

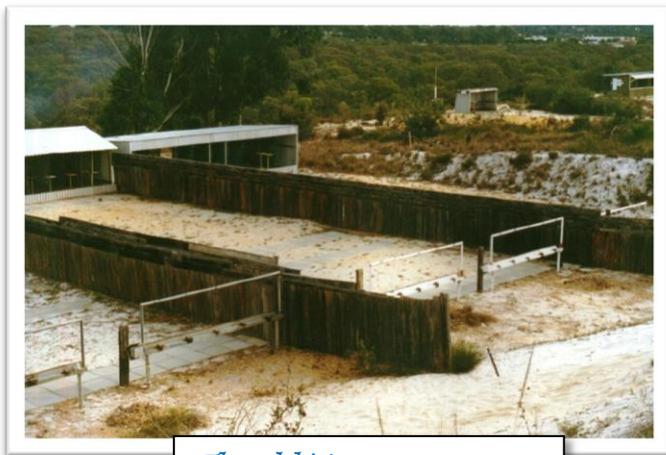
The Whiteman Park International Pistol Club

How it all began...

In the mid 1970's a shotgunner by the name of Jules Steiner began lobbying the State Government to establish a home for international match shooting. Jules was from Germany and he had been to international shooting complexes in Europe where they conducted matches under the ISU (International Shooting Union) rules. These were the same rules that were used for the Olympic Games. In Perth the local shotgun clubs shot to domestic rules. Jules could see the status of the sport in Australia mirroring Europe if Australians could compete in or host international events. The State Government acquired Lew Whiteman's farm in 1977 and Jules saw that being well away from residential areas and not earmarked for development under the Metropolitan Region Scheme, it was an ideal place for a long term facility. Jules had in mind a complex not just for shotgun, but for all shooting sports based on one he had seen in Munich. With determination he lobbied politicians of both sides to build an international shooting complex at Whiteman Park. Jules succeeded and in 1981 the state government announced that they would provide land and some funding. Then in 1983, Minister for Sport and Recreation Keith Wilson officially handed over the land at Whiteman Park.

Subsequently a working party of well regarded shooters formed to organise the planning, design and construction of the complex. There were representatives from shotgun, smallbore rifle, archery and pistol. The state government committed \$2.0 million for stage one which enabled the shotgun and archery facilities to be built plus roads and a caretakers residence. Sadly in 1983 Jules Steiner passed away from a heart attack. He never got to see the fruits of his effort. Stage 1 was finally completed in 1986. Stage 2 was to start a year later and would include an international standard pistol range, but the flow of money had dried up. Nobody knew how to start it again.

A few kilometres away in the Gnangara Pine Plantation, Wanneroo Pistol Club and the Mayne Nickless Armoured Car Division club had been shooting on their ramshackle ranges since the 1970's. The leases were due to expire in 1997 and there were fears they would not be renewed because of residential encroachment. There was also the Postal Institute Pistol Club which had been evicted from their range on Lord Street in East Perth for punching .22 holes in the walls and were limited to



The old Wanneroo range

shooting air pistol at a Telecom building in Bentley. Despite a lack of funding commitment, WAPA were keen to sell Stage 2 to the government and there needed to be a tenant club. WAPA approached the three clubs with the idea of merging into one club and moving to Whiteman Park. Not all members were keen but eventually it was agreed it was best in the long term. A name had already been chosen - the Whiteman Park International Pistol Club. The word international was inserted at the insistence of the West Australian Shooting Association consistent with the

original idea that all the clubs should host international events. Despite no new signs of government interest, in September 1992 the club was incorporated, and in July 1993 all the members of the three old clubs were transferred to the new club.

WAPA did in 1993 create a subcommittee to plan and design the ultimate range. The subcommittee consisted of members with drafting and engineering skills, who then consulted our shooters with international experience to plan the best and most practical features from the best ranges around the world. As good as they were, these plans would never be used. The club would need to make do with something much cheaper if it would ever fire a shot in Whiteman Park.

In 1994 the state government granted just enough money to push up the butts, but that was all they would commit. Thanks to some tragic firearm crimes interstate, funding firearm sport would no longer be a vote winner. But by 1998 the new club had enough savings in the bank to build modest shooting sheds and drag the turning targets from the old ranges to Whiteman Park. On Sunday 7th February 1999 the first shoot was held.



Walls being erected at Whiteman Park

The next milestone event took place almost 10 years later - the closure of the Perth Pistol Club range in Guildford. The Cemeteries Board chose not to renew their lease, leaving the biggest club in WA in limbo. Skilful lobbying by WAPA and WPIPC convinced the Department of Sport and Recreation that by enlarging the range at Whiteman Park, not only would the club be able to handle a doubling of membership, but it could host national championships and international events. Much work went into a high quality development proposal and the government came to the party with \$1.5 million. Construction of additional ranges commenced in early 2010 and was substantially complete in 18 months. In 2013 the club hosted the WA1500 World Championships, finally achieving international status, 30 years after Jules Steiner started the ball rolling.



Cath Fettell opens the World Champs