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AUSTRALIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

Histories of Northern and Regional Australia

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Edited by Lyndon Megarrity,
Benjamin T. Jones, and Joe Collins

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Lyndon Megarrity, Benjamin T. Jones, Joe Collins

"A Land of Great Silences"

Histories of Northern and Regional Australia

Introduction

Embarking on an epic quest from Melbourne to Arnhem Land in 1910, explorer John Stuart Love described northern Australia as a "land of great silences; of wide, unpeopled spaces; of far-off".[1] The vivid imagery reflected the relatively undeveloped nature of the north in terms of people and infrastructure - a stark reality that has haunted, daunted and inspired many Australians right up to the present day. Love's description also serves as an apt metaphor for the historiography of northern and regional Australia. Since colonisation, the majority of Australians and the majority of Australian historians have lived and worked in the south-east of the continent. Northern and regional Australia have been the focus of some significant research but it remains a land of great silences with many of its stories yet to be told. This special issue of the 'Zeitschrift für Australienstudien | Australian Studies Journal' makes some small effort to break this silence.

This special issue is intended to be a lasting outcome of the 2025 Australian Historical Association conference hosted by James Cook University (JCU) and Central Queensland University (CQUniversity) between 30 June and 3 July. The event took place in Townsville, Queensland, representing the first time the peak event for Australian historians had taken place in northern Australia for 30 years. One of the conference streams focused on histories of northern and regional Australia and the articles in this special issue come from those papers. While the broad theme is northern and regional Australia, the focus of the articles is generally on Northern Queensland. In this edition, we define 'Northern Queensland' as those parts of Queensland which are north of the Tropic of Capricorn. There is just the one article venturing as far south as the Boyne Valley in Central Queensland – still 500 kilometres north of Brisbane.

In addition to nine articles, this special issue contains an essay on the writing of northern Australian history, focusing on a dynamic period of scholarship in the History department of James Cook University. Taken as a whole, the research presented here demonstrates the variety of ways governments and citizens have tried to develop the 'neglected north'.

The contributors in this issue of the journal are often building upon academic work on Northern Queensland that has emerged since the 1960s. Geoffrey Bolton's 'A Thousand Miles Away' was the first academic study of North Queensland published,[2] and it influenced the work of other scholars in the field. In particular,

1 Sarah Irving: Governing Nature.
2 See G. C. Bolton: A Thousand Miles Away.

Bolton's emphasis on primary industry (sugar, mining, pastoralism) tended to overshadow the urban history of the region.

Since the publication of Bolton's influential general history, much scholarly work on the north has been the product of historians working at James Cook University[3] in Townsville and, later, at its Cairns campus. Due in large part to the encouragement and efforts of JCU's head of history (1967-1989) Professor Brian Dalton, JCU-based historians such as Henry Reynolds, Clive Moore, Peter Bell, Diane Menghetti and countless others produced important historical work in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, often self-published by the JCU Department of History and Politics. Independent historians such as Ruth and John Kerr also contributed greatly to an understanding of the history of the north's major industries such as sugar and mining.[4]

In more recent decades, the origins and development of the 'Empty North' concept has captivated many historians, both those residing locally and in other parts of Australia. Those who saw the north this way believed that its very emptiness was a temptation for foreign powers to invade. Such rhetoric was also coupled with the notion that the north's potential would be fulfilled through government investment in industry and services. The 'Empty North' was a key focus of Russell McGregor's 2016 monograph on northern development. Elsewhere, the history of Northern Australia loomed large in Warwick Anderson's historical work on tropical medicine and David Walker's study of Australia's anxiety towards Asia (the so-called 'near north'). A younger generation of scholars such as Lyndon Megarrity and Pat White have also explored the history of northern development in their work.[5]

While much previous research has focused on rural industries and 'big picture' development, this special edition encouragingly showcases the diversity of regional and northern Queensland historical research being pursued in the mid-2020s. It includes articles on the visual arts, tourism, literature, academia, soldier settlement schemes, tropical architecture, South Sea Islanders, and music. It also features essays that discuss the history of Townsville as a civic and commercial centre.

This special issue seeks to remind readers that the Australian story has always been far more than the experience in its bustling southern cities. There are still many 'silences' and gaps to fill regarding the story of the north in particular. It is vital that the regions and tropical Australia are more comprehensively considered by historians who make generalisations about the nation as a whole. The editors hope that readers not only enjoy learning about regional and Northern

3 JCU was originally known as the Townsville University College (established 1961), attached to University of Queensland until it became the autonomous James Cook University of North Queensland in 1970.

4 It should be noted that especially since the 1970s, Australian National University has been a strong contributor to studies of Northern Australia, particularly in relation to the Northern Territory and Indigenous affairs. CQUniversity and its predecessors have also had a strong record in promoting the history of their region through scholarship.

5 Russell McGregor: Environmental, Race and Nationhood in Australia; Warwick Anderson: The Cultivation of Whiteness; David Walker: Anxious Nation; Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams; Patrick T. White: Northern Promise.

Australia but that future scholars feel inspired to write Northern Australia back into the national story.

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Lyndon Megarrity

The Suburban Frontier

Townsville in the 1960s

Abstract: This article is an edited transcript of a keynote address delivered at the Australian Historical Association Conference held in Townsville from 30 June to 3 July 2025. It provides a social, cultural, and economic snapshot of Townsville during the 1960s. The paper also highlights the establishment of institutions which brought greater national attention to the unofficial capital of North Queensland, including the establishment of the Townsville University College (now James Cook University) and Lavarack Barracks.

The 1960s never really went away. Born just before tropical Cyclone Althea in 1971, you might think I was a child of the seventies but many of my cultural references growing up came from the 1960s. As a child, I had a TV diet of such sixties programmes as 'Get Smart', 'Skippy' and the 'Banana Splits'. Simon & Garfunkel was always on the stereo, and at school, we learned to sing the more earnest folk songs of Ralph McTell, Bob Dylan, and Peter, Paul & Mary in music class.

As I've grown older, I have watched as the 1960s has become simplified for public consumption as a nostalgic narrative of civil rights struggles, free love, bra burning, and Anti-Vietnam student protests. However, when historians (who should know better) try to define the 1960s in these terms alone, then you know that they've left out much of the real story of the sixties.

The history of Australia in the 1960s has largely been written by men and women in Melbourne and Sydney. And the history of Queensland in the 1960s has often been written by Brisbane academics whose main focus is Brisbane, not the state as a whole. Believe it or not, there's still a great deal to discover about the 1960s, especially when it comes to understanding the development of regional areas such as North Queensland. We are too defined in our history by our great and glorious capital cities. Places like Townsville have a history of their own.

Today I'd like to share with you a short snapshot of Townsville in the 1960s, probably the most important decade in terms of its transition from being a big country town to being the big city that it is today.

Townsville before the 1960s

When I say that Townsville was a big country town before the 1960s, I am not implying that it was not an important centre before this time. In fact, from the 1880s onwards, Townsville was unofficially the economic capital of North Queensland. With its fine port and railway facilities, Townsville was where the North's sugar, cattle, and minerals were exported to Australia and the world. As

a regional hub, it attracted labourers, merchants, teachers, bankers, and families in larger numbers than its civic competitors such as Mackay and Cairns.[1]

Townsville's civic development was nevertheless held back before the 1960s by a number of factors. First, the wet season could cause Townsville to be isolated. Second, it was easy to feel cut off from the rest of Australia because of the poor roads heading down south and the fact that the important political centres were in distant Brisbane and Canberra. Finally, for many ambitious young people, it was difficult to see the advantage of staying in Townsville.[2]

There were no opportunities to do tertiary training unless you moved away or had the option of undertaking external studies. Some talent was wasted because parents could either not afford to send their children away to Brisbane or did not see the point. Many students who moved away were lost to Townsville forever as they developed new friendships and interests down south.[3]

Townsville in the 1960s: A Less Isolated Community

During the 1960s, however, the idea of Townsville as isolated, cut off from the rest of Australia and not of much national importance rapidly changed, at least among locals and the more informed government and business elites in Brisbane and elsewhere. Many Australians remained indifferent to Townsville's existence, but there is no doubt that the 1960s saw an explosion of commercial, civic and government activity which made Townsville people more forward looking, outward looking and confident within themselves.

Between 1959 and 1964, several long-term Townsville-related projects were initiated and had mostly come to fruition. The Mount Isa Mines copper refinery near the suburbs of Stuart and Wulguru, the reconstruction of the Mt Isa to Townsville railway, and the creation of the University College of Townsville in 1961 were among the most celebrated.[4]

Perhaps most crucial of all was the sealing of the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and Cairns, which from 1964 onwards was all bitumen surface. As Townsville politician Harry Hopkins proudly declared: "In most weathers, our isolation is a thing of the past. The effect of this will be profound".[5] Better roads meant greater commercial trade and traffic to Townsville and vice versa, but the better roads also encouraged Townsville people to travel for holidays and experience other places as well.

1 See Geoff Hansen: How Goldfields Made Townsville, pp. 6-11; Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 20; G. C. Bolton: A Thousand Miles Away, p. 330.
2 See Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, pp. 94 f.
3 See Peter Bell: Our Place in the Sun, p. 15.
4 G. C. Bolton: A Thousand Miles Away, p. 330; Ian N. Moles: Townsville South, 1963, p. 305.
5 North Queensland Register, 2 June 1962, p. 1 (Pulling Together to 'People the North').

CSIRO

There were yet more changes to the Townsville landscape. In 1962, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), opened a branch of its Division of Tropical Pastures in Townsville, followed by the establishment of the Davies Laboratory in 1965. As I have noted elsewhere, the "CSIRO's work on tropical pastures" in Townsville "proved important to the beef cattle industry for the development of improved pastures appropriate to the tropical soils and variable climate".[6]

Lavarack Barracks

The Commonwealth's decision to open an army base in Townsville was also pivotal in transforming the town and widening its sense of national importance. Opened in 1966 by Prime Minister Harold Holt, Lavarack Barracks subsequently became Australia's largest army base, "providing a training centre for soldiers during the Vietnam War".[7] It would go on to make a major contribution to Townsville's economy through the sheer number of soldiers and their families transferring to the city to live and work.

It should also be noted that a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base had been established in Townsville during the early stages of World War II.[8] Combined, Lavarack Barracks and the RAAF base cemented Townsville's reputation as a garrison city. It has remained a garrison city. A wise local politician must therefore be conscious of the views of both current and former members of the armed services.

Given the renewed strategic importance of Townsville following the opening of Lavarack Barracks, it is not surprising that US President Lyndon Johnson put Townsville on his itinerary when he toured Australia in 1966. Johnson, who as a US Naval Officer had visited Townsville in 1942, paid a nostalgic visit to his former home away from home, Buchanan's Hotel.[9]

Education Institutions

Aside from the new army base, the city saw the establishment of other key institutions. In 1969, for example, the Townsville Teachers College opened. The college was adjacent to the new Douglas campus of University College of Townsville, which became a fully-fledged University in its own right in 1970. It was now

6 Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 100.
7 Ibid., p. 100.
8 See Keith Richmond: The Edge of the Storm, pp. 4-13.
9 See Lyndon Johnson: Remarks at Townsville upon Departing from Australia.

the James Cook University of North Queensland, and it was the first university in Northern Australia.[10]

Townsville's Growth

All these new regional and national projects brought many newcomers to the city, all needing accommodation, services and entertainment. Between 1961 and 1971 Townsville's urban population grew from 51 143 to 95 464.[11] With most families wanting their own homes, former fringe suburbs like Mundingburra were now in the middle of town. Relatively new suburbs like Gulliver, Pimlico and Aitkenvale were expanding, putting pressure on the local council for more facilities and infrastructure.[12]

So there was an unprecedented explosion of new projects, new ideas, new capital and new sense of civic purpose in Townsville during the 1960s. In many ways, Townsville was in the right place at the right time, but the city was fortunate enough to have many forward-looking citizens who were able to fully capitalise on the town's good fortune.

Townsville = Northern Australia?

It is fair to say that Townsville was the chief beneficiary of the post-war pressure on the Commonwealth Government to develop Northern Australia. During the 1950s and 1960s, politicians from all parties accused the Liberal-Country Party Coalition Government of neglecting the North. Furthermore, it was argued that the Commonwealth was failing to provide the dams and other infrastructure that would fulfil the potential of Northern Australia's mineral and agricultural resources. Indeed, the federal Labor Party in the 1960s campaigned heavily in North Queensland on a platform of developing the North and creating a new Snowy Mountains Scheme in the tropics.[13]

It was also a time when military and political unrest in Indonesia and Vietnam encouraged many Australians to believe that Northern Australia needed a huge injection of European settlers and industry to protect its vulnerable borders. This was the last gasp of the racially-based fear that the so-called Empty North would succumb to Asian invasion if northern development was not accelerated.[14]

10 See Peter Bell: Our Place in the Sun, p. 27. It was not until 1980 that all university departments were transferred from the original Pimlico campus to the new Douglas campus. See ibid., p. 43.

11 See Commonwealth Statistician: Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June, 1961 Vol. III. – Queensland, Part V. – Population and Dwellings in Localities, p. 35; Commonwealth Statistician: Census of Population and Housing, 30 June 1971, Bulletin 6. Population and Dwellings in Local Government Areas and Urban Centres Part 3. Queensland, p. 2.

12 See Ian N. Moles: Townsville South, 1963, p. 306.

13 This section draws on Lyndon Megarrity: The Neglected North, pp. 318-321; Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 95 ff.; Russell McGregor: Environment, Race, and Nationhood in Australia, pp. 212-216.

14 The concept of the 'Empty North' is explored in David Walker: Anxious Nation, pp. 113-126.

Closer to home, the North Queensland Local Government Association formed the People the North Committee, which aimed to massively increase the North's population to maximise the region's prosperity and make it more strategically important to the Commonwealth. Under the leadership of Townsville alderman Harry Hopkins, People the North engaged in a skilful publicity campaign through TV, newspapers and political lobbying. It tried to convince sceptical southerners that the suburban lifestyles of Sydney and Melbourne could be replicated in the North, from cutting the grass to cleaning the car on Sunday. The People the North campaign attracted national attention in the first half of the 1960s.

While the Commonwealth governments of Robert Menzies, Harold Holt and John Gorton knew they had to respond in some way to the strong political and media interest in the North's potential, they were also understandably concerned that spending money on large-scale dams and agricultural subsidies might lead to a circus full of White Elephants. It was far easier to spend money in Southern Australia where markets were well developed and good infrastructure was in place.

So what could the Commonwealth do about the North? It was a tough question. They needed to be seen to be doing something, while avoiding projects that might come to nothing. A big part of the Federal solution was to invest in projects that encouraged the social and economic growth of Townsville, the unofficial capital of Northern Australia.

Townsville to Mount Isa Railway Reconstruction

The Commonwealth's £20 million loan to the Queensland Government to reconstruct the Mount Isa to Townsville railway during the 1960s is a case in point. It benefited not only leading base metal producer Mount Isa Mines but also contributed substantially to the continued prosperity of Townsville's copper refinery and port, the latter being a major exporter of North Queensland's mineral resources. Indeed, Prime Minister Robert Menzies privately told Queensland Premier Frank Nicklin that the reconstructed Mount Isa to Townsville line "will make its largest appeal to all our people if it is seen as something which will open up a new era of development, not only for one Company but for the whole of the North".[15]

In addition to the reconstructed rail link to Mt Isa, Townsville benefited from Australian Government funding of a branch of the CSIRO, the partial federal subsidisation of the University College, and the Commonwealth's creation of a large army base. The Federal government could point to all of these projects and say that they were supporting the development of Northern Australia.

15 Menzies cited in Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 88. See also Lyndon Megarrity: Menzies's Close Shave, pp. 211 f.

Townsville: The North's Most Developed City

There were a number of compelling reasons why the Commonwealth made Townsville its northern showcase. The most obvious reason was that Townsville was the most developed city in the tropical north during the 1960s. It had reasonable, if not perfect, infrastructure such as sealed roads and water supply. Its long-term status as a regional hub had ensured that it had many of the facilities that newly arriving families wanted, including parks, supermarkets, hospitals, a good choice of schools and cinemas. Further, it made sense to concentrate major regional resources in a specific location, and Townsville was the northern city with the largest population.

But while Townsville had a strong case for Commonwealth funding, so did Mackay and Cairns. It was not a foregone conclusion that Townsville would lead the north in terms of its educational, government, military and commercial facilities in the 1960s. In fact, one of the major reasons why Townsville developed so rapidly in this era was due to the foresight of its local council.

A Visionary Local Council and Townsville's Growth

Between 1949 and 1967, the Townsville City Council was run by a group of businessmen and professionals called the Townsville Citizens' Association. The Mayor for most of this period was the owner of Angus Smith's sports store, book store and newsagency, that is, Mr. Angus Smith himself.[16] Smith was a former Royal Australian Air Force pilot who served with distinction in World War II. He was well known as a tennis player, and when Dr Rex Patterson was running for the federal seat of Dawson in 1966, he thought it worth mentioning that he had beaten Angus Smith in the 1946 North Queensland tennis championship.[17]

Under Smith's leadership, the Townsville City Council made vast improvements to essential services such as water, sewerage and roads. Such public works helped the town recover from the crippling infrastructure problems it suffered as a result of hosting tens of thousands of US and Australian troops during the Second World War. Smith's legacy included the centenary fountain at Anzac Park and the completion of the Tobruk Memorial Baths, at which iconic Olympic swimmers like Dawn Fraser trained. However, perhaps the biggest legacy of the Angus Smith years was the council's facilitation of big regional projects through the strategic gifting of council land.[18]

When the University of Queensland (UQ) took the initiative to establish a branch of UQ in the suburb of Pimlico in Townsville, they had initially seen it as a place where students would do one or two years' study, and then transfer

16 Information on Angus Smith and his legacy draws on Lyndon Megarrity: Smith, Angus James (1911-1997).

17 Patterson defeated Smith in the men's doubles, not the singles, although this was not specified in the Dawson campaign. See Lyndon Megarrity: Rex Patterson, p. 15.

18 This section on the gifting of council of land draws on Peter Bell: Our Place in the Sun, pp. 16-27.

to Brisbane. Deputy Mayor George Roberts was one of many local residents who had greater ambitions for the local university. He had a vision of a university in the countryside, a place where students and staff "could relax and think deeply".[19]

Roberts persuaded the Townsville City Council to purchase land from a farming family at what is now the site of the James Cook University in the suburb of Douglas. In 1962, the Council successfully transferred the Douglas land to the University of Queensland to be used for the Townsville University. This visionary decision by the council helped to give North Queensland its own independent university in a relatively brief period of time.

The Council also gifted council land near Douglas to the CSIRO, which enabled it to establish the Davies Laboratory in 1965. Still more council land near the Douglas campus was given free of charge to the Queensland Department of Education, which then built the Townsville Teachers College, opening in time for the 1969 teaching year.

The Townsville City Council's gifting of land to education and research institutions showed local government at its very best. People like Angus Smith and George Roberts helped Townsville to take advantage of its position as a regional centre and provide opportunities for cultural enrichment and economic growth.

Without a strong visionary council, Townsville in the 1960s would probably have been a different place. It would no doubt have continued to grow, but at a slower pace and more young people would have been lost to the north.

The People of Townsville

I have given you the history of Townsville in broad, big picture terms. But now I would like to zoom a little closer, if I may, and talk about what it was like to live in Townsville during the 1960s. The demographics of Townsville back then were fairly homogenous. People of British or Irish extraction predominated, and the social and spiritual role of the Protestant and Catholic churches remained a vital part of many people's lives. This was not dissimilar to many other places in Australia at that time. Despite the very White Australian atmosphere, one of Townsville's leading businessmen in the 1960s was the Chinese Australian Philip Leong, who was developing a mini-empire of supermarkets across Townsville's suburban landscape.[20]

First Nations People

As the 1960s progressed, the number of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people living in Townsville began to rise sharply. This was partly because official state policies began to encourage First Nations people to lead more independent lives. Accordingly, many Aboriginal people started to leave missions and

19 George Roberts, 2008, cited in ibid., p. 18.
20 See Townsville Bulletin, 20 March 2007, p. 27 (Pioneers: The Leong Family).

reserves for places like Townsville.[21] It should also be remembered that Torres Strait Islanders had had a history of working on the mainland since the post-war years, and Townsville's job opportunities encouraged many islanders to settle there.[22] One such Townsville resident of note was Eddie Mabo, whose successful land claim later changed Australian law forever.[23]

Another significant First Nations figure of the time was social activist and educator Evelyn Scott, who was involved with the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League. She campaigned for a YES Vote in the Commonwealth Constitutional Referendum of 1967, which symbolised the growing movement towards national inclusion for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people in the community. Between 1997 and 2000, she served as chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.[24]

The significant presence of First Nations people in Townsville also inspired local historians such as Henry Reynolds and Noel Loos to conduct pioneering studies of the Indigenous side of North Queensland's frontier past.[25] There still remains, however, a lot of history to write about Townsville's First Nations communities from the 1960s onwards.

Women in Townsville

Like elsewhere in Australia at the time, the notion of the husband as the breadwinner and the wife as the home maker and family nurturer was still very strong. Living in the newer suburbs could be isolating for many housewives, as they often experienced poor public transport and lack of community centres.[26] Because women in the post-war years tended to marry and have children early, many older women felt a yearning to work outside the home as their children went to school and became independent. Such women were often held back by out of date qualifications.

The historian reading 1967 issues of the 'Townsville Daily Bulletin' encounters many different perspectives on the lives of women. For example, there are ads for Sanatogen, the "only" protein nerve tonic. "A month ago, my nerves were in a dreadful state", the fictitious Mrs Burrows writes, "I was always in tears and felt everything was too much to cope with. I felt like running away from my family". Then she tried Sanatogen and everything turned out just fine.[27]

Elsewhere in the 'Bulletin', the members of the northern division of the Queensland Country Women's Association proudly pose next to their award winning

21 See Henry Reynolds: Why Weren't We Told?, p. 29.
22 See Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 141.
23 See Noel Loos, Koiki Mabo: Eddie Koiki Mabo.
24 See Townsville Bulletin, 22 September 2017, p. 42 (Amos Aikman: Champion for her People).
25 See Trisha Fielding: A University for the North, p. 30.
26 See National Council of Women (Townsville Branch): Some Aspects of Development in Townsville, based on Branches of Study outlined by the Duke of Edinburgh's Study Conference and printed in 1968 for the Duke of Edinburgh's Third Commonwealth Study Conference. Item located in the National Council of Women (Townsville Branch) archive, held by James Cook University Library Special Collections.
27 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 24 April 1967, p. 7 (Advertisement).

shortbread, fruit and orange cake, chutney and jam.[28] By contrast, the Townsville branch of the Local Government Women's Association make passionate appeals for women to devote more time to public life, claiming in the 'Bulletin' that "Civic Management could be regarded as housekeeping for the city, and women could contribute if given a chance".[29]

Indeed, the sixties saw the political rise of Joan Innes Reid, a medical social worker. In 1967, Joan became the first female councillor on the Townsville City Council and later served as deputy mayor. Joan was subsequently employed by James Cook University as a senior tutor in Behavioural Sciences, and helped pave the way for the creation of the university's Bachelor of Social Work degree.[30]

Another significant Townsville woman who made a mark in public from the 1960s onwards was the teacher and activist Margaret Reynolds, who moved to the north with her husband Henry Reynolds when he took up a position at the University College. In 1966, Margaret initiated a local branch of the anti-conscriptionist Save Our Sons movement and was instrumental in the creation of the One People of Australia League Kindergarten for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, later known as Kindergarten Headstart. Among her many public achievements, she went on to become Queensland's first female Labor senator in 1983 and served as a Minister in the Hawke Government.[31]

Changing Times

As we've seen, cultural expectations often held back women during this time. At the same time, the sixties was also probably the last time that Townsville could be regarded as a working man's town. There were two meatworks, skilled and unskilled work was available on the railways or the copper refinery, and many local factories were thriving. A cement works, a brick works, a tin can factory, glass works, sawmilling, and paint manufacture were among the many local employment opportunities for blue collar workers during this era.[32]

However, to quote our friend Bob Dylan, the times they were a'changing. The port was handling more sugar, meat and mining concentrates than ever before, but increasing automation meant that fewer labourers were needed.[33]

On the other hand, white collar jobs in the professions, private industry and the public service were providing more opportunities to the younger generation. Realising this, parents and officials encouraged students to stay at school longer to gain more qualifications. This was assisted by the Queensland Government's

28 See Townsville Daily Bulletin, 24 April 1967, p. 7 (Q.C.W.A. Cooking Competition).
29 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 24 April 1967, p. 7 (Greater Public Role for Women is Urged).
30 See Heather Grant: Great Queensland Women, p. 20; Joan Innes Reid with Ros Thorpe: Tropical Odyssey, pp. 203-206.
31 See Rodney Sullivan: Reynolds, Margaret (1941-), pp. 204-209.
32 See Ian N. Moles: Townsville South, 1963, p. 305.
33 See National Council of Women (Townsville Branch), Some Aspects of Development in Townsville, based on Branches of Study outlined by the Duke of Edinburgh's Study Conference and printed in 1968 for the Duke of Edinburgh's Third Commonwealth Study Conference. Item located in the National Council of Women (Townsville Branch) archive, held by the James Cook University Library Special Collections.

decision to raise school leaving age from 14 to 15, which came into force in 1965.[34] Further, the existence of the Townsville University College encouraged a small but growing number of North Queenslanders to seek tertiary education.

The University College: Culture Shock

Fig. 1. Professor Brian Dalton, circa 1970

The university lecturers who taught Townsville students in the 1960s were often undergoing culture shock at the same time. Many had travelled from southern areas to take up a position in the tropics, and it took a bit of getting used to. History Professor Brian Dalton (Fig. 1) echoed the comments of many University appointees who travelled to isolated North Queensland in the 1960s: he thought it was dreadful! Dalton's reaction was made worse by the fact that he arrived in January, the hottest part of the year. He especially remembered the discomfort of travelling up the coastal roads in Queensland. Most of the roads were sealed, but were frequently not wide enough to permit two cars to travel in opposite directions without swerving to the side of the road on approach of traffic.[35]

However, many academics grew to enjoy life in Townsville. Because it was a small campus, they had more chance of standing out and more opportunities to take on leadership roles than if they had stayed in Brisbane or Sydney.[36] There was also a bit of time for rest, relaxation and collegiality. For example, historian Peter Bell has told the story of a 1960s event held in the student refectory at Pimlico, where they had a procession with everyone dressed in academic gowns. Because the refectory didn't have a liquor licence, "each member of the academic procession carried a plastic esky full of ice and drinks".[37]

34 See Greg Logan, Eddie Clarke: State Education in Queensland, p. 24.
35 Brian Dalton, interviewed by Barbara Erskine, 19 August 1992. Located in North Queensland Oral History Collection, held by James Cook University Library Special Collections.
36 For details of staff and student experiences in the 1960s, see Anne Deane [et al.] (editorial committee): Year of 1967. There are several other booklets in this retrospective series of staff and student reminiscences, ranging from 1961 to 1970.
37 Peter Bell: Our Place in the Sun, p. 27.

Townsville Cinema and Musical Offerings

Apart from BYO academic parades,[38] what else was there to do in Townsville during the 1960s? Well one cheap option was the cinema. There were many cinemas in Townsville, including the Astor in Currajong, the Esquire in North Ward, the Regent Theatre in Hermit Park, and, of course, the Wintergarden in the city, which also hosted live performances.[39] But if you were going on a date in 1964, you might consider going to one of Townsville's fine drive-in movie theatres, such as the Norline, where you could watch the delightful Helen Shapiro and Chubby Checker in their brand new movie 'It's Trad, Dad!'.[40]

For the musically inclined, Townsville had a lot to offer. For the younger set, there were bands like the Squares. In 1968, they advertised one of their gigs in the 'Townsville Daily Bulletin' with the following phrase: "Flower Power!! At the 'Scene'. Music by the Squares. A prize to the swingingest love child".[41] Where did this groovy band play for these wild Townsville scenesters? Where else but the Young Women's Christian Association Hall in Denham Street?

For those of a more mature vintage, there was old time dancing at the Oonoonba Youth Club, the Hotel Allen Dinner Dance, or perhaps a tête a tête at the Vale Hotel's "spacious lounge" and "beautiful tropical garden setting".[42] In 1964, the Great Northern Hotel was offering piano entertainment on Saturday morning for wives patiently waiting for their husbands to finish their beer. "LADIES", the advertisement read: "While waiting for Dad, why not rest in comfort in our well-conducted Lounge at the Great Northern?".[43]

Townsville on the Weekend

On the weekend, Townsville people had a good range of options for family outings. You could enjoy a picnic at the Queen's Gardens or the Strand (the latter being a popular beachfront location). You could go for a swim at the beach, drive to the Town Common or perhaps take a ferry ride over to Magnetic Island. By the end of sixties, Magnetic Island had many attractions. You could pat Koalas and "buy a locally made palm leaf hat" from Jim Moore, the "hatter of Horseshoe Bay".[44] You could also take in the Nelly Bay aquarium with its sharks, turtles and giant clams.

Apart from family outings, many Townsvilleans spent their weekends playing sport. Tennis, cricket, basketball, squash, the various codes of football and lawn bowls were all very popular.

38 BYO is Australian slang for 'Bring your own alcohol'. BYO is often used in the context of parties and other social functions.
39 See Townsville Daily Bulletin, 1 April 1967, p. 11 (Advertisement).
40 See Townsville Daily Bulletin, 17 October 1964, p. 11 (Advertisement).
41 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 22 November 1968, p. 19 (Advertisement).
42 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 1 April 1967, p. 11 (Advertisement).
43 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 17 October 1964, p. 11 (Advertisement).
44 George Farwell: Sun Country, p. 42.

Being almost totally a sports-free zone, I'm not really the best person to talk about Townsville's sporting history, but I can't discuss the sixties without mentioning the annual Magnetic Island to Townsville swim. Chaired by local jeweller Pat Molloy, the Magnetic Island to Townsville swim was the central attraction of a larger festival called the Magnetikhana, held over three weekends.[45]

It was a big deal in the sixties. There were woodchopping contests, fashion parades, fireworks at the Strand, merry-go-rounds for the kids, a tagged fishing competition, a town procession led by Father Neptune, and last but not least, the judging of that year's Magnetikhana Queen. The winning Queen in 1964 received a gold wristlet watch, a trip for two to Brisbane flying Ansett-ANA airways and the chance to see her face on the 1965 published programme. Such beauty and personality contests for women started to go out of fashion as the sixties turned into the seventies.

The Creative Arts

In terms of artistic culture, the 1960s saw quiet but positive growth. By 1968 an art society had been running for five years in North Ward with a membership of 100. Classes were held two to three times a week, and travelling exhibitions such as those organised by the Queensland Art Gallery and Esso found a ready Townsville audience.[46]

There was also a lively local theatre scene. At the tail end of the decade, three amateur dramatic societies amalgamated to form the Townsville Little Theatre. It is still going strong in 2025.[47]

In addition, there were ambitious locals who sought to foster a strong literary culture in the region. With the strong initial involvement of English teachers at Pimlico high school, an enthusiastic group self-published what they claimed was North Queensland's first literary magazine. They called it, appropriately enough, the 'North'. Published through most of the 1960s, the journal offered a chance for locals to express their views on life and literature in the North.

I don't feel qualified to judge the merits of the North's poetic contributions, but I do like the verse of one anonymous poet, which reads:

> Drought brings inertia
> To all my nasturtia![48]

Townsville in the sixties also boasted a successful songwriter and performer named John Ashe, whose songs were recorded by Slim Dusty and Chad Morgan. Ashe's better known songs tended to be topical and country-flavoured, such as his immortal comic ditty 'The Juvenile Delinquent' (1961), which, among other

45 See Magnetikhana Programme for 1964, held in James University Library Special Collections. See also Geoff Hansen, Diane Menghetti: Caged, p. 20.
46 See Barbara Douglas: The Art Society, pp. 25 f.
47 For more details of the formation of the Townsville Little Theatre, see Performing Arts Historical Society, Townsville Inc. (PAHST).
48 Anonymous, included in North, No. 6, 1968, p. 28.

Fig. 2. View of Castle Hill and Queen's Gardens, Townsville

things, attributed delinquency to sex and violence in motion pictures.[49] As local author Suzy Dickson wrote of Ashe's versifying skills in 1964: "While the Civic Fathers might hesitate to use these songs in a publicity drive, residents of the Townsville district cannot fail to respond to their authenticity".[50]

Recreational Reading

Aside from poetry and song, one of the most popular cultural activities of Townsvilleans in this era was recreational reading. Between 1965 and 1966, library membership rose from 2700 to 4260. Alderman Harry Hopkins suggested that this was "indicative of the end of the television infatuation period".[51] Perhaps not, but suddenly the resources and facilities of Townsville's CBD library seemed insufficient and distant to residents of Townsville's newer suburbs like Wulguru and Aitkenvale.

The Council committed funds in 1969 to build the Aitkenvale Library, which opened in 1971.[52] This was one example of the growth of Townsville: while then, as now, Townsvilleans had a sentimental attachment to the traditional city shopping precinct, the real centre of the city was moving from Flinders Street to the suburbs which were expanding inland along Ross River.

49 Recordings of Chad Morgan singing 'The Juvenile Delinquent' are available in many analogue and digital formats.
50 Suzy Dickson: Culture in North Queensland, p. 5.
51 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 21 May 1966, p. 2 (Big Upsurge in Use of Library).
52 See Richard Sayers: The History of Townsville Library Service, pp. 26-29.

Reflections

In 1970, Paul Wherry of Charters Towers said that he was "convinced […] that in another twenty years Townsville will be so overgrown, so cramped for living space" that people will "commute by air to Townsville, and live in the perfect climate of Charters Towers".[53] Well, it didn't quite work out like that. Townsville has continued to grow and attract new industries, new opportunities and new people. And I believe that the town that so many of us enjoy living in today, with all its promise and potential, owes much to the 1960s, which was a great catalyst to the long-term development of Townsville and its citizens. As a result, it has community, education and economic facilities that many regional towns can only dream of, and it is still a great place to live (Fig. 2).

At the same time, it has a built and natural heritage worth preserving. The challenge for historians and Townsville residents is to build an awareness among politicians, urban planners and developers that retaining and remembering the unique aspects of Townsville's past can only enhance the city's appeal to visitors and new residents alike.

And places like the Strand – where so many family memories have been made – need to be treated with care and respect so that families in the future can make their own memories there too.

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Fig. 1: Professor Brian Dalton, circa 1970, © James Cook University, JCU Records.
Fig. 2: View of Castle Hill and Queen's Gardens, Townsville. Photograph by R.G. Megarrity, 2014.

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'The Man Will Never Be A Success'

The Boyne Valley Soldier Settlement Scheme and Human Capital

Abstract: The Australian Soldier Settlement Scheme after World War I is generally acknowledged as a policy failure with few applicants ultimately able to transition to life as successful farmers. The existing literature, as well as the influential Pike Report highlights systematic failures by the government. Poor planning, a lack of training, inconsistent decision making, and a slow and inflexible bureaucracy, are often cited. This article considers the small settlement in the Boyne Valley in Central Queensland and argues that, in addition to the scheme being poorly managed a lack of human capital was the most significant factor leading to failure. Drawing on an analysis of 104 Dead Farm Files held in the Queensland State archives, this article argues that failure would have been likely even under a well-managed scheme as too many of the men were damaged mentally and physically from their war experience.

> "Tell me, O muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations with whose manners and customs he was acquainted; moreover, he suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home."[1]

The Christmas Card produced by the Queensland Lands Department in 1920 proudly bears a map with the locations of some eighteen Soldier Settlement localities with a total of 1317 settlers (Fig. 1). The most prominent settlements were at Beerburrum and Stanthorpe which had approximately 300 settlers each. Tucked away in the Boyne Valley, south-west of Gladstone in Central Queensland, settlement 15 had a grand total of forty-five settlers, the second smallest. Another thirty men and their families would end up at Ubobo (one of the four rural townships that make up the Boyne Valley). Though small in size, these 75 settlers provide an important case study. By 1939, only 17 of the original settlers would remain in the Valley. At the end of World War II that would be reduced to twelve, with six men returning to the colours for a second time. By that stage, the settlement would be unrecognisable, with the majority of the land consolidated blocks, mostly leased by non-ex-servicemen. Examining the background and suitability of the Boyne Valley cohort provides insights into the overall failure of the scheme. For well over a century, posterity's finger of blame has been pointed squarely at the government with lack of planning, incompetent management, and a slow and inflexible bureaucracy, often cited as the causes of failure. Using this small settlement in regional Australia as a case study, this article suggests that what Bruce Scates and Melanie Oppenheimer call "human capital" was the most significant factor in determining the fate of the scheme.[2] It will be argued here that even if the Boyne Valley settlers had been given the most favourable circumstances, the damage they had received in the war, physical and psychological, would have made success unlikely.

1 Homer: The Odyssey.
2 Bruce Scates, Melanie Oppenheimer: The Last Battle, p. 246.

Fig. 1 Christmas greetings from the Minister and Officers of the Department of Public Lands, 1920.

This article is based on an analysis of 104 Dead Farm Files held in the Queensland State archives.[3] For each selection a file was created, which was then the repository of all correspondence, reports, and reviews of the selection for its duration. These files range from less than ten pages where the abandonment or surrender of the selection often happened within six months of the license to occupy was awarded, to three hundred pages or more or where leases were exchanged or altered. Often there are bureaucratic debates which last for twenty or more pages which reflect two or three years of uncertainty and delay for the settlers. It is beyond the scope of this study, but an examination of the War Service Records and Repatriation Files would offer additional insights into the human capital of these settlers and the horrors they experience in war. For the purposes of this article, the Dead Farm Files provides strong evidence that they took to the land with physical and psychological scars.

In terms of the contents, there are three elements to consider. The first is that predominantly the files contain the reports, leases, and internal memoranda created by the Lands Department bureaucrats in Brisbane, as well as its people in the field – land agents, particularly W. A. Collins, and inspectors. For much of this material, the language is formal, bureaucratic, and refers to the selector in the

3 See QSA Series 14050 – Dead Farm Files. For referencing a Perpetual Lease Selection number was allocated. Last year the files were digitised with a grant from the Queensland State Government and work from the Boyne Valley Historical Association to commemorate the centenary of the settlement.

third person. Part of the narrative of the Soldier Settlement Scheme is the story of the disconnect between government, bureaucracy, and the settlers. While this can be identified, it is important to note that the overall tone of the material is generally supportive of the settlers, and a genuine concern to fix problems and issues that beset them – especially the issue of drought and portion sizes. From 1925 on, there is a distinct strategy to consolidate the blocks to ensure the survival of the remaining men.

The second element is the correspondence from settlers to the Department. Naturally, nearly all of this is negative and filled with anger, despair, or puzzlement. Some settlers only wrote to the department when faced with problems that were existential. Many of the files end with a settler's final note of despair before the selection was abandoned. Certain settlers took the 'squeaky wheel' option and were regular correspondents. Others are more obsequious in tone.

One particular aspect of the correspondence was unexpected. Throughout the correspondence there are numerous instances of settlers complaining about the behaviour of their neighbours, or their failure to abide by the conditions of the selections. The first example of this is a letter from a "dinkum digger" who informs on six settlers who are at fault in some ways and suggests it would be wise for the department to send someone to the Valley to "see how things are for themselves on the settlement".[4] Those conversations become more prevalent in the second half of the decade when a clear delineation becomes apparent between the 'better type' of settler, and those whose 'indolent' behaviour is recognised and discussed. It becomes clear that there was an element of cronyism and favouritism in the awarding of extra land, or extensions of times for a select group in the Valley.

The third element is less quantifiable. Because they are written sources, what is unsaid or unreported is more difficult to identify. A thin file can be reflective of a trouble-free period of selection, while an assumption can be made that the thicker the file the more 'interesting' and 'valuable' its contents will be. That assumption can be hazardous, as one can find the first piece of correspondence in two years describing a neighbour's cows surviving by eating bark off the trees for want of grass or fodder. Also, as one reads a discussion of who will be awarded an extra block of land, or access to permanent water, the duration of that debate is a factor in the settler's survival. Many of these issues took many months as correspondence from land agents and the department went back and forth weighing the various arguments. During that time, the settlers were in limbo. So while the files are wonderful sources, there is a need for caution in taking them as a clear picture of the selection narrative. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, the files do suggest that human capital was the most significant factor in the many instances of failure.

Before examining the files, this article will provide some background to the Soldier Settlement Scheme and the existing literature. The dominant narrative of the Soldier Settlement Scheme has been heavily influenced by Justice George Herbert Pike who in 1929 released his 'Report on Losses Due to Soldier

4 QSA: P.L.S. 1830, Newton, ID3479174, p. 88.

Settlement'.[5] While not the main focus of his report, his four reasons for failure have provided the parameters for most discussions of the Soldier Settlement Scheme:

1. Want of capital;
2. Want of home maintenance area;
3. Unsuitability of settlers; due to a large extent to war services and want of training;
4. Drop in value of primary products, chiefly on irrigation areas.[6]

Despite the importance of the third factor, discussion in the literature tends to provide only anecdotal evidence of the human struggles of the soldier settlement. Both Scates and Oppenheimer and Marilyn Lake focus on the first two findings, and the lack of government will or capacity to recognise the problems and provide solutions.[7] In each case, this makes perfect sense as they are books looking at the policy and overall implementation of the scheme. Individual settler's experiences provide evidence for government mismanagement or failings, however, it is the latter that is their focus rather than a study of the settlers themselves.[8] The fourth finding differs according to states, but in the Boyne Valley the collapse in milk prices and the Port Curtis Dairy Association's obfuscation in grading the settlers' milk is evidence of the importance of this cause.[9]

Pike divides his third finding idea into two aspects – war service and want of training. This article does not attempt a comprehensive prosopographical study of the Boyne Valley settlers but such a project would be valuable as a way of quantifying these two elements. The attestation papers provide us with an insight into the men pre-war. We know their age, skills, birthplace and general health. Most of the men were young, lacking skills, and lived in rural and regional areas. The war service records provide us with vast detail that can measure the effects of service on the settlers' capacity. Key evidence includes detailed descriptions of wounds and illnesses, the length of time spent on the front line, in hospitals, and peculiarities of each man's service (such as a predisposition to Absence Without Leave or Courts Martial).

