reverend John Mason.

12

### Exchange Hotel

125 Denison Street

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The Miners Exchange, as this hotel was originally called, was an easy downhill walk for the coal miners of D Pit (the Borehole). It has operated since 1880 with only a small change to its name, now the Exchange Hotel.

13

### Donald's Corner

131 Beaumont Street

P

One of Hamilton's earliest independent grocery shops was established here in 1865 by George Donald, who became Hamilton's first Mayor. In time, an ironmonger (hardware) and chemist shop were added to the grocery and the buildings became known as Donald's Corner. Damaged in the 1989 earthquake, they were demolished, to be replaced in 2000 by the Boulevard on Beaumont.



Donald's Chemist, Grocer and Ironmonger, c.1900 (Lynn Family, courtesy Newcastle Region Library)



## 14 Scots Kirk 21 Murray Street

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Scots Kirk was considered one of the finest pieces of church architecture in the Northern District when it was dedicated in 1887. The design of Scots Kirk is based on Dunfermline Abbey in Scotland, the birthplace of community and church leader George Donald. It is notable for its 12 beautiful stained glass windows, designed and built by Polish-born Sydney designer John Radecki.

## 15 Volunteer Fire Station 38 James Street

P H

This was the second fire station for the township of Hamilton, manned by volunteers. It became the Hamilton Flats during the 1920s. At risk of demolition after the 1989 earthquake, the building was saved by the Lindsay family. The sculpture above the entrance of Sam Donn, Mayor of Hamilton in 1901, was restored by Victor Lindsay.

## 16 Lawson Street terraces

Some excellent examples of intact free standing Victorian terrace homes can be seen in this historic residential area of Hamilton.

## 17 Pina Deli 48 Lindsay Street

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This is the site of Hamilton's longest surviving continental delicatessen, Pina Deli. The first five owners all included members of the tightly knit Lettesi community, Italian migrants who settled Hamilton in large numbers from the war devastated village of Lettopalena. Images of several owners and staff can be seen on a wall inside what is now Delikacies.



Tony D'Accione in Pina Deli, 1980s (Courtesy D'Accione family)

## 18 C R Deitz and Son 88 Beaumont Street

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The first hardware shop on this site was Hamilton Hardware, established as early as 1930. Bought by Reilly Deitz in 1932, it was run by Reilly and son Doug for more than four decades. In 1974, C R Deitz and Son was sold to long-term employee, Noel Herbert. Returning to its original name, Herbert's Hamilton Hardware was the last hardware store in Beaumont Street.



Hamilton Hardware store, corner Beaumont and Lindsay Streets, c.1930s was first owned by Frank Newey (Courtesy Deitz family)

## 19 Masonic Hall 104 Beaumont Street

P H

Designed by prominent Newcastle architect Frederick Menkens, the Masonic Hall was built in 1907 for the Hamilton Lodge of the Freemasons, Star of the East. Severely damaged in the 1989 earthquake, the building was saved and restored. In 2011, it was redeveloped into a contemporary function centre.

## 20 Northern Star Café 106 Beaumont Street

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When this café opened in the early 1940s, it offered a typical Australian menu of the times. It was especially popular with men working on Newcastle's industrial sites, and later, students. In the 1980s the Italian owners began responding to customers' interest in homestyle Italian food, which quickly became the signature of this enduring Hamilton café.



Northern Star Café, mid 1980s (Courtesy Bizzarri family)

## 21 Northern Star Hotel 112 Beaumont Street

P H

Built in 1877, this is the earliest Hamilton hotel still in existence on the same site, and with the same name. A major redevelopment in 1969 saw much of the existing building, including the cast iron lacework balcony, demolished. In 2016, two generations of the Ramplin family celebrated 30 years as owner-operators of the hotel.



The Northern Star Hotel with balcony, early 1900s (Courtesy Newcastle Region Library)

## 22 Hamilton Municipal Chambers & clock tower 111 Beaumont Street

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This is the third Hamilton Chambers building. Hamilton Municipal Council was incorporated in 1872 and the first Council Chambers was built in 1880. A second building in 1892 was soon replaced by a third in 1919. The distinctive W R Alexander clock tower was added in 1929. On 31 March, 1938 an independent Hamilton Council met for the last time. Damaged in the 1989 earthquake, the clock tower was reinstated using clock faces and mechanisms from the original structure. The building was substantially rebuilt and the James Street plaza created at this time.



The third Hamilton Municipal building, before the 1989 earthquake (Percy Sternbeck, courtesy Coalfields Heritage Group)