

# The Holt-Sutherland Estate

In 1881 the Holt-Sutherland Estate Land Company was formed and 1000 acres of the estate was subdivided. Land speculators snapped up 99-year leases, just as the Illawarra Railway Line to Sutherland opened in December 1885. With the district now more accessible, primary producers and tradesmen began to move in.

The first subdivision in 1881 through which ran the government road – now the Princes Highway – was located at the ‘Townlet of Sylvania’. Holt estate tenant farmers also settled where the Five Ways now is and soon the village of Miranda developed.

By 1900 the Holt Sutherland Estate Land Company had leased approximately 1683 acres to tenants. That year when the Holt Sutherland Estate Act was passed, land ownership became possible. A new company was formed, the Holt Sutherland Estate Company, and lessees’ debts were written off.

The unusual lease system had prevented lessees from converting to freehold, but now this could be done for a sum 25 times the value of the annual rent. While there were many conversions, some lessees retained both freehold and leasehold land well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## References:

- Maryanne Larkin, *Sutherland Shire: a history to 1939*, Sutherland History Press, 1998
- Henry E. Holt, *An Energetic Colonist*, Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1972