Australia paid a high price for its participation in the war with one in six members of the Australian Imperial Force not returning. The Boyne Valley settlers all survived but they did not come home unscarred. Of the group, nearly two thirds were medically discharged, and it is in the decision-making process surrounding the discharge we can find a very helpful clue as to what Pike might have been trying to measure in his term "unsuitability". Before discharge a panel of doctors was assembled that filled out 'Army Form B, 179 – Medical Report on Invalid'. Question 24 is of particular interest:

> To what extent is his capacity for earning a full livelihood in the general labour market lessened at present? In defining the extent of his inability to earn a livelihood, estimate it as ¼, ½. ¾, or total incapacity.[10]

5 See George Herbert Pike: Report on Losses Due to Soldier Settlement, pp. 22-25.
6 See ibid., p. 23.
7 See Marilyn Lake: The Limits of Hope.
8 See ibid., p. 120.
9 See Bundaberg Mail, 27 February 1922 (Ubobo Soldier Settlement).
10 Australian Imperial Force, Base Records Office. World War I Service Records. Series B2455, Barcode 8021047, NAA B2455 Polley Arthur Harold Ernest, NAA.

In Arthur Polley's case, an anonymous hand has written "¾ - 75%".[11]

All this detail only measures the physical scars. Both Marina Larsson and Leigh Straw have written on the psychological scars carried by the returned soldiers.[12] Larsson's thesis is that the psychological scars are as important as the more quantifiable physical costs of the war. Straw adds another dimension of the repatriation process when she points out that the Western Australian returned men were especially problematic as many were British or interstate immigrants and had no family waiting for their return. Furthermore, she emphasises isolation as a key factor in the problem of rehabilitation.[13] An analysis of the Boyne Valley men reveals a high rate of British born men, who on their attestation papers recorded their parents as still in Britain. In terms of isolation, the Boyne Valley was, and is, a place that at first experience feels like the middle of nowhere. This would surely have affected their human capital.

The evidence for the trauma caused by the war can also be found in the Lands Department and Repatriation Department records. All the records contain correspondence from the settlers which only points to their paucity of human capital. As the 1920s progresses, the language of the settlers becomes more frustrated and despairing. Charles Kelly's prefaced his request for an extension of rent in 1928 by stating "he had had a bad time of it early this year".[14] The subtext is deafening.

Pike's second aspect of the unsuitability is want of training. Virtually none was offered in the Boyne Valley, unlike the (poorly managed) training farms at Beerburrum and Pikedale. Some help was offered by Messrs Hellen and Murray, local landowners, however, there seems to be a complete lack of support offered by state and local government bodies. Dairy farming is not a simple business and the newspaper articles on the settlement detail the problems the settlers faced in establishing dairy herds on small portions in an unforgiving environment.[15]

To measure human capital we need to look at the age, skills, and background of the men before they went to war. The Boyne Valley men were largely unskilled and young when they enlisted. Their war experiences were violent and often the young men were away from Australia for several years. Most suffered wounds, illnesses, or both. Despite the elusive nature of human capital, this article contends that, for the 75 settlers in the Boyne Valley at least, it is the key to understanding the failure of the scheme.

In November 1919, the 'Daily Standard' ran a series of articles extolling the promise of a new era for Queensland. On Friday 28 November 1919, the headline heralded "millions of acres of fertile land" were available for selection in what was the "Wonderland of the Southern Hemisphere".[16] By January 1921, the Boyne Valley Soldier Settlement was an actuality. The 'Bundaberg Mail' noted that 11 472 acres had been set aside for forty-five portions.[17] It was proud to announce

11 Ibid.
12 See Marina Larsson: Shattered Anzacs; Leigh Straw: After the War.
13 See ibid., p. 8.
14 Queensland Lands Department: Perpetual Lease Selections. Series 14050. Item 68932. Selection 1915. Queensland State Archives. (QSA).
15 See Bundaberg Mail, 27 February 1922, (Ubobo Soldier Settlement).
16 Daily Standard, 28 November 1919, p. 8 (Queensland wants Millions of New Settlers).
17 See Bundaberg Mail, 14 January 1921, p. 3.

that several returned soldiers had already been 'repatriated' to blocks in the Valley. The Queensland Soldier Settlement schemes had begun.

Despite this initial enthusiasm, three key factors can be seen in the problematic development of the Valley. Rainfall in 1922 and 1923 was approximately half the normal amount. While the settlers with river frontage were less affected, many of those on portions away from the flats found that their 'permanent' water creeks and wells were not. As well, the failure of the Calliope Council and the Queensland Railway Department meant that critical infrastructure to transport cream to Gladstone was below par, or non-existent. This meant that by the time the cream reached the Port Curtis Dairy it was graded poorly, lowering of the price for the farmer. The decision to introduce cotton into the valley was a catastrophe. Not only is cotton a water intensive crop, but it is also labour intensive for the men who were already burdened with clearing and fencing their selections. Growing cotton was a distraction to the main game, which was dairying. The results were disappointing at best and was virtually abandoned after a couple of attempts. Each of these factors are referred to within the two serialised reports on the settlement by the 'Bundaberg Mail' in February 1922 and the 'Morning Bulletin' in August 1923. These reports provide eyewitness, if anecdotal, comments on the realities of the valley that provide a foil to the Lands Department files.

Finally, the department and its representatives felt the need to proactively decide who was worth supporting, and those who should be either abandoned or forced to abandon their selections. In 1923, a list of eight selectors were identified who "will never make a success anywhere as such settlers in all instances breed a feeling of dissatisfaction among the better class of tryers". The report goes on to recommend that "every endeavour should be made to have these men removed".[18]

In February 1922, the 'Bundaberg Mail' commissioned a series of six weekly articles on the Boyne Valley Settlers.[19] Its tone is overwhelmingly optimistic, and we are given a series of accounts of the successes, trials and tribulations of individual settlers. Its detail is useful as a means of providing an alternative perspective to the lands department files. Eighteen Months later the 'Brisbane Courier' would happily comment that, "in the Boyne Valley, success is being achieved, and prospects for a prosperous future are bright".[20] What the article fails to mention is that by this time, seventeen, or nearly a third of the Boyne Valley portions had either been surrendered or abandoned.

The Boyne Valley Soldier Settlement was situated midway along the Boyne Valley which runs from Calliope in the north, to Monto in the south. The forty-five portions were surveyed from three pastoral leases between Nagoorin and Hellens' siding. The settlement ran along the west bank of the Boyne River, which essentially runs north to south in this part of the valley. The portions were of varied size and quality.[21] The prize portions were no.s 106-120, which were river

18 QSA: P. L. S. 1830, Newton, ID 3479174, p. 56.

19 See Bundaberg Mail, Seven Part Series, 13 February 1922 – 3 March 1922, (Ubobo Soldier Settlement).

20 Brisbane Courier, 7 August 1923, p. 6 (A Happy Corner, Boyne Valley Settlement).

21 A number of maps exist of the planned settlement. The main source used for this article is a map produced titled Soldier Settlement, Parishes of Wietalaba and Milton, For Free Distribution. It was presumably produced in 1920. Its scale is 40 Chains to an inch or roughly one

flats, each with river frontage. As well, their western boundaries ran alongside the Boyne Valley Railway – which suggested ease of access to the Port Curtis Dairy based in Gladstone, approximately fifty kilometres north-east. They were partially cleared and fenced, however had been only used for occasional grazing by cattle. No intensive agriculture or dairying had been done. The drawback of these portions was their size – most on average were between eighty to one hundred acres which was to limit the size of the herds the settlers could carry.

Across the railway were the majority of the portions. Directly alongside the western side of the railway, portions no. 123-132 were also quite small, however were still quite level. These portions lacked permanent water, however the digging of wells proved relatively successful. These were the first portions to be consolidated into larger blocks in the early years. Alfred Stephenson and the Turner family would eventually merge eight portions into two viable farms.[22] From there, the quality of the portions became variable at best. The largest of the portions was over a thousand acres, however, most straddled the hills that rise to the west of the valley. The land was rocky, uneven, and heavily wooded. These portions' suitability for dairying and cropping would come into question as the settlement grew.

What is remarkable about the Boyne Valley Settlement compared to others is its lack of planning or strategy. As a small settlement, it seems to have been virtually ignored by the department and the state government who were understandably more concerned about the larger settlements which had a clear goal, however misguided, and attracted the lion's share of investment and infrastructure. The Beerburrum settlement was pineapple based – there was a training farm and the government built a canning factory in Brisbane to ensure a market for the produce. Atherton had maize, and eventually the Kauri silo was built in 1926 at considerable cost for storage. An entire railway line was built at Stanthorpe, together with a training farm. There was none of this in the Boyne Valley. The allocation of portions was unsystematic, there was little or no oversight or training, and the lack of infrastructure seems unforgivable. For a planned dairying industry, the lack of daily trains to Gladstone, and the fact that there was no station built for the settlement until 1924 seems at best incompetent, if not negligent.[23]

This was the situation that awaited the settlers as they arrived in 1920 and 1921. Unfortunately, we have virtually no record of their first impressions, nor how they were supposed to create an existence from nothing. The only two sources are vignettes at best, however, they are worth considering. In his foreword to his father's diary, Syd Davies describes his father and wife arriving in the valley on

kilometre to six centimetres. One of its features is a table of the land value per acre of the portions, indicating their supposed quality. The original is proudly displayed at the Boyne Valley Historical Association's cottage at Ubobo.

22 See QSA: P. L. S. 2134, Stephenson, ID 181955, and QSA: P. L. S. 1780, 2147, Turner, IDs 181926 and 192423.

23 See Brisbane Courier, 19 December 1922, p. 9. This is an example of a number of complaints from settlers about the lack of a railway service for the settlement. The only sidings were at Nagoorin and opposite Hellen's farm.

a horse and cart. They owned a bed and an iron stove. Their building materials consisted of two sheets of corrugated iron.[24]

The most astonishing arrival was that of William Glanville Smellie. The 'Bundaberg Mail' enthusiastically noted in 1922 that being a graduate of the Gatton Agricultural College would stand him in good stead for the future.[25] It did not. Despite his training, Smellie's success was not assured and a report from the land inspector points to human capital in addition to other factors. It concluded in January of 1923 that he was: "An erratic settler, inclined to drink freely on occasion […] This settler may eventually make good, but I am very doubtful".[26] Even before then, in October 1922, Smellie had asked for a bigger portion, repeating his request in March 1923.[27] In July William Collins telegrammed the department that the portion had been abandoned and the stock and equipment were being cared for by a neighbour.[28] Smellie wrote to the department in August pleading his case. The tone of the letter can only be described as one of despair. He wrote:

> I worked like blazes for seventeen months and spent a lot of my own money on Portion 128, and found it impossible to make a living or even get back the money I had spent on it, owing to the land being unsuitable for agriculture, and too small for anything else.[29]

There is no reply. The last note is a letter from the Department offering him land in Atherton or Kingaroy.[30] It was returned unclaimed and unanswered.

Smellie was one of thirty settlers who lasted less than two years in the Valley. It is an extraordinary attrition rate – sixty per cent of the portions available were turned over by the end of 1924. The question that must be asked is why such a large number of the early arrivals failed so quickly. Justice Pike's four reasons are a useful starting point, however Smellie's narrative reflects key elements in the failure of the thirty early arrivals.

The first and most obvious is the size and quality of the portions allotted, compounded by the second elemental problem, which was the department's refusal to acknowledge the problem until the second half of 1923. Thirdly, and most importantly in terms of this article's argument, the human capital of the settlers was clearly an issue. Smellie's numerous letters are pervaded by exhaustion and despair. Smellie was dismissed as "erratic" – not surprisingly given he had received a severe gunshot wound to his ankle in early 1918 after three years overseas which included lengthy hospitalisations for varicocele and appendicitis in Egypt before a six month stint in the trenches in France.[31] Presumably ploughing rock-hard ground and watching ever decreasing cream cheques did not improve his mental or physical capacity. For the thirty men who failed so quickly, there is clear evidence of human failure, but perhaps more sadly, clear evidence of the

24 See Roy Ramsay: Hell, Hope and Heroes, p. 259.
25 See Bundaberg Mail, 9 March 1922, p. 4. (Nagoorin).
26 QSA: P.L.S. 1916, Smellie, ID 3479227, pp. 112-129.
27 See ibid., p. 82.
28 See ibid., p. 73.
29 See ibid., p. 70.
30 See ibid., p. 79.
31 NAA: B2455/ Smellie WG. Barcode 8086661.

department passing judgement on those men and effectively abandoning them in terms of support – as abruptly as the men abandoned their selections.

The thirty settlers were hardly exceptional in terms of the AIF cohort. Nearly all were in their mid to late twenties. Most had found themselves in regional Queensland after the war, and the applications for their selections were signed in Bundaberg, Gladstone, and Rockhampton. Their lack of skills and experience were obvious. Aside from a musician, undertaker, and fireman, the majority were simply unskilled labourers. Only four were married, a point made by the 'Bundaberg Mail' in its series on the settlement. By February 1922, the 'Mail' noted that:

> More than one bachelor has abandoned the block he originally selected, and these are now being taken up by married men with children.[32]

As human capital, they do not inspire confidence. A third had been born overseas (mainly England), half a dozen came from NSW and Victoria. The rest had been born and raised in regional Queensland, though Cairns and Charters Towers can hardly be counted as close to the Boyne Valley.

Looking at Western Australian ex-servicemen, Straw notes that many arrived in Fremantle with no family or home awaiting them.[33] She argues this made them particularly susceptible to mental health issues and loneliness. One can infer this is the case with the thirty men who arrived in the Boyne Valley through 1920 and 1921. Alone, far from family, they lacked fundamental support networks that may have made a difference. Unskilled, and with their physical health affected by their war service, it is not surprising that many struggled. Their war service records are representative of a sample of the AIF. Eight had been wounded in action, eleven had experienced long-term hospitalisations for illnesses. On average, they had spent thirty months away from Australia. Even the 'Mail''s optimism was tempered by the reality of the men:

> I am still of the opinion that the settlers, with the exception of a very small proportion, will make good. This portion constitutes men who have been rendered incompetent by war's alarms, their physical conditions having been so radically altered that they are unable to concentrate their energies for any length of time on the tedious, and sustained work mixed farming, and especially dairying entails.[34]

Tragically, the proportion of settlers too damaged from the war to "make good" was not "very small" and human capital would be the key element of failure as the decade progressed.

It did not take long for the issue of the size of the portions to become apparent. Mayo Clarke, a boat builder from Denver in the United States, applied for and was allocated portion 134 in February 1922.[35] The portion consisted of 160 acres, with Fidler Creek being its Northern boundary. Valued at £2.10s per acre it was one of the "better" portions. By May, having spent £58 on clearing and fencing, Clarke had surrendered the portion and walked away.[36] Mr Thomson, the

32 Bundaberg Mail, 15 February 1922, p. 5 (Ubobo Soldier Settlement).
33 See Leigh Straw: After the War, p. 8.
34 Bundaberg Mail, 6 March 1922, p. 6 (Ubobo Soldier Settlement – Conclusion).
35 See NAA: B2455, Clark MC. Barcode 1967574; QSA: P. L. S 1911, ID 3479222, p. 1.
36 See ibid., p. 4.

Supervisor Soldier Settlements Central Districts, based in Rockhampton wrote to his superiors in Brisbane:

> As previously advised the area of this portion is too small and the quality of the soil is of an inferior quality, and in my opinion dose [sic] not constitute a living area.[37]

Within a fortnight Thomson had his reply. The under-secretary wrote that a prospective settler "had been over the ground three times" and was well acquainted with the "merits and faults" of the portion.[38] Thomson's advice was ignored and the prospective settler, one Robert John Bell was allocated the portion. He would surrender the portion in May 1924, almost two years to the day he arrived in the Valley. The Clarke case highlights the initial intransigence of the department to listen to early concerns about the size and quality of the portions allocated.

By the end of the year, the conversation had begun to change. After Claude McDonald had left the valley in late 1922, William Collins did an audit of the improvements made on "Abandoned Portion 110, Milton". Collins noted that McDonald had constructed buildings worth £247, as well as clearing and fencing worth £123 – as well as running eighteen milking cows. At the bottom of his report, he notes that the area is "too small for dairying".[39] Collins recommended increasing the size of the portion. Across the bottom a bureaucrat has written that "150 acres from 124 and 24 be added to portion 110 Milton". The reality of the problem was beginning to be acknowledged.

Nevertheless, the intransigence would be seen in the refusal to increase William Smellie's portion until he abandoned it in July 1923. The gradual understanding was too late for most of the thirty settlers. Fourteen had either surrendered or abandoned their portions in 1922, a further ten throughout 1923. Justice Pike's second reason for failure, the want of the home maintenance area certainly manifested itself in the first two years of the Boyne Valley Soldier Settlement.

Two postscripts are worth adding to the land narrative. In July 1924 William Collins wrote to Mr Fraser, who had taken over Thompson's role in Rockhampton. William Newton had abandoned Portion 152 after Job-like tribulations.[40] Like Smellie's file, much of the later correspondence revolves around the jockeying for the land, the principal competitors being William Binns and Herbert Lucas, whose portions 152 and 142 bordered the west and east perimeters of Newton's land. Collins' fears are expressed bluntly as the wisdom of Solomon was required. He wrote:

> [I]f Binns and Lucas are given the areas they ask for, most of the other settlers will be asking for similar areas. Some of the settlers are asking for extra areas so that they can run large dairy herds and depend on natural grasses. I am satisfied if they would grow more fodder crops and look after a small dairy herd, they would be better off.[41]

The implications and assumptions in the above passage are key to the management of the settlers in the Boyne Valley. They were there to be yeomen, not

37 Ibid., p. 7.
38 Ibid., p. 8.
39 QSA: P.L.S. 1818, McDonald. ID 3479222, p. 9.
40 See QSA: P.L.S. 1830, Newton. ID 3479174, p. 104.
41 Ibid., p. 115.

graziers. The portions were to be worked and improved, and the blood, sweat and tears of the settlers was to be a given. As will be discussed more fully below, there is a subtext of laziness inherent in the passage. Mr Collins firmly believed that hard work, rather than an acknowledgment of the problem, would prevail. Mr Fraser's reply, typed below Mr Collins letter confirms this understanding:

> I recommend that Messrs Binns and Lucas be advised, that as their holdings are considered living areas as they now stand, consideration cannot be given to their requests for additional land.

It would take another two years for the reality of the situation to really strike home. The consolidation of the portions would accelerate in the second half of the decade, too late for the first arrivals.

Clearly the size of the portions and quality of the land were key elements in the lack of progress in the Boyne Valley, however this article suggests that it was human capital was the ultimate cause of so many failures. Evidence for this is not straightforward as much of the material involves qualitative judgements and opinions. In fact, one might argue that one of the reasons for failure was the opinion of the rangers and supervisors that some settlers were unlikely to succeed, thereby ensuring they would not.

Frank Casson had surrendered his portion in May 1922 after a year in the valley due to "straitened financial circumstances, as stated by him, and his inability to make a living".[42] However, after two weeks, he changed his mind and requested that he return to the portion. Mr Thompson in Rockhampton thought otherwise, and his note to Brisbane is unambiguous:

> In view of this Settler Casson's past demeanour whilst in occupation, and who has frequently repeated his intention of giving up the portion, and the remarks from the Overseer regarding this Settler's ability to carry on and make a success, I have grave doubts as to whether his present attitude is genuine and bonafied [sic].[43]

This is the earliest instance where a settler is judged on his attitude. We have no way of knowing how this judgement was formed, and if "attitude" is the subtext for other failures of character or temperament. Reading his file today, it is possible, if not probable, that Casson was attempting to make a living from his portion while facing mental health issues. The traumatic impact of war service did not appear to garner much sympathy and in Mr Thompson's opinion, Casson's human capital was not worth much.

In the February 1922 'Bundaberg Mail' series, Robert Ellis is described as a model settler.[44] His portion 111 was a small 108 acres situated at the north end of the settlement was river frontage.[45] The 'Mail' noted "Ellis has not been idle", however he had been forced to give up dairying, as the low cream price and the paucity of his herd (only eight cows) had led him to breeding pigs and experimenting with different crops. The reporter noted that "every spare moment at his disposal is devoted to the improvement of his farm".

42 QSA: P.L.S. 1829, Casson, p. 10.
43 Ibid.
44 See Bundaberg Mail, 15 February 1922, p. 5 (Ubobo Soldier Settlement).
45 See QSA: P.L.S. 1792, Ellis. ID 3479138.

By January 1923, an anonymous ranger had audited Ellis's portion. Ellis had erected a house, milking yards and 77 chains of fencing (approximately one mile) worth £243 as well as clearing and ploughing twelve acres. However, it is the note at the bottom that is worth quoting in full:

> An exceedingly poor type of settler. Always complaining but doing very little work. Is now engaged in half-heartedly planting cotton and has a partner with him on this deal. Most of their time is spent riding horseback around the country. Through inattention the cotton will probably be a failure and Ellis will leave.[46]

Not unsurprisingly, Ellis abandoned the portion in the second half of the year finding work at the sawmill in Nagoorin. It is difficult to reconcile the two accounts. Like Casson, Ellis may have been facing mental health challenges but from a bureaucratic perspective a judgment had been made.

There were cases where the problem of human capital was unambiguous. By Christmas 1922, all three McDonald brothers had abandoned their portions. In January 1923, after the usual audit of Leonard's portion, the report notes that:

> This settler has lately been ordered to Brisbane by Medical Board Officer to undergo treatment at the Rosemount Hospital. It is probable that he won't return as his case is a bad one.[47]

On 4 October 1917, Leonard McDonald had endured gunshot and shrapnel wounds to his scalp in fighting which cost the lives of 36 men of the 41st Battalion and left 208 wounded. Leonard would spend two months in hospital before being shipped home.[48] The case, was indeed a bad one. He was referred to the Repatriation Hospital in Windsor, then sent to a rest home in Toowoomba.[49] By the end of 1924, Leonard McDonald had been awarded a 100 per cent pension for tuberculosis. He would spend the next decade living in Nudgee Road Hamilton, until dying, aged forty in 1936. His death certificate lists three causes of death: pulmonary tuberculosis, asthenia and exhaustion.[50]

Charles Speas is another settler whose health conditions made his success as a settler unlikely. He enlisted in Cairns in July 1917, only weeks after marrying his wife, Annie in Brisbane.[51] The first half of his war service record is devoted to identifying who he actually was, as he had enlisted under a false name. Meanwhile he had been hospitalised twice for gonorrhoea, and once for mumps, influenza, and measles, respectively. In May 1918 he had received a flesh wound from a bullet in his right leg and in August 1918 he was a victim of a mustard gas attack and was hospitalized for two months before returning home. Despite, this somewhat chequered past, Speas was allocated portion 166 in the valley.[52] Eighteen months later, in June 1923, despite having erected a house and yards, the district land office in Gladstone reported to Brisbane:

46 Ibid., p. 10.
47 QSA: P. L. S. 1884, McDonald. ID 3479210, p. 8.
48 See NAA: B2455, McDonald L. Barcode 184268.
49 See NAA: B709/1 M7486 Pt 2. Barcode 32253889'
50 See Marina Larsson: Shattered Anzacs, p. 178-205. Larsson devotes an entire chapter to TB arguing it was one of the most pervasive problems for returned soldiers.
51 See NAA: B2455, Speas Charles. Barcode 8090227.
52 See QSA: P. L. S. 1880, Speas. ID 3479206.

> He left the district some months ago, leaving an infant child which had deserted, and he is not likely to return to the district.[53]

One might consider the report an understatement of Speas' human capital.

Robert Macpherson was not one of the thirty, however, he appears to have been the bane of William Collins' life in the six years he was in the Valley.[54] His file runs to some one hundred pages, many of which represent a continual stream of poor reports and demands for payment of arrears of loans. On 6 March 1923, a public servant has scrawled across the bottom of a typed document "attach to Macpherson file".[55] It is a document that pulls no punches and is confronting in the language used to describe the eight named men. The extract from the Chief Supervisor's report reflects a growing sense of frustration:

> There are a few who, however, will never make a success anywhere as such settlers in all instances breed a feeling of dissatisfaction among the better class of tryers, every endeavour should be made to have this type of settler removed and I strongly recommend the calling up of the loan and dispossession of the following settlers who have not even tried to work their holdings.[56]

This unambiguous statement reflects a growing discussion as to why the soldier settlement scheme was in distress. Both Lake and Scates and Oppenheimer point to a 'rotten apple' line of discussion in the years from 1923-1926, where governments and departments blamed settlers for apparently not trying, or having a bad attitude, or in Smellie's case, being inclined to drink.[57] There is little consideration in the official reports that the physical and mental toll of war service was a contributing factor.

In this case the eight settlers named seemed to have been judged harshly. Claude and William McDonald are the first named. Claude had made significant improvements to his portion while William had erected a house, as well as fencing, clearing and yards valued at £77 after he had forfeited the land in December 1922.[58] The Chief Supervisor's thoughts may have been coloured by the undue haste both men "abandoned" their portions, however, their brother's treatment in Brisbane might be considered a reasonable distraction and cause for their departure.

Both Charles Mulder and Rupert Nicholson managed to transfer their portions in 1924.[59] It should be noted that Nicholson's portions, 12 and 54 were surrendered by his successor, Mr Foley the following year.[60] Portion 54 was situated on a bend in the Boyne River and was one of four portions prone to flooding during rains. Each portion was allocated a small block on higher ground to build a house which would stay dry. The want of a home maintenance area is telling in this regard. Raymond Gridley may deserve the Chief Supervisor's wrath. Gri-

53 Ibid., p. 4.
54 See QSA: P.L.S. 1797, MacPherson. ID 3479142.
55 Ibid., p. 32.
56 Ibid.
57 See Bruce Scates, Melanie Oppenheimer: The Last Battle, Chapter 2. Lake, The Limits of Hope, p. 203.
58 See QSA: P.L.S. 1854, McDonald W. ID 3479184, p. 8.
59 See QSA: P.L.S. 1883, Nicholson. ID 3479209.
60 See QSA: P.L.S. 1779, Turner. ID 3479206. There is no file for Foley. Turner's file indicates he took over Foley's portion sometime in 1926.

dley was a musician born in Creston, Iowa, who enlisted in Dalby in 1917.[61] His file contains only his application, a prickly report, and a copy of the Government Gazette offering the land for reselection in March 1923.[62] There is no trace of Gridley in any of the newspaper reports about the settlement.

Hugh Fox was the second last named. Fox had enlisted in Charters Towers in October 1915.[63] Fox's war service was unusual; after four months in the trenches, he succumbed to a debilitating bout of influenza which hospitalised him for four months at the end of 1916. After that, he was transferred out of the 26th Battalion to a light railway company where he would spend the rest of the war. In December 1920, Fox became one of the first settlers in the Valley, allocated portion 117, 136 acres with river frontage.[64] In December 1922, the supervisor noted that Fox had been absent for a considerable time. An audit of improvements was made and the land forfeited in June 1923. The sole building on the portion was a weatherboard hut with a galvanised iron roof, valued at £25. This shelter appears to have been Fox's home. Some clearing and fencing had been done and a calf pen built worth £5. A notable entry was a debit of £7 10s for missing tools. A departmental official has circled the entry and noted in red ink at the bottom of the page: "As selector held the portion for almost three years, the tools have probably been broken or worn out".[65] One suspects as had their owner.

The last name on the list is William Henry Newton. Newton's experience perhaps best personifies the tribulations of the thirty failures and for this reason will be discussed in greater detail. Newton enlisted in Charleville in February 1915.[66] However, he failed to reach Gallipoli, disembarking in Mudros in December 1915 with Enteric Fever. Shipped to Alexandria by January 1916 the fever transmogrified into Paratyphoid and he was shipped back to Australia. In October he returned to Egypt and joined the Second Light Horse. His war is relatively uneventful after that, however, has contracted Malaria when shipped home in February 1919.

Newton applied for and was granted Portion 152 in February 1921.[67] The first sign of trouble in the file is a letter dated October 1921 from Mr Gray, the general store owner in Nagoorin who wrote to the department complaining that Newton had run up a credit of £28 and had shown no signs of paying.[68] The department debited the money from Newton's loan account, and Mr Collins was asked to have a quiet word with Newton.

By June 1922 there is serious trouble. Newton had been doing odd jobs around the district but hurt his back and wrote to Collins asking for an extension of time on his payments as he would be "laid up in bed for an indefinite time" and that

61 See NAA: B2455, Gridley R. Barcode 4711471.
62 See QSA: P.L.S. 1847, Gridley. ID 3479178.
63 See NAA: B2455, Fox H. Barcode 4019526.
64 See QSA: P.L.S. 1783, Fox. ID 3479131.
65 Ibid., 10.
66 See NAA: B2455, Newton WH. Barcode 7993458. Newton was a member of Olden's Force, a small force of Australians sent into inland Egypt to quell a 'native' rebellion in the first months of 1919.
67 See QSA: P.L.S. 1830, Newton. ID 3479174.
68 See ibid., p. 38.

his cows have gone dry.[69] With no income the extension was granted however by December 1922, the acting supervisor had lost patience and visited Newton for an audit of the selection. The assets on the selection included a house, and some 214 chains of fencing. At the bottom of the page, however, there is the following note:

> Strongly recommend the Loan be called up in this case. The man will never be a success and is continuously away from the holding, allowing his stock to the mercy of anyone good enough to milk and take care of them.[70]

The file then notes a ministerial decision to take possession of the selection.

By this stage, Newton's fate seems to have been decided with other settlers contriving with Collins to take a share of his portion. The final process for Newton was to be invited to show cause why his selection should not be forfeited. In the final irony, one of the key reasons given on the document is his failure to continuously occupy the land. The document is dated 23 December 1923, and is signed by W. McCormack, the secretary of Public Lands. It was then posted to Newton care of the Post Office at Nagoorin. The file then contains one of the most powerful artefacts of this article.[71] The envelope carrying the show cause document was returned to the lands department. Across the back of the envelope are a number of carbon stampings from the Post Offices at Gladstone and Nagoorin, and the Dead Letter Office at the Brisbane GPO. Across the bottom the envelope the postmaster at Nagooring has stamped and initialled unclaimed. Newton had gone. He returned to his birthplace at Mount Morgan and died in 1930 aged thirty-eight.[72] His grave is in the Mount Morgan cemetery.

What the Lands Department did not factor in was Newton's human capital. His Repatriation File provides depressing reading. The malaria which he contracted in Egypt stayed with him for the rest of his life. Given a 40 per cent pension in 1919, his pension was suspended in 1922 for failing to attend a medical, about the time when the foreclosure notice was returned unclaimed. On his death certificate, the causes of death are miner's phthisis, double pneumonia, and heart failure. His widow, Mabel is quoted as saying he was continually sick, losing jobs at the Many Peaks mine, cotton picking, and "hunting opossums".[73] On the medical certificate notes that he died under an operation for appendicitis, then states: "The causes of death are in no way related to the man's war service disabilities or conditions of service overseas".[74]

Newton's story is one of a flawed individual; definitely physically and most likely psychologically. His time in the Valley was one of struggle, with the land, himself, his illness, the Lands and Repatriation Departments, and his fellow selectors. His fate was probably inevitable. Put simply, a lack of human capital can be readily identified as the main cause of failure. This combined with departmental judgement and the attempts by other settlers to consolidate their holdings

69 Ibid., pp. 49 f.
70 Ibid., p. 54.
71 See ibid., pp. 100-103.
72 See NAA: J34, C24972. Barcode 32552342.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.

left him with no chance. He, and the other twenty-nine settlers who lasted less than two years in the valley, can be classed as the victims of their own weakness, and of the Soldier Settlement Scheme's flaws.

The Soldier Settlement Scheme is one of the great tragedies of Australian history, because it does not fit neatly within the Anzac and Kokoda narratives of the Australian war experience in the first half of the 20th century. It is a difficult topic. The resources that have been spent in the years leading up to the centenary of Anzac and the end of World War I have been enormous, as governments and institutions place the Anzac experience as the cornerstone of Australian national history. Unfortunately, the sequel to that story receives less exposure than its reality deserves. The literature of the scheme tends to be at a macro level, analysing the failures of government and bureaucracy within the framework of Pike's four findings.

This article has examined the experience in Central Queensland. The case study of the Boyne Valley does not dispute that the scheme was deeply flawed and that the bureaucratic oversight was often incompetent and unsympathetic. Indeed, it has offered supportive evidence of this. What the case study also shows is the human tragedy of the scheme. The analysis of the men of the Boyne Valley in this article contends that even if the bureaucratic issues had been addressed, the failure of the scheme was likely inevitable due to the nature of the human capital. Young and unskilled before the war, the value of the Soldier Settlement Scheme's assets was traumatically and violently shattered by the experience of the trenches at Gallipoli and in France. One hundred years on, we can reflect on the Soldier Settlement Scheme, placing it in the context of the problem, understood from Homer's Odysseus to the present, of what to do with the men coming home from the wars.

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Fig. 1: Christmas greetings from the Minister and Officers of the Department of Public Lands, 1920.

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Music in the Tropics

Looking from Townsville to the Pacific through Arts Festivals

Abstract: This article examines Townsville's distinctiveness as a site for festivals which looked to the Pacific region in presenting arts and culture. Two festivals – the Townsville Pacific Festival (1970-1991), a ten-day celebration of arts and culture in northern Australia that ran for over two decades, and the fifth Festival of Pacific Arts (1988) – made their home in Townsville. In placing these two very different festivals side by side, we draw attention to the distinctive flavour of engagement with arts and culture prosecuted in Townsville in the 1970s and 1980s. Leading from the north, the celebration of "high art" alongside Indigenous cultural heritage of the region points to the role of Australia's north in reorienting the focus of Australian cultural life. In this article, we introduce the two festivals, which, while being independent of one another, demonstrate a shared aspiration for defining far north Queensland as a site of diverse cultural practice. Each festival negotiated the Australian arts landscape represented by government departments and arts bodies including the Australia Council for the Arts and Musica Viva, but also created a distinctly localised leadership that guided the priorities of the Townsville Pacific Festival and the 5th Festival of Pacific Arts.

The Townsville Pacific Festival (TPF) was repeatedly described by local council officials as a "mirror of our way of life".[1] From the first festival in 1970 through to the last festival in 1991, the TPF presented a diverse program of events, from sporting events to fashion parades, displays of art, ceramics, gems and handicrafts, cultural exhibits, open-air concerts, and the iconic mardi gras and street parade. Among this broad view of what was included in the festival, its planning and programming nevertheless emphasised that "first and foremost [this] was designed to be an international arts festival".[2] Early festival organisers aimed at putting Townsville 'on show' and – in common with other arts festivals of the era – counteracting cultural isolation.[3] The early TPFs reached out to national and international arts networks as well as neighbouring Pacific countries for content and collaboration. In the early years, Townsville wanted the TPF to be for Townsville what the Adelaide Festival of Arts was for Adelaide. Later festivals, however, looked inwards to the local community and were remembered as "really grassroots".[4] John Wright, the festival's president in 1978 explained:

> There is nothing which identifies a city more than a successful Festival. Adelaide would be merely a pleasant city nestling rather inconspicuously at the base of its rolling picturesque foothills if it had not been identified throughout Australia and much of the world through its Festival of Arts. The image of Edinburgh in Scotland would still revolve around its castle rock if it had not achieved instant recognition and renown through its own outstanding Festival. There is no doubt whatever that the shortest cut to national recognition for Townsville would be a

1 Percy Tucker: Message from His Worship the Mayor – 1978 Festival Program Book; Entertainment for Everyone – Festival Program Book 1979.
2 Tony Raggatt: The Day the Festival Died, p. 21.
3 See Harold Phillips: Greetings From His Worship the Mayor – 1978 Festival Program Book, PAFA; also Rose Gaby: An Australian Stratford, p. 167.
4 Julia Russoniello: Interview with Mike Reynolds, 26 February 2025.

> Festival of such calibre and quality that it would identify not only this city but the whole of North Queensland and its attendant the Great Barrier Reef.[5]

The 5th Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA), hosted in Townsville in 1988, was similarly ambitious in scope. Arising out of international diplomatic negotiations among colonial nations in an age of decolonization, the first festival had been proposed through the South Pacific Commission by Fiji, while it was still an external territory of Britain, and took place in Suva Fiji in 1972 – two years after Fijian independence (and two years after the first TPF).[6] Involving delegations from 26 nations from the Pacific region, including Australia, the first festival had been directed by Australian singer and producer Victor Carell. The fifth festival saw Townsville host these delegations with significant leadership from local Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal cultural and arts leaders, as well as institutional representatives from Australia's major arts bodies outside of Townsville. The 1988 festival coincided with the bicentenary of the establishment of Australia as a British colony, and the original idea for the festival had come from a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts and Crafts Workshop proposal for a Townsville-hosted FOPA to be part of Bicentenary Celebrations.[7] However, as 1988 approached, the organisers persistently asserted that the two events were unrelated. Thus as Aboriginal activists contested the widespread celebrations of the bicentenary in Sydney and at the Brisbane Expo '88, in Townsville negotiations focused on looking towards the Indigenous practices of the Pacific region and distancing these efforts from the colonial bicentenary milestone altogether.

This article analyses the evolution of the two festivals and their negotiation of local, national and international cultural priorities. We situate the various foci of the festival that flared and faded over the twenty years within wider constellations of culture, celebration and arts practice. This article contributes to a field of scholarship on regional festivals and the cultural and political work they have done, examining, in particular, the aspirations for cultural enrichment that drove regional festivals in the 20th century.[8]

The Townsville Pacific Festival

The idea of the Pacific Festival was brought to Townsville by a man named John Raggatt. Raggatt was appointed to the role of Public Relations Officer for the

5 President's Message – 1978 Festival Program Book. Interestingly the first Perth Festival in 1953 went ahead on the organising Adult Education Board's proviso that it "kept to the higher cultural level, following more or less the Edinburgh Festival", John Birman: Festival of Perth, p. 17.

6 See SPC Savingram South Pacific Commission to Commissioners and Routine Distribution Territorial Administrations 3 November 1965.

7 Clyde Holding, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to Prime Minister Bob Hawke, 26 June 1984.

8 See Kay Dreyfus: The South Street Eisteddfod, pp. 99-121; Rob Edwards: Birthday Parties and Flower Shows, Musters and Multiculturalism, pp. 136-154; Kate Darian Smith: Histories of Agricultural Shows and Rural Festivals in Australia, p. 39; John Birman: Festival of Perth, pp. 10-32.

Townsville City Council in 1967, a position he held until his retirement in 1975.[9] Raggatt's son Tony wrote in the 'Townsville Bulletin' some twenty-five years after the first festival that his father had written "the blueprint for the festival, gave it its name and its symbol the Brolga".[10]

In 1967, John Raggatt was well placed to inspire the idea of an arts festival for Townsville. After serving in the Royal Australian Airforce during the WWII years, Raggatt worked in the English theatre with Sir Donald Wolfit's Shakespeare company touring Italy, Yugoslavia and Austria. In 1956 he returned to Australia to work as a freelance writer and went on to become the Director of Publicity, Concerts and TV Time for the ABC in Melbourne and Adelaide.[11] Raggatt was involved with the organisation of the Adelaide Festival of Arts in the 1960s as well as the Moomba Festival in Melbourne.[12]

The idea for the Townsville Pacific Festival reportedly came to Raggatt on the plane on his way to take up his appointment with the Townsville City Council.[13] The proposal for a festival for Townsville, which followed, emphasised that a Pacific festival – one that encouraged closer relations with Townsville's northern and Pacific neighbours – would give the suggested festival the best chance of success. Raggatt went on to highlight that such a festival would be in line with Australia's current policy and needs, and had the potential to be "an event of some importance to the country".[14] In 1967, as Raggatt flew north to take up the role, major cultural transformations were underway that would lead to the establishment of new arts funding through the Australia Council, and new Indigenous companies such as the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation, Black Theatre and Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, driven by the self-determination agenda of the era after the 1967 referendum for constitutional change.[15] Just as the TPF was in formation, the Australia Council's new funding model that centralised federal grants and built on the work of earlier arts bodies including the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Musica Viva and the ABC, would transform the cultural sphere of the late 1960s and early 1970s.[16] Raggatt explained that in contrast to most of the celebrations along the eastern coast, which are "little more than parades or carnivals through the streets", a festival for Townsville should "aim high".[17] In an address to the Townsville Chamber of Commerce in 1969 Raggatt emphasised:

9 See Pam Raggatt, John Raggatt: The Bull Dancers of Knossos, p. 631; Festival President Retires.
10 Tony Raggatt: The Day the Festival Died, p. 21.
11 See Local Man Wins Major Art Award, Local Collection Newspaper File; Port Lincoln Times, 27 February 1964, p. 1 (Famous Artists for EP Concerts).
12 See Tony Raggatt: The Day the Festival Died, p. 21.
13 See His Idea for Festival Here – 1974 news clipping.
14 Raggatt also wrote that "A festival of this nature would also have the advantage of being the first, and I believe only, large scale event of its kind to be presented in Australia". John Raggatt: A Festival for Townsville.
15 See Amanda Harris, Representing Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance 1930-1970, p. 114.
16 See Richard Waterhouse: Lola Montez and High Culture; Katya Johanson, Ruth Rentschler: The New Arts Leader; Amanda Harris, Representing Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance 1930-1970, p. 114.
17 John Raggatt: A Festival for Townsville.

> We make no apologies whatever for our hopes that this festival will be a major event in Australia, and that it will have an impact on Townsville's stature as a progressive Australian city – an impact on Australia's relationship with overseas peoples, on the standards of artistic expression in our region, on our civic pride and economic growth, and on important aspects of our way of life both now and in the future.[18]

In June 1970, Townsville presented its first Pacific Festival. Raggatt's aims for the festival, which were, for many years, repeated in festival publicity and programs were to:

- Promote greater understanding and friendship between peoples in the neighbouring countries of the Pacific region.
- Assist local and regional organisations, cultural groups and participating bodies to advance their own aims and raise performance standards and
- Create greater interest among Australians and others in Townsville and North Queensland.[19]

The accompanying symbol of the Brolga depicted looking up captured a sense of place and a spirit of aspiration.

The inaugural festival opened with an outdoor gala concert, which brought together the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, a 400 Voice Festival Choir and the Royal Australian Infantry Band. The presentation culminated in a performance of Tchaikovsky's '1812 Overture' which was repeated in 1972 augmented by the guns of the 4 Field Battery Royal Australian Regiment.[20] Such large-scale musical spectacles were a feature of the festival and an example of one of the ways in which the TPF encouraged Australians to look up.[21]

Large-scale concerts

Impactful open-air musical displays were an ongoing drawcard of the TPF. The first festival promised readers of the 'Sydney Morning Herald Holiday and Travel Survey' jazz concerts, symphony, art exhibitions and a film festival.[22] From 1970 to 1976, the gala opening concerts were performed by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. By 1978, however, this tradition had shifted toward a more contemporary approach, featuring the rock 'n' roll band Ol' 55 alongside the Royal Australian Air Force (R. A. A. F.) Band.[23]

18 John Raggatt: Address to the Townsville Chamber of Commerce Meeting.
19 J. Raggatt to A. Hull, 8 May 1974, Townsville Pacific Festival – Arts Activities 1970-1974; It's Festival Time Again.
20 See 1970 Festival Program Book, p. 6; 1972 Festival Program Book, p. 9; Tony Raggatt: The Day the Festival Died, p. 21.'
21 This article originated from two presentations developed for a panel at the Australian Historical Association's conference 'Looking Up', hosted by James Cook University in Townsville. We are indebted to the conference organisers for the prompt that their thematization of the conference provided for our thinking in this article.
22 See Alan Goodall: Everyone Invited to Cook's Fiesta, p. 6.
23 In 1977 the Royal Australian Air Force band played the TPF's opening concert and the QSO performed at the Lavarack Barracks on the following Monday. See 1977 Festival Program Book, p. 8.

Fig. 1: Sound shell, Dean Park, Townsville, (n.d.)

Military bands were an ongoing musical and visual centrepiece of the festivals. In 1972, in addition to partnering with the QSO in the opening concert, the army staged an entertainment day at the Lavarack Barracks. This event included displays of equipment and aircraft, artillery and mortar demonstrations, a helicopter assault landing, parachutists, a band concert, a cross country run and fairground activities.[24] In subsequent years, both local and interstate military bands continued to feature prominently.[25] In the 1980 festival, the North Queensland Army Band played the opening concert and later enacted a "Beating the retreat ceremony" as well as Tchaikovsky's '1812 Overture' with gunners, howitzers and fireworks.[26] Other openair displays over the years included parades, massed band concerts and a "musical tableau" of the Battle of Waterloo.[27] This musical "battle", complete with rifle and artillery fire, was staged at several festivals and was described by Sydney wine and food personality Johnnie Walker in 1977 as "undoubtably the most memorable event for me".[28]

Popular music also had a significant presence at the festivals and revolved around the Dean Park 'Sound shell' – a blue polyweave structure contemporaneously likened to Melbourne's Myer Music Bowl (see Fig. 1).[29] Beginning as an earthen amphitheatre in 1969, the venue was upgraded in 1975 with a concrete

24 See 1972 Festival Program Book, p. 27.
25 See Busy in Townsville, p. 8; Festival Ends on a High Note.
26 1980 Festival Program Book, p. 2 and p. 21.
27 On Show in Townsville, p. 10.
28 Johnnie Walker: Fun in the Townsville Sun, s.p.; Townsville Army Show, p. 1; Busy in Townsville, p. 8.
29 On the proliferation of sound shells in the mid-century for open air concerts see Kate Darian Smith: Histories of Agricultural Shows and Rural Festivals in Australia, p. 39.

stage and dressing rooms.[30] Across the two decades of Pacific Festivals the Sound shell hosted many leading Australian artists, including Sherbet, Daryl Braithwaite, Ross Ryan, Lee Conway, Skyhooks and John Paul Young, among others.[31]

The appearance of the Supremes at the 1974 festival was seen as a "tremendous coup".[32] A local article highlighted that "Townsville can be justly proud of the fact that it is listed with Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane on this exclusive six-day Australian itinerary".[33] Similarly, the 1974 program proclaimed; "The Supremes will only give six shows in Australia. The performance at the Townsville Pacific Festival is their only provincial date in this country".[34]

Pacific Content

The TPF was the first festival of its kind with a Pacific focus in Australia and predated the first Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA) by two years. Cultural exchange, both within Australia and with overseas nations was from the earliest planning stages, a priority for the festival. A press release for the first TPF lead with:

> BIG INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR TOWNSVILLE. A major international festival, the first of its kind ever presented in Australia, will be held in Townsville June 6-15, 1970. The mayor of Townsville, Alderman Harold Phillips announced this to-day. The event aimed at promoting closer ties with Australia's neighbouring countries in the Pacific and south-east region will be known as the Pacific Festival.[35]

Raggatt's original aim – that the festival would promote greater understanding and friendship between peoples in the region – was reflected in the programming of the early festivals. As noted in one article entitled "City's March to Cultural Maturity", the author states, "nowhere has the city's striving for cultural maturity been so amply demonstrated as in the emergence of the Townsville Pacific Festival".[36]

The inclusion of international culture in the first festival was modest, with the only items in the program listed as: Tongan crafts, exhibitions by a number of Pacific countries and Eastern countries display.[37] However, by 1972 this dimension of the festival had expanded to include international displays from Canada, Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, and the United States.[38] Baranggay Dancers from the Philippines performed on the opening night and travel films featuring the Pacific region were shown at lunchtime sessions.[39] In 1974, invitations to participate in the TPF were issued to twenty Pacific countries and the following years saw performances by

30 See Ian Frazer: Sound Shell Rocked, But Soon Rolled Over.
31 See 1976 Festival Program Book, p. 23; 1978 Festival Program Book, p. 35 and p. 49; Sunday Concert – 1978 news clipping.
32 Tony Raggatt: The Day the Festival Died, p. 21.
33 The Supremes Here Sunday – 1974 news clipping.
34 1974 Festival Program Book, p. 34.
35 Press Release – 12 April 1970.
36 City's March to Cultural Maturity.
37 See 1970 Festival Program Book, pp. 7 f.
38 See 1972 Festival Program Book, p. 5.
39 See ibid., p. 13.

the NEMIL Dance Group from Papua New Guinea, the Dance Concert Company, and a Fijian delegation.[40] The Murray Island Dancers also represented the Torres Strait Islands. Reflecting on the Papua New Guinean and Fijian festival acts, John Wright, the festival's director in 1978, wrote "it is only in this way and through the interest and dedication of us all that the Townville Pacific Festival will grow into an event that will lift this city from some obscurity into the international limelight".[41] The 'Townsville Bulletin' printed that the involvement of the groups from Papua New Guinea and Fiji was "achieving the festival's principal aim to foster good relations between south Pacific people".[42]

Australian Arts Networks

The TPF was seen by the Council as an important moment for Townsville to connect with national arts networks, as Townsville often missed out on the artistic influences available in the major cities, due to its geographical isolation.[43] The problem of distance was recognised by locals and outsiders. John Raggatt emphasised in 1976, "there is a terrific problem Townsville has of isolation, being so far from the main centres where the major entertainments are produced".[44] On the opening of the Townsville Civic Theatre in 1978 a local Councillor explained "we've been so isolated that we've been starved of this sort of entertainment".[45] Townsville had only recently been added to the touring schedules of arts organisations, with Musica Viva's annual "Outback Tours" beginning in October 1970 and including a stop in Townsville sponsored by the local Chamber Music Society alongside the other towns on the route – Mt Isa, Port Moresby, Cairns, Gove, Darwin and Alice Springs – with a school concert and evening concert in each town.[46] The performance of the Adelaide Wind Quintet in 1970 was described in one newspaper report "as the beginning of a Musica Viva plan to send concerts to places where musicians do not go in the course of a normal concert tour".[47]

Despite these challenges, from the very outset, Raggatt envisioned the co-operation of national arts organisations. Subsequently, partnerships with the ABC, the Arts Council of Australia, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and Musica Viva among many others were forged. Artists that had appeared at the Adelaide Festival of the Arts such as the Baranggay Dancers, Theatre 62 and the Adelaide Wind Quintet appeared later in Townsville.[48] In 1972 the TPF

40 See 1977 Festival Program Book, Local Collection Pamphlets, p. 61; 1974 Festival Program Book, s.p.
41 1978 Festival Program Book; Festival has Something for Everyone.
42 Festival has Something for Everyone.
43 John Makepiece said in 1981: "Not unlike remote regions of Australia, Townsville suffers from many of the problems of isolation and distance; a feeling of, perhaps, being left out of the mainstream of Australia", A Submission Directed to QANTAS.
44 Plenty to See and Do – 1974 news clipping.
45 Townsville's Civic Theatre Now a 'Goer', p. 71.
46 See Adelaide Wind Quintet – Outback Tour, 1970.
47 Ibid.
48 The Adelaide Festival of Arts, Souvenir Program 1968; The Adelaide Festival of Arts, Souvenir Program 1970; MVAR.

secured funding from the Arts Council of Australia to present a recital by the Sydney-based tenor David Parker – although the board only projected an audience of between 300-400 they expressed to the Arts Council "we are anxious to include this performance in an effort to raise artistic standards in this region".[49] Approaching the 1974 Festival, board member A. E. Bracey reached out personally to the executive director of the Arts Council of Australia, Jean Battersby to ascertain what "international or national theatre companies or personalities would be in Australia during that period and perhaps available to visit Townsville to add weight to the 'arts' section of the Festival".[50] The TPF programme book in 1974 asserted the festival's parity with capital city events by including images of the TPF-programmed Dance Concert Company in front of iconic locations: the Sydney Opera House and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Additionally, the marionette show, 'Tales from Noonamena' – presented by the Festival board and Elizabethan Opera Trust – was touted as "recently presented by the Marionette Theatre at the Sydney Opera House".[51]

Similarly, the securing of the No. 1 R. A. A. F. Band from Richmond NSW which had "appeared at many functions and ceremonies in the eastern states" was a source of pride in the 1972 and 1974 festivals.[52] It was also noted in 1977, following an appearance of the R. A. A. F. band in 1977 at the Pacific Festival Gala night "Townsville is the only other provincial city to be visited on the tour. All other concerts will be staged in capital cities".[53]

The Aboriginal and Islander Festival and the Later Years

From its inception, the Townsville Pacific Festival (TPF) placed importance on local community involvement, yet the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remained notably limited throughout the 1970s. Despite the festival's inclusion of performers from Pacific nations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in this festival was minimal – with the festival committee's own report on the first Aboriginal and Islander Special Performance Day observing that local Indigenous people had been either prevented or reluctant to play a prominent role in public life.[54] This report further stated that "the level of racism in Townsville and indeed in North Queensland generally is a crucial factor in this".[55] This absence of Indigenous content in the 1970s, mirrored patterns seen in other regional festivals. Mickey Dewar observes that the Darwin festivals before 1974 and later ones, after 1989, included Aboriginal content however the was an

49 John Raggatt to J. Battersby, 13 March 1972, p. 2.
50 A. E Bracey to J. Battersby, 14 February 1974.
51 See 1974 Festival Program Book, p. 23.
52 R. A. A. F. Band for Festival; Full Programme of Entertainment, 7 June 1972, TPFA; R. A. A. F. Band Show – 1974.
53 R. A. A. F. Band on Whirlwind Tour, p. 3.
54 See Letter of Agreement No. SP QLD 80162 to Mr. Ian McDonnell.
55 Ibid. Letters between the Community Action Group Against Racism (CAGAR) and the Townsville Pacific Festival Committee in 1982 highlight racial tensions within the Townsville community at this time. See for example, Letter from Rowan Silva (CAGAR) to Sheila Nichols (TPF Committee).

observable absence in the intervening years.[56] Adrian Franklin et al. argue that the Adelaide Festival did not look to its own community for arts content, and the Kaurna community were not involved until 1976.[57] The Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council had been established in 1972 and provided centralised funding for all kinds of Indigenous performing and visual arts endeavours by individuals and ensembles alike. However, the Council's efforts to encourage new Indigenous-led companies to flourish also meant that non-Indigenous directors and producers seeking to program Indigenous content often found their requests unmet, while resources were directed towards Indigenous-led initiatives. For example, the TPF's request to include in their own festival the Aboriginal dancers who had been funded by a $13 500 Australia Council grant to travel to the South Pacific Festival in Fiji seems to have been declined.[58]

A significant change in the TPF however occurred in 1980 with the introduction of an Islander Night – the success of which prompted a dedicated evening in the 1981 festival for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Festival within the festival. The Townsville Council's Cultural Director and Co-Community Arts Officer described the event as "the first community festival in Australia to feature Indigenous Australians as a major and integral component of the Festival".[59] The event reportedly drew 3 500 Indigenous and 800 non-Indigenous attendees.[60] By 1984, a dedicated community committee was formed to organise the Aboriginal and Islanders festival which, by this time, ran for several days and estimated an attendance of 10 000 people.[61] Presentations included music, dance, displays and storytelling and included performers from the Torres Strait Islands, Palm Island, Mackay, Alice Springs and New South Wales.[62] The renewed emphasis on Aboriginal arts and crafts at the TPF in the 1980s during this period may also have supported Townsville's bid to host the 1988 Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA).[63] In the 1984 program the President's Message explained: "the enlarged Aboriginal and Islander Festival is an exciting step towards our hosting the 1988 South Pacific Festival".[64] A planning document for the 1984 Aboriginal and Islanders Festival concluded:

> It is vital that this Festival is a tremendous success as the decision of the location of the 1988 Festival [of Pacific Arts], to be made in Noumea, will be based on

56 See Mickey Dewar: A Festival Event, pp. 33-49; Amanda Harris: Representing Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance 1930-1970, pp. 143 f.

57 See Adrian Franklin, Boram Lee, Ruth Rentschler: The Adelaide Festival and the Development of Arts in Adelaide, pp. 588-613.

58 See S. J. Douglass to A. Weinrauch, 15 May 1972. This was also the case with other non-Indigenous producers, such as Beth Dean and Victor Carell, who were rebuffed in their attempts to access the Aboriginal performers supported by Coombs' Australia Council and the Aboriginal Theatre Foundation. See 1969 letters between Coombs and Dean, in Victor Carell: Proposed Ballet of the South Pacific.

59 Chips Mackinolty to Grahame Steel.

60 See Alycia Watson: Townsville's Pacific Festival.

61 See Aboriginal and Islander Festival.

62 See Alycia Watson: Townsville's Pacific Festival; Aboriginal and Islander Festival Program 1984.

63 See Anne Duke: Report on Planning and Staging the 5th Festival of Pacific Arts held in Townsville Australia, 14-27 August 1988; and South Pacific Festival Promises Big Boost to City's Economy.

64 Presidents Message – Festival Program Book 1984, p. 7.

> the ability of the local Aboriginal and Islander community to host and administer such a large event. This annual Festival must show that it is moving in that direction.[65]

Hosting the fifth Festival of Pacific Arts in Townsville, 1988

Co-ordinator of the 1984 TPF, Florence Smallwood was elected by the Townsville Aboriginal Community to go as representative to the 4th Festival of Pacific Arts in Tahiti in 1985.[66] Emphasising the importance of local control of the planned 5th festival, Smallwood asserted that it would be essential to have Aboriginal involvement in all stages of the festival planning. Indeed, this Festival of Pacific Arts (Fig. 2) was an altogether different kind of festival to the TPF's more than a decade of bi-annual festivals, a fact that would have been evident to Smallwood while in Tahiti. The FOPA would bring performers in delegations from 26 island nations, including Palau, The Northern Marianas, Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, The Marshall Islands, Nauru, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Norfolk Island, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Wallis and Futuna, Fiji, Tonga, Niue, American Samoa, Western Samoa, Cook Islands, The Tokelaus, The Marquesas, French Polynesia, Pitcairn Island, and Hawai'i.[67] Australia would be represented by a number of groups from different Aboriginal nations and the Torres Strait. In contrast to the first (1972) Festival of Pacific Arts (originally called South Pacific Festival), in which a non-Indigenous theatre company had been included, this time preference would "be given scripts/works written by Aboriginal/Islander authors depicting Aboriginal/Islander issues with the majority of cast members being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander".[68]

Key Indigenous arts leaders became involved with scoping Townsville's hosting of the festival from 1985 including Chicka Dixon (as head of the Aboriginal Arts Board of the Australia Council), Leila Rankin (a leader of the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) in Adelaide), Charles Perkins (in his role at the time as Director, Department of Aboriginal Affairs) and Shireen Malamoo (as a Townsville representative), along with non-Indigenous leaders such as Anthony Steel (who ran the Aboriginal Arts Agency at the time), Prof Eric Willmot from James Cook University, and the Townsville Mayor Mike Reynolds. As the festival approached, a planning committee was formed, led by director Greg Stewart, but also including the new head of the Aboriginal Arts Board, Bob Merritt, the mayor, Perkins, and now Eddie Mabo and Josephine Sailor as local representatives.

65 Planning document, 1985. A submission for a grant also explained "in view of Townsville's application to host the 1988 South Pacific Festival and the success of last year, it is proposed to extend the Festival over a three day period". Submission for Grant – Aboriginal Development Commission.

66 See Proposal to Department of Arts, Heritage and Environment for Consultancy, Festival of Pacific Arts by Nicholas Clark and Associates, 25 September 1985.

67 See Program of Fifth Festival of Pacific Arts.

68 Advocate, 10 February 1988, n.p. (Dorothy Grimm: Board Wants Festival Input).

Fig. 2. Festivals and celebrations – Queensland – Papua New Guinea dancers at Festival of Pacific Arts, Townsville

The copious archival records of the 1988 Townsville festival in the collections of Mike Reynolds and Eddie Mabo document the intensity with which this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local community control was argued for in the lead up to the festival. These disputes took the foreground in part because the planned 1988 festival would be contiguous with wider bicentenary celebrations taking place across Australia. As interim festival director Greg Stewart told 'The Australian' in November 1987:

> Where the politics perhaps come into it is that it is a difficult year next year for Aboriginal and Islander people, but this is a cultural event, a way of showing that the culture has survived. It will show Aboriginal and Islander people that there are other blacks who are proud and they will perform on equal terms. It's a source of strength for them.[69]

Discussions within the Foreign Affairs department at the beginning of the decade suggest that Australia was discussed as a potential host of the festival in 1988, precisely because it would be the bicentennial year.[70] Later, the direct organisers were insistent that the disconnect between the two events be widely publicised in promoting the festival, and a leaflet to invite proposals to the festival, opened with the bolded phrase "The Festival is not part of Australia's Bicentennial program".[71]

However, even more than anxiety about the bicentennial year, the contestations over leadership of the festival reflect the new ground that the festival aimed

69 The Australian, 5 November 1987, n.p. (Andrew L. Urban: Political Benefits of Pacific Festival Outweigh the Cost)
70 See Foreign Affairs report by Anthony Wallis.
71 See Papers of Edward Koiki Mabo 1936-1992.

to traverse. This was not a Pacific Festival in name only, but was "an International Festival for Indigenous peoples". This description, included in a statement from the local community meeting, was articulated by the largely Torres Strait Islander membership, who asked the festival board:

> If this is an International Festival for Indigenous peoples, then why hasn't the indigenous peoples of Australia, more to the point why hasn't the Aboriginal and Islander Community of North Queensland had more input?[72]

At the Townsville Festival of Pacific Arts, Australian international engagements looked towards connections across the Pacific ocean, and away from metropolitan centres that were the usual political and cultural points of reference, seeking to articulate this as a festival that would be aspirational not only in its aims for quality performers, but also in the political and cultural work that would be done through hosting it. One document that sits among Eddie Mabo's papers relating to the 1988 Townsville festival in the National Library of Australia – and that evidently was considered by the 1988 festival planning committee in their deliberations about what would be important in guiding the 5th festival of Pacific Arts – captures the reflections of Moi Avei on the third Festival of Pacific Arts, in Papua New Guinea in 1980. Avei, then Chairman of the National Cultural Council of Papua New Guinea, and later PNG Deputy Prime Minister, suggested,

> In giving the third Festival of South Pacific Arts the theme 'Celebration of Pacific Awareness' we are lifting our eyes beyond the narrow artistic confines of an Arts Festival.
>
> The aesthetic value of the art presented at the Festival remains important – the Festival should demonstrate the richness, the best, and the most creative elements of Pacific culture.
>
> But we beg you to explore other dimensions of such an event […] The period of repressive attitudes to indigenous culture is past, so now is the time to examine [those] old ways for guidelines to living which may have been discarded prematurely.[73]

This rethinking of what Avei called "guidelines for living" was evidenced in organisers' approach to implementing Pacific ways through the festival. One key initiative proposed by Jimmy Little and Anthony Steel during the course of their scoping study (and likely inspired by the travels by canoe of some participants in the 1980 PNG festival)[74] was the arrival of delegations to the festival by water – an initiative that remains a key part of Festivals of Pacific Arts in the present day.

> The format that has been adopted for opening and closing ceremonies at previous Festivals should be changed. We find the Olympic-style parade in an arena to be foreign to the spirit of the Festival, with its sporting and competitive connotations. […] the participants could arrive at the Strand from Magnetic Island in a flotilla of small craft, parade along and perform on the Strand, finishing up in the rock pool venue where the VIPs would be seated.[75]

72 Community Meeting – Pacific Festival 17 July 1987.
73 Festival Theme: "Celebration of Pacific Awareness", see Papers of Edward Koiki Mabo 1936-1992.
74 The armada of canoes from different parts of Papua New Guinea as far away as Manus Island to Port Moresby is described in Arnold Zable: Operation Armada.
75 Anthony Steel, Jimmy Little: Preliminary report to the Board from the Joint Artistic Advisors.

Another was the introduction of welcome protocols, proposed by the Indigenous advisory group to be formally implemented on arrival of all delegates from the Pacific at the airport. In 1988, the Townsville festival committee planned that the welcome protocols would proceed with groups of Indigenous people from Australia greeting all delegates at the airport, using a formalised text that included the welcome "On behalf of all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of my country I give you and the people of ____ permission to enter our country to share in our culture and tradition during this gathering".[76]

Eventual Festival Director, Pat Turner, also recalled her initiative to recognise the Christian beliefs of the majority of participants by including an ecumenical service in the program. However, even in the inclusion of Christian rituals, Turner wanted the particularities of Pacific ways to be kept in frame:

> [B]ecause this is about the preservation of Indigenous culture and the promotion of Indigenous culture, this ecumenical service means that every country that participates will have to sing in language. They'll have to sing a hymn in language. So I made that rule.[77]

After some negotiations at planning meetings where the originally-planned theme for the 1988 festival was changed from "Pacific Achievement" to "Pacific Survival",[78] the final theme became "Pacific Interchange", a concept that hints at the reorientation towards the cultural reference points of the Indigenous Pacific, rather than those of metropolitan, colonial Australia.

Though some of the new protocols developed through the planning of the 1988 festival are perhaps unsurprising today, their reorientation towards Indigenous and Oceanic worldviews and ways becomes more remarkable when we consider the origins of the festival in the South Pacific Commission. A founding member of the Commission and the largest contributor, Australia had worked with other colonial powers in the region (UK, USA, France, Netherlands, NZ) to set up the South Pacific Commission in 1947. The 30 per cent of the SPC budget that Australia contributed reflected their stake in the region and an awareness of "not necessarily favourable" attention from the United Nations towards colonial control of the Pacific.[79]

The 1957 Australian representatives to the commission recognised that

> The peoples of the region are awakening and many of them tend to look to Australia as the most developed neighbouring country for guidance and assistance.

76 Festival Director's Report to the Board. It is not clear which individuals delivered the 1988 welcome, but the choice of representatives likely followed the practice at the time of someone from both local Aboriginal and local Torres Strait Islander Townsville communities being chosen as representatives of the community. This is an early instance of Welcome to Country protocols that only became formal official practice through the initiative of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and Reconciliation Australia at the very end of the 20th century, although Ernie Dingo and Richard Walley recalled performing a Welcome in response to the request of visiting Māori performers earlier still in 1976. Mark McKenna: Tokenism or Belated Recognition.

77 Pat Turner interviewed by Nikki Henningham.

78 Two motions from the 6 November 1987 meeting of the Festival Advisory Committee, Papers of Edward Koiki Mabo 1936-1992.

79 "Australia's large contribution reflects not only the greatest number of native peoples under her care but her role as leading initiator of the commission", Confidential Notes on the Political Importance of the South Pacific Commission.

> They are also nowadays seeking associations with other island people and the Commission through its triennial South Pacific Conference [which] affords opportunity for these tendencies to develop fruitfully under guidance.[80]

Australia also worried that "Since there are already some signs of communist interest in some of these islands this work is clearly necessary and of positive value". In the early decade of the commission, a document marked "Confidential" outlined the commission's strategy to support activities including "social welfare", a category that would soon include cultural festivals, because this would "tend to forestall the subversive activity which thrives on conditions of under-development and feelings of neglect".[81]

A year out from the festival, in August 1987, major protests were mobilised by the local community against the lack of input invited from local Aboriginal and Islander people. Though the festival committee reassured that there would be plenty of jobs for local Indigenous people at the time of the festival, the community were not assuaged, insisting not just on temporary jobs, but rather on a major role in the planning and design.

A highly successful protest from the point of view of community mobilisation, the community achieved close to the level of representation they demanded – with Eddie Mabo and Josephine Sailor sitting both on the festival organising board and the local community meetings and communicating between the two, and perhaps also because of the interventions of Perkins as Director of Aboriginal Affairs. Several new members were added to the board, Perkins stepped down from the festival organising team, new salaried roles were created for local people with artistic and production oversight, and a new Indigenous advisory board was established. The demands also led to the appointment of key artistic advisors including Bob Maza and Jimmy Little, with Pat Turner taking over as festival Director in the final year, after acting for Perkins when he was unavailable for meetings.

One of the more overtly political programmed features of the Townsville festival in 1988 – The Cultural Forum – arrived at a number of proposals over the course of the festival, one of which was that Australian Aboriginal people should seek independent membership of the South Pacific Forum – the colonial body in which FOPA had its origins.[82] The negotiation of rights and political agency persisted alongside the plans for cultural programming throughout the organisation of the festival. As Charles Perkins asserted in a speech he gave at the opening of the Cultural Forum attached to the festival, the arts was a medium for both political struggle and cultural expression:

> Recent Government initiatives and the cautious optimism which many Aboriginal people presently share have not occurred without great struggle.
>
> That struggle is increasingly being portrayed in the artistic expression of our people.

80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 As reported in 'The Cairns Post', 27 August 1988, n.p., membership would be sought "in a bid to win Federal government and international recognition as Australia's aboriginal landowners", quoted in Rosita Henry, Jenny Pilot: Politics in the Pacific, p. 206.

> In this way our arts are both reflecting the struggle which is our present position as well as playing their own part in that struggle.
>
> Such is the nature of our culture that the arts cannot be separated from the political process […]
>
> Each bark painting can be seen as an argument for landrights – an acknowledgement of prior Aboriginal ownership of this land. Culture and the arts enrich and give direction to our lives as Aboriginal people.[83]

Conclusion

The dissolution of the Townsville Pacific Festival (TPF) in 1991 came just a few years after the city hosted the fifth FOPA. What had started out as a festival with high aims – combining Pacific cultural content and European high arts, over time changed markedly in tone. Over its two-decade lifespan the festival's priorities shifted. While music and the arts remained present, the emphasis moved increasingly toward community participation and the promotion of a tropical lifestyle over cross-cultural or high-art engagement. In 1983 John Raggatt was interviewed for an article printed in the festival program, entitled "Looking at the Past". While the article focused on the points of continuity over the 13 years of the festival, Raggatt pointed out that the TPF was established with the aim of a festival for the Pacific area which "hasn't been emphasised as much in recent years".[84]

The later shift in focus of the TPF coincided with the planning and staging of the 1988 FOPA as well as with an expansion of cultural infrastructure in Townsville: for example, in 1975, the Sound Shell was upgraded; in 1978, the Townsville Civic Theatre opened; and in 1981, the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery was inaugurated. The first Australian Festival of Chamber Music in 1991, which remained in Townsville until 2025, provided a significant access point for an international standard of musical performance for the region of North Queensland. Similarly Townsville's Australian Concerto and Vocal Competition (originally the North Queensland Piano Competition) provided valuable performing opportunities for young musicians between 1980 and 2024.[85] Rather than viewing this reduction of arts and cultural content in the TPF as a backward step, this shift may be viewed in the context of an expansion of artistic and cultural agency within the region in these years.

Indeed, Raggatt's Townsville Pacific Festival may have laid the groundwork for both a serious engagement with the performing and visual arts of Indigenous Australia and the wider Pacific through the 5th Festival of Pacific Arts in 1988 as well as an expansion of arts engagement throughout the community. By

83 Opening Address Charles Perkins to the Cultural Forum, Records (1988) of Festival of Pacific Arts.

84 Looking at the Past – 1983 Festival Program.

85 We are grateful to members of the local Townsville community including Heidi Streiner, Bryony Barnett, Helen Lucas, Andrew Ryder and Lyndon Megarrity who attended the conference at which this panel was originally presented and who drew our attention to the Australian Festival of Chamber Music and the North Queensland Piano Competition and shared their fond recollections of festivals of the 1970s and 1980s.

placing the arts of the Indigenous Pacific alongside the "high arts" of Europe and Australians of European descent, the festival introduced a progressive vision for its time.

Raggatt's approach aligned with significant institutional changes during the 1970s, especially those of the Australian Council for the Arts (later Australia Council). Driven by H. C. Coombs, the Council would seek to invigorate the performing arts broadly in Australia, while, for the first time, providing targeted support to Indigenous performing and visual artists. In bridging artistic lineages at that time seen as separate, Raggatt was highly attuned to contemporary political and arts priorities. His vision of Townsville as a cultural and artistic centre was initially embodied in the efforts of the Townsville Pacific Festival but has since continued to resonate in the city's cultural landscape.

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Fig. 2: Festivals and celebrations – Queensland – Papua New Guinea dancers at Festival of Pacific Arts, Townsville. Image courtesy of the National Archives of Australia (hereafter NAA). NAA: A6135, K8/9/88/108

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Joe Collins

The Paradox of Plenty

Mining Capital and the Underdevelopment of Northern Australia, 1945-2015

Abstract: Northern Australia contains most of the nation's mineral wealth and over half its land mass. Despite this, it remains underdeveloped compared to the southeast and is home to only 5.2 per cent of the national population. This article charts the history and impact of mining capital in northern Australia in the six decades after the conclusion of World War II. It argues that extractive industry dominated by multinational capital has actively perpetuated northern Australia's underdevelopment rather than driving regional prosperity.

In February 2012, mining heiress Gina Rinehart unveiled her vision for northern Australia. Her poem 'Our Future', engraved on a plaque fixed to a 30-tonne iron ore boulder at a Perth shopping centre, called for developing North Australia through foreign investment and resource extraction. "Develop North Australia, embrace multiculturalism and welcome short term foreign workers," she wrote, "to benefit from the export of our minerals and ores".[1] This public monument appeared during Australia's bitter 'mining tax debacle' from 2010-2014 when corporate resistance successfully defeated federal government attempts to capture greater returns from resource extraction.[2]

Rinehart's vision crystallises a fundamental paradox in northern Australian development that has persisted for over seven decades. Despite containing most of Australia's mineral wealth and comprising 53 per cent of the continent's landmass, northern Australia remains home to only 5.2 per cent of the national population. While mining accounts for 7.7 per cent of the region's workforce compared to 1.9 per cent nationally, this resource abundance has not translated into sustained regional development or population growth.

Northern Australia encompasses approximately four million square kilometres, an area larger than India, yet supports 1.4 million residents only. This low population density persists despite containing world-class deposits of iron ore, coal, uranium, bauxite, gold, and natural gas that generate billions in export revenues annually for predominantly foreign-owned companies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples comprise 17.4 per cent of northern Australia's population compared to 3.1 per cent nationally.[3]

This article argues that export-oriented resource extraction has actively perpetuated northern Australia's underdevelopment rather than driving regional prosperity. Through historical analysis spanning 1945-2015, it demonstrates how the structure of the mining industry, 83 per cent foreign-owned by 2010, has

1 Gina Rinehart: Our Future.
2 See Sinclair Davidson: The Mining Tax Debacle, p. 21.
3 See Office of Northern Australia: Northern Australia Action Plan 2024-2029.

systematically channelled northern Australia's mineral wealth offshore while providing minimal lasting benefits to regional communities.[4]

The analysis posits four critical phases in this process of extractive underdevelopment. First, the post-1945 transformation established northern Australia as a resource extraction zone serving Asian industrialisation. Second, successive mining booms from the 1960s onward deepened deepened patterns of foreign ownership and control while gradually entrenching fly-in, fly-out employment models. Third, the spectacular failure of the mining tax experiment (2010-2014) demonstrated the political impossibility of redirecting resource wealth toward regional development. Fourth, the China boom of the 2000s intensified these patterns while introducing new forms of foreign ownership and control.

Northern Australia's experience challenges orthodox assumptions about the relationship between resource endowments and regional development. Rather than providing a foundation for prosperity, mineral wealth has become a mechanism for extracting value from the region while providing minimal lasting benefits to local communities.

Colonial Foundations and Early Settlement Patterns (1870s-1945)

Understanding northern Australia's contemporary development challenges requires examining how colonial settlement patterns established the extractive relationships that persist today. European settlement in northern Australia proceeded differently from the southern colonies, creating patterns of extensive land use and external dependency that would later influence mining development.

The Cattle Frontier

The cattle industry emerged as the dominant economic activity from the 1870s onward, eventually covering approximately 2.5 million square kilometres or 60 per cent of northern Australia's land area.[5] This extensive pastoral system supported relatively few people across vast distances, creating the sparse population distribution that characterises the region today. The pastoral frontier established several crucial features that would later influence mining development. For example, infrastructure networks were oriented primarily toward export markets rather than regional centres, although ports also serviced domestic markets and economic spillover effects benefited port towns such as Townsville and Rockhampton. Furthermore, pastoral enterprises on the northern frontier required significant investment from the outset which left the door open for foreign ownership and control when the shallow pool of domestic savings was exhausted. According to Dawn May, northern squatters in the 1860s were typically owner-managers with investors ranging from silent partners, family

4 See Michael Janda: Mixed Reaction to Greens' Mining Profits Report.
5 See Office of Northern Australia: Northern Australia Action Plan 2024-2029.

members or business houses.[6] The labour-power making all of this possible was mediated through the emergence of a dual economy where European settlers owned and controlled land while Aboriginal peoples were largely excluded from economic participation beyond earning wages. Indeed, as May argues, many station owners from the 1870s were only able to retain their holdings by using low or unpaid Aboriginal labour.[7]

Early Mining and Extractive Patterns

Early mineral discoveries followed the same extractive patterns established by the pastoral industry. Gold rushes in North Queensland during the 1870s and 1880s attracted temporary populations who extracted wealth before departing, leaving minimal lasting infrastructure. The Palmer River goldfield supported over 18 000 miners at its peak between 1877-1880 but was virtually abandoned within a decade when easily accessible deposits were exhausted, demonstrating the boom-bust cycles that would characterise northern Australian resource development.[8] To be clear, there were several northern mining fields that enjoyed relatively long lifespans, including goldfields at Charters Towers and Ravenswood, and mineral fields surrounding Chillagoe. Mount Morgan in Central Queensland is another example of a relatively long-lived mine with adjoining settlement.[9] Boom-bust cycles characterise the volatility of mineral prices on global markets that may or may not correspond to the closure of mining settlements reliant upon the buoyancy of demand for specific minerals. Colin Hooper's recent work reveals 524 "abandoned boom-and-bust mining towns" across north Queensland alone.[10]

These early mining experiences established patterns that would characterise later developments: predominantly male, temporary populations rather than family settlers; wealth largely exported from the region rather than invested locally; and boom-bust cycles that prevented the accumulation of capital necessary for sustained development. Early mining operations also demonstrated the challenges of establishing processing industries in northern Australia, with the region's distance from major markets making it cheaper to export raw materials for processing elsewhere. Although as Megarrity has pointed out there was a sense of permanency in places like Ravenswood, Chillagoe and Charters Towers from the 1870s until most residents moved to Townsville and other regional towns by the 1910s. Processing operations did gradually tend to move to distant locations like Cockle Creek in New South Wales or Maryborough in Queensland but only after local processing was attempted and deemed untenable.[11]

The extractive orientation also established exploitative relationships with Aboriginal peoples that would intensify with later mining developments. Mining

6 See Dawn May: From Bush To Station, p. 11.
7 See ibid., pp. 1 f.
8 See Gordon Grimwade, Christine Grimwade: Shattered Dreams, p. 440.
9 See Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, pp. 20-116.
10 Phil Brandel: Abandoned Boom-And-Bust Mining Towns of Far North Queensland Measured by How Many Pubs They Had.
11 See Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 20.

operations frequently destroyed traditional food sources and sacred sites while employing Indigenous people under conditions that amounted to forced labour, creating legal frameworks that facilitated extraction while marginalising traditional owners.[12]

Post-War Transformation Establishing Resource Dependence (1945-1970)

The transformation of northern Australia into a resource extraction zone began with the collapse of British imperial trade networks after 1945, fundamentally altering the region's development trajectory and establishing patterns that persist today. Lucrative preferential deals between Australia and Britain on commodities such as meat would remain in place for several years into the post-war period due to representations by the Australian government during Anglo-American loan negotiations from September-December 1945.[13] But the emergence of the Bretton Woods institutions and the implementation of their processes designed to ameliorate trade and financial imbalances across capitalist economies would create the preconditions for import-substitution-industrialisation in Australia.

Reorienting Trade Networks

The disintegration of the British Empire forced Australia to seek new markets, particularly in Asia, with profound implications for northern Australia. The region became the primary source of raw materials for Asian industrialisation as large-scale mining operations targeted export markets in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. This transition represented a fundamental shift from pastoral activities serving primarily Australian and British markets to mining operations integrated into Asian industrial development.

The Great Mineral Discoveries

The 1950s and 1960s witnessed unprecedented mineral discoveries across northern Australia, fundamentally altering global perceptions of the region's economic potential. Harry Evans' discovery of vast bauxite deposits at Weipa in the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1955 exemplifies both the scale and limitations of these developments. The Weipa deposit contained an estimated three billion tonnes of high-grade bauxite, sufficient to supply global aluminium production for decades.[14]

12 See Raymond Evans: "Kings" in Brass Crescents, p. 198.
13 See Francine McKenzie: Redefining the Bonds Of Commonwealth, 1939-1948, p. 152.
14 See Max Griffiths: Of Mines and Men, p. 39.

However, Weipa's development established patterns that would characterise later mining projects and limit their regional benefits. The deposit was developed by a consortium dominated by foreign companies, with processing occurring overseas rather than in northern Australia despite the region's advantages for aluminium production. Workers were flown in from southern cities rather than recruited locally, and the operation functioned as an enclave with minimal integration into the regional economy.

Uranium discoveries at Rum Jungle (1949) and Mary Kathleen (1954) positioned northern Australia as a major supplier of nuclear materials during the Cold War period.[15] Iron ore discoveries in Western Australia's Pilbara region proved most significant for northern Australia's long-term development trajectory, establishing the foundation for contemporary mining dominance. The Pilbara discoveries in Northwest Australia contained billions of tonnes of high-grade ore that would underpin decades of expansion, but mining operations were established as isolated industrial facilities with minimal connections to existing regional centres.[16]

The Japan Connection

Japan's post-war industrialisation created enormous demand for northern Australian resources, establishing the foundation for the region's integration into Asian supply chains. The 1957 bilateral trade agreement between Australia and Japan established formal frameworks for resource exports. Following Menzies' so-called 'man to man' election speech in 1955, in which he extols the virtues of "co-operative Liberalism" to warrant "intensified [...] import restrictions" under the aegis of "Divine Providence, by co-operative social effort," Australians are offered economic prosperity, and the new enemy of "Communist bandits in Malaya," to assuage any residual resentments owing to the horrors of the Second World War in the Pacific.[17]

Despite formal commitments to import-substitution-industrialisation (ISI), which should have subsidised the growth of domestic manufacturing capacity through redistribution of export tax receipts, the new trade relationship was fundamentally asymmetrical, with northern Australia providing raw materials while Japan captured the benefits of processing and manufacturing.[18] Moreover, the point of ISI was to anticipate and address the deterioration of terms of trade observed by Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer as the long-run consequence of national economies relying on the export of primary goods to optimise so-called comparative advantage in a system of international free trade.

By the time Japan overtook Britain as Australia's leading export destination in 1966/67, the spillover effects that typically accompany ISI development strategies might have been expected to materialise around the sites of extraction in

15 See Geoffrey Blainey: The Rush that Never Ended, pp. 335 ff.
16 See Sydney Morning Herald, 15 July 1963, p. 48 (Harold Raggatt: Major Importance of Discoveries. Minerals and Mining).
17 Robert G. Menzies: Australian Federal Election Speeches 1955.
18 See Australian Bureau of Statistics: Yearbook Australia 1973, p. 289.

northern Australia. Paul Keating's famous 'banana republic' warning in 1986 characterised the success of co-operative Liberalism in observing that in the 1970s "we became a third world economy selling raw materials and food and we let the sophisticated industrial side fall apart".[19]

By 1971/72, metalliferous ores and metal scrap comprised the largest export category to Japan at $425 million, representing 31 per cent of total Australian exports. Coal exports added another $199 million, while together these northern Australian primary products constituted over 60 per cent of Australian exports to Japan. This demonstrated the region's central role while highlighting the concentration of trade in unprocessed raw materials.

Japanese imports of Australian goods grew from $98 million in 1951/52 to $1.36 billion by 1971/72, a fourteen-fold increase that established northern Australia as an integral component of Japanese industrial development.[20] However, these relationships were structured to serve Japan's rather than northern Australia's development priorities, with processing and manufacturing remaining concentrated in Japan.

Early Foreign Investment Patterns

The capital requirements for developing northern Australia's mineral deposits exceeded domestic capacity, necessitating foreign investment that established patterns of foreign ownership and control. Foreign companies typically retained majority ownership, made key operational decisions offshore, and structured their activities to minimise Australian tax obligations while maximising returns to overseas shareholders.

The Mount Newman iron ore project exemplifies these patterns. Developed by a consortium, including British, American, and Japanese companies, the project required massive investments in railway and port infrastructure. However, these partnerships were structured to serve the partners' home country interests rather than northern Australian development needs. The Japanese steel industry, for example, hailed the 1965 Mount Newman contract setting price schedules for production due to begin in 1969, as "an astonishingly good one for Japan".[21] Ore was shipped directly to overseas steel mills rather than supporting domestic processing industries, equipment was sourced globally rather than from northern Australian suppliers, and employment remained limited despite well-paid positions.

19 Tom Conley: Revisiting the Banana Republic and Other Familiar Destinations.
20 See ibid., p. 301.
21 David Lee: The Establishment of Iron Ore Giants, p. 68.

Deepening Dependence
Mining Booms and Foreign Ownership and Control (1970-2000)

The 1970s energy boom and subsequent mining expansions deepened foreign ownership and control over northern Australia's resources while further entrenching the region's role as a raw materials supplier to global markets.

The Energy Boom

Northern Australia's energy resources attracted massive foreign investment during the 1970s oil price shocks. The Northwest Shelf project off Western Australia's coast became the flagship development, representing one of the largest resource investments in Australian history. The project involved natural gas reserves estimated at over 300 000 million cubic meters, requiring investments exceeding $8 billion over the construction and production phases.[22] However, the project was developed by a consortium dominated by international companies, including Shell, BP, and Chevron, with Japanese utilities as major customers through long-term purchase agreements that prioritised export markets over domestic industrial development. The project was structured as an export facility serving Asian markets rather than supporting domestic industrial development, with natural gas processed into liquefied natural gas for shipment to Japan and other national markets in Asia.[23]

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's optimistic proclamation in 1980 that prospective development had reached $29 billion reflected the extraordinary scale of planned investments and hopes for sustained regional development.[24] However, this enthusiasm overlooked the structural arrangements that would limit northern Australia's benefits, particularly the foreign ownership patterns and export orientation that characterised the projects.

The boom's end in 1982/83 revealed the vulnerability of northern Australia's resource-dependent economy. When global demand collapsed due to recession, projects were cancelled, workers departed, and regional communities faced economic decline. This boom-bust pattern would characterise subsequent mining cycles across northern Australia, demonstrating the risks of depending on export markets and foreign investment.

Consolidating Foreign Ownership

The mining expansions of the 1970s and 1980s deepened patterns of foreign ownership and control across northern Australian operations. By 1978, the Australian mining industry was 59 per cent foreign owned and controlled, with northern

22 See Peter J. Higgs, Alan A. Powell: Australia's North-West Shelf Gas Project, pp. 179 f.
23 See Peter Ellery: Born in Fire, pp. 93 f.
24 See Tom Conley: The Politics of Prosperity, p. 122.

Australian operations featuring even higher levels due to their capital intensity and export orientation.[25] Fuel minerals reached 73 per cent foreign control, black coal 59 per cent, petroleum 84 per cent, tin 81 per cent, and silver, lead and zinc 75 per cent. Most foreign investment originated from the United States, establishing American corporate control over much of northern Australia's resource base and creating dependency relationships that served American industrial and strategic interests during the Cold War period.[26]

The Fitzgerald Report of 1974 revealed that during 1967-1973, Australian governments received $286 million in taxes and royalties from mining but granted $341 million in concessions, resulting in a $55 million net loss.[27] Foreign ownership meant that strategic decisions about northern Australia's development were made in corporate boardrooms in New York, London, and Tokyo rather than in regional centres. This external control limited opportunities for local value-adding and constrained regional economic diversification by prioritising global efficiency considerations over regional development needs.

The Resource Processing Gap

Perhaps the most significant consequence of foreign control was the systematic failure to develop processing industries in northern Australia. The bauxite industry exemplifies this pattern: In 1979, Australian companies earned $800 million from bauxite and alumina exports, primarily from northern Australian deposits. However, processing these materials into aluminium would have generated $4 billion—five times the raw material value—while creating substantial employment and industrial capacity.[28]

Northern Australia possessed clear advantages for aluminium processing: abundant energy resources, proximity to bauxite deposits, access to Asian markets, and available land for large-scale industrial facilities. However, foreign-owned mining companies preferred to ship raw materials to existing facilities in their home countries, or the last vestiges of onshore processing capacity in places like Gladstone, Newcastle and Port Kembla south of the Tropic of Capricorn, missing opportunities to develop northern Australian industrial capacity.[29]

This processing gap represented foregone opportunities for value-added employment, industrial development, and regional economic diversification. The result was a classic colonial relationship where northern Australia provided raw materials while value-added processing occurred elsewhere, limiting employment opportunities and constraining regional development.

25 United Nations: Transnational Corporations in World Development, p. 60.
26 See Gregory J. Crough: Foreign Ownership and Control of the Australian Minerals Industry.
27 See Tom M. Fitzgerald: The Contribution of the Mineral Industry to Australian Welfare, p. 6.
28 See Humphrey McQueen: Gone Tomorrow, p. 53.
29 See Gregory J. Crough, Edward L. Wheelwright: Australia, p. 16.

The Mining Tax Debacle
Corporate Power and Democracy (2010-2014)

The conflict over mining taxation between 2010 and 2014 provides a crucial case study of how foreign-dominated corporations and their locally based sycophants successfully resisted government attempts to capture greater benefits from northern Australia's resource wealth, revealing the political power of transnational mining companies vis-a-vis democratically elected national governments.

The Resource Super Profits Tax Proposal

On 2 May 2010, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced a Resource Super Profits Tax (RSPT) based on recommendations from the Henry Tax Review. The proposed tax aimed to capture 40 per cent of 'super profits' from mining operations, potentially generating $12 billion annually in additional revenue. The tax recognised that mineral resources belonged to the Australian people rather than foreign corporations that had gradually gained control over their extraction.

The RSPT was particularly relevant to northern Australia, where foreign-owned companies extracted vast wealth while regional communities received minimal benefits beyond employment and limited royalty payments. For northern Australia, this revenue represented a genuinely transformative opportunity that could have addressed decades of underinvestment in regional development. The national infrastructure deficit was estimated at between $450-$700 billion in February 2017, with inadequate roads, communications systems, health facilities, and educational institutions constraining economic development.[30]

The Industry Campaign

The mining industry's response demonstrated the political power that foreign owned and controlled corporations could mobilise to influence Australian domestic policy. Companies spent approximately $100 million on advertising campaigns designed to discredit the proposed tax, representing one of the largest corporate political campaigns in Australian history.[31]

The campaign was coordinated by the Minerals Council of Australia and employed advanced political messaging techniques, focus group testing, and targeted advertising. The industry's messaging strategy was particularly sophisticated in its targeting of northern Australian constituencies, presenting the RSPT as a threat to regional employment rather than an opportunity to redirect mining wealth toward regional development.

Ironically, this massive expenditure was tax-deductible under existing corporate tax provisions, meaning Australian taxpayers subsidised corporate

30 See Shane V. Styn: Regional Capitals Australia, p. 3.
31 See Ian McAuley: Taxing the Miners' Uncommonly Large Profits, p. 25.

opposition to the mining tax to the tune of $30 million.[32] The campaign also revealed international coordination, with foreign owned and controlled companies sharing strategies across multiple jurisdictions and leveraging their global operations to maximise political pressure.

Political Consequences

The mining industry's campaign proved devastatingly effective. Within 52 days of announcing the tax, Kevin Rudd was removed as Labor Party leader and replaced by Julia Gillard. On her first day as Prime Minister, Gillard cancelled government advertising supporting the mining tax. A week later, she announced a 'deal' with mining companies that would replace the RSPT with a much weaker alternative.

This political intervention demonstrated the power of foreign owned and controlled mining companies to influence Australian domestic policy in ways that revealed fundamental tensions between democratic governance and transnational corporate power. For example, Rio Tinto Chief Executive Tom Albanese made the following remark in a speech to mining executives in London ten days after Rudd was ousted by Gillard in 2010: "Policymakers around the world can learn a lesson when considering a new tax to plug a revenue gap, or to play local politics".[33] The industry's success showed how strategic corporate collaboration could overwhelm democratic processes, particularly in resource-dependent regions where companies possessed concentrated economic leverage.

The Weakened Mining Tax

The Mineral Resources Rent Tax (MRRT) that replaced the RSPT represented a significant victory for mining companies. The MRRT applied only to iron ore and coal operations, exempting gold, uranium, base metals, and natural gas projects. For covered operations, the tax included generous allowances and exemptions that reduced effective tax rates substantially below the nominal 30 per cent rate.

The revenue impact was devastating. In its first full year of operation (2012/13), the tax raised just $126 million against original projections of $3 billion annually from the RSPT. Rio Tinto reportedly paid nothing at all under the new arrangements, while BHP Billiton's payments remained minimal relative to its substantial northern Australian operations.[34]

The MRRT was finally repealed in September 2014 by the Abbott government. From inception to repeal, the mining tax experiment lasted just over four years, influenced the fortunes of four Prime Ministers, and demonstrated the political

32 See ibid.
33 The Weekend Australian, 10 July 2010, p. 28 (Peter Wilson: Rio Chief Uses Rudd Case as Warning – Mining Tax Battle).
34 See M. Chambers: Rio Tinto Pays No Mining Tax.

impossibility of challenging foreign corporate control over Australian resources under existing institutional arrangements.

Contemporary Challenges
The China Boom and Beyond (2000-2015)

The early twenty-first century witnessed unprecedented mining expansion across northern Australia, driven primarily by growth of economic output in China. However, this latest boom intensified rather than resolved the region's development challenges, further entrenching patterns of foreign ownership and control of export-oriented extractive industry.

The China Boom

Economic growth in China from 2000 onward created massive demand for northern Australian resources. Exports to China from Australia increased from approximately $10 billion in 2003/04 to $107 billion by 2013/14, with iron ore and coal from northern Australia comprising the largest components. By 2023, Australia provided 64 per cent of China's iron ore imports, establishing northern Australia as a crucial supplier for steel production in Asia.[35]

This surge in demand drove unprecedented investment in northern Australian mining infrastructure. The Pilbara region experienced massive expansion, with new mines, railways, and port facilities. Individual projects like the Gorgon natural gas development required investments exceeding $60 billion, while iron ore expansions across the Pilbara totalled over $100 billion during peak boom years.[36]

However, the benefits remained concentrated among foreign shareholders rather than northern Australian communities. Mining employment increased from 113 800 in May 2005 to 321 300 workers across Australia during the boom, representing substantial growth but limited impact relative to the massive capital investments involved. Much of this employment was provided through fly-in, fly-out arrangements that limited regional economic benefits. Moreover, when adjusted for population growth, the percentage of the labour force in Australia working in mining has remained just above 2 per cent in the 20 years to 2025.[37]

Intensifying Foreign Ownership

The China boom deepened patterns of foreign ownership and control in extractive industry while introducing new forms of external control through foreign

35 See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Trade Time Series Data.
36 See Department of Industry Science and Resources: Resources and Energy Major Projects 2017.
37 See Jobs and Skills Australia: Mining Employment.

direct investment originating in Asia. By 2010, approximately 83 per cent of the Australian mining industry was foreign-owned, with northern Australian operations featuring even higher concentrations of foreign control due to their scale and strategic importance.

Chinese companies joined American, British, and Japanese investors in acquiring northern Australian assets. Chinalco's attempted acquisition of Rio Tinto assets, Sinosteel's purchase of Midwest Corporation, and various other Chinese investments represented a new phase of foreign ownership that reflected China's growing economic power and resource security concerns while creating additional layers of external control.[38]

This intensification occurred with minimal government resistance, despite growing public concerns about foreign control of critical infrastructure. The Foreign Investment Review Board approved virtually all applications for foreign investment in northern Australian mining, often with limited conditions and minimal consideration of regional development implications. One inflection point worth noting is the abolition of the "50 per cent Australian equity and control guideline for participation in new mining projects, and the economic benefits test for takeovers of existing mining businesses" on 26 February 1992 as part of the Keating government's One Nation Economic Statement.[39]

The Expansion of Fly-In, Fly-Out Employment

Perhaps the most significant development during this period was the massive expansion of fly-in, fly-out employment arrangements across northern Australia from the 1960s.[40] Rather than establishing permanent mining towns, companies increasingly flew workers in for rotational shifts and returned them to southern Australian cities, maximising operational flexibility while minimising regional development commitments.

The FIFO model enabled companies to access skilled workers from southern Australian labour markets without establishing permanent communities, provided operational flexibility to scale employment rapidly, and reduced infrastructure and community development obligations. However, FIFO arrangements created significant challenges for northern Australian regional development. Mining workers earned high wages that could have supported regional economic development, but they spent most of their income in Perth, Brisbane, or other southern cities, or coastal areas in the north, where they maintained primary residences. The data is patchy on where exactly workers on remote mine sites fly or drive from, and return to, but the reaction of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Mayor, Ron Yurevich, to a study commissioned by the Minerals Council of Australia on FIFO work in 2013 is interesting to note: "Regional areas will suffer and will die if mining industry and governments don't acknowledge and don't support those

38 See Emma Alberici: China May Stall BHP-Rio Tinto Merger.
39 Foreign Investment Review Board: Report 2001-02, p. 82.
40 See Geoff Bull: Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Australia Inquiry, p. 6.

communities when they have mining developments occurring in and around their areas".[41]

For Indigenous communities, FIFO arrangements often represented the worst aspects of mining development, combining economic disruption with cultural marginalisation and providing minimal opportunities for inclusive development. Mining operations disrupted traditional territories while providing limited employment opportunities for local Indigenous people, who often lacked the formal qualifications required for mining employment.[42]

Environmental and Social Costs

The expansion of mining imposed significant environmental and social costs that were rarely factored into development planning. Open-cut mining operations transformed vast areas of northern Australian landscape, removing vegetation and creating permanent changes to regional environments. Water rights became increasingly contentious as mining operations competed with pastoral, agricultural, and Indigenous community needs for access to limited water resources. Indeed, despite Indigenous land now exceeding 30 per cent of total land in Australia, Indigenous-held "water access entitlements" are 0.01 per cent only of total Australian water allocations.[43]

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities bore disproportionate environmental and social costs, continuing historical patterns of dispossession and marginalisation. Sacred sites were damaged despite legal protections, traditional economic activities were disrupted, and communities faced ongoing pressure to accept mining developments with limited capacity to influence their terms.

Rinehart's Vision and Persistent Constraints

Gina Rinehart's advocacy for northern Australian development through Australians for Northern Development and Economic Vision (ANDEV) exemplifies both the recognition of northern Australia's development challenges and the enduring logic of extractivism to which they owe. Despite acknowledging northern Australia's underdevelopment, Rinehart's proposed solutions deepen rather than challenge the foreign-dominated resource extraction model.

ANDEV promotes reducing taxes and regulations while embracing "free market entrepreneurs" as the solution to northern Australia's development challenges.[44] The organisation's emphasis reflects Rinehart's longstanding political and economic philosophy while ignoring substantial evidence that favourable

41 ABC News: FIFO Study Finds One in Five Work in Mining Sector.
42 See Samy Leyton-Flor, Kamaljit Sangha: The Socio-Ecological Impacts of Mining on the Well-Being of Indigenous Australians, p. 2.
43 Lily O'Neill, Lee C. Godden, Elizabeth Jane Macpherson, Erin O'Donnell: Australia, Wet or Dry, North or South.
44 Gina Rinehart: McMillan Woods Global Awards 2012 – Award for 'Visionary CEO of the year' Speech by Recipient Mrs Gina Rinehart.

investment conditions for resource extraction have consistently failed to generate inclusive regional development outcomes.

ANDEV's promotion of special economic zones represents a contemporary version of enclave development approaches that have characterised the region's mining industry for decades. However, special economic zones do not address the structural constraints that have limited regional development: foreign ownership patterns, export orientation, and technological factors that favour capital-intensive over labour-intensive development would persist, limiting their capacity to generate different outcomes.

Historical Lessons and Future Choices
Conclusion

A fundamental paradox has persisted across seven decades of northern Australian economic development: the region's vast mineral wealth has supported foreign corporate profits and national export earnings while contributing minimally to regional development or community prosperity. Each mining boom has deepened rather than reduced the region's peripheral status, establishing patterns of foreign ownership and external control that persist despite massive investments in mining infrastructure and unprecedented commodity export revenues.

Northern Australia's experience from 1945-2015 demonstrates that resource abundance alone does not guarantee regional prosperity. The systematic failure to transform mineral wealth into sustained regional development reflects three critical structural factors that have shaped northern Australian development across multiple mining booms.

First, foreign ownership concentrated strategic decision-making outside Australia, limiting regional influence over development directions. The progression from 59 per cent foreign ownership in 1978 to 83 per cent by 2010 demonstrates deepening external control, with corresponding reductions in regional capacity to influence development outcomes.

Second, export orientation integrated northern Australia into global commodity systems of provision as a raw materials supplier rather than a centre of value-added production. The failure to develop processing industries represents foregone opportunities worth billions of dollars annually, as demonstrated by the bauxite industry's potential to generate five times more value through aluminium processing than bauxite exports.

The mining tax episode of 2010-2014 demonstrated the political constraints on redirecting resource wealth toward regional development, revealing the extent of corporate influence over democratic decision-making. The failure of this reform attempt highlighted the structural power imbalances that favour transnational corporations over regional communities and democratic institutions.

Northern Australia's historical experience challenges the assumption that market-driven resource development will automatically generate regional prosperity. The region's continuing underdevelopment despite extraordinary

resource endowments suggests that alternative development models are necessary; models that prioritise regional development outcomes in northern Australia over dividends for shareholders currently reaping benefits from mining that are disproportionate to their contribution to extractive industry.

A decade on from the mining tax debacle and familiar themes appear in new guises. Rio Tinto's profits dropped 16 per cent in the first half of 2025 to a mere $4.81 billion "reporting its smallest first-half underlying profit since 2020 and the lowest interim dividend in seven years" due to "falling iron ore prices and rising costs in Australia".[45] On 24 May 2020 people working for Rio Tinto destroyed 46 000 year old artefacts in Juukan Gorge, including a "kangaroo leg bone dating back 28 000 years which had been sharpened into a pointed tool — the oldest examples of bone technology found in Australia".[46] Puutu Kunti Kurruma and Pinikura (PKKP) traditional owners discovered the destruction by accident after seeking permission from Rio Tinto to visit the site ahead of National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week celebrations. Ministerial consent for the blast was granted in 2013 but a statement from Rio Tinto released three days after the incident "apologised that the PKKP's 'recently expressed concerns' did not arise 'through the engagements that have taken place over many years under the agreement that governs our operations on their country'".[47] Mining magnate Clive Palmer spent $60 million on campaign advertising ahead of the 2019 federal election claiming he "decided to polarise the electorate" with an "anti-Labor advertising blitz in the final weeks of the election campaign, rather than attempting to win seats for his United Australia Party".[48] The Labor Party's analysis of the unexpected election loss notes that,

> The anti-Adani campaign entrenched the view that Queensland mining communities that the progressive parties considered their jobs unworthy, reinforcing the divide between 'self' and 'other', where the 'other' were southerners telling Queenslanders how to live their lives. The entire communities of central and north Queensland reacted savagely to this perception, voting strongly against Labor and the Greens.[49]

The following year Queensland's Supreme Court ruled that Palmer did not have to pay the remaining $102 million that liquidators were pursuing after the 2016 collapse of his company Queensland Nickel left $200 million in outstanding debts, including unpaid worker entitlements for those who lost their jobs at the Yabulu nickel refinery in Townsville. Palmer stands accused by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission of "misusing his position as a company director" in the lead up to the company being placed into voluntary administration.[50] Meanwhile the Queensland government cut a deal with Adani in August 2025 to defer royalties in exchange for a $50 million expansion of the Carmichael

45 Melanie Burton, Sameer Manekar, Clara Denina: Rio Tinto Logs Smallest First-Half Profit in Five Years on Lower Iron Ore Prices.
46 Michelle Stanley, Kelly Gudgeon: Pilbara Mining Blast Confirmed to Have Destroyed 46 000yo Sites of 'Staggering' Significance.
47 Edie Hofmeister, Amandeep Sandhu: Opinion.
48 Ben Smee: Clive Palmer Says He 'Decided to Polarise Electorate' with Anti-Labor Ads to Ensure Coalition Win.
49 Craig Emerson, Jay Weatherill: Review of Labor's 2019 Federal Election Campaign, p. 62.
50 Mark Ludlow: Clive Palmer Won't Have to Pay Last $100M in QNI Debts.

coal mine operation in Central Queensland.[51] The mine began production in 2021 and Adani has paid royalties of around $78.6 million in 2025 and $83.5 million in 2024 but not a cent in corporate income tax due to reporting no profits despite earning $1.27 billion in revenue in 2025.[52] Over a decade has passed since the controversial mine was approved by the Queensland government with a pledge from Adani that it would contribute around $22 billion in taxes and royalties over the course of the operation.[53]

The choice facing the people of northern Australia remains clear: continue expanding extractive industries under foreign ownership and control, accepting the patterns of regional underdevelopment that have characterised the past seven decades, or develop alternative approaches that harness the region's natural wealth for genuine regional transformation. History demonstrates that the former path leads to continued underdevelopment despite resource abundance, while the latter requires challenging powerful interests but offers the possibility of finally realising northern Australia's potential for supporting prosperous and sustainable communities.

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51 See Jack McKay: Queensland Government Strikes New Deal with Bravus to Defer Royalties, Expand Carmichael Coal Mine.
52 See Jonathan Barrett: Adani Promised Australia Billions from Its Carmichael Mine but It Hasn't Paid A Cent in Tax.
53 See Jonathan Barrett: Despite $22bn Promise, Adani has Paid Zero Corporate Tax in Australia and Experts Think It Won't Ever Pay A Cent.

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The Origins of the Queenslander House

Abstract: The inspiration for the ubiquitous external stud frame of the Queensland house has previously been assumed to be the half timbered houses of Britain. There was an assumed single point of dissemination throughout Queensland via the work of a British immigrant architect, Richard George Suter. This article demonstrates a direct connection between an 1853 house in Geelong designed by German immigrant architect Frederick Kawerau and the earliest known external stud buildings in Queensland. The earliest of these two buildings, the Rockhampton Railway house (1865), pre-dates Suter's arrival in Australia and was designed by a German architect, Richard Roericht, who had emigrated from the same town as Kawerau. Roericht spent six years in Victoria before he relocated to Queensland. The second building, the Nanango School (1866) was designed by Benjamin Backhouse. Backhouse had previously practiced in Geelong and his association with Kawerau is well documented.

This article challenges what we thought we knew about outside studding in Queensland and recognises the previously unexplored role of German architects in shaping the quintessential Queensland house.

Queensland attained Statehood later, and with less preparation, than other colonies in what would become Australia.[1] The new state was immediately beset by pressure to satisfy competing regions and to supply accommodation for the new state's administration.[2] The exposed stud framing technique, central to the quintessential Queenslander house, was born out of the need for expediency and economy. The stud frame, previously credited as inspired by British medieval housing, came to the state via two German immigrant architects. The Queenslander has been described by architect Don Roderick as having a "distinctive character that was the closest that Australia has ever come to producing an indigenous style".[3] This new story about what makes the Queenslander House special opens our understanding of the influence exerted by German immigrants, an often-overlooked community, in our young Australian colonies.

By 1860, Victoria's gold rush decade, and the opportunities it presented, were fading. It is therefore not surprising that several entrepreneurs and architects who had contributed to, and benefited from, gold-fuelled development 'looked north.' Architects Charles Tiffin, Richard Roehricht and Benjamin Backhouse; and businessmen Frederick Bauer and Alexander Fyfe were among those, previously from Geelong, who made the journey north to Brisbane. The new state did not settle quickly into self-government. Reflected in the emerging architecture of the era, several already established towns felt that they should have been the capital, and those situated some distance away believed that they owed little to the new capital Brisbane.[4] This paper examines the history of two regional government buildings which incorporate the earliest identified uses of external stud framing in Queensland, and were the inspiration for the spread of the style in

1 See Allan A. Morrison: Colonial Society 1860-1890, p. 21.
2 See ibid., p. 24.
3 Donald C. Roderick: The Origins of the Elevated Queensland House, p. 21.
4 See Northern Argus: 16 September 1865, p. 2 (Government Buildings).

other parts of the state.[5] These pioneering structures are the Nanango School in Nanango and the Railway Offices in Rockhampton.

The Rockhampton Railway House

Rockhampton was a vocal critic of the central government and government administration buildings being built there were openly disparaged. The 'Northern Argus' editorial of 16 September 1865, called the design for the planned Telegraph and Post Offices a "pattern of architectural deformity" with "ugly proportions and worse taste […] an ugly jumble of masonry".[6] According to the article, the Colonial Architect, Mr. Tiffin, had already earned "imperishable fame' for his former designs, none of which met the standards expected by the community.[7] It did not help that an earlier proposal for the Telegraph and Post Offices was withdrawn, as the government considered it too expensive for Rockhampton. The editor concluded by commenting that the cost would not have been too great for Maryborough.[8]

In this context, the initiation of the railway towards the east from Rockhampton was seen by many in Brisbane as a concession to Rockhampton's East Street businesses.[9] There had been a "monster meeting" in Rockhampton, reported on 26 August 1863, at which resolutions in favour of separation had been carried and "embodied in a memorial for presentation to the Governor" triggered by dissatisfaction with the railway debate in Parliament.[10] The local community continued to share their opinions.

Given the public commentary on other government buildings, it is unfortunate that local newspapers for the period immediately following the announcement and tender of the Railway Offices in Rockhampton have not survived. It would be fruitful to have a record of local attitudes to the building, of timber and tin construction, and the first external stud frame building known in Queensland.

The Railway Offices were initially built as temporary offices for the fledgling Great Northern Railway and were designed to become the manager's residence once the new Terminal Station and offices were established.[11] It is possible that the Railway Offices in Rockhampton were prefabricated elsewhere after being designed in Rockhampton.[12] The building shows some characteristics of a portable building, such as carpenter markings incised on joints.[13] Roman numerals indicate the matching pieces.

Portable wooden buildings were widely used by the new government in the first 20 years after statehood to meet pressing administrative needs, particularly

5 See Don Watson: Outside Studding, p. 819.
6 Ibid., p. 2.
7 See ibid., p. 2.
8 See Northern Argus: 16 September 1865, p. 2 (Government Buildings).
9 See Allan A. Morrison: Colonial Society 1860-1890, p. 27.
10 Goulburn Herald: 26 August 1863, p. 2 (Telegraphic Intelligence).
11 See Rockhampton Bulletin: 16 March 1865, p. 3 (The Northern Railway).
12 See Letter from Herbert to Plews: 24 November 1864.
13 See Miles Lewis: The Diagnosis of Prefabricated Buildings, p. 58.

in the regions.[14] Twenty-four buildings intended for the new Port Albany (Somerset) settlement which had been precut and constructed to framework stage in Brisbane in 1863 were deployed for other more pressing needs in other communities.[15] The demand was so high that they were sent as post offices in Rockhampton, customs offices in Mackay, and administrative offices in Ipswich and Brisbane. By early 1865, Maryborough was also providing pre-cut buildings to meet the state government's urgent needs.[16]

The Railway Offices in Rockhampton were a speedy solution for accommodating a new government department in the north. A Department of Land and Works letter sent on 1 October 1864 to the then Engineer for Roads, Northern Division, Henry Plews, records that the "government has decided upon building suitable premises for carrying on the business of the Railway Department at Rockhampton as soon as practicable".[17] The process of negotiating with Brisbane and the delays in dealing with a distant Head Office meant that work did not commence until at least 18 April 1865.[18] By 22 June 1865 the offices were near completion when there was an attempted arson.[19] Painters were already at work and skirting boards; fireplaces and other joinery were in place.

The government adopted wooden buildings as an expedient solution for large distances in the state. As sawn timber became plentiful, it was eagerly adopted by the broader community, even in the most elegant private homes.[20] The separate elements of the 'Queenslander' home, when set out as design features, are not in themselves innovations or unique to Queensland.[21] Every significant technique later utilised in the Queenslander had been employed elsewhere. It is rather in the combination of a 'set' of design elements, and then in its widespread and persistent proliferation, that the Queensland house has grown to be the recognisable building form so strongly identified with the state.

The houses are generally recognisable as single stories, elevated on piles composed of timber and tin, with a verandah on at least one side, and studs exposed on at least two outside walls. There are other elements, decorative detailing between verandah posts and a steeply pitched roof, for example, that can fit the 'checklist' too.[22] External stud architecture was not common, although not unknown, when the first outside-studded buildings 'appeared' in government buildings in Queensland in 1865. There were already several examples of exterior stud-framed buildings elsewhere in Australia, but these were relatively few and often erected in public spaces, such as parks, for their decorative value.[23]

The 'Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture' by J.C. Louden (1853) admonished readers of this topic.

14 See Don Watson, A Century of Distant Accommodation, p. 8.
15 See ibid., p. 8.
16 See ibid., p. 9.
17 Letter from LWO to Plews: 1 October 1864.
18 See Letter from Plews to LWO: 1 April 1865.
19 See Rockhampton Bulletin: 22 June 1865, p. 2 (untitled).
20 See Rod Fisher: Queenslanders, p. 4.
21 See Peter Bell: Square Wooden Boxes on Long Legs, p. 37.
22 See Rod Fisher: Queenslanders: Their Historic Timbered Homes, p. 3.
23 See Miles Lewis: Research Data Bases – Australian Building.

> Half-timbered cottages are very picturesque objects and seem particularly appropriate to a woody country; nevertheless, we cannot recommend them for general adoption, even if the expense were not an object, on account of the thinness of the walls, and the care requisite to keep the roof and other parts of the exterior in nice order. As ornamental objects in parks they are very desirable, both on account of their beauty and their historical interest.[24]

Until the introduction of the outside stud frame, timber buildings in Queensland were clad both inside and outside. Structural framing was fully enclosed and not meant for view.[25] The deliberate use of outside stud frames was a significant and traceable change in timber construction in 1865.[26] The term only applies when the use of studs is intentional, and studs form a deliberate pattern with aesthetic intention.[27] To date, most scholars have identified the half-timber houses of Tudor England as the likely source of inspiration for exterior studding in Queensland.[28] The English model, however, differed significantly from exterior stud buildings, which became the norm in Queensland.[29] Traditional half-timbered buildings have brick or clay infill applied between the studs on the exterior of the house to create an outside finish that sits flush with the timber frame.

The Origins of 'the Queenslander'

Bell's overview of the research prepared for the Queensland Heritage Council in 2002[30] specifically called for further research into "the origins of the (Queensland) exposed timber frame in the 1860s".[31] This study seeks to address the gap identified by Bell and suggests a new antecedent to the outside stud frame of Queensland. It also challenges the established view that Richard Suter designed Nanango School. Bell's call was prompted by the identification of Rockhampton Railway Offices in 1999.[32] Watson identified the Queensland stud wall as an intentional, architect-driven device.[33] He concluded that the Nanango School was the earliest example of outside studding in Queensland and identified Richard George Suter as its likely architect.[34] He has since attempted to reconcile his original research (1988) in relation to the Nanango School and the stud frame's origins with the Railway Office, a well-documented example from Northern Queensland.[35] In his 2021 paper, Watson confirmed his view that Suter was the architect of the Nanango School, and he suggested that the stud frame developed for the

24 John C. Loudon: An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture, p. 1147.
25 See Peter Bell: A History of the Queensland House, p. 10.
26 See Don Watson: Outside Studding. Some Claims To Architectural Taste, p. 22.
27 See Don Watson: Outside Studding, p. 812.
28 See Donald C. Roderick: The Origins of the Elevated Queensland House, p. 235.
29 See John C. Loudon: An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture, p. 1146.
30 See Peter Bell: A History of the Queensland House.
31 Ibid., p. 57.
32 See Margaret Strelow: Railway Offices History.
33 See Don Watson: Outside Studding. Some Claims To Architectural Taste, p. 22.
34 See ibid., p. 28.
35 See Don Watson: Outside Studding, pp. 819 ff..

Railway Office was a separate but short-lived rendition of the style. Suter's style prevailed, and outside studding spread quickly across the state.[36]

The Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, held in 1911, identifies the outer walls of private dwellings. At that time, nearly 79 per cent of Queensland's housing was made of wood, compared to the Australian average of 55 per cent. (Tasmania was not far behind Queensland at 75 per cent.)[37] At the time the Nanango School was built the school was described by a journalist as "somewhat in the Chalet or Swiss style".[38] The school had external cross-bracing (removed) and heavy upright studs. The school was designed in August and September 1865 and was built in 1866.

The Rockhampton Railway Offices were designed in late 1864 and occupied on 25 July 1865, predating the design of the Nanango School. The Railway Offices use heavy external studs and cross bracing to form a pattern not unlike that of the Nanango school, but heavier and more elaborate. The building was originally surrounded by verandahs and included a detached kitchen (removed).[39] The Rockhampton Railway Offices were first identified in an unpublished document disseminated privately to other researchers in 1999,[40] and its significance as an early external stud frame building was immediately recognised. The building has a strong public record that allows traceability from construction to its current location and ownership.

One of the Victorian architects who moved to the new Queensland state, Benjamin Backhouse, was appointed as an architect to the Board of General Education in 1863.[41] He was the only architect paid by the Board in 1865, the year the Nanango School was designed.[42] Watson postulated, however, that it was Suter who had designed the Nanango school while working in Backhouse's office,[43] as Suter later designed several very similar exterior stud-framed schools.[44] Suter may have spent some time employed in Benjamin Backhouse's firm,[45] but the specific timeframe is uncertain, and given that he arrived in Australia only five weeks before tenders for Nanango School were called (which required a completed design available for viewing), it is doubtful that Backhouse would have entrusted such a significant task to a newcomer. Suter had arrived in the colony on 7 August 1865,[46] but the design and documentation for the school likely took place between 18 August 1865 when the application for financial aid was lodged by the local community, and the calling of tenders on 13 September 1865.[47]

36 See ibid., p. 824.
37 See Peter Bell: A History of the Queensland House, p. 17.
38 Burnett Argus: 19 May 1866, p. 2.
39 See Margaret Strelow: Railway Offices History.
40 See ibid., p. 10.
41 See John W. East: Benjamin Backhouse in Brisbane, 1861-1868, p. 27.
42 See Don Watson: Outside Studding. Some Claims To Architectural Taste, p. 26.
43 See Don Watson: Outside Studding, p. 811.
44 See Don Watson: Outside Studding. Some Claims To Architectural Taste, p. 30.
45 See Watson, Outside Studding, p. 816.
46 See ibid., p. 820.
47 See ibid., p. 816.

Designed by Richard Hugo Oswald Roehricht, a draftsman and architect in the employ of the fledgling Great Northern Railway,[48] the Railway Offices were already completed before Suter arrived in Australia.[49] Belland Lewis both identified similarities between Nanango School and Rockhampton Railway Offices.[50] This paper contends that Benjamin Backhouse was the architect of the Nanango School, rather than it having been designed by Richard Suter, and it will describe links between Backhouse, Richard Roehricht and a Victorian cottage, the likely antecedent for the two Queensland buildings. In his online database, Lewis identified a timber cottage in Geelong, Victoria, as a possible inspiration for the Nanango School.[51] This cottage, known as Kawerau's 'Swiss cottage', was a clear landmark in Geelong's developing township. This is depicted in two contemporaneous sketches reproduced in the Lewis database.[52]

Kawerau's Swiss Cottage: An Influence on the 'Queenslander'?

Kawerau's cottage was used as a reference point in newspaper advertisements, such as an auction of land "situated immediately opposite the very pretty Swiss cottage, erected by Mr Kawerau".[53] Another advertisement advised that an imported cottage, one of twelve for sale, had been "erected at the back of the residence of F Kawerau, Esq, in Newtown, for inspection".[54]

Lewis described Kawerau's cottage as an expressed decorative frame of closely spaced studwork, with horizontal members at sill height and a band of criss-cross bracing below the eave.[55] It was completed by 17 January 1853. Geelong's population grew rapidly, from 3 810 (406 houses) at the start of 1845[56] to 23 314 by 1857.[57] By then, there were 6 000 houses and 17 architects in town.[58] One of the architects, Frederick (Fritz) Kawerau (1818-1876), architect of the Swiss cottage, had studied at the Royal Academy in Berlin. He arrived in Melbourne in 1849[59] with his wife and brother, Theodore. Shortly after his arrival he visited the 'Argus' and the editor reported the visit,

> A German gentleman of the name of Kawerau (pronounced Carvero by anybody wishing to be successful in finding him,) has left at our office some plans and drawings of buildings erected by him in Hamburg and elsewhere […] is anxious to practice [sic] his profession in this district, and his talents appear equally to embrace the simplicity of a Pyramid and an elaboration of an Alhambra, and he

48 See ibid., p. 819.
49 See ibid., p. 820.
50 See Peter Bell: A History of the Queensland House, p. 9; Miles Lewis: Research Data Bases – Australian Building, section 5.06.14.
51 See ibid., 5.06.17.
52 See ibid., 5.06.08.
53 Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 24 March 1853, p. 2 (Sales by Auction).
54 Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 23 June 1854, p. 1 (Four Room Wooden Houses for Sale).
55 See Miles Lewis: Research Data Bases – Australian Building, section 5.06.7.
56 See David Rowe: About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong Theme Six, p. 12.
57 See ibid., p. 14.
58 See David Rowe: About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong Theme Two, p. 15.
59 See Gabrielle L. McMullen: Germantown Revisited, p. 11.

> speaks of being perfectly capable of undertaking any building from a dog-kennel to a tower of Babel, we wish to draw the attention of intending builders to his claims for support[60]

A few years later, Kawerau followed the rush to the gold fields before returning to his profession as an architect, basing himself in Geelong in 1852.[61] Kawerau designed a house for his new business partner, Edward Snell, in 1853, following the style set by his own 'Swiss cottage'.[62] Snell's house included a small section with timber framed elements similar to the Swiss cottage. The house had criss-cross bracing and upright studs on a "small externally framed timber room projected from the upper level above the verandah".[63]

Frederick Kawerau understood the opportunities of 1850s, both economically and politically. Kawerau's name appeared consistently on the pages of the Geelong newspapers. He initially established himself on Ryrie Street,[64] next door to compatriot Frederick Bauer, before forming a partnership with Edward Snell.[65] Kawerau and Bauer continued their business relationship by importing prefabricated houses.[66] Kawerau was active in the public life of his community. He was involved in seeking justice for gold miners during the months leading up to the fateful Eureka Stockade. He addressed a public meeting in support of the miner's cause on 11 August 1853 and was later appointed to a small committee to carry out the "objects of the meeting", to seek political and social rights for the miners, and to reduce the goldminer's licence tax.[67]

On 8 August 1853, the 'Argus' printed a strongly worded Letter to the Editor, addressed to the Lieutenant Governor of Victoria. The Governor had disparaged the German community when presented with a petition regarding miners' grievances, and Kawerau demanded a public apology on behalf of the German community. Later, in the same month, Kawerau actively supported John Goldman, a condemned man, as he sat in his cell with only minutes to live.[68] The hanging was delayed for 15 minutes, while the hangman waited for the result of a last-minute appeal on the grounds that the killing had been unintentional. The news of a reprieve arrived at less than ten minutes to spare. The sentence was eventually commuted to 15 years of hard labour.[69]

The early years of the gold rush made Australia very wealthy with a high demand for luxury goods.[70] Kawerau's enterprise helped to meet the demand. Although most imported goods came from the United Kingdom,[71] with significant imports from America, Kawerau found a ready market for imported

60 Argus, 3 August 1849, p. 2 (Architecture).
61 See Lorraine Huddle: Architects of Geelong, p. 49.
62 See Louise Honman: A Conservation Plan for 2 Skene Street Newtown Geelong, p. 2.
63 Ibid., p. 12.
64 See Lorraine Huddle: Architects of Geelong, p. 50.
65 See ibid., p. 49.
66 See Griffiths, Tom (ed): The Illustrated Diary of an Artist, Engineer and Adventurer in the Australian colonies 1849 to 1859, 23 June 1855 entry.
67 Argus, 12 August 1853, p. 12 (Geelong).
68 See Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer: 16 August 1853, p. 2. (The Condemned Criminal).
69 See Lorraine Finlay: Eliza Nelson and Dr John Singleton, p. 30.
70 See Lloyd Churchward: Australia and America 1788-1972, p. 42.
71 See ibid., p. 52.

furniture and damasks. The 'Hamburg' furniture was manufactured "expressly to the order of Mr Kawerau".[72] The goldrush peaked in 1853,[73] and declined in the late 1850s.[74] Geelong experienced a significant decline in trade and population stagnation[75] as Melbourne fiercely competed for the miner's gold.[76]

The partnership between Kawerau and Snell had been very profitable but ended in May 1854,[77] by which time Kawerau was desperately trying to sell some of the portable houses he had imported with Bauer.[78] Although Snell entered in his diary that Kawerau was in poor health and was planning to return to Germany, it is more likely that Kawerau was in desperate need of funds.[79] Kawerau sold his share of the business to Edward Prouse and sold two of the portable timber houses to Snell.[80] The planned return to Europe did not happen until 1867, when he visited for a year,[81] before returning to his home in Melbourne.[82] Kawerau was not the only architect in Geelong in the early years of the goldrush. Benjamin Backhouse landed in Geelong in 1853 and remained there until 1860.[83]

The son of a stonemason and Builder in Ipswich, Suffolk, Benjamin Backhouse junior initially emigrated to Australia because of financial embarrassment when his own business ran into difficulties.[84] His household furniture and stock in trade were auctioned on 13 September 1852 and he left London with his wife and children on 26 October.[85] The Backhouse family landed in Geelong on 8 March 1853 when Kawerau's 'Swiss cottage' was freshly built and the gold rush was at its peak. The acquaintance between Kawerau and Backhouse was documented in the records of the Geelong Society of Architects, Civil Engineers, and Surveyors, a short-lived association that published its Rules and Regulations in 1855. Benjamin Backhouse was Honorary Secretary and Frederick Kawerau was listed as one of 14 members. There were nine Honorary Members and five associates. Interestingly, one of these associate members was Charles Tiffin, who later became Queensland's first Colonial Architect, a role he held during the period when the Nanango School and the Rockhampton Railway Offices, both Queensland Government buildings, were built. Tiffin originally emigrated to Geelong but left shortly afterwards for Hobart,[86] where he stayed for two years[87] before making his way to Brisbane.

72 Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 21 September 1853, p. 3 (Advertisement).
73 See Lloyd Churchward: Australia and America 1788-1972 An Alternative History, p. 42.
74 See David Rowe: About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong Theme Two, p. 115.
75 See David Rowe: About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong Theme Six, p. 675.
76 See ibid., p. 671.
77 See Tom Griffiths (ed.): The Illustrated Diary of an Artist, Engineer and Adventurer in the Australian Colonies 1849 to 1859.
78 See Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 23 June 1854, p. 1 (Advertisement).
79 See Tom Griffiths (ed.): The Illustrated Diary of an Artist, Engineer and Adventurer in the Australian colonies 1849 to 1859.
80 See ibid.
81 See David Rowe: About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong Theme Two, p. 110.
82 See Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 24 July 1856, p. 2 (The Rifle Corps).
83 See John W. East: Benjamin Backhouse in Brisbane, 1861-1868, p. 7.
84 See ibid., p. 6.
85 See ibid., p. 7.
86 See Colonial Times Hobart, 26 April 1855, p. 2 (Shipping Intelligence).
87 See Colonial Times Hobart, 9 May 1857, p. 2 (Shipping Intelligence).

Backhouse's early works in Geelong were of a "simple design" with little, if any, architectural detail.[88] His partnership with Reynolds, which began in 1856,[89] paved the way for the construction of more elaborate buildings.[90] Backhouse clearly saw the merit in learning from other architects' works. Huddle identified several buildings from this period with a clear relationship with either a pattern book plan or the work of another local architect.[91] Significant parts of the Trinity Church (1858) are apparent borrowing from the church design that appeared in the Illustrated London News in 1854.[92] With his move to Brisbane in 1861, Backhouse positioned himself in an era of "rapid pastoral expansion" in Queensland, allowing him to "ride the rising wave of prosperity".[93] Kawerau had already relocated to Melbourne, where he played a significant role in the advancement of the German National Association in Victoria, serving as a Chair in 1857.[94] The Association included in its principles the centralisation of military and diplomatic power under one head and the reinstitution of the German Parliament.[95]

In Melbourne, Kawerau formed a close association with Professor Damm, a member of the Frankfurt National Assembly in 1848.[96] Damm also participated in the Baden Uprising, which followed the failed revolution.[97] Their signatures beneath each other on a petition calling for the protection of existing electoral rights.[98] A cover page attached to the petition held at the Victoria State Library recorded that the petition had been lying in the German Association rooms.[99] It is estimated that up to 10 000 German 48ers took refuge in the United States.[100] A small but influential percentage came to Australia. When Backhouse arrived in Brisbane in 1861, there were only a handful of architects in practice with whom to share opportunities.[101] Backhouse quickly found clients, ecclesiastical, squatter, and with the Queensland Board of General Education.

The schools designed by Backhouse fit the individual budgets and communities they were designed to serve.[102] Simple timber structures, along with more ornate and attractive brick designs, were adapted and repeated. The 'Romanesque' Maryborough National School became the model for Fortitude Valley Primary School and part of the Brisbane Normal School.[103] Nanango School was designed during his tenure as an architect of the Board of General Education. A journalist, reporting on the Nanango School writes, "Our school, schoolmaster's

88 Lorraine Huddle: Architects of Geelong, p. 65.
89 See ibid., p. 63.
90 See ibid., p. 65.
91 See ibid., p. 70.
92 See ibid., p. 70.
93 John W. East: Benjamin Backhouse in Brisbane, 1861-1868, p. 20.
94 See Argus, 20 August 1857, p. 5 (German Meeting at the Criterion).
95 See Argus, 17 June 1861 (German National Association), p. 6.
96 See ibid.
97 See Sonja-Maria Bauer: Die Verfassunggebende Versammlung in der Badischen Revolution von 1849, p. 56.
98 See 1856 Petition to Parliament by the German Community against the second clause of the Electoral Law Amendment Bill, State Library Victoria, Lists 3 and 4.
99 See ibid.
100 See Raanan Geberer: The 48ers, p. 56.
101 Ibid., p. 20.
102 See ibid., p. 43.
103 See ibid., p. 45.

house, and adjunct are now finished – they are built somewhat in the chalet, or Swiss style".[104] Although grainy and difficult to see, the cross-bracing and belt rail of the single-skin wall of the school were large, and the studs were widely spaced. Overall, the school has a practical and utilitarian design. The school underwent a significant remodelling in 1926, during which time it appears that the cross bracing was removed. Lewis has pointed out that its 'Swiss' appearance suggested that Nanango School belonged "in the tradition of Kawerau's house".[105] The use of outside studding was unusual enough for a school inspector to later comment, "floor hardwood, walls hardwood, boards tongued and grooved and placed upright – with outside studding. The only building of the kind, I have seen".[106] Curiously, this Inspector's report was written in 1876 when a good number of similar schools had already been built, but perhaps they did not come under the purview of our observant inspector.

Backhouse was not above borrowing ideas from other architects, and he certainly had ample opportunity to examine the 'Swiss cottage' in Geelong. Frederick Kawerau's design for his Swiss cottage was unusual for its time. Swiss cottages were very popular,[107] but the use of exposed studs was normally not a feature of this style. Kawerau trained in Berlin at the prestigious Royal Academy under the famous architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel. Shinkel called for honesty in architecture, believing that the structure of a building should not be obscured or masked.[108] He would have approved of Kawerau's choice to build a cottage with an exposed stud frame, showing the building's structure. There is a possible model for the pattern of crosses and upright studs of the Swiss cottage in the half-timbering of the Peace Church in Jawor. This massive timber church was located 60 km from Frederick Kawerau's hometown of Boleslaweic in Lower Silesia, and was of great significance to the local Protestant community. Kawerau was Lutheran and would have known the church.[109] Kawerau's mother was Swiss, and we know the family visited the maternal hometown at least once during Frederick's childhood.[110]

Not One but Two Germans Architects behind the Queenslander?

After years of unease and a short-lived civil war, 22 Swiss cantons formed a confederation in 1848. Kawerau would also have supported the new Swiss Confederation. The newly formed nation-state of Switzerland needed a national icon to inspire unity, and they embraced the 'chalet' as a "ready-made solution".[111] It is easy to imagine that Kawerau celebrated his Swiss connection in the cottage design. Kawerau's links with Switzerland were reinforced by his father's career

104 Brisbane Courier, 28 May 1866, p. 4 (Nanango).
105 Miles Lewis: Research Data Bases – Australian Building, section 5.06.19.
106 Don Watson: Outside Studding. Some Claims To Architectural Taste, p. 27.
107 See Irene, Cieraad: Bringing Nostalgia Home, p. 267.
108 See Negar Saadat: The Impact of Schinkel's Vision on German Architecture, Berlin, p. 2.
109 See Farmer's Journal and Gardener's Chronicle, 1 April 1864, p. 3 (News of the Week).
110 See Peter Kawerau: Dokument Henning.
111 Irene Cieraad: Bringing Nostalgia Home, p. 278.

which may also account for Kawerau's political activity in Australia. Kawerau's father, Peter, had been an eminent academic and educator who had trained with Pestalozzi in Switzerland.[112] Pestalozzi's teaching was originally embraced by the ruling class, but the Pestalozzian ideals supported a high view of "the common man",[113] and many teachers were advocates of "a free education" for a "free people".[114] As unrest spread across Europe prior to the Revolution, the ruling classes became distrustful of Pestalozzi's style of education, and a system of supervision of teachers, as they taught in the classroom, was enforced. They were also denied the freedom of association in their private time.[115] Peter Kawerau was one of those specifically targeted but died in 1844, before the 1848 Revolution itself.[116] Frederick Kawerau left Germany in late 1848.

Whatever the reason for Kawerau's small Swiss Cottage in Skene Street Geelong, it demonstrated an economical and attractive solution for housing in the new colony. Backhouse moved to Sydney in 1868, where he became the first Socialist Party Member of the Legislative Council of New South Wales.[117] Richard Roehricht, meanwhile, the architect responsible for the Rockhampton Railway Offices,[118] had migrated to Australia in 1854.[119] Roehricht spent four years on the goldfields in Victoria, Australia. Unclaimed mail for Richard Roehricht advertised as being held at the Maryborough (Victoria) post office in both March and November 1858[120] led to the assumption that he had likely been working at nearby diggings. His obituary states that Richard Roehricht was born in 1834 in Breslau (now known as Wrocław) in Silesia.[121] Wrocław was a major city, 76 miles from Boleslawiec, where Richard's father was an architect. Richard was educated in Wrocław but was in Boleslawiec by the age of 14 at which time he was articled to his father in that town.[122] The Peace Churches in Jawor and Swidnica are accessed via a road connecting the two towns. Boleslawiec was Frederick Kawerau's birthplace.[123] William Westgarth likely recruited Kawerau from there when he visited Lower Silesia in mid-1848[124] as he arrived on one of the Westgarth ships with others from the same area. Roehricht was in Boleslawiec at that time.

Boleslawiec has never been a large centre, with a population of only 5843 in 1840. Roehricht stayed in Boleslawiec for six years, saving a few months studying at Gewerbeschule, Liegnitz.[125] At 20, Roehricht moved to Australia to try his luck in the goldfields. Frustratingly, he is rarely mentioned in surviving records. Most

112 See Rebekka Horlacher: Los Modelos Educativos Imponen La Estandarizacion, p. 15.
113 Karl G Maeser: Pestalozzi, Revolution, and the Reaktion, p. 34.
114 Ibid., p. 34.
115 See CHS. A (s.n.): The Public Schools In Massachusetts Compared With Those In Prussia, p. 57.
116 See ibid., p. 63.
117 See ibid., p. 74.
118 See Don Watson: Outside Studding, p. 820.
119 See Grace's Guide: Richard Hugo Oswald Roehricht – 1891 Obituary.
120 See Maryborough and Donolly Advertiser, 12 March 1858, p. 3 (List of Unclaimed Letters).
121 See Grace's Guide: Richard Hugo Oswald Roehricht – 1891 Obituary.
122 See ibid.
123 See Siegfried, Kawerau: Kawerau family through 333 years. P22.
124 See William Westgarth: Personal Recollections of Early Melbourne and Victoria, p. 120.
125 See Grace's Guide: Richard Hugo Oswald Roehricht – 1891 Obituary.

of this information was obtained from his obituary.[126] Roehricht had trained as an architect in Germany, and he returned to architectural practice in and around Melbourne, in early 1868. He volunteered in Melbourne with a local architect for a few months before serving for two years as a draughtsman for a firm in Kilmore,[127] north of the city. While Roehricht was employed at Kilmore, Kawerau was a Clerk of Works for the Victorian Public Works Department.[128] Given the strength of the connections between members of the German Community, and by the number of societies and organisations that had been established by German immigrants, it would be expected that architects Frederick Kawerau and Richard Roehricht had contact in Victoria.

Roehricht was also a practicing Lutheran and would have known the Peace church at Jawor.[129] There were few, if any, other half-timbered buildings in the places he had called home, neither in Boleslawiec or Wrocław. The town of Wrocław saw significant growth and wealth in the mid-fourteenth century, and timber frame buildings were replaced with bricks.[130] No half-timbered buildings are mentioned in the town's tourism profile. The Railway Offices bear a closer resemblance to Kawerau's Swiss cottage than Nanango School. Lewis identified that the Railway Offices belongs "to the same tradition as the buildings of Richard Suter".[131] The upright studs were closer together and heavier than those at Nanango School. Cross-bracing is a strong and deliberate decorative feature of the building. Whether Roehricht saw Kawerau's cottage is unknown; however, he spent more than six years in the vicinity. His four years as a gold miner and his later years working with an architect both within and north of Melbourne created many opportunities for the two architects from the same small town in Lower Silesia to meet in Australia.

In 1861, Roehricht accepted a post as a draughtsman at the Roads Branch of the Department of Public Works in Queensland. He moved to Brisbane to take the position.[132] It was early days for Brisbane, not unlike the first years of Geelong, with a huge demand for architects, especially to serve a growing government sector. At that time, there were only 6 000 residents in the township. We know that both Roehricht and Backhouse were in Brisbane at the same time for at least two years. These two architects, who shared common experiences in Victoria, were active in the Brisbane community, population 6 000 (and growing), for two years. They were social equals, known to each other, and recorded as attending at least one social event.[133] Roehricht remained in his government job in Brisbane until he was appointed to a similar position in Rockhampton in 1863. In Rockhampton, he designed Railway Offices. In mid-1865, when the circumstances called for a cost-effective and aesthetically pleasing building solution, Backhouse and

126 See ibid.
127 See ibid.
128 See David Rowe: About Corayo: A Thematic History of Greater Geelong Theme Two, p. 110.
129 See Brisbane Courier, 17 October 1863, p. 4.
130 See Jerzy Piekalski: Transformation of Timber Building Construction in Medieval Wrocław, p. 104.
131 Miles Lewis: Research Data Bases – Australian Building, section 5.06.14.
132 See Grace's Guide: Richard Hugo Oswald Roehricht – 1891 Obituary.
133 See Brisbane Courier, 24 May 1862, p. 2 (Queen's Birthday Levee)

Roehricht, within months of each other, designed their own 'Swiss' style building here in Queensland – in the criss-cross, outside-studded style of Kawerau's Swiss cottage in Geelong.

Conclusion

The story of the inspiration for the exterior stud frames of the Queenslander is a challenge to our assumptions about the makeup of our early population and their role in developing our culture. Most historians assume an English antecedent to the exposed stud frame. This assumption presupposes a homogeneous population of British immigrants. German-born residents accounted for five per cent of the Rockhampton population of 1868.[134] Queensland was a heady melting pot – perhaps not quite as pressurised as Victoria had been a decade earlier, however the need to respond to the pressures of growth led to some of the same solutions. Even without Kawerau's cottage, German similarities should have been considered.

The stud frame highlights the debt we owe to the influx of non-British immigrants and the skills they bought with them. Far from being isolated and unaffected by the tumultuous times of 1848, stories such as those of Kawerau and his influence have placed Australia in the context of tumultuous world affairs. There was a level of connectedness with events overseas and between colonies that could escape our notice. The story of Frederick Kawerau and his adventurous life in Australia deserves to be known, and he should be celebrated for his role as the architect behind the architects behind the Queenslander!

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"Don't Waste Time … Go North"

The Representation of North Queensland as a Tourist Destination in the Post-Second World War 'Holiday and Travel' Magazine

Abstract: This article examines a selection of content from the Australian travel magazine 'Holiday and Travel' published between 1947 and 1951 with a focus on articles and advertising promoting North Queensland as a travel destination. The content surveyed reveals a variety of themes from wellness, relaxation, and recreation to calls for further development of regions, contrasting with articles highlighting the virtues of the natural beauty of the North. The articles highlighting the burgeoning development of tourism construct this new industry as a pathway to economic success with little commentary on potential environmental impact. This provides important historical context for the increasing tourism development which took place in the state in the second half of the 20th century and beyond. In some articles the spectre of the Second World War emerges as the benefactor of infrastructure which facilitates easier travel. This article argues that the magazine continued some of the trends in travel writing begun in the interwar period, while also operating in a new post-war context, wherein writers incorporated an active intent to offer readers a mental transition from the challenges of the war years to a potential future of leisure, relaxation and economic prosperity through travel.

To those who live in the southern states, North Queensland and its warmer climate is often appealing in the middle of the year. This was also true in the mid-20th century as the author quoted in this title called out to would-be-travellers seeking warmer climes. This article examines a sample of content published in the 'Holiday and Travel' magazine which ran between 1947 and 1951.[1] Published in Sydney, the magazine covered a broad range of topics and tourist destinations in Australia and overseas. This article focuses specifically on content relating to North Queensland to explore how the region was represented in this significant period of development both in North Queensland and in the travel industry in Australia. In doing so it illuminates how North Queensland was represented to a broader Australian audience in the period and reveals trends in the representation of tourism more generally in the post-war period.

The first half of the 20th century had limited opportunities for leisure travel around the country, and the First World War, the Great Depression and the Second World War were obstacles to the development of a strong domestic tourism industry. However, the late 1940s and 1950s, with a rebounding economy, the rise of car ownership and air travel, paved the way for tourism. As a consequence, the immediate post-war period was a turning point for the development of travel magazines in Australia. As Richard White has highlighted, paid leave was increasingly enshrined in legislation in this period, which allowed a broader cross-section of Australians to take extended leave.[2] This opened a

1 Also known by the titles 'Air Travel and Holiday' and 'Holiday and Travel in Australia'. For the purposes of this article the magazine will be generally referred to as Holiday and Travel.

2 See Richard White: On Holidays, p. 122.

market for commercial publications to curate and promote destinations to fill that leave, both in Australia and overseas. Stephen Garton has also noted technical advances in the 1940s that enhanced magazine production, allowing for visual illustrations – including colour photographs – in an affordable publication for the mass market.[3]

'Holiday and Travel', which launched in December 1947, aimed to be both an informative and entertaining reference source for its readers. The opening editorial stated:

> It will be a real magazine, with authoritative articles by leading writers, photographs in colour and black and white by masters of the craft. We hope to catch your interest, to instruct as well as entertain, so that as our magazine "finds its feet" and expands month by month it will become your constant companion eagerly awaited, not put down until every word is read – and even then placed carefully aside, that you may turn back and consult it at the need.[4]

The target audience for the magazine appears to have been relatively broad. The topics covered and its advertisements were pitched at both women and men. Erica Moran has noted the travel literature of the 1940s and 1950s in the American context tended to focus on honeymooners.[5] This trend is reflected in many of the articles and advertisements in 'Holiday and Travel' though not exclusively. The articles have less of a focus on families, but children are occasionally mentioned or pictured in articles and advertisements. One advertisement for Dunlop tyres (Fig. 1) featured a family gathered around their car eating a picnic near the beach, explicitly invoking the driving holidays Richard White has argued were prominent in Australian culture in the period.[6]

Fig. 1: Dunlop Tires advertisement emphasising the growing importance of the car to family holidays.

The magazine was clearly aimed at Australians with a European background. As will be discussed later First Nations Australians do not appear to be part of the intended audience for the magazine. Rather, some First Nations people are framed as part of the travel experience in some articles.

Magazines were an influential source of information and cultural influence for Australians in the mid-20th century. As Anna Johnston and Palo Magagnoli have noted, magazines

3 See Stephen Garton: Return Fantasies, p. 718.
4 Editorial of 'History and Travel' issue 1, December 1947, p. 4.
5 See Erica Moran: No Vacation for Mother, pp. 439 f.
6 See Holiday and Travel, June 1951, p. 60. See also, Holiday and Travel June, 1951 p. 3; Richard White: On Holidays, p. 133.

are "a vast, invaluable and as-yet-untapped archive of everyday life in Australia".[7] They suggest examining the run of a magazine offers the opportunity to understand the "diversity within individual titles".[8] In this article, examining the North Queensland related specific content within 'Holiday and Travel' provides insight into how North Queensland was represented to a wider audience in a commercial publication. For the purpose of this article North Queensland is being defined as Mackay and above. The articles discussed relate to coastal cities in North Queensland, as this was the focal point for travel in the region.

An article in the 1950 issue of 'Holiday and Travel' entitled 'Don't Waste Time … Go North' evokes the typical Queensland sunshine state image readers would expect:

> What joy to walk over the soft, warm, yielding sand down to the water's edge. A swim from a beach on a tropic island must be experienced to be appreciated. The water seems so cool, translucent, and inviting. It's not cold and not too warm, just the right temperature to stay in for half an hour, one hour, two hours if you feel like it without experiencing that goose fleshy chill so well remembered in the colder South.[9]

This depiction of a Whitsunday Island, describing a warm, inviting destination is a stereotypical piece of travel journalism, but my analysis of the articles in this magazine reveals more depth in the representations of North Queensland than might be expected for a travel magazine. The Queensland tourism advertisements scattered throughout issues over the years of the magazine's run reflect a similar picture. However, a deeper analysis of the magazine reveals greater depth in how North Queensland was portrayed. Thematic issues relevant to the tourism industry in Queensland in the post-Second-World-War period, such as commentary on the advantages and disadvantages of development, the role of service personnel in the Second World War in raising the profile of the region, the rise of air travel increasing visitation, evidence of the shift to cruising in the Whitsundays and the emerging luxury market in this period, reveal a layered understanding of the tourism context of North Queensland in the mid-20th century.

Examining the representation of one region in depth serves to reveal the editors and contributors had researched the areas well enough to be aware and, in some cases, quite transparent about the potential strengths and weaknesses of tourism in the region. More than solely a vehicle for tourism advertising, the magazine delivered on its stated intent of serving readers as an informative and authoritative guide. In this way, the writers were continuing the educative approach to the North which McGregor argues travel writers had sought to adopt in the interwar period, with travel writing being an 'entertaining means of informing the public about a part of Australia that few had seen but many regarded with misgivings.'[10] 'Holiday and Travel' was one publication seeking to address those misgivings through its articles: accounts of North Queensland vary considerably between articles, depending on the author's perceptions and biases.

7 Anna Johnston, Palo Magagnoli: Histories of the Illustrated Magazine in Australia, p. 4.
8 Ibid., p. 6.
9 Harold J. Pollock: Don't Waste Time … Go North, p. 14.
10 See Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 423.

It has been well documented that the late 1940s and 1950s saw an increased focus in infrastructure and other tourism developments in the North Queensland area.[11] As late as the 1930s, communication infrastructure between the mainland and the Whitsunday islands was so limited one tour operator is said to have relied on a carrier pigeon to communicate with his wife when he collected guests and transported them by boat from the mainland to their resort.[12] Roads and transport were problematic and the standard of hotels was considered low in some areas.[13] The tourism development discussion prevalent in North Queensland at the time was also reflected in several articles in 'Holiday and Travel'.

Some articles approached this discussion practically, highlighting the logistics of using new tour buses and facilities. One article detailed at length various organized tours visitors could take from Mackay with timings and pricings detailed:

> EUNGELLA RANGE – An all day tour to this beautiful range which includes a comprehensive run on the top of the Range covering 130 miles for the round tour. This is the outstanding motor tour in the Mackay District. The Jungle vegetation on the Range is exceptionally rich and luxuriant, orchids, elkhorns, strangler figs, vines, tree and ground ferns being seen in abundance. Eungella is said to be richer in palm groves than other of the Mountain Ranges in Queensland. The name is an aboriginal word meaning "Land of the Cloud". This is a trip visitors to Mackay should not miss. Tour leaves every Sunday, Wednesday and Friday at 8.45am, returning 6pm. Morning tea is available at Netherdale. Coach Tour, including lunch, Wednesday and Friday, £1/14/-. Sunday £1/15.[14]

This description of Mackay may have been collaboration between the writer and the Queensland Tourist Bureau. While Barr notes the numbers of tourists who visited the area difficult to ascertain thanks to poor record keeping at the time, magazines like 'Holiday and Travel' are valuable sources demonstrating how the areas were presented to *potential* tourists and the extent to which North Queensland featured as a travel destination against other locations in Australia and overseas.[15]

The article also emphasised the client service available in the area. Many articles relating to North Queensland focused more on the landscape than people in the region. This is one of the rare examples of emphasising interactions with the local community, but it is a mediated tourist focused interaction, aimed at demonstrating the locals were capable of providing good service.

> Immediately on arrival, visitors are aware that they are really welcome, townsfolk are friendly and co-operative, and there is a well-worded brochure in every hotel bedroom, giving details of local tours, etc. Hotel receptionists are anxious to let everyone know that the Tourist Bureau officers will gladly assist in the planning of itineraries. Itineraries can be of considerable variety, for as well as a number of organized trips to the Reef Islands, there are beautiful beaches along the coast, visits to the canefields and sugar mills, and fifty miles inland there is the Eungella

11 See for example, Todd Barr: No Swank Here; Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 117.
12 See Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 34; Lyall R. Ford: Role of the Road Network in the Development of Far North Queensland.
13 See Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 34.
14 Catherine Gaul: Editor on Tour Visits, p. 7.
15 See Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 42.

> Range, where mountain scenery and tropical vegetation provide interesting contrast to coastal attractions. All tours are well organized and clearly set out. The offices of the Queensland Tourist Bureau and the Mackay Tourist & Development Association, are conveniently situated to the leading hotels. Unusual in this country there is the definite impression that assistance is available, and inquiries will be met with courtesy.[16]

Meanwhile, describing Townsville, the reference to "several reasonably good hotels" is an acknowledgment that hotels in North Queensland were considered inferior to luxury hotels in the south.

> In Townsville itself there are plenty of facilities for sport and recreation: golf, bowls, tennis and swimming. The theatres are cool and comfortable and there is a good shopping centre. Hotel accommodation is of varying standards, but there are several reasonably good hotels.[17]

In their history of Queensland, Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, and David Symons, note the post-war period marked a turning point in the development of tourism infrastructure in the region.[18]

While development was noted as a selling point in some articles, others picked up on the tensions between the need for development and the potential impact on the environment or the potential for over commercialization. The following 1950 article noted the importance of 'planning, control, wisdom and caution':

> At the moment the North Coast has a future more than a present. Air travel is one factor which is bringing it within the time factor of the average holiday maker. But there is still much to do in the way of organisation. Those who travel there at this moment must not expect all the comforts of home. Old timers hope that it will not suffer the same fate of exploitation which faces the tourist in the South Seas, where everything is reduced to a sale of cents and dollars and the tourist is a bewildered character dressed in a spotless suit, straw hat and carrying a camera; kidding himself that he is living as nature intended. There is a future for the Reef and a good one, providing there is planning, control, wisdom and caution; and there is little reason why the North Coast shouldn't become the playground of the world.[19]

Another author reflected on the same issue regarding National Parks:

> Authorities differ as to what a National Park should embrace, or what its purpose should be. It all depends on which side of the fence you sit; whether you view the scene in light of public recreation mainly, or whether your eyes are centred on the objective of preserving natural features and native fauna and flora. In the past there have been some pretty vigorous debates on the subject. In more than one case, the threat of commercial exploitation has put a keen edge on the controversy.[20]

The growth of tourism in this period may have been influenced by the Second World War. Fitzgerald, Megarrity and Symons note the presence of troops in North Queensland in the Second World War served to promote awareness of the area as a potential tourist destination in the post-war years.[21] Todd Barr also confirms military personnel returned as tourists post-war and Government

16 Catherine Gaul: Editor on Tour Visits, p. 7.
17 Id.: Editor on Tour, p. 50.
18 See Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 117.
19 s.n.: Following the Sun to the Great Barrier Reef, p. 91.
20 William Kinsella: Australia's Scenic Strongholds, p. 19 f.
21 See Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megarrity, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 117.

officials believed "ex-servicemen had contributed significantly to the growth of Queensland tourism".[22] Several articles in 'Holiday and Travel' magazine in the post-war period mention that troops were stationed in the area, using this recent history to provide context for their readership. An article about the 'Atherton Tableland' notes:

> When Japan entered the war and our soldiers were scattered on the Tablelands, these lakes were a Mecca for troops on leave. Barrine was a Convalescent Depot, and Eacham was a Sunday resort for all troops. It seemed incongruous in an isolated and sylvan spot like Eacham, to see different sections of the shore earmarked for different ranks of soldiers. One shady corner for instance, was labelled "officers Only," whilst another were reserved for "AWAS" or "Ors".[23]

'Don't Waste Time … Go North' was written in the second person, consciously addressing a population which was still unsettled by war:

> Are you nervy, unsettled, longing for a break from the monotonous routine? Are you frightened of the future, your health, income tax or old age? Does your tie feel as though it's choking you? Do your feet ache to be free of shoes? Do you long to walk barefoot over warm, golden sands and bathe in cool water? Do you dream of sundrenched tropical islands, seas alive with iridescent fish, coconut palms and blazing white beaches? Well then, don't waste time. Throw a few things into a port and hurry North to the Great Barrier Reef. You'll soon forget your problems in the sheer joy of exploring this wonder of the world.[24]

The caption for a photograph in a 1951 article also addresses a weary reader: "If you're bored with the winter, the city, or life in general there is always something new on the reef; be it a yarn, new companions or tastier fish".[25] Many returned service personnel were perceived as 'nervy' or unsettled and there was a popular expectation they may have been having trouble adjusting back to civilian life. It seems possible the magazine editors were consciously or subconsciously harnessing this sense of dislocation and cultivating it toward an interest in travel and thus an ongoing readership. Stephen Garton has argued there was an explicit societal attempt in this period toward "remasculinisation, returning men to 'civilisation' and the behaviours and subjectivities demanded of productive citizens, faithful husbands and dutiful fathers".[26] Travel could be seen as one means by which to encourage returned men to conform to the 'traditional' nuclear family model.

More generally, the magazine did conform to traditional gender norms. This is particularly evident in the fashion spreads which were a common feature in the magazine. 'Holiday and Travel' often featured fashion advertisements for women and men's travel attire. This inclusion is illustrative of the growing commodification of travel which began in the mid-19th century.[27] The May 1949 issue featured a women's fashion spread which complemented a feature article on the Great Barrier Reef. It sold the idea that a trip to the reef required a specific wardrobe:

22 Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. 34.
23 Henrik Brammal: Atherton Wonderland, p. 50. 'AWAS' is the acronym for 'Australian Women's Army Service' and 'ORs' is an acronym for 'Other Ranks'.
24 Harold J Pollock: Don't Waste Time … Go North, p. 13.
25 s.n.: Isles of the Sun, p. 6.
26 Stephen Garton: Return Fantasies, p. 718.
27 See Will MackIntosh: Ticketed Through, p. 63.

"If you plan a trip to the Barrier Reef to escape the cold months ahead, these pages may help you cope with your wardrobe problems".[28]

> Erica Morin has argued travel literature reinforced traditional gendered roles through:
>
> clothing representations, recommendations for daily activities, implied recreational preferences, assignments of tasks or responsibilities before and during vacations, vacation destination decision-making, concern for the enjoyment of "all family members," and the distinct presence or absence of certain family members in travel articles.[29]

The Great Barrier Reef fashion spread (Fig. 2) included ten designs, the majority of which were dresses or skirts, reinforcing traditional gender expectations with a focus on femininity and fashion.

Morin notes that this presentation of women in "delicate skirts and blouses, often in high heels, and with perfectly coifed hair" was common in travel articles and advertisements in the 1940s and 1950s.[30] This particular fashion spread included a few nods to practicality such as a "cover up blouse, very necessary in the tropics", a reference to pique as a practical material, useful "if launder-

Fig. 2: The fashion spread promoted the designs as exclusive Jack Pickworth designs created for the magazine.

ing facilities are limited" or a "water-proof nylon" jacket with "a large pocket in the back [which] makes it a very serviceable jacket for walking, picnicking etc".[31] Notably none of the clothing would facilitate any rigorous activity this aligns with Morin's suggestion that travel literature presented particular activities as gendered, in this case by implication through the clothing presented. The

28 s.n.: Following the Sun in Cotton and Rayon, p. 31.
29 Erica Morin: No Vacation for Mother, pp. 439 f.
30 Ibid., p. 446.
31 Ibid, p. 33.

gendered activities were also reflected in the photographs for the companion article. The women were presented lying or walking on the beach, sitting by the pool or gazing at the view in the distance, while the men were pictured undertaking the more 'masculine' fishing activities.

The Great Barrier Reef article also references the burgeoning luxury market in the region, but tempers the expectations of tourists. "Apart from a few instances", the author warns that "hotel accommodation would rate as fourth or fifth class to any other nation". It also alludes to the postwar challenges in building accommodation with "many other industries still having priority in the building line". The article notes the purchase of Hayman and Daydream Islands by the Barrier Reef Islands Pty Ltd, and some luxury cruises around the islands.[32] Dunk Island is singled out as coming the closest to matching luxury tourist brochure superlatives but with the accommodation described as "provided for forty guests in fibro army type lodges",[33] the expectations of luxury for a reader must have been low.

While the articles may have tempered expectations somewhat, advertisements were less circumspect. The March 1951 issue an advertisement for the Royal Hayman Hotel dubbed it "The finest resort South of the Equator". It encourages the visitor to "Holiday in idyllic luxury at the Royal Hayman Hotel, the finest vacation playground south of the Line".[34]Another advertisement for the Italian Flotta Lauro cruise line advertised the Barrier Reef as part of the route to Italy, a stopover for the emerging international tourism market.[35]

Richard White has observed in this period that many Australians of different classes regularly returned to the same coastal location for holidays, usually driving to the destination, staying in modest accommodation. White suggests people spent money on travel goods rather than travel services.[36] To some extent magazines like 'Holiday and Travel' challenged this trend by promoting both domestic and international destinations, with regular advertisements for air travel, because such magazines were aiming to shift the market to promote holidays in more distant locations and encourage the exploration of different destinations rather than a regular holiday destination. However, the magazine editors were also keen to tap into the trend for buying travel goods, with a regular feature page on decorating vacation houses providing encouraging people to spent money on goods to fill the home, as White has noted.

Another feature of the magazine was the monthly competition feature 'Worst or Best Holiday' run in the 1951 issues which offered readers the opportunity to share their own experiences with photographs. The winning entry for July 1951 written by Mr and Mrs Krause from Palm Island provides a rare insight into the travels of a North Queensland couple in other parts of Australia. The couple begin the article explaining this eight-month trip had been anticipated for thirty-two years. They note many people enquired why they hadn't travelled overseas for such a long trip, the couple reflected:

32 See s.n.: Following the Sun to the Great Barrier Reef. Holiday and Travel, May 1949, p. 11.
33 Ibid.
34 Holiday and Travel, March 1951, p. 34.
35 See ibid., p. 38.
36 See Richard White: On Holidays, p. 147.

> we wanted to know our own land first. Places hitherto just named on a piece of paper or a mere dot on a map now mean something to us. They are realities, and if it ever should become our good fortune to go abroad we feel we could now go as ambassadors of this great land of ours with a greater confidence having had this first hand knowledge of it.[37]

Through this series of reader accounts we gain an insight into how people constructed themselves as travellers and their reflections on the destinations they visited. Mr and Mrs Krause, who were likely unusual in the length of their domestic trip, reported visiting New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. They began their trip in the Tablelands of North Queensland, recording it as 'the most entrancing' of their trip, with natural wonders like the Baron Falls and the Millstream Falls among the highlights. The winner for the November-December issue focused on a 'worst trip' – a woman described her rained-out camping trip with her younger brother Charlie. The author slept in the car for the night, while her brother slept under a tarpaulin strung between two trees. The heavy rain began to pool above the sleeping Charlie until

> the bulge of water on the tarpaulin above Charlie became lower and lower (he still slept) until it was only an inch or two above his face. When John discovered this, he called out to Charlie to move, and Charlie sat up in a great hurry, bumped his head into the canvas above him, and sent the water in it splashing in all directions.[38]

These kinds of accounts are valuable additions to travel memoir literature, revealing a wider cross-section of travel accounts providing insight into travellers who may not have recorded their experiences in a longer memoir.

The representation of North Queensland as a place and the depiction of the region's landscapes varies in the magazine. The dominant presentation in many of the articles is of a sun-drenched landscape with an emphasis on exploring and an active lifestyle. This aligns with Josh Woodward's recent analysis of the representation of Mount Buffalo advertisements in the 1930s issues of 'Walkabout' magazine. Woodward suggests this presentation of an "idealized version of Australian nature" was intended to have a democratizing effect and harnessing nature for development.[39] Woodward argues this imagery had its antecedents in "the cultural and nationalist art and literary movements of the nineteenth century".[40] While Mt Buffalo and North Queensland are very different locations there is a through line of sun and outdoor recreation in the presentation of landscape in these different tourism focused magazines.

One 1950 article in 'Holiday and Travel' depicts the peace and tranquillity of Eacham and Barrine, while also emphasizing the recreational opportunities.

> Not far from here lie the beautiful volcanic crater lakes Eacham and Barrine. Eacham is almost circular with a surface area of 126 acres. It is a lovely and tranquil spot, sapphire blue, smooth as glass, and warm to swim in, though incredibly deep. Thick scrub and high trees enclose it on all sides, and resonant birdsongs echo through the cool fern laced jungle. Pathways lead to the water's edge, where there are dressing sheds, spring boards, and floating platforms for sun-baking.

37 Mr & Mrs Krause: Our Ideal Holiday, p. 39 ff.
38 Gayle Lynd: Charlie's Camping Holiday, p. 27.
39 Josh Woodward: Glorious in Spring, Exhilarating in Winter, p. 544.
40 Ibid., p. 555.

> The sister lake, twice as big and about fifteen miles distant by road is said to be connected by subterranean river, as the water levels are always the same.[41]

Other representations are more otherworldly and 'othering' in a way that differs from the Mt Buffalo depictions described by Woodward. North Queensland is Australia, but it is emphasized by some authors as different, a kind of exotic domestic travel.

In the April 1950 issue, the article 'Caves – and Chillagoe' writer Robert Archer emphasizes the difference of place. It opens with a haunting image, the sun present but not welcoming:

> Sun-Bleached grass, blue black rocks reflecting the heatwaves shimmering down among the lonely ironbarks and bloodwoods, somber, black cockatoos, mournfully crying from the red quartz ridges, pink-breasted galahs wheeling in sudden flight against the jagged outlines of a jutting mass of limestone – this is the Chillagoe country, land of a thousand and one mines, a million hopes, and one vast ruin of closed-down smelters.[42]

The language is abrupt, harsh and unsettling. Words like "jagged", "lonely", "wheeling in sudden flight" emphasize the effect. Later, the caverns in the region come into focus, the writer highlights danger mixed with adventure describing the activities of a group of miners and prospectors.

> Here are some of the largest and most beautiful caverns to be found, almost unknown and unexplored. Four intrepid men made many trips into their uncharted depths, braving the treacherous, yawning chasms, winding galleries and narrow passages, finding several large caves, and risking their lives by precarious rope-descents into the depths of great holes in the floors […]. Few make any deep penetration into these caves, the way is unmarked, the going arduous and the risks very real.[43]

Here the language of the explorer is deployed, moving beyond the outdoors as a site of recreation to a site of exploration. In invoking the 'unknown and unexplored' the writer is evoking the nostalgia for a 'real Australia' and 'pioneering past' McGregor notes was evident in some interwar writing – while also silencing any First Nations history and connection to the land.[44]

In her analyses of the representation of First Nations peoples in Great Barrier Reef tourist ephemera, Celmara Pocock notes that First Nations' peoples labour and knowledge on which much of the industry was based is rarely if ever acknowledged.[45] In the case of travel literature in the interwar years and in 'Holiday and Travel' First Nations people were mentioned but it is through a tourist gaze.[46]

Pocock also notes tours were often conducted on missions, subjecting people living on the mission to the tourist gaze.[47] This served to compound a settler narrative reinforcing the white Australian perception of the land as 'belonging'

41 s.n.: Chasing Winter Sunshine, p. 25.
42 Robert Archer: Caves and Chillagoe, p. 17.
43 Ibid., p. 17.
44 Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 431.
45 See Celmara Pocock: Aborigines, Islanders and Hula Girls in Great Barrier Reef Tourism, p. 173.
46 See Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 433.
47 See ibid., p. 179.

to the tourist, with First Nations people sequestered and arguably depicted as part of the landscape rather than active agents in own right. At least one article in 'Holiday and Travel' appears to engage with this practice:

> Palm Island, the principal aboriginal settlement in Queensland, is also close to Townsville. It is a rugged mountainous island with a coastline of white sandy beaches fringed with coconut palms and Mango trees. The aboriginal settlement is at Challenger Bay where there are fourteen hundred people.[48]

Another simultaneously acknowledges First Nations people's knowledge of the environment while also representing the people in a patronising manner:

> Sharks, yes I guess they're there too, but apparently Nature provides well for these monsters. The native boys say "plenty shark but no bite.[49]

This condescension and minimisation of the contributions was a continuation of the tone travel writers had adopted in the interwar years and it was not limited to First Nations people.[50] This paragraph describing Chinese Australians stands out for its derogatory tone and description, it was also reflective of the 'White Australia' views of the time:

> The few Orientals now left are aged and decrepit storekeepers, who in an apparent atmosphere of poverty are reputed by the locals to be amassing substantial fortunes for their ultimate return to China. Near Atherton, on the Herberton Road, stands an ancient Joss House tended by a tiny withered Chinaman who looks 100 years old. Bent to a right angle, he shuffles wearily about with the aid of a queer bamboo stick. He cannot speak English, but indicates, with feeble gestures, that visitors should remove their hats. A rusting metal lamp hangs dejectedly over the broken gateway, and the portico, decorated with faded red and gold characters, leads to a dark and musty interior, drably resplendent with a finely carved wooden shrine towering to the roof. Hanging lamps, and many quaint figures and designs in faded colours are grouped about the shrine – melancholy reminder of an ancient faith.[51]

Many travel writers in the interwar years had found diversity in the north confronting.[52] This post-war article was perhaps seeking to alleviate the fears of a population still entrenched in the White Australia policy by suggesting that a significant population of people of Asian descent in North Queensland was a relic of history. In this way, the writer was continuing themes prominent in travel writing in the interwar period.

The articles in 'Holiday and Travel' reveal a diverse representation of North Queensland. Some of the articles suggest the authors and editors had a nuanced understanding of tourism developments in the region at the time. Some writers demonstrated a prescient awareness of the potential issues of tourism such as the potential issue of development on the environment. The editors and some of the contributors of the magazine also demonstrated an understanding of their readership, contextualising North Queensland for their readers in the context of the Second World War personnel who had served and perhaps even tapping into a sense of restlessness which may have encouraged an interest in travel and by

48 Catherine Gaul: Editor on Tour , p. 50.
49 Harold J. Pollock: Don't Waste Time … Go North, p. 14.
50 See Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 432.
51 Henrik Brammal: Atherton Wonderland, p. 25.
52 See Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 432.

extension the magazine. More than that, they included readers stories through competitions such as 'Best or Worst Holiday' which provided an (albeit curated) insight into the personal travel experiences of everyday people in the era who may not otherwise have published accounts of their travel in travel memoirs or other publications.

In contrast, other articles reflect the dominant settler narrative of the time; excluding the voices and contributions of First Nations people and others to the industry. The stereotypical 'sunshine state' imagery we are used to seeing for Queensland tourism was also apparent in many articles which obscures the diversity of the North Queensland region may have fed and reinforced a desire to travel to the Whitsunday islands and the developing luxury market, rather than encouraging a more diverse exploration and understanding of the region.

The writers and editors of 'Holiday and Travel' in presenting these varied versions of North Queensland were, in some ways, demystifying what had been known as the 'empty north'.[53] In curating a variety of articles from different viewpoints, the editors showcased the region as diverse and populated. For southern readers the magazine made North Queensland appear accessible if, in some ways, foreign.

Future research might explore how the representation of North Queensland has evolved in the decades since the 1940s and 1950s, perhaps with some comparative analysis of how modern mediums, such as social media, engage with the locations and themes represented in 'Holiday and Travel' and other magazines of the era.

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53 For a discussion of the presentation of Northern Australia as the 'empty north' see, for example, Lyndon Megarrity: Northern Dreams, p. 29; David Walker: Anxious Nation, p. 114; Russell McGregor: Excursions Through Emptiness, p. 422.

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Looking Up, Looking Back on the Writing of North Queensland History at James Cook University

Abstract: Drawn from first-hand experience, this essay recalls the radical spirit of James Cook University's history department in the 1970s – an institution unafraid to challenge both imperial and Australian nationalist historiography, expose the violence of colonisation, and anchor scholarship in the realities of North Queensland's history. I recall how students were drawn into the fight for Indigenous rights and land, inspired by figures such as Joe McGinness, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, and Koiki (Eddie) Mabo. The department thrived, producing original regional histories with implications for national perceptions and debates on Australia's past, which via its publication program had a wide readership. But political indifference, financial mismanagement, and the rise of market ideology steadily undermined its work. The decline was not abstract; it was something I saw unfold – misguided leadership, squandered resources, and the slow suffocation of the humanities. Yet it's a story that ends with cautious hope: a new generation of scholars are committed to reviving the study of the north's past, working to share their findings with the wider public as well as their academic peers.

I rarely go to conferences these days, but the Australian Historical Association's 2025 annual meeting, 'Looking Up', held at James Cook University and focused on the history of North Queensland, offered more than academic interest. It took me back to the place where, fifty years ago, my path as a historian began.

When I arrived at James Cook in 1974, I had no intention of pursuing honours or postgraduate study in history. My ambition then was to become a clinical psychologist. I had left school with poor results, but after two years of night school and a modest improvement in my university entrance score, I gained entry under the new Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS), introduced by the Whitlam government. James Cook, with its lower entry threshold compared to the University of Queensland and other metropolitan institutions, became my path into higher education.

Before university, I worked as a junior administrative officer in Queensland's prison department. Part of my role involved secondments to the department's secure hospital, which held both those deemed criminally insane and repeat offenders with mental illness. Many of them were sentenced to indefinite detention – held "at Her Majesty's Pleasure" – and some were assigned menial tasks in the hospital office and grounds. I came to know several through daily interactions. Conversations with them, and the psychiatric reports I handled, convinced me that more could be done therapeutically to prepare some of them for independent life.

This belief led me to join the Queensland Mental Health Federation – an organisation of doctors, former patients, and relatives, committed to reforming care in the state's institutions. My involvement came to the notice of Stewart Kerr, Comptroller-General of Prisons, and his deputy, Mike Lewis. Neither objected. Kerr saw it as youthful enthusiasm that would eventually give way to realism. As I recall himself telling me, "There are no votes in prisons or mental hospitals

and never will be". Resources went to vocational training for the general prison population. The inmates of the secure hospital received little.

I began my studies intending to help reform mental health care in the prison system. But by the end of my first year – after courses in psychology, history, and literature – I had started to doubt the behaviourist psychology being taught as orthodoxy in the University's School of Behavioural Sciences. Studying history along with literature left me questioning whether any one theory could account for the richness and complexity of the human condition. And it was the history department that changed my thinking most. I came to see that many of the problems which I knew to have brought men and women into conflict with the law were not simply psychological but had their origins in the accidents and inequalities of history.

History-Making in North Queensland

To write of one's formative years without a trace of nostalgia is almost impossible. Still, others will confirm that the history department at James Cook University in the mid-1970s was distinctive. Students were required to take a year-long foundational course that confronted conventional imperial and more recent nationalist accounts of Australia's past. Manning Clark's 'Short History of Australia' (1969 edition) was a prescribed text – largely because it economically sketched with literary flair the more significant social, political, and cultural developments from the beginnings of colonisation to the 1960s. Alongside it we were required to read and discuss Humphrey McQueen's 'New Britannia' (1970), which, as Jon Piccini observes, was in many ways the flagship of an earlier period of "decolonising Australia's past".[1] With hindsight, it is clear that Henry Reynolds, who convened the course, deliberately paired these books, adding Russel Ward's 'Australian Legend' (1958) as recommended reading, to dispel the idea that history of itinerant pastoral workers was the story of the development of radical egalitarianism, nobly resisting the greed of pastoral and mining interests – a story that, if accepted, would breathe new life into contemporary politics. McQueen would have none of it. As he argued, the bush was no cradle of socialism but a frontier of white capitalism, where so-called mateship cloaked petty bourgeois ambition, imperialism, and racism. The imagined socialism of the bush worker amounted, in truth, to little more than the demand for "ten bob a week" and "no Chinese". And Henry's lectures, always well researched and uncompromising, left no doubt that among Ward's agrarian proletarians were many who had played their part in the dispossession – and killing – of Indigenous people.

The history department's first-year course was also distinctive in its focus on the history of North Queensland, with Geoffrey Bolton's 'A Thousand Miles Away' – the first detailed history of the region by a professionally trained historian – assigned as a third set text.[2] The inclusion of regional history in the course

1 Jon Piccini: Reading Humphrey McQueen's 'A New Britannia' in Decolonial Times.
2 Geoffrey Bolton's book and its influence on the Dalton era of North Queensland scholars is also discussed by Lyndon Megarrity: Geoffrey Bolton's 'A Thousand Miles Away'.

reflected the intention of Brian Dalton, the university's foundation professor of history, to offer students – most of whom, at the time, were born and raised in the north – the opportunity to study the histories of their own and other communities across the vast northern part of the state, regardless of their subsequent academic or vocational paths. Brian also recognised that the geographic distance from southern metropolitan centres shaped a local focus in both undergraduate and postgraduate research. However, he saw this not as a limitation, but as an opportunity to generate new and valuable insights into how national issues unfolded in specific local contexts. He actively sought to attract, and generously supported, those of us who were inspired to pursue honours and postgraduate work in history, encouraging exploration of new avenues of inquiry into North Queensland's rich – and in many respects, remarkable – past.

History as Witness: Encounters with the Fight for Indigenous Rights

What was also distinctive and memorable about the department's first-year history course was that, during the second half of the program, lectures included talks by men and women actively involved in the struggle for Indigenous self-determination and land rights. One of these speakers was Joe McGinness (1914-2003), a Kungarakan man and long-time trade unionist. In 1974, he was serving as the regional manager for Aboriginal Hostels – a vitally important service that supported Aboriginal and Islander people travelling to Cairns and Townsville for work, medical treatment, or education. Joe had become politically active in Darwin during the Great Depression of the 1930s. He joined others – most of them, like himself, of mixed ancestry – in protesting against slave-like working conditions. Under the prevailing racial attitudes, they suffered the indignity of being classified as "half-castes". Among the many actions Joe and his comrades took to improve their circumstances was to camp on the veranda of the Northern Territory Administrator's office in Darwin, where they publicly agitated for citizenship. Remarkably, in 1936, Joe and others were instrumental in securing changes to the Territory's Aboriginals Ordinance, allowing Indigenous people with white or Asian ancestry to apply for exemption from its provisions.

Joe later worked on the wharves in Cairns, where he became active in local labour politics through his involvement with the Waterside Workers' Federation. With the support of the Cairns Trades and Labour Council, he and others founded the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders Advancement League. Their chief concern was to end the near-slave-labour conditions under which Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in Northern Australia's pastoral and pearling industries were still employed – conditions in which they were paid only a fraction of the wages earned by non-Indigenous workers.

Other guests invited by Henry Reynolds included the poet and activist Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Koiki (Eddie) Mabo. Oodgeroo (Aunty Kath Walker as we then knew her) spoke about her educational work on North Stradbroke Island, or Minjerriba, as it is called by the Noonuccal people. With the support of the Queensland Teachers Union and progressive staff within the state's Department

of Education, who contributed their time voluntarily, she had established a centre dedicated to teaching both Indigenous and non-Indigenous schoolchildren about Noonuccal culture.

Koiki knew Aunty Kath well. During the 1960s, they worked together for the advancement of Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland. In doing so, they came under the scrutiny of ASIO, with informants falsely claiming they were members of the Communist Party.[3] Both believed deeply in the liberating power of education. At a time when most white residents of Northern Queensland knew little or nothing about Torres Strait Islander history, Koiki was eager to share his extensive knowledge of the peoples of the Torres Strait. What stood out in his contributions to both first- and second-year history courses was not only his reliance on knowledge passed down through his extended family, but also his critical engagement with European historical and anthropological studies of Mer and other Strait communities.

Noel Loos, who lectured in history at Townsville's College of Advanced Education during the mid-1970s, was a close friend of Koiki and would later collaborate with him on his biography. Loos recalled that after Koiki began working at the university, he often spent time in the library "to discover what had been written about his people […] and in the process [he] not only realised that white academics had a lot to learn and often made mistakes, but expanded his own knowledge as he grafted on new insights to his old understanding".[4] Koiki especially enjoyed introducing students to Islander culture, using both artefacts from his personal collection and items he arranged to borrow from the university's small holdings of Indigenous material culture.

I have written elsewhere about how, in the wake of the 1967 referendum's success, Koiki and Bonita turned their attention to improving educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Islander children.[5] They became actively involved in Queensland's first preschool for Aboriginal and Islander children, established in Townsville in early 1967 by social worker – and future federal senator – Margaret Reynolds, the activist Roberta Sykes, and members of the One People of Australia League (OPAL). After fifty years, the school, now known as Kindergarten Headstart, continues to enrich the lives of Aboriginal and Islander children.[6]

The Whitlam government's support for Indigenous education inspired Koiki, Bonita, and other community elders to establish a community-run primary school for Aboriginal and Islander students in Townsville. The school opened in 1973, supported initially by modest funding from the Townsville Diocese of the Catholic Church, the Townsville Trades and Labour Council, and the James Cook

3 On ASIO's surveillance of Koiki and Aunty Kath, see Australian Communist Party Policy and its attitude towards Australian aborigines, 1961-1967, A452/1961/3211, Australian National Archives, online via https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au. While there have been various claims that over the years that both were members of the CPA, they were not. I can confirm this having been a member of the North Queensland branch of the party during 1974/75.

4 Noel Loos, Koiki Mabo: Edward Koiki Mabo, p. 11.

5 See Paul Turnbull: Remembering Koiki and Bonita Mabo, Pioneers of Indigenous Education.

6 See Headstart Kindergarten Lady Gowrie online, https://gowrieqld.com.au/location/headstart-kindergarten-pre-school-inc.

University branch of the Australian Union of Students – whose executive members, at that time, were almost entirely students from the history department.

In asking us to join them in the struggle for a better future, Joe, Koiki, and Aunty Kath showed us – more powerfully than any academic text could – the extent and brutality of the discrimination faced by Aboriginal and Islander people in Queensland, and the fundamental importance of reclaiming their sovereign ancestral lands. In the mid-1970s, many still lived on government or mission reserves, most of which had been established in the early decades of the 20th century, following the enactment of so-called 'protective' legislation in 1897. That Act laid the foundation for an apartheid-like system under which people were forcibly removed – either from their ancestral country or from fringe camps on the outskirts of rural and remote townships.

By the mid-1970s, many of the harshest provisions of the 1897 Act had been repealed or modified by later legislation. Yet residents of reserves and missions had gained only limited freedom and political agency. The Queensland government still held intrusive and unjust powers over their lives. People were required to seek official permission to have family members stay with them. If relatives visited without such approval, they could be fined up to two hundred dollars. Young people over the age of seventeen could be barred from living with their parents, in order to push them into low-paid manual labour – typically in the cattle industry or on local farms. If the Director of Aboriginal Affairs judged that a person was incapable of managing their property, the Department could assume control over it – without any obligation to consult the individual or offer a right of appeal. The Director even had the authority to decide who would inherit a deceased person's estate.[7]

In addition to supporting the Black Community School and becoming involved in Abschol – an initiative of the National Union of Australian University Students aimed at assisting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in secondary education – history students at James Cook University played an active role in campaigning for Indigenous land rights in the Townsville community (Fig. 1). Indeed, while Koiki Mabo's long struggle to reclaim his family's land on the island of Mer began in conversations with Henry Reynolds, it gained real momentum – and crucial financial backing – from the James Cook student union, whose executive was, at the time, made up largely of history students.

Researching the North's Past: Student Histories and a Publishing Vision

The focus on the history of North Queensland in the department's first-year introductory course included giving students the opportunity to submit an essay based on original research on an aspect of the region's history. Although I wasn't from the area, I followed the suggestion of one of my tutors, Mike Doumben, and looked into a series of murders involving Italian Australian farmers and cane

7 See Kathy Franklin: A Brief History of Government Administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Queensland; also Rosalind Kidd: The Way We Civilise Aboriginal Affairs – the Untold Story.

Fig. 1: Calling for land rights in 1970s Queensland. Oodgeroo Noonuccal (centre), Paul Sekfy, Welfare Officer, James Cook University Student Union Executive and Australian Union of Students Delegate (left), the author (with megaphone, right).

cutters that took place in the Ingham and Innisfail regions in the late 1920s and early 1930s. According to local folklore, the killings were the work of the Black Hand, or 'La Mano Nera' – a secret society with roots in 18th-century Naples.[8] I spent the mid-year break in Brisbane, visiting the Queensland State Library and Archives almost daily, reviewing newspaper reports and examining any relevant files I could locate. The essay I submitted argued that the murders were, in all likelihood, carried out by two violent individuals posing as members of the society. But what stood out more clearly was the wealth of evidence – within popular media and official records – revealing the racial abuse and discrimination endured by Italian Australian settlers in North Queensland during these years.[9]

I went on to specialise in 18th-century European intellectual history, but most of my contemporaries within the history honours stream between 1975 and 1977 were to write theses which were the first in-depth studies of various aspects of North Queensland history. Among them was Christine Doran, who explored separatism in Townsville during the late 19th-century. After graduating, Christine went on to gain a doctorate in 1981 on the North Queensland separatism, which as Frank Bongiorno observes, "unsettled the spatial and temporal orthodoxies in Australian history".[10] Another was Peter Bell who produced a vivid, meticulously researched account of the 1921 Mount Mulligan coal mine disaster, and afterwards pursued doctoral studies resulting in the first in-depth study of

8 Among subsequent dubious, sensationalist accounts of the killings, see Queensland State Archives: Stories from the Archives.
9 See Vanda Moraes-Gorecki: 'Black Italians' in the Sugar Fields of North Queensland, pp. 306-319.
10 Frank Bongiorno: A View from the North.

North Queensland vernacular architecture.[11] And there was Noreen Kirkman, whose honours thesis explored the Palmer River Goldfield between 1873-1883. Noreen's subsequent publications include the first social history of the north-western city of Mount Isa.[12]

The late 1970s and 1980s saw the completion of an astonishing number of honours and postgraduate theses, covering a wide range of topics: pastoral settlement and Aboriginal–settler relations in North Queensland, European migrant communities, the presence of republicanism, civic and working-class politics, the religious life of northern towns, legal history, the impact of the Boer War and both world wars, the South Sea Islander labour trade, and the history of health and disease in the region. Brian Dalton was immensely proud of the quality of this original research. He often remarked, with evident pleasure, that a James Cook honours thesis would qualify as a master's degree at any other Australian university.

Brian was equally determined that this body of research should not sit, seldom read, on library shelves. He wanted it made publicly available as modestly priced books. This was not easy. No commercial publisher could be persuaded that North Queensland history would sell well enough to make a profit. Nor were they willing to act as distributors. Brian responded by launching a departmental publishing program under his own editorship. With help from local newspapers, schoolteachers, and various heritage and historical societies, the initiative became a success. By the time Brian retired in 1989, the department had published fifteen honours theses and eleven other books written by postgraduate students and staff. Among them was the first edition of Henry Reynolds's The Other Side of the Frontier, published in 1981. It now seems remarkable that it was rejected by both trade and scholarly presses as commercially unviable. As Brian later observed, the program had made North Queensland "the most richly documented of any non-metropolitan region in Australia".[13]

Brian continued as general editor of the department's publication program during his retirement, working from an office in the department where he spent much of his time preparing what he hoped would become a comprehensive, multi-volume guide to sources for North Queensland history. It was an ambitious project, made possible by funding from the Australian Research Council, which allowed him to employ two honours graduates from the department, Anne Allingham and Carolyn Edmonson, to search for manuscripts and rare publications in archives, libraries, and private collections across North Queensland and in southern metropolitan centres. They located just under fifteen thousand sources.

Brian did not complete the project. At the time of his sudden death in 1996, he had prepared around one hundred pages in camera-ready copy. However, there is now a possibility that this ambitious undertaking may yet be completed as a web-based resource (more on this will be said later).

11 See Peter Bell: Timber and Iron.
12 See Noreen Kirkman: Mount Isa.
13 Brian Dalton in his introduction to Todd Barr: No Swank Here, p. vi.

Years of Waste and Withering

The publication program came to an end soon after Brian's death. One of its final titles was the memoirs of Joseph Arratta, who had worked for many years as a doctor in central-western Queensland.[14] Its closure was, as Edward Gibbon might have put it, the result of "an unhappy concatenation of circumstances". Chief among these was the steady decline in public funding to universities, which had contracted relative to the size of the economy since the Dawkins Reforms of 1987-1992. Although total student numbers at James Cook University had nearly doubled by the early 1990s, its Commonwealth operating grant failed to keep pace with enrolment growth.

At the same time, the history department's student load fell. The reintroduction of university fees, along with an income-contingent loan scheme, meant that students who might once have chosen to major in history or politics were now opting for more vocational courses. By 1996, enrolments across the university were well below projections, leading to the first of several rounds of voluntary redundancies.

If that were not enough, the situation worsened in 1996 with the election of a federal Coalition government under John Howard, which imposed further cuts to university funding. Senior members of government gave tacit support to conservative media commentators who claimed that history departments had become safe havens for Marxist ideologues, intent on portraying Australia's national past as nothing more than a shameful story of capitalist greed, Indigenous dispossession, and environmental ruin.

By the mid-1990s, what was now the Department of History and Politics had little discretionary funding. The cost of producing books had become increasingly difficult to meet.

Even so, the publication program might have survived had it not been for a serious intra-university and departmental problems that ultimately proved fatal. I witnessed these developments first-hand during my time as lecturer in European intellectual history from 1984 to 1998. Over those years, I served on the executive of the university's branch of the National Tertiary Education Union, participated in numerous university committees, and held the position of Dean of the Faculty of Arts in 1997-98.

Ray Golding was appointed as the university's second Vice-Chancellor in 1986. The university's Council were especially impressed by his reforms to patterns of expenditure as a pro-vice-chancellor at the University of New South Wales. However, that Golding had ambitions for James Cook University that required funding well in excess of its income from commonwealth and state government sources.

As Peter Bell observed in his fortieth anniversary history of James Cook, the establishment of a second campus in Cairns had been periodically considered by the university's council and executive since the mid-1970s.[15] By the mid-1980s, the accelerating pace of economic development and population growth in North

14 See Brian Dalton, Anne Smith (eds.): Doctor on the Landsborough.
15 See Peter Bell: Our Place in the Sun, p. 54.

Queensland second city led prominent local businessmen to agitate for the creation of a Cairns tertiary institution. In hindsight, the Cairns campus was a sensible initiative, but it was costly and disruptive, especially for history and politics, which along with other departments was required to fund teaching in Cairns from its existing budget allocation.[16] By the early 1990s there was the additional financial strain on humanities disciplines of Golding's creating a music academy and a department of creative arts, both requiring the funding of new staff and specialist resources to teach small numbers of students.

In my opinion, what hopes there were for restoring history at James Cook to its standing under the visionary leadership of Brian Dalton were dashed during Ray Golding's second term as Vice-Chancellor. Some of his actions were beyond belief. As Peter Bell writes in his brief history of James Cook:

> One of the most controversial exercises in supporting the arts came when Ray Golding invited the renowned National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine to Australia in 1995 to celebrate the University's 25th anniversary. They gave a number of performances in the major cities, including three concerts in Townsville. Kuchar, director of the Townsville Chamber Festival, was also conductor of the orchestra. Some 80 strong, with all the instruments of a classical orchestra, the party were transported around the country in a chartered Boeing 737. Their visit was a tremendous success, and wonderful publicity for James Cook University, but at what cost? Officially the University's contribution was put at $60 000, but it has been whispered that the real bill was more than four times that.[17]

My belief then and now is that the full cost to the university was never revealed and could have been as much as half a million dollars, at a time when the university "reported a deficit of $6 million, and funding for expanding the Cairns Campus was in doubt".[18] Indeed, as Bell concedes in his anniversary history of James Cook, "There were rumours that [the deficit] was really $8 million".[19]

The decline of history at James Cook accelerated after the appointment of Kett Kennedy as Brian Dalton's successor. A protégé of Brian's, Kett was a gifted historian of North Queensland's mining industry, admired for the depth of his research and flair for narrative. Yet by the later 1990s, Kett's loyalty to Golding was unfathomably unwavering and, in my opinion, severely damaged the fortunes of the department, as discontent across the university grew with Golding's increasingly centralised control and opaque financial practices. There were also other aspects of Kett's time as head of department several years prior to his resignation, in early 1997, which brought the department adverse publicity and which, in my opinion, further damaged its reputation in the eyes of the university's executive.[20]

Kett 's departure came in the wake of Ray Golding's resignation, which was ostensibly on the grounds of ill-health. Officially, the university was said to be in

16 See ibid., p. 54.
17 Ibid., p. 59.
18 Ibid., p. 63.
19 Ibid.
20 The validity or otherwise of my opinion may be judged by consulting editions of the Townsville Bulletin through 1997-9. Files relating to court proceedings are closed until 2098-9: Queensland State Archives, items ITM2473148; ITM2493161; ITM2494299. There is also relevant documentation from the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts during my deanship in the James Cook University archives.

debt to the sum of twenty million dollars on Golding's departure.[21] Near a year of chaos followed, during which time I was Dean of the Faculty of Arts. In my discussions with the university executive, the actual size of the university's debt was said to be double the official figure. The university's faculties were restructured, in several instances without, in my view, any sound intellectual or administrative rationale, while the federal Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs agreed to reduce the university's financial distress if, among other belt-tightening measures, it drastically over-enrolled students, especially in humanities undergraduate subjects, despite this necessitating an extreme reduction in entry standards the level of students' prior educational attainments. In late 1997, a new Vice-Chancellor, Bernard Moulden, was appointed. Moulden, a psychologist who had been Executive Dean of the University of Western Australia's Faculty of Science, was firmly of the view that the teaching of history at James Cook would survive to the degree it could secure government funding through student enrolments. As Peter Bell observes,

> Some disciplines continued to wither from lack of resources, especially the traditional humanities like History and English. Moulden was unrepentant, saying that the disciplines which suffered were the ones which failed to justify their existence in a changing world, believing they should exist by right and tradition.[22]

The Promise of Renewal

History teaching and research have endured, despite the prevailing climate of neoliberalism, which continues to push the narrow belief that higher education is merely a private investment with little value to the wider society. At James Cook University, senior management has for the most part shown little interest in supporting knowledge of the north's rich and remarkable history. And by the early 2000s the Department of History and Politics had been absorbed within a School of Humanities. Yet a small group of younger historians within what is now a College of Arts, Society and Education headed by Koen Stapelbroek, an internationally respected scholar in the history of political thought, trade, and political economy. Koen and his colleagues are committed to reviving the study of North Queensland and sharing their findings with people beyond the university. But their commitment is evident in successfully bringing the Australian Historical Association to James Cook University for a program notable for papers based on new research on topics including northern Indigenous-settler relations, migration and cross-cultural interactions, South Sea Islander History, the impact of the white Australia policy, North Queensland's environmental and economic history, healthcare challenges, and the history of the arts and literature in the region. It is also reflected in Koen's collaboration with colleagues and Bronwyn McBurnie, manager of the university's special collections, to gradually create free digital editions of the books originally published under Brian Dalton's

21 See Peter Bell: Our Place in the Sun, p. 61.
22 Ibid., p. 69.

editorship, along with selected undergraduate and postgraduate theses on North Queensland history.[23] And there is also a real chance that Brian's ambition to produce an exhaustive guide to sources on the region's history may yet be realised in digital form.[24] All this signals a hopeful future in which the rich history of North Queensland is not only made more accessible but inspires renewed interest and exploration of the region's history in both scholarly and public spheres.

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23 See JCU Library News: Studies in North Queensland History.

24 Over a number of years, I have transcribed the 15000 thousand index cards detailing sources for North Queensland History forming the basis of the guide Brian Dalton envisaged. A prototype freely accessible version of the guide can be consulted at https://www.paulturnbull.org/project/nqhistory. The hope is that this digital edition of the guide will be completed and further supplemented by a range of additional visual and audio sources held within special collections at James Cook University. The challenge, however, will be securing the resources to realise the potential of digital technologies to enhance understanding and appreciation of the history North Queensland.

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Celie Forbes

In Situ – Artists, Art Groups and Art Spaces

Northern Queensland 1970-1980

Abstract: Northern Queensland has a rich history of the visual arts dating from early surveys of the Far North. Historically, however, the story of the arts in Australia evolved in its telling from the southern capitals, leaving gaps in understandings of Queensland's contribution to the broader narrative.

In examining the lived experience of artists, patrons, directors and art groups based in Northern Queensland during the scope of this study, a distinctly contemporary cultural landscape emerges, informing a more nuanced understanding of Australian art history.

This paper is drawn from the work of Dr Forbes whose doctoral thesis documented the history of Northern Queensland Visual Arts from 1971 to 1981. In examining subject matter, technique and style, it was found that artists were strongly influenced by contemporary Western – as well as non-Western – techniques, challenging traditional notions of landscape painting. In addition, the need for education, cultural programmes and spaces created challenges resolved while living and working in situ. The resulting works, included in private, regional, state, national and international collections, exist as a legacy, evidencing this critical period in the region's cultural history.

This article is drawn from a doctoral thesis which explores the history of Northern Queensland Visual Arts during the decade of the 1970s. While mostly romanticised representations of the tropics by visiting landscape artists is recognised in the broader Australian landscape canon, resulting histories either excluded Northern Queensland or became reliant on notions of isolation and provincialism, reinforced by the dictates of the south, in particular Sydney and Melbourne, and even at times Brisbane. In examining art works characterised as distinctive to Northern Queensland and drawn in inspiration from urban and non-urban environments, the resulting subject matter, style, and representations of people and places evidence a distinctly northern approach to the depiction of the Australian landscape. Conducive to this was the mostly informal infrastructure of the arts in Northern Queensland, made up of artists, patrons, directors and art groups acting as professional networks through the provision of exhibiting space, education opportunities, and cultural programmes and events. This included initiatives of the Queensland Board of Education, Technical and Further Education colleges, universities, the Brisbane-based Queensland Arts Council as supported by local branches through Northern Queensland, and the activities of Art Societies which would inaugurate annual art prizes and advocate for the establishment of regional art galleries. Independent of these organisations were the small commercial galleries in Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, and Cairns, which acted as cultural hubs connecting artists, directors, patrons, and the general public. These galleries supported artists through exposure, advice, exhibiting opportunities and links to professional artists within and beyond the region. At the interface of this infrastructure were the visual artists living and working in Northern Queensland, whose practice evidence this political, social, and cultural

environment and whose resulting body of works characterise Northern Queensland's unique contribution to the broader Australian contemporary arts narrative.

Locating Northern Queensland

> "North Australia and the lifestyle of its people – the exotic being eroded by encroaching drabness. It is more rust than rustic; and differs, in its dense humidity, from the outback or inland desert already much represented in Australian art"[1]

The geographic areas in this study have been categorised as Central; Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday; North and Far North regions of Queensland, all located to the north of Brisbane.[2] The major population centres of Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns, located along the east coast of Queensland, were historically identified as port towns connecting the north to Brisbane and further to the south (see Fig. 1).

The geographic features relevant to the study include creek, river, coastal, island and forest eco-systems. The forest areas include evergreen and semi-deciduous rainforests, the Melaleuca woodlands and the Brigalow Belt.[3]Artists associated with Northern Queensland in this paper include Gil Jamieson (1934-1992) in Monto; William (Bill) Yaxley (b. 1943) in Rockhampton; Clem Forbes (1938-1997) and Dorothy Forbes (b. 1934) in Mackay; Anneke Silver (b. 1937) in Townsville; Tom Risley (1947-2010) in Atherton and Gloria Fletcher Thancoupie [Thanakupi], (1937-2011) in Cairns.

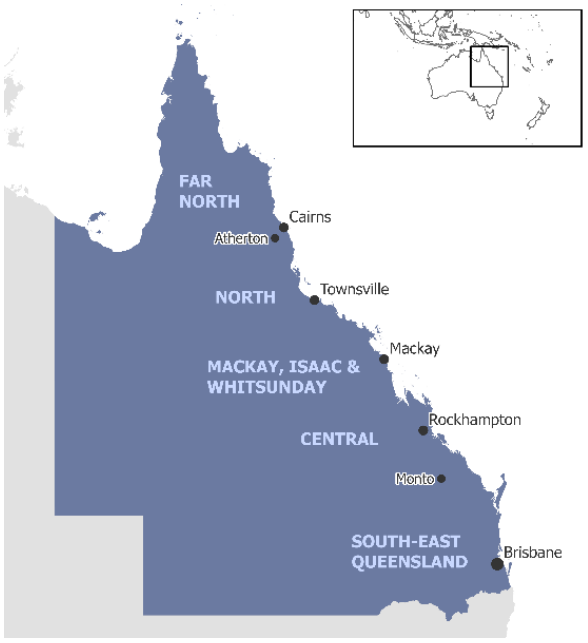

Fig. 1: Northern Queensland

A View of Queensland as Told from the South: Australian Art Histories

Early surveys seeking to document the history of Western art in Australia were through the lens of exploration, colonisation, isolation and mythology. While non-Western and Indigenous perspectives are recognised as contributing to understandings of landscape, they are, in the case of the broader study, evidenced in the historiography proceeding from the literature and discussed within the

1 Ian Smith: Tom Risley, p. 492.
2 The geographic boundaries for the regions are defined by the Queensland Government, see Queensland Government: Trade and Investment Queensland.
3 See State of Queensland: Biodiversity Assessment, Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy.

context of time and place.[4] Early in Australia's colonial history artists visited Queensland for topographic and ethnographic purposes. Art historian Bernard Smith (1916-2011), for example, recognised the Far North in his 1960 survey 'European Vision and the South Pacific',[5] elaborating on the theme of location in 'Australian Painting 1788-1990' (1992) looking to the earlier artists as topographers. It was not surprising therefore that it was through photography that English born geologist Richard Daintree (1832-1878), tasked with surveying north Queensland, created an early portfolio of images (c. 1871) as extensive as it was rich in its depiction of the landscape through the emphasis on natural resources.[6] Beyond this, existing histories were told through the lens of an Australian school as reliant on depictions of southern landscapes, evidenced, for example, in the Heidelberg School, through its "depiction of subjects redolent with local history".[7] Queensland's contribution, while limited, was told predominantly from its capital Brisbane. William Moore's 'The Story of Australian Art From the Earliest Known Art of the Continent to the Art of To-Day' (1934),[8] for example, makes reference to the Brisbane painting 'Under the Jacaranda' (1903) by R. Godfrey Rivers (1858-1925) as a "typical outdoor subject",[9] and artists Isaac Walter Jenner (1836-1901), William Bustard (1894-1973) and Vida Lahey (1882-1968), as important Queensland landscape painters. Herbart Badham, in 'A Study of Australian Art' (1949) further recognises Jenner as the "founder of Queensland art".[10]

However, Bernard Smith's subsequent condemnation of Brisbane as "provincial even by Australian standards" was in part due to his criticism of the Art Gallery of Queensland, which he described as in an "impoverished and out of date condition", which "could not be compared favourably with many of the active little galleries in Victorian country towns".[11] Smith did however make reference to contemporary Australian artists exhibiting in Brisbane including Sidney Nolan (1917-1992) who exhibited work at the Johnstone Gallery [Brisbane] in 1954, the contributions of London trained artist and teacher Roy Churcher (1933-2014), and critic Dr Gertrude Langer (1908-1984), as well as recognising the eastern influence on the work of artist Ian Fairweather (1891-1974). By the 1960s, Smith argued, artists in Queensland emerged to fill the "cultural vacuum", referencing Ray Crooke (1922-2015) as having "created a new visual image of the tropical north" and Gil Jamieson, "who has sought to capture the spirit of the Queensland outback".[12] Further, Jon Molvig (1923-1970), Andrew Sibley (1933-2015), Gordon Shepherdson (1934-2019), and Sam Fullbrook (1922-2004) are identified as important to the emergence of figurative expressionism in Queensland, and artist John Coburn

4 For a discussion on relationality see Rex Butler's lecture 'Australian Art History and Revisionism' in Rex Butler: A Secret History of Australian Art, pp. 101-112.
5 See Bernard Smith: European Vision and the South Pacific.
6 See Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art: Richard Daintree. "Images of Queensland" c. 1870.
7 Bernard Smith: Australian Painting 1788-1990, p. 85.
8 See William Moore: The Story of Australian Art from the Earliest Known Art of the Continent to the Art of To-day in Two Volumes.
9 Ibid., p. 208.
10 Herbert E. Badham: A Study of Australian Art, p. 217.
11 Bernard Smith: Australian Painting 1788-1990, p. 406.
12 Ibid., p. 363.

(1925-2006), born in Ingham, Queensland, was recognised as representative of the Sydney school of Abstraction.[13]

Aside from these Queensland influences and artists, the conceptual alignment of the general narrative of Australian art history to the Melbourne figurative and landscape artists is, however, significant when reflecting on understandings of contemporary art. Modernists such as Arthur Boyd (1920-1999), Charles Blackman (1928-2018), John Perceval (1923-2000), Clifton Pugh (1924-1990) and Robert Dickerson (1924-2015) came to represent Australia's contemporary approach to landscape as described by Bernard Smith in 'The Antipodean Manifesto' (1959).[14] Smith understood and championed the importance of Australian subject matter, challenging the influence of international trends of non-figurative abstraction. Typical of the Australian Modernist painters is the subject matter, colours, patterns, motifs and symbols that are evocative of the Australian landscape and people. In particular, the use of ochre reflects the approach taken by artists to Australian culture from the 1940s, when they were "beginning to appreciate the aesthetic and cultural significance of Aboriginal art".[15] Jon Molvig for example, made reference to an "Australian attitude towards the country and the people",[16] in work exhibited in his 'Central Australian' series at the Johnstone Gallery in 1959.[17] Further examples include the 'Bride' series (c. 1957) by Arthur Boyd,[18] the 'Burke and Wills', and 'Leichardt' series by Albert Tucker (1914-1999), Ray Crooke's 'Three Studies for Palmer River' (1970), and 'Death of a Mining Town' (1964),[19] early landscapes by Brisbane artist John Rigby (1922-2012) such as 'Bracken Pool' (1963);[20] portraits by Margaret Olley (1923-2011), including 'Susan with Flowers';[21] Sidney Nolan's 'Camel Driver', and 'The Bore Keeper's Camp' by Russell Drysdale (1912-1981), both of which were exhibited at the Johnstone Gallery.[22] Representative of this subject matter and ethos is the work of Northern Queensland artists referenced in this study – such as Gil Jamieson in his depiction of Monto farmers and the remote landscapes of Northern Queensland, and Clem Forbes through his 'Lasseter' and 'Merinda Farmers' series.

Curator Ross Searle however, categorically stated in 1991 that there had been "little cohesive focus for the visual arts outside Brisbane",[23] seeking to address the gap in "Artist in the Tropics: 200 Years of Art in North Queensland",[24] for the Perc Tucker Regional Art Gallery, Townsville (1991). Further efforts to document Northern Queensland's contribution to the national art conversation have

13 For the extensive literature review, see Celie Forbes: In Defence of the North.
14 See essay in Peter Beilharz, Bernard Smith: Imagining the Antipodes.
15 Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art: Jon Molvig, p. 15.
16 Ibid., p. 15.
17 See ibid., p. 16.
18 See Kendrah Morgan: Arthur Boyd.
19 See Rosemary Dobson: Focus on Ray Crooke, p. 49.
20 See John Millington, Mark Rigby: John Rigby.
21 See Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art: Susan with Flowers.
22 See Nancy Underhill, Louise Martin-Chew: Remembering Brian and Marjorie Johnstone's Galleries, pp. 24, 48.
23 Ross Searle: Artist in the Tropics, p. 10.
24 Ibid.

included the output of state, regional, and commercial galleries, universities, and through monograph publications.

Not immediately apparent throughout is the efforts of the artists, patrons, directors, and art groups living and working in Northern Queensland as a voice of the visual arts. Academic Ursula Szulakowska in 1991 referred to the challenge of Northern Queensland where "the resources are more dispersed", noting, with reference to Townsville, that "much knowledge of the region's art remains as a vulnerable oral history which is extremely difficult to access by scholars".[25]

Research Design

The research methodology for the broader project was designed to support the multifaceted description of the artistic life that was to be found in Northern Queensland during the decade of the 1970s. Historical, comparative, ethnographic and case-study research strategies supported the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data inclusive of the lived experience of artists, gallery directors and art patrons who were living and working in situ throughout the scope of this study.[26] Social Constructionist Grounded Theory was incorporated due to the socio-cultural, political, economic, geographic, and environmental factors, through the researcher's consideration of the participants' positionalities and preconceived contentions, specific to their personal experience of the arts.[27] The ethnographic approach acknowledged the author's positionality as researcher while enabling access to the field.[28]

A View of Queensland as Told from the North: Art Education, Art Spaces and Art Groups

The need for education, cultural programmes and art spaces were the motivating factors contextualising the actions of artists, patrons, art groups, and curators relevant to this study. In the absence of formalised arts infrastructure, these groups operated as informal networks that mentored, promoted and championed artists in Northern Queensland through the organisation of cultural programmes, events, and educational opportunities.

25 Urszula Szulakowska: Experimental Art in Queensland, 1975-1995, p. iv.
26 See Michael Crotty: The Foundations of Social Research, p. 94.
27 Charmaz states, "Assumptions are as follows: Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed under particular conditions; the research process emerges from interaction; it takes into account the researcher's positionality, as well as that of the research participants; the researcher and researched co-construct the data; researchers are part of the research situation, and their positions, privileges, perspectives, and interactions affect it". Kathy Charmaz: Constructionism and the Grounded Theory Method, p. 402. Further, Charmaz refers to the "nuanced analysis that acknowledges and analyses positionality and partiality" as a strength of the method, pp. 408 f.
28 Methodology as summarised in overview of thesis, Celie Forbes: In Defence of the North. For research framework, see Chapter 4.

Art Education

The Schools of Art consistently played a critical role in creating cultural opportunities, evolving into the Technical And Further Education (TAFE) model that would provide art training throughout Northern Queensland. Institutions including the Townsville college of TAFE and Capricornia Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT) delivered fine art training including adult education. The Rockhampton Technical College was established in 1890, Mackay in 1892, Townsville in 1889, and Cairns in 1899. The technical education syllabus from 1919 included freehand drawing and painting. Increasingly relevant at this time was also the creation of rural programmes and repatriation opportunities for returned soldiers offering commercial, vocational, and teaching courses inclusive of arts education.[29]

The Board of Education, established in 1944, was controlled by the Department of Public Instruction (known as the Department of Education after 1957) including the Far North, North, North-West, Mackay, Rockhampton, Wide Bay – Burnett, Moreton and Toowoomba districts. Promoting cultural activities from the 1940s, it provided the public with opportunities throughout Queensland to access lecture courses, study circles and discussion groups further providing appropriate facilities.[30] For example the Townsville district reported that enrolments for art classes on indoor and outdoor sketching and painting, conducted by artist James Phillips Samuel (1879-1962), art master for the Bendigo and Melbourne Technical Colleges, "were so heavy that enrolments for the classes had to be closed within a week and individual members had to be discouraged from attending more than one series of the classes".[31] By 1951 there is evidence in North Queensland of a strong engagement in cultural activities sponsored by the Adult Education movement.

> Practically every North Queensland centre has a story on somewhat similar lines [to that of Townsville] to report […] there is a general re-awakening of Interest in cultural activities. […] Fortunately, the general public is beginning to realise that the soul of a nation is partly fashioned by its peoples' cultural endeavours.[32]

The university model became a focus for education after 1951 and in 1958 the University of Queensland (UQ) proposed a Multiple Regional University Centre in Townsville, "where secondary, technical, and the lower years of university education could be given. […] with the opportunity of existing later in its own right".[33] This was realised in 1961, becoming the University College of Townsville and later James Cook University of North Queensland (JCU) in 1970 with a campus established in Cairns in 1987. Townsville artist and teacher, Anneke Silver noted that

> People from all over the world came to Townsville, from the main centres of Australia, from the UK and various countries in Europe, to take up positions at

29 See Eddie Clarke: Technical and Further Education in Queensland.
30 Board of Adult Education.
31 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 2 December 1950, p. 2 (s.n.: Adult Education).
32 Townsville Daily Bulletin, 10 April 1950, p. 2 (s.n.: Cultural Progress Has Been Rapid in North Queensland).
33 Malcolm I. Thomis: A Place of Light and Learning, p. 300.

> these institutions. Accustomed to visual arts and galleries as part of daily life, and expecting as much, they contributed greatly to the development of a visual arts culture.[34]

Townsville College of Advanced Education (TCAE) staff member and Colour Field artist Anne Willis (b. 1937) was further noted by Silver as a "highly contemporary inspiration to us all".[35] Other Townsville artists and academics who established careers in Townsville include Ron Kenny (1925-1987), Ron McBurnie (b. 1957), Robert Preston (b. 1942) and Mervyn Moriarty (1937-2021): Moriarty founded Flying Arts in 1971.[36] In 1967, the Capricornia QIT (Rockhampton) was also established, renamed the Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education (CIAE) in 1971, later becoming Central Queensland University Australia. University culture was further supported by graduate groups such as the UQ Women's association in Mackay.[37]

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT), formally the Queensland Institute of Technology, JCU and CQU have established art collections inclusive of work of artists from the Northern Queensland region.

Art Spaces

During the late 19th century the Schools of Arts in regional towns were seen as "bastions of culture, providing not only libraries, but also venues for educational lectures" playing a role in the establishment of Technical Colleges.[38] Regional galleries, however, came late to the north. The Rockhampton Art Gallery officially opened in 1967 in the auditorium of the Rockhampton City Hall. Director Glenn C. Webb wrote that "an agreement was completed between the City of Rockhampton and the Queensland Art Gallery for the establishment here of The Queensland Art Gallery, City of Rockhampton Branch".[39] In 1976, the Pilbeam and Art Acquisition Committee (Rockhampton) accessed the Australian Contemporary Art Acquisition Programme (Australia Council for the Arts 1973)[40] to purchase works for the Rockhampton Art Gallery, emphasising a national focus on Australian artists.[41] In 1978, the Rockhampton Art Gallery relocated to its own building in Victoria Parade on the Fitzroy River, moving again to a purpose-built space renamed the Rockhampton Museum of Art in 2022. The

34 Ralph Martin, Shane Fitzgerald, Anneke Silver: Images of an Era, p. 19. The importance of Willis as a contemporary artist of this period was also reiterated by directors Ralph Martin (interviewed by the author on 23 March 2018) and Dorothy Forbes (interviewed by the author on 22 April 2019). Willis judged the Mackay Caltex Art Prize in 1973.
35 Ibid., p. 19.
36 See Marilyn Irene England: From River Banks to Shearing Sheds.
37 Information collected from the author's interview with Geneveive and Jim Gall on 27 February 2021.
38 Eddie Clarke: Technical and Further Education in Queensland, pp. 17 f.
39 Rockhampton Art Gallery File.
40 Note: The Australia Council for the Arts was established 1967-1968 by Prime Minister Harold Holt and Prime Minister John Gorton. From 1975 it became known as the Australia Council under Prime Minister Gough Whitlam.
41 See Rockhampton Art Gallery: Cream.

Gallery's permanent collection includes Australian artists Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd and Russell Drysdale. Foundational works prior included the work of Clem Forbes.[42]

The Perc Tucker Regional Gallery opened in 1981 with the exhibition 'Nine Queensland Artists' curated in partnership with the Ray Hughes gallery, Brisbane (Director Ray Hughes 1946-2017), and included artists William Yaxley, William Robinson (b. 1936), and Davida Allen (b. 1951),[43] with the Clem Forbes work Range (1975) presented by the Tucker family at the opening.[44] Later, director Ross Searle would focus strongly on local and regional narratives, further promoting links to Aboriginal and Islander and Pacific groups in the region.[45] Significant was Searle's 1991 exhibition 'Artist in the Tropics', which demonstrated the history of Western art in Queensland as distinct to the north. The Cairns Regional Gallery opened in 1995 and Artspace Mackay in 2003. Prior to this, the Mackay Regional Council established an art collection, including works by Clem Forbes. The Mackay City Library, opened in 1980, was designed to include an exhibition space and in 1982 Mackay established the Mackay/Pioneer Cultural Advisory committee to access Visual Arts Board funding to support a regional collection, with Clem Forbes, Dorothy Forbes, and patrons Simon McConnell and Lorraine Gray-McConnell acting in an advisory capacity regarding acquisition proposals.[46]

Acting as what the broader study characterised as 'cultural hubs', commercial galleries in the major towns would centralise patronage through engagement with education, art spaces and cultural events. Artists included in this study exhibited in multiple galleries along this network, and patrons understood the galleries as important in exhibiting the works of non-traditional, modern and contemporary Australian artists.[47] Galleries identified in this study include Gallery Up Top in Rockhampton (Director: Lal Lanyon); The Bakehouse Art Gallery in Mackay (Director: Dorothy Forbes); the Martin Gallery in Townsville; (Director: Ralph Martin), and the Trinity Gallery in Cairns (Directors: Jim Macfarlane and Rosemary Macfarlane).[48]

The Australian Heritage Gallery established in 1976 in Cairns by Jim Macfarlane, in consultation with artist Percy Trezise (1923-2005), was the initiative of the newly formed Federal Government Indigenous Aboriginal Arts Board, under the

42 In 1972, 'Northern Landscape' was acquired for the Rockhampton Art Gallery's (now the Rockhampton Museum of Art) permanent collection.

43 See Perc Tucker Regional Gallery: Journey through Images 40 Years of Perc Tucker Regional Gallery.

44 "Clem Forbes is already represented in the gallery with an earlier work presented at the opening by Mrs Perc Tucker". Painting Goes to Townsville. (Note: The Clem Forbes work, Bright Forest was purchased in 1985. Accession no.: 1985.0001.000.)

45 See Urszula Szulakowska: Experimental Art in Queensland, 1975-1995, p. 100.

46 Recommendations to Mackay/Pioneer Advisory Committee on the Visual Arts Board Art Acquisition Scheme, Prepared by Miss S. Outridge (Community Arts Officer) and Mrs L. Gray-McConnell (President, Mackay Arts Council), June 1982.

47 Evidenced in the works of Australian contemporary artists in the collections of patrons exhibited in these galleries including Sidney Nolan, Gil Jamieson; Clem Forbes; Robert Preston; John Rigby, Ray Crooke; Robert Dickerson; Pro Hart (1928-2006); Anneke Silver; Brett Whiteley (1939-1992); William Yaxley; Tom Risley; William Robinson, and David Rose (1936-2006).

48 See exhibition listings in appendix to Celie Forbes: In Defence of the North.

Whitlam Government's Australia Council, of which artist and author Dick (Goobalathaldin) Roughsey (1920-1985) was the chair. Managed through the Australia Council Subsidiary company, Aboriginal Arts and Crafts Pty Ltd, the gallery was described by Rosemary Macfarlane as

> a Federal Government initiative to expose the value and tradition of Indigenous work to the Australian and international world. In addition the aim was to bring a livelihood to worthy crafts people and lift their work into a gallery and out of the souvenir and craft shop level where it had to compete with gaudy factory imitation with no respect for copyright. The gallery stopped exploitation of these artists and paid professional reward.[49]

All commercial galleries in the study were closing throughout the 1980s due to the adverse financial impact experienced by their directors, who had had a largely altruistic commitment to the arts. The establishment of regional galleries and the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) would bring with it a more structured approach to the arts in Northern Queensland, with arts courses and education programmes becoming formalised. Many of the patrons in the study had also moved away, citing professional commitments.[50]

Art Groups

In addition to the exhibition programme of commercial galleries, cultural activities throughout Queensland allowed artists to exhibit, access prizes and interact with artists, art groups and societies, while engaging the public in the arts.[51] While the Queensland Art Gallery's (QAGOMA) touring programme was designed to bring works in the collection to regional Queensland,[52] it was the actions of the local branches of the Queensland Arts Council and Art Societies that would have an impact throughout the state.

The Queensland Division of the Arts Council of Australia, later to become the Queensland Arts Council (QAC) formed in 1950, sought to highlight the importance of the arts to Australian culture, provide exhibition opportunities for artists, and broaden public access to the arts.[53] In 1964 Gertrude Langer, as

49 Information collected from the author's email communication with Rosemary Macfarlane on 10 April 2020.

50 For further reference to commercial gallery case studies, see Celie Forbes, Stephen Naylor: Taking Northern Queensland into Account.

51 Note: While the focus on the visual arts was strongly privileged by art societies, artist groups and through the work of the LACs, the Community Arts (CA) movement from the 1970s, was established to "democratise the arts by providing access to people otherwise excluded by economic, social or geographic disadvantage". Michael John Richards: Grow the Arts, Reap the Harvest, p. 76.

52 The 1951 Jubilee Art train, for example, was significant in its reach to regional centres, including Northern Queensland.

53 The Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) was formed by Dorothy Helmrich in 1943 to tour performance programmes to regional areas. The Queensland Division was formed in 1944 under the presidency of Dr J. V. Duhig. CEMA was renamed the Arts Council of Australia in 1947. The Queensland Division of CEMA would instigate the annual exhibition Artists of Fame and Promise. In 1961 Karl and Gertrude Langer oversaw the transition of the organisation, renamed the Queensland Arts Council. Michael John Richards: Grow the Arts, Reap the Harvest, p. 45.

president, introduced the Queensland touring programme and vacation schools ensuring their reach throughout the state. The QAC's local branches [referred to in this article as LACs] were grouped as Central (including Rockhampton and Mackay) and Northern (including Townsville and Cairns).[54] The Vacation Schools, held at UQ from 1962, focussed specifically on supporting arts practice.[55] Teachers included John Rigby and Stanislaus Rapotec (1913-1997). The LACs supported regional centres through annual touring programmes and project funding. From 1968 'on demand' workshops, facilitated through the LACs as aligned to the QAC Vacation Schools, brought artists such as Moriarty, Rigby and Rapotec to Northern Queensland to deliver workshops (see Fig. 2).[56]


WEEKEND PAINTING COURSE
to be conducted by FAMOUS ARTIST
STANISLAV RAPOTEC
JULY 16, 17, 18
at
ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE
(By courtesy Mackay Director, Adult Education)
FEE FOR COURSE — $6.00
Enquiries: Mrs. R. Skolen — Telephone Mackay 4545
sponsored by
The Arts Council of Australia, Mackay Branch

Fig. 2: Newspaper advertisement, Daily Mercury, 8 July 1971

Regional art societies in Northern Queensland were active in connecting artists and patrons throughout the north and further south, to Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne, through exhibition programmes, art prizes and art workshops. Their goals were consistent in challenging traditional approaches to the arts as supported by what was seen as conservative government bodies and institutions.

The Cairns Art Society initiated art prizes and exhibitions including the contribution towards the 1976 City of Cairns Centenary Art Purchase exhibition. In addition, 'Purchase Awards' supported the development of regional art collections.[57] The Townsville Art Society (TAS) from 1962 created opportunities for artists, including advocating for art courses through the TAFE education model and lobbying the Townsville City Council in 1969 for what would become the Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in 1980.[58] The establishment of the Caltex Art Prize (sponsored by Caltex Oil) by the Rockhampton Rotary Club in 1965, presented the opportunity for a concerted development of the arts in the North and Central regions of Queensland,[59] and the Mackay Art Society also created exhibition opportunities for artists including art prizes, hosting the annual 'Artists and Art' competition and actively campaigned for a regional art gallery and collection.[60]

Significant in the opportunities they provided to artists, patrons and the general public, the education, cultural and exhibiting programmes generated by these informal networks therefore evidence a remarkable commitment to the promotion of contemporary art in the region. Further, they became the context that informed the practices of artists, patrons and directors at this time, in providing

54 See ibid., p. 111.
55 See Philipp Strobl: But the Main Thing Is I Had the Knowledge, p. 27.
56 See Gertrude Langer Papers.
57 See Cairns Art Society: Art in North Queensland. Selected Works from the Cairns City Collection.
58 See Helen Kenny: History of the Townsville Art Society.
59 See Keith Bradbury, Glenn R. Cooke: Thorns & Petals, pp. 175 f.
60 See Daily Mercury, 1972 (s.n.: Art Work for City). This article is referenced in the broader thesis as held in the 'Dorothy Forbes Archive. Unpublished Manuscript', 1967-1977.

the conditions for emerging artists to be mentored, promoted and financially rewarded. The consequent body of works distinguished through subject matter and style, is further reflective of an ethos understood as distinct to Northern Queensland.[61]

A View of Queensland from the North: Artists and Art Works

Whilst many of these artists in this study have been considered more broadly as significant to Australian art history, it is in the context of artists painting from the experience in particular of living and working in Northern Queensland that they can be more fully understood and interpreted – not only through their landscapes and imagery of the north, but as a Northern Queensland school of art.

Gil Jamieson: Monto

Gil Jamieson, raised on his family's cattle property in Monto, was an artist "inspired by country life".[62] Studying briefly at the Central Technical College (CTC) in Brisbane under Melville Haysom (1900-1967) in the 1950s, he was largely self-taught.[63] This is in part because the CTC at that time delivered a somewhat traditional curriculum.[64] As a result many of the emerging Queensland artists in this study including Jamieson, would experiment with their own techniques, media and subject matter. Jamieson's approach to landscape has been aligned to Jon Molvig,[65] and the Queensland group of figurative expressionists.[66] It was Jamieson's move to Melbourne that would be the catalyst for his critical success becoming recognised as one of Australia's important exhibiting painters from the 1960s.[67] At this time it was typical of Queensland artists to seek recognition by relocating to Sydney or Melbourne. This was the case for Jamieson who would base his studio in Melbourne, finding friendships with artists such as Fred Williams (1927-1982)[68] and gaining the patronage of John Reed (1901-1981) of the Heide Museum of Modern Art. He would come under the umbrella of art dealer

61 Separate to the infrastructure discussed, but worth noting as a significant in its contribution, is the Dunk Island group, active from the 1940s into the 1950s, based in Northern Queensland including the Bedarra and Timana islands. Artists Noel Wood (1912-2001), Roy Dalgarno (1910-2001), Deanna Conti (n.d.), Yvonne Cohen (1912-2004), and Valerie Cohen (Albiston 1911-2008), formed "one of Australia's first island-based artistic communities", with Noel Wood one of the "first artists in Australia to establish a national profile from a regional base. Ross Searle: To the Islands, p. 11.
62 Glenn R. Cooke: A Time Remembered, p. 28.
63 See Mervyn Horton: Present Day Art in Australia, p. 102.
64 See Glenn R. Cooke: A Time Remembered, p. 35.
65 Cooke stated that "Shepherdson and Jamieson are regarded as Jon Molvig's most significant followers", ibid., p. 28.
66 See Bernard Smith: Australian Painting 1788-1990, p. 406.
67 See Kym Bonython: Modern Australian Painting, 1960/1970.
68 See National Gallery of Victoria: Gil Jamieson Painting at Lysterfield, 1965. Estate of Fred Williams.

and gallerist Rudy Komon (1908-1982) from 1960, winning the John McCaughey Memorial Prize (Melbourne) in 1965 for 'The Pigs'.

Returning to Monto, Jamieson worked in the field, painting pictures that told the story of where he came from.[69] Art historian Elwyn Lynn, in his introduction to Modern Australian Painting, 1970-1975 in which Jamieson was included, stated "in almost all Australian painting of note there is an urgency, a sense of frontal impact, a feeling of pressure and, at times, of anxiety".[70] This is relevant to Jamieson's work where figurative imagery expresses his storytelling through the use of red, green, black and ochre, evocative of the landscape, people and places of the region as far north as Cape York, including local stories related by Aboriginal and Islander peoples.[71] It was therefore Jamieson's experience of Northern

Fig. 3: Gil Jamieson: Skull Tree at Rawbelle.

Fig. 4: Gil Jamieson: Scrub Dodgers at Three Moon

Queensland that provided the provocative imagery that presented a challenge to the more traditional Australian school of art (see Fig. 3 and 4).

Bill Yaxley: Rockhampton

Born in Melbourne in 1943, Yaxley's development as a self-taught artist continued after moving to the Rockhampton region in the 1960s. Yaxley developed an agricultural theme in the work of this period while living and working in Byfield, depicting the landscape in the style resonant of Naïve and Folk art (see Fig. 5).

69 Information collected from author's interview with Matthew Jamieson on 14 March 2021 (topic: Gil Jamieson).
70 Kym Bonython: Modern Australian Painting, 1970/1975, p. 10.
71 Information collected from author's email communication with Matthew Jamieson on 17 June 2025. Provenance and references to people and place were recorded for the Gil Jamieson exhibition at the Birrunga Gallery in 2020.

Yaxley is understood as strongly local, deliberately removed from the influence of other artists. He would reference artist Gil Jamieson in the shared understanding that there is "no reason why you can't create in the area you are living in".[72] This was reiterated by Queensland art journalist Phil Brown who stated that Yaxley's style was "unpolluted by the fashions of southern salons or art schools".[73] In Rockhampton, Yaxley was associated with the Rockhampton commercial Gallery 111, Gallery Up Top, and artist Brenda Lewis (1924-2010). His representation with art dealer Ray Hughes in Brisbane and Sydney, further extended his influence to a national level.[74] Yaxley continues to recognise however that Queensland is still his 'market'.[75]

Fig. 5: Bill Yaxley: Untitled [Byfield Orchard]

Clem Forbes and Dorothy Forbes: Mackay

Clem Forbes

Northern Queensland became the subject matter for much of Forbes' works after moving from Brisbane to Mackay in 1964. The Central Queensland landscapes typical of the mining towns of Northern Queensland, including Collinsville, Clermont, and Nebo, as well as his memories of the cattle farmers in Merinda, north of Townsville, were realised in his early paintings (see Fig. 6).

Fig. 6: Clem Forbes: Wedge Tailed Eagle [Merinda Farmer Series]

The geography of the Northern Queensland region, in particular the rainforest and cane fields of the Mackay hinterland including the Eungella region, the Melaleuca wetlands found to the north of Mackay, and the Brigalow Belt north of Rockhampton, became repeated themes and motifs from the 1970s. The understanding of landscape in these works is specific to locality, through the visual conceptualisation of local ecosystems and rural life. Further, the use of mixed media techniques, considered experimental and contemporary in style, were practiced and mastered while living in Mackay (see Fig. 7).

72 Information collected from author's interview with William Yaxley on 2 July 2019.
73 Diana Warnes, Phil Brown, Glenn Barkley: The Adventures of William Yaxley, p. 43.
74 See ibid.
75 Information collected from author's interview with William Yaxley on 2 July 2019.

Fig. 7: Clem Forbes: Range

Forbes was able to transition to a full time professional artist in 1976, supported through studio exhibitions and ongoing relationships with commercial galleries including the Holdsworth Galleries (Sydney); Young Australian Gallery (Brisbane); Bakehouse Art Gallery and Forbes Gallery (Mackay); Munster Gallery (Melbourne); Martin Gallery (Townsville); Trinity Gallery (Cairns); and Gallery Up Top (Rockhampton). By 1982 Forbes had chosen to stay in Mackay making "its environment and the people of that environment, his special concern".[76]

Dorothy Forbes

Moving to Mackay from Brisbane with Clem Forbes in 1964, Dorothy Forbes brought with her a strong focus on studio practice and commercial gallery model experienced in Brisbane during the 1950s.[77]

It was here she aspired to being a practicing artist after being selected for hanging in the Finney's Centenary Art Prize, (later known as the David Jones Art

76 Burdekin Mural Programme, 1982.

77 Dorothy Forbes recalled an "excellent little gallery in Upper Edward Street" [Brisbane] selling Carl Mcconnell pottery in the 1960s as influencing her ambition to open an art gallery. She also referred to the Forbes Gallery, later established with Clem Forbes in 1980 in their home in George Street, Mackay, as similar in layout to the Johnstone Gallery (Bowen Hills, Brisbane). Information collected from author's interview with Dorothy Forbes on 10 February 2019.

Fig. 8: Daily Mercury, 5 September 1977 (Art Show)

Prize) in 1963 with the work, 'Portrait of Young Man', influenced by the Modernist style of Amedio Modigliani (1884-1920).[78] Dorothy Forbes recalled that Gertrude Langer's focus, in discussing the prize at the opening, was on the importance of contemporary art.[79]

In Brisbane, Dorothy Forbes would also be exposed to drawing techniques, as outlined by Kimon Nicolaides in 'The Natural Way to Draw',[80] through drawing sessions held at a New Farm studio c1954 run by artists including John Rigby.[81] Contour and gesture drawing techniques in particular, had a lasting impact on her practice.[82] Clem Forbes would utilise this method in his adult drawing classes in Mackay from 1972,[83] which Dorothy Forbes attended for studio practice.

As director of The Bakehouse Art Gallery co-founded in 1972 with Clem Forbes, Dorothy Forbes through the eight years the gallery was located in Victoria Street, Mackay, established an exhibiting programme of paintings, pottery, sculpture, printmaking, jewellery, textiles and crafts including, works from the Asia Pacific

78 Finneys Art Prize 1963 was awarded to Margaret Olley for 'Susan with Flowers' (Judge: Laurie Thomas).
79 Information collected from author's interview with Dorothy Forbes on 10 February 2019.
80 See Kimon Nicolaides: The Natural Way to Draw.
81 Information collected from author's interview with Dorothy Forbes on 15 November 2019 (topic: reflections on Brisbane in the 1950s).
82 Artist Jon Molvig, on taking over from teacher John Rigby at St Mary's Studio, Brisbane in 1955, would make use of Nicolaides' 'free' drawing techniques. Dorothy Forbes, however, did not attend these workshops.
83 See Bettina MacAulay: Clem Forbes, p. 25.

region. Her intense focus on contemporary art impacted the region through her curatorial decisions in bringing Australian Modernists to Northern Queensland, and contemporary Northern Queensland artists to Mackay (see Fig. 8).

Fig. 10: Anneke Silver in front of her work at the Trinity Gallery, Cairns, c. 1974.

Fig. 9: Dorothy Forbes: Figure

After moving to Brisbane in 1988, Dorothy Forbes continued to practice as an artist, resulting in a prolific body of work held in private and regional collections (see Fig. 9).

Anneke Silver: Townsville

Artist Anneke Silver studied Cultural Anthropology at Amsterdam University, moving to Townsville in 1961. Her diverse representation of the Townsville landscape is distinct to her practice, contemporary in its conceptual approach to imagery through concepts of fertility, mythology and spirituality. During the period of this study, Silver exhibited regularly at the Trinity, Bakehouse and Martin galleries (see Fig. 10).

Silver's influence extended further through the teaching the Visual Art and Design Course at the Townsville TAFE College, with Robert Preston and Ron McBurnie. Academic, Szulakowska recognised that the teaching at this time "became distinct historically and thematically from those in Brisbane and which constitute a unique contribution to Australian art history".[84] Permanently based in Townsville, Silver has produced an extensive body of work, represented in regional, state and national collections, while consistently exhibiting in Northern Queensland throughout her career.

84 Urszula Szulakowska: Experimental Art in Queensland, p. 100.

Tom Risley: Atherton Tablelands

Tom Risley is differentiated in his challenge to traditional representations of the Northern Queensland landscape. This was the result of a deliberate shift in his practice as a sculptor after 1978, through his use of industrial materials, including steel, which he understood as a distinctly contemporary medium. This approach is evidenced in 'Malanda Fountain' (1980) (see Fig. 11), commissioned by the Eacham Shire Council, works exhibited in the 'First Melbourne Sculpture Triennial' (1981) and 'Fabrications', his solo exhibition at the Martin Gallery (1981) (see Fig. 12). Australian critic Daniel Thomas described Risley as "an artist whose work is intensely regional in content (tropical North Queensland rustic, not metropolitan)".[85]

Fig. 11: Tom Risley: Malanda Fountain

While challenging cliched notions of regionalism in seeking a profile beyond Northern Queensland, Risley was able to remain true to his locality through his diverse and complex representation of rural landscapes.[86]

By 1981, Risley's relationship with art dealer Ray Hughes gave him exposure beyond Northern Queensland facilitating professional relationships with artists, including Queensland William Robinson, Bill Yaxley and Ian Smith (b. 1950).

Risley is represented in regional, state, national and international collections. Steven Tomkin, Senior Curator of Cairns Regional Gallery in 2005, stated of Risley that "while the subject may be regional, the processes that drive his practice have important art historical precedents".[87]

NQ sculptor opens exhibition in city

NORTH Queensland sculptor Tom Risley with one of the pieces in his exhibition which opened opened at the Ralph Martin Gallery, Townsville, yesterday. Mr Risley, who works almost exclusively in welded steel, paints his sculptures because he believes that colour adds another dimension to them by highlighting textures and symbolic association. The exhibition was made possible by a $2000 grant from the Visual Arts Board of the Australia

Fig. 12: Townsville Daily Bulletin, 14 November 1981

85 Daniel Thomas: Tom Risley. Further Concern with Still Life and Composition.
86 See Chapter 6 case study in Celie Forbes: In Defence of the North.
87 Steven Tonkin: Tom Risley, p. 6.

Thanakupi: Cairns

While the reach of Ceramicist Gloria Fletcher Thancoupie [Thanakupi], is extensive, through her exhibition output, murals and public art works, her early career as an artist in Cairns, through her links to, and influence on, artists throughout Northern Queensland is formative. Moving from her home in Weipa (Napranum) to study ceramics at the East Sydney Technical College, Thancoupie returned to Queensland in 1976, basing herself in Cairns.[88] Here she was supported with a workshop/studio by the Australian Heritage Gallery, which also acting as her agent.[89] Describing her functional ware as "story pots like books or paintings",[90] they are interpreted through understandings of relationships between land, culture and the natural world. Thancoupie stated, "when I'm working with clay, I am at peace and harmony with clay (earth), firing the kiln (fire), water (the sea and the wetness of clay) and the air, (the fresh air of Trinity Beach)".[91] Potters Carol Rosser (b. 1939)[92] and Arthur Rosser (1938-2020);[93] Rick Wood (1949-2007);[94] based in the Mackay and its hinterland region, and Connie Hoedt (1936-2014),[95] practicing in Townsville, were also unique in their contemporary and experimental approach to ceramics at this time.

A Northern School of Art

"… and the atmosphere is Queensland."[96]

It was art critic Robert Hughes (1938-2012) who described artist Ian Fairweather as a "local artist" whose value to Australian art lay in his images as "projected through a philosophy of experience".[97] The notion can also be applied to this context. To understand the unique contribution of Northern Queensland to the broader Australian contemporary arts narrative is to engage in the imagery and experience of the north projected through a visually rich and complex collection of works. This is further realised through the multi-faceted lens of education, informal infrastructure, and cultural programmes, driven by the dedicated activities of artists, patrons and directors all working in situ. In this way a complex story of the arts in Northern Queensland emerges, one that is distinctive as a northern school of art responsive to national and international art movements, whilst remaining true to the ethos and identity of its own locale.

88 See Cairns Post, 21 November 1977 (s.n.: Pottery Exhibition).
89 Information collected from author's email communication with Rosemary Macfarlane.
90 J. Isaacs: Thancoupie the Potter, p. 58.
91 Quoted in J. Isaacs: Thancoupie the Potter, p. 60.
92 See McBurnie, Jonathan, Anneke Silver, Ross Searle: Connie Hoedt.
93 See Artspace Mackay: Fire and Ash.
94 See Artspace Mackay: Hands On.
95 See McBurnie, Jonathan, Anneke Silver, Ross Searle: Connie Hoedt.
96 Gil Jamieson, artist statement, in Mervyn Horton: Present Day Art in Australia.
97 Robert Hughes: The Art of Australia, p. 291.

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Wage Theft, Misappropriation or Profiteering?

A Microhistory of the Coutts Store and its Exploitation of South Sea Islanders in Ayr, North Queensland

Abstract: In 1877, a special Government Savings Bank fund was established for the 'safekeeping' of wages belonging to South Sea Islanders working in Queensland's sugar industry. Legislation was subsequently introduced under the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 and The Pacific Islander Labourers Act 1880 Amendment Act 1884 to further regulate and protect South Sea Islander wages in Queensland. In theory, these policies ensured the protection and regular distribution of pay to recruits and facilitated their purchase of trade goods, an integral outcome of their employment. However, research by Adrian Graves and Clive Moore has demonstrated that this system was frequently exploited by employers, storekeepers and the Queensland government for their own financial benefit. Employing a microhistory approach, this paper builds on Graves and Moore's research by exploring how a general store in Ayr, North Queensland manipulated government-led financial systems and South Sea Islander labourers for its economic gain. Utilising a unique collection of letters written to the store's owner Charles Coutts between March 1901 and April 1902, it explores the techniques adopted at the Coutts Store to financially and psychologically exploit South Sea Islanders, a practice which ultimately facilitated the business's expansion into a multimillion dollar company throughout the 20th century.

Between 1863 and 1904, an estimated 50 000 to 60 000 men and women (collectively referred to as South Sea Islanders, or 'Kanakas', a derogatory term) from South Pacific islands such as Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, were legally and illegally recruited to work under indentured contracts in Australia's sugar industry.[1] Early recruiting practices often involved kidnapping, coercion and deception, yet some men and women engaged voluntarily, using the labour trade as an opportunity to escape the social and traditional constraints of their respective islands.[2] South Sea Islanders were crucial to the success of Queensland's sugar industry until 1906, when policies introduced as part of the Immigration Restriction Act 1901 led to the deportation of thousands of workers between 1906 and 1908. An estimated 1 500 and 2 500 men and women remained in Australia under exemption certificates or by other illegitimate means.[3] Their descendants (Australian South Sea Islanders) were not formally recognised by the Australian Government as a minority group until 1992.[4]

1 See Max Quanchi: Australia's South Sea Islanders, pp. 3-19; Charles A. Price, Elizabeth Baker: Origins of Pacific Island Labourers in Queensland, 1863-1904, pp. 106-121; Clive Moore: Revising the Revisionists, pp. 61-86.
2 See Henry E. Maude, Ida Leeson: The Coconut Oil Trade of the Gilbert Islands, p. 423; Clive Moore: Kanaka, pp. 26 f.; Peter Corris: Passage, Port and Plantation, pp. 27 ff., 53-59; Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage, pp. 127-140; Deryck Scarr: Recruits and Recruiters, pp. 5-24; Patricia Mercer: The Survival of a Pacific Islander Population in North Queensland 1900-1940, pp. 86 ff.
3 See Patricia Mercer: White Australia Defied, p. 99; Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, pp. 10 f.
4 See Max Quanchi: Australia's South Sea Islanders; Australian Government: The Call for Recognition.

This period of Australia's history has been the subject of over 200 books, articles, chapters, dissertations, oral histories, Australian Research Council Linkage Grant projects and historiographies since 1917.[5] South Sea Islander pay and living conditions on Queensland's sugar plantations have formed a key component of this research.[6] In 1983 and 2015, detailed analyses of the 'truck system' of payment and misappropriation of South Sea Islander wages through the Queensland Pacific Islanders' Fund were published by Adrian Graves in and Clive Moore, respectively.[7] Their research demonstrated that access to goods and systems of payment represented tools of control over South Sea Islander mobility, autonomy and financial independence. Graves' research highlighted the role consumerism played in financially benefitting storekeepers and plantations owners and binding labourers to their employers.[8] Moore found that government led initiatives such as the Queensland Pacific Islanders' Fund facilitated the diversion of compensation payments away from the families of South Sea Islander men and women who died in Australia.[9] Both Graves and Moore took a broad historical approach to their research, exploring these practices across Queensland in regions such as Mackay and Maryborough.

Using materials held in the James Cook University (JCU) Library's Special Collections and Queensland State Archives (QSA), this paper adopts a microhistory approach to explore the financial exploitation of South Sea Islanders by the managers of the Coutts Store in Ayr, Queensland. As Christian G. De Vito describes, microhistories offer an opportunity to understand specific events, people or places as "'fragments' through which 'universal' processes can be observed".[10] They aim to, as Giovanni Levi argues, observe "aspects of large historical processes that would remain invisible under the homogenous categories of microhistory".[11] By adopting a microhistorical approach, this paper presents a detailed reconstruction of the systems Graves and Moore describe through the lens of the Coutts Store and the central characters in, and around it. This paper draws on research funded by an Australian Historical Association's 2025 Northern Australian Fellowship that explored the capacity for the JCU Library Special Collections in Townsville to tell the stories of South Sea Islanders in north Queensland.[12] As part of that research, the Henry Braby Collection, donated to the Library by the Coutts family – descendants of Charles Coutts – was reviewed in March 2025.

Henry Braby was an engineer, responsible for several patented inventions. Charles Coutts was an astute businessman who established a general store (the

5 See Bevil. H. Molesworth: History of Kanaka Labour in Queensland; cf. Clive Moore: Revising the revisionists, pp. 61-86; Imelda Miller [et al.]: Developing A Holistic and Collaborative Approach for the Archaeology of Australian South Sea Islanders in Queensland, pp. 435-449.
6 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 87-124; Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, pp. 1-18; id.: Kanaka; Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage, pp. 127-140; Tracey Banivanua Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue.
7 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 87-124; Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, pp. 1-18.
8 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 87-124.
9 See ibid.; Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, pp. 1-18.
10 Christian G. De Vito: History Without Scale, p. 352.
11 Giovanni Levi: On Microhistory, pp. 93-113.
12 See Adele Zubrzycka: Hidden Voices.

Coutts Store) in Ayr, Queensland in 1894. The Coutts Store marked the beginning of a long and successful line of retail, pastoral and tourism businesses owned by Charles and his family across north Queensland until the 1990s.[13] Both men had connections to the sugar industry, having worked on plantations across Queensland; Braby in his capacity as an engineer and Coutts as a ploughman and later a South Sea Islander hospital wardsman.[14] In 1901, Braby and Coutts established a business partnership and travelled to the United Kingdom to exhibit Braby's inventions at the Glasgow Exhibition and find buyers in the European market.[15] During this period, a small collection of letters, dating from March 1901 to April 1902 were written to Coutts by his store managers Jack (Giovanni) Dossetto and Max Irving. These letters are now held in the Henry Braby collection. They offer a rare and candid insight into systems of credit, price inflation, and use of South Sea Islander "pay" to fund Braby and Coutts' business trip and reduce the store's liabilities. The extent to which these activities represent explicit theft, profiteering, or misappropriation of wages earned by South Sea Islanders in the district form the primary analytical approach of this paper.

Fig. 1: Group of South Sea Islander workers at the Seaforth Plantation, Ayr in ca. 1898

Ayr, Lower Burdekin

Ayr is located in the Burdekin Shire and named after the Burdekin River, a 740-kilometre perennial watercourse that runs to its south before flowing east into the Pacific Ocean. Positioned near the mouth of the river, the geographic region around Ayr is known as the Lower Burdekin. Ayr and its immediate townships occupy traditional Juru (or Yuru) and Bindal country.[16] European settlement of the region began in the 1860s in connection with the pastoral industry, yet it soon became a central district for sugar growing.[17] By 1882, the townships of Ayr and nearby Brandon had been laid out and four major sugar plantations and mills

13 Cf. John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, pp. 134, 276, 279-282.
14 See ibid., pp. 65 f., 280.
15 See The Northern Miner, 24 July 1901, p. 3 (Advertising).
16 See Norman B. Tindale: Aboriginal tribes of Australia.
17 See Dorothy Gibson-Wilde: Gateway to A Golden Land, p. 17; John Henry Peake: A History of the Burdekin, p. 5.

established: Airdmillan, Kalamia, Seaforth and Pioneer.[18] By March 1901, when the first letter held in the Braby collection was composed, the Airdmillan and Seaforth estates had ceased operations, and Kalamia and Pioneer were the only large mills in the district. Both were owned and managed by Drysdale Brothers and Company, and each estate was responsible for crushing sugarcane grown on their respective holdings and surrounding farms.[19] Hundreds of South Sea Islanders were employed on these properties and engaged under a variety of long and short-term indentured contracts (Fig. 1).[20]

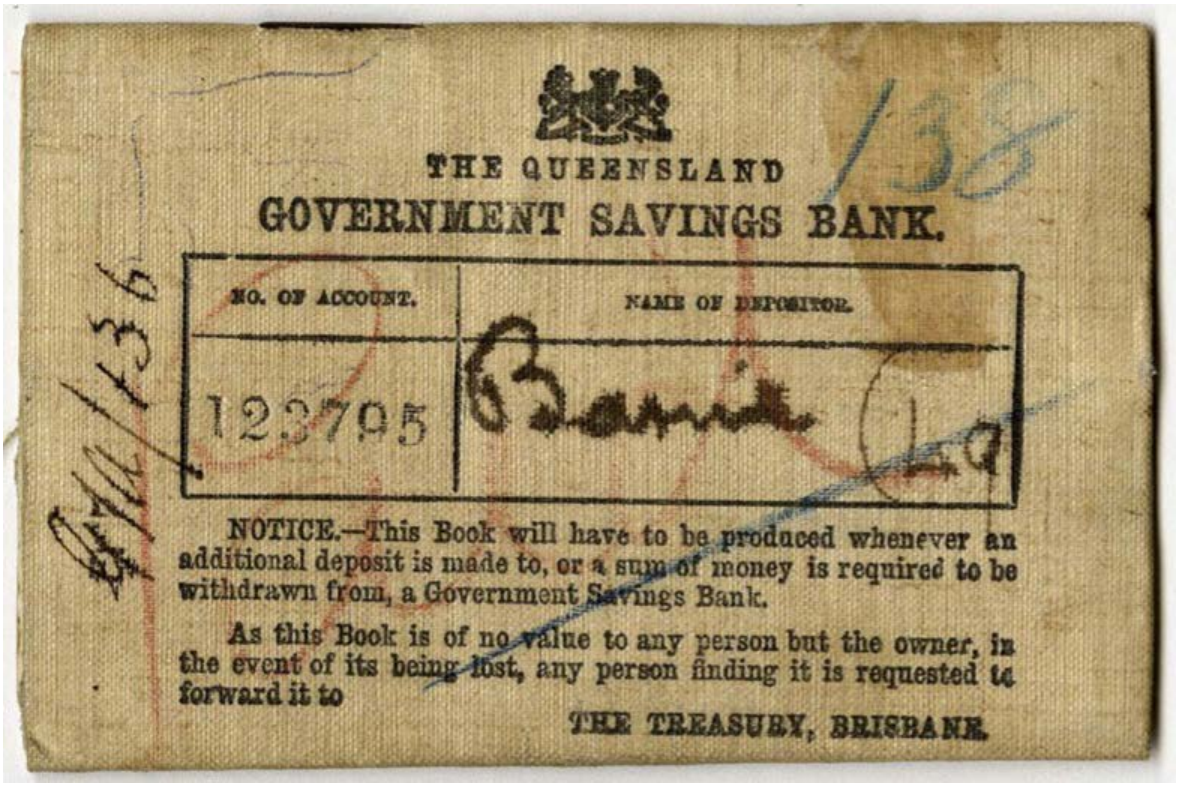
South Sea Islander Wages and the Queensland Government Savings Bank

South Sea Islanders working on Queensland's sugar plantations were typically employed in two ways. The first was under a 3-year indentured contract generally reserved for first time workers. The second was as a 'time-expired' labourer – a worker who had completed their initial 3-year contract and was no longer contractually tied to a particular estate. Time-expired workers were preferred amongst cane farmers and estate managers and could negotiate higher wages.[21] Recruits in the Lower Burdekin typically earned between £6 and £20 annually.[22] Throughout the 1860s, wages were paid to first time recruits annually or at the end of their 3-year contract in cash or goods.[23] This system was initially subject to the Queensland Masters and Servants Act 1861 yet was unregulated and open to exploitation. Following public outcry, the Polynesian Labourers Act was passed in 1868 and specified that South Sea Islanders on 3-year contracts be paid a minimum of £6 annually "in the coin of the realm" (a wage that Moore notes did not increase for forty years), and provided with clothing, rations and a return passage home.[24] This legislation was, however, still exploited by employers, many of whom withheld wages until the expiration of a labourer's contract in order to disincentivise them from absconding or seeking employment elsewhere.[25] The Act also left recruits with limited legal rights, and they were often unable to claim unpaid wages, or access money owed to them by planters who had become insolvent.[26] Similarly, there was little legislative protection to prevent plantation owners from keeping the wages of deceased recruits.[27]

In an effort to address this, the Queensland government established a special trust account in the Government Savings Bank in 1877. This was distinct from individual bank accounts and intended for employers to deposit South Sea

18 See Peter Griggs: Plantation to small farm, p. 116.
19 See ibid., pp. 168, 202.
20 See Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Register of returns 1885-1896; Ledger, Pacific Islanders' wages, Townsville region, 1884-1907.
21 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 107.
22 See pay rates recorded in Inspector of Pacific Islanders: Register of Agreements, pp. index-369.
23 See Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 5; Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 107 f.
24 Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 4; Queensland Government, 31 Vic. No. 47.
25 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 108.
26 See ibid., p. 108.
27 See ibid.; Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 6; Tracey Banivanua Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue.

Islander wages directly into, rather than paying them cash or withholding wages in other ways.[28] Once the trust was established, an amendment to the Polynesian Labourers Act 1868 was passed which required deposits and withdrawals into the Government Savings Bank or independent trust accounts to be overseen by an Inspector of Pacific Islanders. These deposits and withdrawals were recorded in pass books and bank books (Fig. 2).[29] Bank books recorded wages held in the Government Savings Bank trust and were kept by each region's appointed Inspec-


THE QUEENSLAND
GOVERNMENT SAVINGS BANK.

NO. OF ACCOUNT.	NAME OF DEPOSITOR.
123795	Barrie

NOTICE.—This Book will have to be produced whenever an additional deposit is made to, or a sum of money is required to be withdrawn from, a Government Savings Bank.

As this Book is of no value to any person but the owner, in the event of its being lost, any person finding it is requested to forward it to

THE TREASURY, BRISBANE.

Fig. 2: Queensland Government Savings Bank Pass book issued to the Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Maryborough as Trustee for Barrie

tor of Pacific Islanders. Wages held in State banks were also recorded in bank books which were held by employers or bank managers. Recruits were unable to withdraw money without access to their appointed Inspector of Pacific Islanders, and were thus reliant on those individuals to access their wages.[30] Douglas Brown, Manager of the Lower Burdekin's Pioneer Sugar Estate wrote extensively about the challenges of paying recruits under this system.[31] In March 1897 he complained that time-expired recruits refused to re-engage at the end of their contracts unless they were paid: "We are sorry Mr Wallace [Townsville Inspector of Pacific Islanders] won't be down by the next steamer as we have failed in getting the 'Boys' to recommence work pending his arrival".[32] Without efficient access to wages, South Sea Islanders were often forced to purchase goods from

28 See Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 5.
29 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 114.
30 See ibid.
31 See Douglas Brown to David Donald, 17 March 1897, p. 26.
32 Douglas Brown to David Donald, 9 March 1897, pp. 22 f.

stores, hawkers or vendors on credit.[33] As will be discussed later in this paper, the same practice occurred at the Coutts Store in Ayr.

In 1880, the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 (44 Vic. No. 17) replaced the Polynesian Labourers Act 1868. Under the new Act, wages were to be paid every six months in the presence of the Inspector of Pacific Islanders or Police Magistrate. According to Graves and Moore's research, pay could be distributed to South Sea Islanders in four ways under the Act: (1) cash; (2) payment into a Government Savings Bank trust account; (3) payment into a trust account held by an Inspector of Pacific Islanders, or (4) into an independent bank of the recruit's choice.[34] Moore also suggests that in some instances, wages were held in accounts managed by their employers.[35] To date, the exact number of recruits who chose to deposit their wages into the Government Savings Bank trust or their own savings accounts is not known. However, Graves estimates that 23 per cent of South Sea Islander deposits were made into personal accounts, rather than the special Government Savings Bank trust fund.[36] According to Moore's research, by 1884, £13 869 of South Sea Islander money was being held in the Government Savings Bank wages trust account and £3 917 in individual Government Savings Bank accounts.[37] By 1901, South Sea Islander wages totalling £32 693 had been deposited in the Government Savings Bank, demonstrating its widespread adoption in the industry.[38]

The Queensland Government Savings Bank and the Lower Burdekin

Up until 1896, all South Sea Islanders wages in the Lower Burdekin deposited into the Government Savings Bank were managed by the Inspector of Pacific Islanders in Townsville. Between 1885 to 1896, all associated withdrawals and deposits were recorded in account books, bank books, ledgers and cash books. Many of these are held in the QSA. According to the Townsville Inspector's cash books, the majority of (recorded) South Sea Islander withdrawals and deposits during this period were witnessed by "Henry Boyd", the Wardsman of Townsville's Ross Island Immigration Depot.[39] A journey to the Ross Island Depot from the Lower Burdekin would have taken at least two days by foot or half a day by boat prior to the construction of the Ayr Tramway in 1901.[40] During this period, South Sea Islanders wages held in the Government Savings Bank trust ranged from £181, £545.0.6 and £845.3.7.[41] According to cash books, only two South Sea

33 See Henry Turner.: Rural Life in Sunny Queensland, p. 65 cf. Adrian Graves, Truck and Gifts, p. 114.
34 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 113 f.; Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 5.
35 See Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 6.
36 See Adrian Graves: Cane and Labour, pp. 138-142.
37 See Queensland Government: Savings Bank Deposits by Polynesians, Queensland Votes and Proceedings, pp. 845 ff., cf. Clive Moore: The Pacific Islanders' Fund, p. 6.
38 See Clive Moore: Kanaka, pp. 179 f., 182 f.
39 T. B. Pugh: Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar (1894), p. 175.
40 See Peter Bell: A Short History of Thuringowa, p. 38.
41 See Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Cash book, pp. 1-63.

Islanders had their savings in the custody of the Townsville Inspector rather than a trust account in 1886.[42]

In April 1896, Police Magistrate, James C. Baird, was appointed as Ayr's Inspector of Pacific Islanders to 'relieve' the Inspector of Pacific Islanders in Townsville of their duties in the region.[43] In September that year, 219 South Sea Islander accounts, totalling approximately £500 and held in the Townsville Government Savings Bank trust were transferred to Ayr.[44] This left the Townsville's Government Saving Bank trust account with only £289.9.6 in March 1897.[45] It is not clear where the £500 was deposited in Ayr, although it was presumably placed under Baird's control. Bank books, pay books and cash books for Ayr dating from 1896 to 1907 have not been located. Consequently, there is no record of South Sea Islander wages held in the Lower Burdekin's Government Savings Bank after 1896. Baird died in May 1898 soon after he brought a case against Charles Coutts for supplying firearms to recruits.[46] These charges were "quashed on appeal", yet Coutts was found guilty of those and other charges later that year and ordered to pay a fine.[47] Baird was replaced by Clement A. Collard, who retained the position of Acting Police Magistrate and Inspector of Pacific Islanders until May 1902.[48] Collard was also one of the licencing justices in Ayr, and granted liquor licences in the region and may have facilitated the supply of alcohol for Coutts' benefit.[49] He was replaced by Alexander Fraser who remained in the role until 1907.[50]

South Sea Islander Consumerism, Queensland's Regional Stores and the Truck System

Acquiring goods to take back to home islands in trade boxes played a vital role in the lives of South Sea Islanders in Queensland. Trade boxes – wooden storage chests with handles and lockable lids – were filled with goods that were valued by recruits such as tobacco pipes, metal axes, firearms, gun powder, nails, beads, matches, handkerchiefs, calico and clothing.[51] Firearms were particularly coveted and purchased freely until 1884, when their sale to South Sea Islanders was banned under the Pacific Islanders Act 1884. After 1884, firearms were regularly

42 See ibid., pp. 1-63.
43 See The Capricornian, 22 August 1896, p. 23 (Queensland News).
44 See Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Cash book, pp. 63-68.
45 See Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Cash book, p. 70.
46 The Charters Towers Herald and Mining Record, 29 September 1897, p. 3 (The Way to Put a Set on Him); The North Queensland Register, 20 October 1897, p. 18 (Northern Supreme Court); The Northern Miner, 30 October 1897, p. 4 (Northern Supreme Court).
47 Charters Towers Mining Standard, 29 October 1897, p. 3 (Clips, Chips and Chunks of "Standard" Value); Charters Towers Mining Standard, 5 November 1897, p. 3 (Clips, Chips and Chunks of "Standard" Value).
48 See The Telegraph, 24 May 1902, p. 2 (Official Notifications); The Telegraph, 9 June 1898, p. 4 (Official Notification).
49 See Pugh's Queensland Almanac and Directory, 1901, p. 207; Victoriae Reginae, 1885, No. DCCCLVII; Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, pp. 9, 11.
50 See Daily Standard, 27 October 1916, p. 11 (Sub-Inspector A. Fraser); The Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs General Advertiser, 13 May 1902, p. 3 (Retrenchment).
51 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 88; John Cromar: Jock of the Islands, p. 157; Tracey Banivanua Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue, pp. 67 f.

acquired illegally.[52] As Graves describes, firearms were principally useful in Australia for hunting, yet they were most valuable on home islands where they facilitated resistance against recruiters, missionaries and opposing clans.[53] These and other goods acquired in Queensland had the capacity to facilitate marriage, or maintain status and authority and acquire land.[54] To return home without a trade box was a source of "shame".[55]

By the early 20th century, goods such as iron and steel tools, tobacco, and calico had become integral in Melanesian society. Graves' research demonstrates that this generated a further dependency on commodities and reliance on trade boxes brought back by returning recruits.[56] The significance of trade boxes made them tools of control for plantation owners, tying recruits to their employers and their contracts, which needed to be fulfilled before a recruits could access their wages. As a result, the threat of losing access to their wages disincentivised workers from absconding from sugar estates late into their contracts or challenging poor working conditions or mistreatment.[57]

This reliance on goods meant that South Sea Islanders played an important role in the local retail economies of sugar towns across Queensland.[58] Within these retail economies existed a system of consumption and payment defined as the "truck system".[59] Historically, the truck system refers to a process in which "consumption is tied to the employment contract".[60] In the context of South Sea Islanders in Queensland, Graves defines it as "the payment of wages in goods or in money with a view to it being spent in shops ["truck" shops] in which the employer has either a direct or indirect interest".[61] On sugar plantations, recruits were often forced to purchase goods from "truck" shops on credit between pay days.[62] The truck system was complex and flexible, permeating itself throughout local economies, social and professional networks, and sugar estate systems more broadly.[63] Recruits relied on it as a source of goods, plantation owners used it as a tool of control, and storekeepers depended on it as a source of income.

In addition to truck shops, goods could also be purchased from plantation stores "either directly or selected from the plantation store on pay day" or regional stores close to plantations or in larger regional towns".[64] Graves' research demonstrates that regional store owners – sometimes, but not always, affiliated with

52 See Queensland Government: A Bill to Amend 'The Pacific Island Labours Act of 1880'; Patricia Mercer: White Australia Defied, p. 26.
53 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 93 ff.
54 See ibid., pp. 87, 91; Clive Moore: Kanaka, p. 54; William Gordon Farquhar: Diary, 7 January 1871, p. 16.
55 See John B. Thurston to commander-in-chief of Australian Station, 21 July 1891 cited in: Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 15, 91. Tracey Banivanua Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue, p. 68.
56 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 100, 106.
57 See ibid, pp. 15, 91.
58 See Tracey Banivanua-Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue, pp. 66, 68; Patricia Mercer: White Australia Defied, p. 26; Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 119 f.
59 Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 87-123.
60 George W. Hilton: The Truck System, p. 1-9.
61 Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 87.
62 See ibid, pp. 108-118.
63 See ibid, pp. 122 f.
64 Ibid, p. 108.

nearby plantations – often took advantage of South Sea Islanders by inflating the price of goods. This occurred regularly, but was most lucrative when workers were in a state of "heightened anxiety [to] fill their trade boxes before they left the colony".[65] The inflation of goods is supported by the historical record, for example, in 1886, Charles M. Woodford – a naturalist and government minister – remarked that a returning recruit had spent £4.10/- on a musical box that was "a great waste of money".[66] Furthermore, in 1877, an appraiser estimated that the price of goods purchased by recruits in Queensland was 33 per cent above the company's "legitimate profits".[67] South Sea Islander had few avenues available to them to resist this system, working in "isolated areas […] where they constituted a captive market for estate stores [and arguably independent shopkeepers]".[68] While it can be reasoned that not all storekeepers engaged in these practices, Graves' research indicates that they were pervasive across Queensland. Using the microhistory framework, this paper will now explore Coutts Store's function and role within this broader context.

Coutts, Braby and the Mysterious Journey of South Sea Islander Wages at the Coutts Store

Charles Coutts was twenty when he moved to Australia from Aberdeen, Scotland in 1886.[69] He initially settled on the McIvor River, north of Cooktown, before working as a ploughman on the Bloomfield Sugar Plantation near Cairns and later as a navvy on the Cairns Railway.[70] Coutts eventually travelled to Ayr where he purchased a second-hand circus and its menagerie. After selling the circus, he found employment as a farm labourer on the Seaforth Sugar Plantation.[71] Subsequently, in 1890, despite having no medical training, he took on the position of wardsman in charge of the Pioneer Sugar Estate's South Sea Islander hospital.[72] It was here that he met John Drysdale, manager and co-owner of the estate, and its Chief Engineer, Henry Braby.[73] These relationships were instrumental both personally and professionally for Coutts. In 1894, Coutts left Pioneer and established a retail store (Coutts Store) in Ayr, a business venture funded, according to Roy Connolly, by John Drysdale.[74]

Henry Braby was a Sussex born consulting engineer employed at the Seaforth, Kalamia and Pioneer Sugar Estates between 1885 and 1899.[75] Braby was

65 Ibid, pp. 110-116.
66 Charles Morris Woodford, 17 April 1886, cited in: Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 116.
67 Case of the Schooner "Chance", pp. 1234-1244, cited in: Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 116.
68 Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 114.
69 See John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, p. 280.
70 See ibid, p. 280.
71 See Roy Connolly: John Drysdale and the Burdekin, p. 113.
72 See John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, p. 280.
73 See Pioneer Sugar Mills: Pioneer Sugar Mills (Pty) Limited: 1884-1958, p. 22.
74 See Roy Connolly: John Drysdale and the Burdekin, p. 114.
75 See John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, pp. 65 f.; Charles Young to Manager, U. M & A. Co of Australia, 18 February 1899, p. 2.

Fig. 3: The Coutts General Store, circa. 1910

well-known across Queensland's sugar industry for overseeing the construction of sugar mills in Mackay and the Lower Burdekin. He was also responsible for several inventions, including the spear system of irrigation at the Pioneer Sugar Estate, an innovation which arguably led to its historic survival and ongoing success.[76] In May 1885, while working as engineer at Pioneer, Braby "accidentally" shot and killed a South Sea Islander named Saripell.[77] He was later acquitted of the death, alleging it occurred during shooting practice and was the fault of a "sensitive trigger".[78] The death, and Braby's subsequent arrest in Rockhampton, were heavily reported by the local media.[79]

The Coutts Store was a single storey iron building located on the corner of Queen and Edwards Streets, in Ayr's town centre (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4). Coutts was one of only three storekeepers in town, although other stores were located near the Pioneer, Airdmillan and Kalamia Sugar Estates.[80] Between circa 1894 and 1901, Coutts employed Sam Murry – a South Sea Islander – to assist at the store.[81] Murry also leased land from Coutts where he grew sugar cane and resided on the property.[82]

The Coutts Store was patronised by South Sea Islanders and European cane farmers across the region. According to the Townsville Inspector of Pacific Islander's cash books, Islanders working at the Kalamia Sugar Estate were purchasing

76 See John Henry Peake: A History of the Burdekin, pp. 34 f.; The Townsville Daily Bulletin, 7 September 1938, p. 2 (W. Braby to the editor: Back to Ayr Week); Peter Griggs: Global Industry, Local Innovation, pp. 50 f.
77 The Brisbane Courier, 11 June 1885, p. 4 (European Mails).
78 Ibid.
79 See The Capricornian, 1 August 1885, p. 16 (Current Notes).
80 See The Port Denison Times and Kennedy District Advertiser, 22 September 1894, p. 4 (The Lower Burdekin); T.P. Pugh: Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar 1895, p. 48; id.: Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar 1901, p. 728, and id.: Pugh's Queensland Almanac, Directory and Law Calendar 1904, pp. 562, 620.
81 See Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, pp. 4 f.
82 Dossetto accused Murry of stealing from the store prior to Coutts and Braby's departure for Scotland in 1901, see ibid., pp. 4 f., 9 f.

Fig. 4: The Coutts Ltd General Store, 1918

goods from Coutts on credit from at least 1895.[83] No detailed records of items traded by the shop have been found, although its main suppliers were Burns Philp & Co. and Hollis Hopkins and Co., who has warehouses in Townsville.[84]

In February 1901, Coutts hired Max Irving and Jack Dossetto to manage the shop while he and Braby travelled to Europe to attend the Glasgow International Exhibition. The trip, allegedly funded by Coutts, aimed to attract buyers for three of Braby's inventions: an 'improved' fire lighter, steam generator and wind motor.[85]

Jack Dossetto had recently arrived in Australia from Italy,[86] and Max Irving was a Tasmanian-born storekeeper.[87] Notably, the year Dossetto and Irving took over the store's management coincided with the opening of the Ayr Tramway, which appears to have diverted much trade away from Ayr and into nearby Townsville.[88] Irving and Dossetto wrote to Coutts regularly between March 1901, and April 1902, updating him on surrounding businesses, residents and the store's finances. All orders and sales between March and June 1901 were recorded under 'cash sales'; 'order book' (items ordered into the store though not

83 Cf. index notes referring to five South Sea Islanders – Sailleo (also Sailho), Levee Vato (or Lunee Vatoo), Tommy, Aechoo (or Eachoo) and Mameceombo, who owed Coutts between £3.4.3 to £6.8.6 in 1895 and another, unspecified year – in Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Ledger; Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Cash Book, pp. 1 f. Levee, a time-expired labourer, along with Aechoo, Sailho and Mameceombo were all from Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and employed by the Young Brothers at the Kalamia Estate, cf. Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Townsville: Ledger, pp. 159, 169; Inspector of Pacific Islanders: Register of Agreements, pp. 97, 172.

84 See Max Irvine to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, p. 3; Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 2.

85 See The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, 23 November 1901, p. 1304 (A New Steam Generator); Roy Connolly: John Drysdale and the Burdekin, p. 114.

86 See Townsville Daily Bulletin, 8 June 1946, p. 2 (Death of J. Dossetto).

87 See Delta Advocate, 9 March 1940, p. 11 (Obituary. M.H. Irving).

88 See John Henry Peake: A History of the Burdekin, pp. 7, 16; Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 16 April 1901, p. 4; Frances Pollon: Shopkeepers and Shoppers, p. 234.

yet purchased) and 'day book' (a chronological list of all transactions and customer orders (see Table 1).

The earliest record of Irving and Dossetto's business with South Sea Islanders in the district is on 8 April 1901. That month, Dossetto wrote to Coutts describing his success selling goods at a 100 per cent markup to "new chum" (recently engaged) recruits and chasing down those who had purchased goods on credit:

> "I have had all the new chum Kanakas in Ayr the last four Sundays and been as busy as a man could be. I managed it all myself[.] I think I have made a better fist of those boys than you would have done yourself all the time. Boxes sold even down to the old ones. All stuff I have sold is over 100 per cent [of their profit margin] so that is not to [sic] bad. If the business is going back with the whites it is not doing so with the blacks. For February I sold £161.11.6 and collected £246.9.9. I think I have collected pretty well all the money from the boys. There is about four that I cannot find but you can bet I will make up for them).[89]

Max Irving, on the other hand, described March's trade as "exceedingly dull", bringing in only £524.4.3.[90] The store also had rising "liabilities" which were exasperated by money coming out of the business to pay for "Mr Braby's travelling expenses" and legal fees, yet not enough coming in to "meet engagements".[91] Irving predicted that the business would fall into debt until the end of sugar cane crushing season, which typically ran from June to November.[92] By early June, Dossetto's attitude had changed, lamenting to Coutts that "things are very bad here and […] business is going back every day […] If it was not for the Kanaka trade the business in the shop would hardly pay expenses).[93] Dossetto had, however, been "kept busy with the boys [South Sea Islanders]" and "booked about £600.0.0 to them" since February, 80 per cent "if not more" of which would be a profit once those credits were paid.[94]

In July 1901, the business owed Burns Philp "about £1700", a large sum considering their cash sales for June had only been £90.5.7 and combined orders of sales and credits had only totalled £434.3.2 (see Table 1).[95] According to one of Irving's letters, Coutts had suggested that he sell land to cover the business's expenses. Irving had apparently cautioned against this due to the "dullness of the place" and "considerable outlay of cash" to divide and survey the land.[96] Curiously, Irving alluded to the pressure of these liabilities being alleviated by the promise of South Sea Islander "pay" – between £400-£500 – coming into the store later that month.[97] While he did not elaborate on what form the £400-£500 would take, his letter implied that the money would put them in a position to reduce their debt to a point that the business could stay afloat. Dossetto was also doing his best to take advantage of recruits for the store's financial benefit. That same month he wrote to Coutts boasting that he had "greatly improved

89 Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 8 April 1901, p. 4.
90 See Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 16 April 1901, pp. 3 f.
91 Ibid, p. 4.
92 See David Donald to Messrs Drysdale, 31 October 1885, p. 173.
93 Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 3 June 1901, p. 1.
94 Ibid, p. 1.
95 See Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 11 July 1901, p. 1.
96 Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, p. 3.
97 See ibid, pp. 1 f.; Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 23 July 1901, p. 7.

Month & Year	*Sale Type*	*Sales*
March 1901	Kanakas (Cash)	£41.15.0
	Cash sales	£104.5.8
	Order book	£152.3.7
	Day book	£226
	Total	**£524.4.3**
April 1901	Kanaka	£31.16.6
	Cash sales	£63.5.1
	Order book	£163.11.4
	Day book	£206.17.7
	Total	**£465.11.1**
June 1901	Kanaka	£30.17.6
	Cash sales	£90.5.7
	Order book	£145.3.4
	Day book	£167.16.9
	Total	**£434.3.2**
January 1902	**Total sales**	**£408.4.8**
February 1902	**Total sales**	**£480.1.2**
March 1902	**Total sales**	**£298.12.8**

Table 1. Coutts Store sales, March 1901 to March 1902

on [Coutts'] system" with South Sea Islanders, collecting £376.18.1 (presumably in cash) and booking £656.2.6 to them since February.[98] Again, the processes involved in Coutts' "system" were not described, although it seemed to represent the inflation of prices to almost double their value as a way of balancing out the businesses debts and profiteering from South Sea Islanders shopping in the store.

A month or so later, Irving used £800 of South Sea Islander "pay" to reduce the store's debts to Burns Philp and Co. "from nearly £1800" to "a little over £1000".[99]

Whether South Sea Islander "pay" was represented by actual wages being deposited at the store for safe keeping (perhaps as part of the Queensland Saving Bank trust meant for Collard's safe keeping), or by recruits using their "pay" to purchase goods or pay off their accounts in the store is not clear. If the £800 was from sales alone, the store would have had to sell goods to approximately 80 South Sea Islanders spending an average of £10 each in one month.

By November 1901, "'[t]hings at the store [had] been going along at a draging [sic] pace" and its liabilities had risen to £2050.17.0, with book debts (credit owed to the business) now at £2707.8. This left the store account with an actual balance of £656.8.8, but that sum was contingent on all credits were paid. Money was also required for Coutts and Braby who had cabled for £630 between July and

98 Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 23 July 1901, p. 7.
99 Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, p. 3.

November, eliminating any profits the business had made that year.[100] Correspondence paused between December 1901 and March 1902 before a final round of letters was sent to Coutts in April 1902. By now it was clear that Braby and Coutts' business trip was not going as planned and had not generated the orders – or money – they had anticipated.[101] This continued to put pressure on the Irving and Dossetto, who were by now being chased by Hollis Hopkins and Co. for outstanding credits. Dossetto managed to pay off £200 to the company that month, but this drained the business account.[102] Things were so dire that at the same time Dossetto paid the Hollis Hopkins and Co. account, he had been forced to withdraw money from his own account to cover his expenses.[103] Irvine too had borrowed £50 for Coutts and Braby's travel expenditures, writing to Coutts that he hoped trip would "eventually turn out a financial success [because it was] taking a long time […] wasting a lot of money [and had] pretty well drained your business of funds [[…]] should you require more money I hardly know how I am going to raise it).[104]

In the background, South Sea Islander trade appears to have continued to keep the store afloat. At the end of 1901, the store's takings totalled £1091.9.6 of which £1902.8.3 had been "booked" and £600 was "clear profit". According to Dossetto, booked sales had "kept the business going" and most were to South Sea Islanders, who he had "booked" £1000 to since March.[105] However, March 1902 sales had dropped sharply to almost half those recorded for the previous year (see Table 1), and the men were finding it difficult to recover money owed to the store by European farmers in the district. One of those accounts belonged to Clement Collard, the Inspector of Pacific Islanders in Ayr who owed the store between £60 and £70 pounds. Despite their financial predicament, Irving was unwilling to press Collard for money, worrying it might "effect [sic] the Kanaka pays somewhat".[106] As already described, Collard was required to witness all South Sea Islander deposits and withdrawals made into trust accounts and the Government Savings Bank.[107] Whether these funds were held in his own trust account, or the Immigration Department's account is not known. Irving did not elaborate on how the South Sea Islander pay would be affected, yet his comment implies a reliance on Collard to bring South Sea Islander earnings into the business.

Money was also owed to the store by South Sea Islanders, some of whom had presumably skipped town before Dossetto or Irving caught up with them.[108] Graves discusses this in his research, although he notes that South Sea Islanders were known for their honesty and efficiency when it came to paying off credit to shopkeepers.[109] In order to force recruits who owed money into the store,

100 See Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, pp. 2f.
101 See William Maw to Charles Coutts, 12 February 1902, pp. 1f.; William Maw to Charles Coutts, 17 February 1902, pp. 1f.; Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 1.
102 See Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 2.
103 See ibid, pp. 2f.
104 Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 1.
105 Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 2.
106 Max Irving to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 4.
107 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 113.
108 See Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, p. 3.
109 See Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, p. 116.

Dossetto purchased and displayed an Ayr Tramway timetable in the shop then advised workers that the Government had "taken over" their employer's estates and money owed to the store needed to be paid.[110] Irving made money back from workers whose accounts went unpaid by inflating the price of other recruit's purchases "thre [sic] times over".[111]

Coutts and Braby returned to Ayr in mid-1902, at which time Dossetto and Irving's correspondence ceased. Dossetto married Irving's daughter, Beatrice in 1903 and opened his own store in Hambleden Junction, Cairns in 1903.[112] He later returned to Ayr, established a store on Queen Street in 1906, and joined the Ayr Shire Council.[113] Irving opened a general store with his brother in Brandon.[114]

The Coutts Empire (1902-1990)

Little is published about the year following Coutts and Braby's return to Ayr and it is unclear how Coutts financially recovered from their trip. Income from Islander customers would have gradually dwindled, because between 1906 and 1908, all South Sea Islanders not exempt from deportation left the Lower Burdekin and returned to their respective home islands.[115] In February 1905, Coutts married Braby's daughter Mabel (May) in Sydney.[116] They divorced fifteen years later.[117] Charles Coutts would maintain strong business interests in Ayr until his death in 1957. His former associate, Henry Braby, died from pernicious anaemia in Kyogle in April 1907, where he had recently moved in an effort to improve his health.[118]

Between 1907 and 1913, Coutts was financially stable enough to expand his business and establish a bakery and bulk store on Queen Street, purchase a block of land near the Ayr Railway station, and open additional stores in the nearby towns of McDesme and Home Hill.[119] In July 1916, the business was incorporated, forming 'Coutts Limited' (Fig. 4 and 5).[120] Coutts replaced the original 1894 Queen Street store with a new brick building in 1928.[121] That building, albeit modified, continues to stand today. Charles' son Laurie joined the business in 1922 and was followed by his sons Graham and David in the early 1950s and 1970s.[122]

110 Jack Dossetto to Charles Coutts, 19 November 1901, p. 5.
111 Ibid, p. 2.
112 See Townsville Daily Bulletin, 8 June 1946, p. 2 (Death of J. Dossetto).
113 See Morning Post, 25 August 1903, p. 3 (Advertising); The Townsville Daily Bulletin, 8 June 1946, p. 2 (Death of Mr. J. Dossetto).
114 See The Townsville Daily Bulletin, 9 March 1940, p. 6 (Personal).
115 See Patricia Mercer, White Australia Defied, pp. 98 f.; Clive Moore: 'Good-bye, Queensland, good-bye, White Australia; Good-bye Christians', p. 29; J.D. Brown to D. Donald, 28 September 1906, p. 234, JCULSC: PMR/LB/5.
116 See The Northern Miner, 11 February 1905, p. 5 (Personal).
117 See Townsville Dailly Bulletin, 28 July 1920, p. 2 (Coutts v. Coutts).
118 See The Richmond River Express, 9 April 1907, p. 2 (Sad Death).
119 See The Northern Miner, 23 October 1909, p. 4 (The Northern Miner).
120 See The Northern Miner, 22 July 1916, p. 4 (Telegrams).
121 See John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, p. 279.
122 See ibid, pp. 279, 281.

Fig. 5: Tropix Cinema, Queen Street, Ayr and the Coutts Bulk Store to its right

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Coutts family invested in hotels in Ayr and Townsville, soft drink manufacturing, fashion, meatworks, financial services and expanded their retail branches.[123] By the late 1980s, the Coutts brothers (now the Coutts Group Pty Ltd), owned twenty supermarkets and convenience stores in Townsville, Cairns and Ayr. Those businesses turned over an estimated $40 million annually.[124] In 1983, the business diversified by purchasing the Queensland Stations, a group of pastoral stations, for $33.7 million. In 1988, they developed the Burdekin Wilderness Lodge, a tourist attraction along the banks of Burdekin Falls Dam in Charters Towers (Fig. 6).[125] Between 1979 and 1986, Woolworths and Coles opened stores in Ayr.[126] The Coutts Group, like many independent businesses tied to the grocery and retail market, found it difficult to compete with these duopolies and were impacted by rising debts as interest rates rose.[127] In 1990, the Coutts Group was placed into receivership, owing $80 million to creditors.[128]

Conclusion

Adrian Graves and Clive Moore's research explored the systems used by employers, storekeepers and the Queensland Government to capitalise on South Sea Islanders and misappropriate their wages for their own financial gain. These

123 See ibid.
124 See Michael O'Meara: Davids Sets Sights on Coutts Assets.
125 See Turi Condon: More Coutts Assets for Auction; Townsville City Council: Burdekin Wilderness Lodge; Premier's Department: Title Public Facility License, Burdekin Wilderness Lodge; John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, p. 282.
126 See John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, pp. 281 f.
127 See David T. Merrett: The Making of Australia's Supermarket Duopoly, pp. 301-321; John Kerr: Black Snow and Liquid Gold, pp. 281 f.
128 See Turi Condon: Diversified Coutts Brothers Group Put into Receivership.

Fig. 6: Still from a film promoting the Burdekin Wilderness Lodge

schemes were successful because they relied on the unfamiliarity of many South Sea Islander workers with colonial bureaucratic systems and their incentive to acquire goods before returning to their islands. Graves and Moore's work demonstrates that these systems occurred across the state of Queensland and impacted thousands of men and women working in the sugar industry. Employing the microhistory approach, this paper has explored these themes of exploitation and wage misappropriation in the context of the Coutts Store in Ayr, Queensland, which forms the nucleus of these activities.

Informing this narrative are Max Irving and Jack Dossetto's letters, which are both candid and incriminating. Their correspondence makes it clear that the store inflated the price of goods sold to South Sea Islanders by up to 100 per cent while simultaneously using their connections with Clement Collard to facilitate this process. While these strategies were common across Queensland, Irving and Dossetto's letters indicate that South Sea Islander wages formed a key component of the Coutts Store's survival throughout 1901 and 1902 and simultaneously benefited larger companies such as Burns Philp & Co. Most significantly, their correspondence demonstrates the extent to which their attitudes towards South Sea Islanders were normalised and accepted by those around them. Although Coutts and Braby were physically absent throughout this period, they arguably played a vital role within this dynamic, acting as antagonists who were motivated by their financial dependence on the South Sea Islander trade which indirectly subsidised their trip to Scotland and England. Consequently, profits made by capitalising on South Sea Islanders in the store contributed not just to the local, but the global economy.

The appointed Inspectors of Pacific Islanders in Ayr – James Baird and Clement Collard – were both active and passive players in this dynamic. Baird's efforts to hold Coutts accountable for his alleged sale of firearms to recruits in 1897 – despite Coutts' connections to powerful figures in the district – reveals a level integrity he brought to the position. His death in 1898 opened the role to Collard, who used it to his and Coutts' advantage. Without surviving ledgers, cash books or bank books for Ayr and the Burdekin region, the extent of Collard's role in the store's access to South Sea Islander wages cannot be determined. However, his responsibility over South Sea Islander wages deposited into the Government Savings Bank trust appears to have allowed him to funnel hundreds of pounds directly towards the Coutts Store between 1901 and 1902. Exactly how Collard benefitted from this system is a matter of speculation, although he maintained a large account with the store without any resistance from Max Irving. An ancillary outcome of this system was the indirect financial advantage it gave to farmers (and Collard), who were disincentivised to pay off their outstanding accounts because South Sea Islander purchases alleviated the store's liabilities. From this perspective, it can be argued that the store's misappropriation of South Sea Islander wages created a manufactured economy that became embedded into the broader economy. This was so pervasive that it was almost impossible to disentangle without the risk of a broader financial collapse.

On the surface, this system benefited everyone except South Sea Islanders. However, Irving and Dossetto's correspondence demonstrates that not all workers were passive actors within this dynamic. Most notably, several successfully avoided paying off their credits to the store, and South Sea Islander Sam Murry found work at the store. Murry and Coutts' relationship enabled Murry to make an independent income by cultivating sugar cane on Coutts' leased land. This conflicts somewhat with Graves' research and demonstrates that some South Sea Islanders in the district had the agency to resist the broader colonial structures around them.

Today, the Coutts name endures in Ayr's collective memory and physical landscape through the Coutts Commercial Hotel, Bulk Stores (now the Centrepoint Arcade) and Coutts Park. Simultaneously, Ayr and the broader region is home to a large Australian South Sea Islander community, some of whom descend from employees engaged at the Seaforth and Kalamia estates.[129] While the Coutts Store's connection to Ayr is embedded into its built and cultural landscape, its early connections to South Sea Islanders, so integral to the Lower Burdekin's historical development and economy, are largely invisible. This paper has highlighted the role Charles Coutts, Jack Dossetto and Max Irving played in the broader practice of capitalising on South Sea Islanders employed on Queensland's sugar plantations who were subject to Government legislation that controlled access to their wages. While Coutts' descendants did not play a direct role in this system, profits made from South Sea Islander workers acted as a foundation that facilitated the business's growth throughout the 20th century.

129 See Imelda Miller [et al.]: Developing A Holistic and Collaborative Approach for the Archaeology of Australian South Sea Islanders in Queensland, p. 10.

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Fig. 2: Queensland Government Savings Bank Pass book issued to the Inspector of Pacific Islanders, Maryborough as Trustee for Barrie (49). Source. Queensland State Archives, Item ID ITM844826.

Fig. 3: The Coutts General Store, circa. 1910. Burdekin Shire Council Library Services, Album 7 – 115 and State Library of Queensland, image no. bur00019.

Fig. 4: The Coutts Ltd General Store, 1918. Source. Burdekin Library, Album 12 – 546.

Fig. 5: Tropix Cinema, Queen Street, Ayr and the Coutts Bulk Store to its right. Source. Burdekin Library, Album 7 – 130.

Fig. 6.: Still from a film promoting the Burdekin Wilderness Lodge, n.d. Source. North Queensland Television Collection, Townsville City Council.

Table 1: Coutts Store sales, March 1901 to March 1902. In: Henry Braby Archives: Shelf Location W8, JCULSC.
Sources for the data: March 1901 – Max Irvine to Charles Coutts, 16 April 1901, p. 5; April 1901 – Max Irvine to Charles Coutts, 14 May 1901, p. 2; June 1901 – Max Irvine to Charles Coutts, 11 July 1901, p. 2; January 1902: Max Irvine to Charles Coutts, 23 April 1902, p. 1; February 1902 – ibid.; March 1902 – ibid.

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Drawing Southerners' Attention to the Far North

Kylie Tennant's Mission as a Public Commentator in Mid-Century Australia

Abstract: Kylie Tennant was one of Australia's most popular and influential writers in the mid-20th century. Having gained fame in the 1930s and 1940s for her eye-witness accounts of the suffering of the poor and unemployed, in the late 1950s she used her public platform to draw attention to the terrible consequences of colonialism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the far north. Her books 'Speak You So Gently' and 'All the Proud Tribesmen' sold well nationally and internationally, fulfilling her aim to promote community co-operatives as a solution. Here I position her as an activist who sought to shift Australian public opinion away from racism. I suggest that we might see her as a transitional figure between Xavier Herbert, who in the 1930s profited from colourful depictions of Aboriginal degradation, and Kath Walker/Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the celebrated Indigenous poet whose works from the 1960s evoked Aboriginal oppression and called for human rights and full citizenship.

Kylie Tennant was one of Australia's most prominent writers in the mid-20th-century decades, known especially for her socialist realist portrayals of the hardships of the working class and unemployed swagmen (as itinerant labourers were called) – occasionally referred to as Australia's John Steinbeck. Tennant is a complex figure: from a middle-class background, but accomplishing feats such as walking hundreds of kilometres from Sydney to Coonabarabran, camping out with the unemployed along the way. One journalist put it that her name became "legendary for a certain mad courage that took her into brothels, bars, and jails to get material for her novels".[1] A firm socialist (very briefly in 1935 a member of the Communist Party of Australia), she gained fame following her portrayals of the unemployed during the Depression. Her 1941 book 'The Battlers' made her, according to biographer Jane Grant, a "household name" – partly because the stoicism she captured resonated with a wartime readership.[2]

She is one of a group of ten activists and internationalists who comprise my current study of how Australian general public opinion on race was persuaded to shift in the mid-century decades. Tennant was influential as a popular writer, while radical on both class and race. Her subjects included daily life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, with vivid accounts and fictional portrayals that condemned racism and abysmal living conditions, while evoking the richness of Indigenous cultures and community life.

In this article, I locate Kylie Tennant in a lineage of evolving Australian cultural conceptions of First Nations people, and thinking about race and human rights. In the 1950s Tennant used her fame as a platform to draw attention to the living conditions of First Nations people in the north. Grant notes that Tennant hoped her books would educate the public about disadvantage, and thus shift the "climate of opinion".[3] Tennant lived in New South Wales practically her

1 The Bulletin, 29 April 1967, p. 32 (April Hersey: Back to the battling).
2 The Weekend Australian, 10 June 2006, p. 32 (Jane Grant: Life of Kylie).
3 Jane Grant: Kathleen (Kylie) Tennant (1912-1988).

whole life, mostly in Sydney – so in that sense she was an unlikely champion of the far north.

Arguably, southerners – the majority of the Australian populace – had little detailed knowledge of Australia's northern expanse prior to World War II. Awareness of the far north, especially of Aboriginal people, increased abruptly in 1938 with the publication and success of Xavier Herbert's sprawling novel 'Capricornia'.

'Capricornia' won the Commonwealth Sesqui-Centenary prize and was widely read and reviewed. Frank Ryan, writing in 'The Workers' Weekly' called it "an outstanding book":

> Xavier Herbert has written a powerful story, chock-a-block with realism, which is a grave indictment of the governing class of this country, for their infamous treatment of colored [sic] and half-caste Australia. … [O]nly last week official figures showed the rapid extermination of the aborigines [sic] in the north … But while the author's sympathy is clearly on the side of the victims of this color [sic] prejudice, he never idealises these characters, nor allows his vision to become clouded by his allegiance to their cause […] [W]hen he sees degradation he knows exactly where to point the finger of blame.[4]

The 'Sydney Morning Herald' called it "a virile novel" about the "injustice" "meted out by the conquering whites" in the Northern Territory.[5] Brisbane's 'Telegraph' considered that Herbert used "unrestrained realism" to show "life in the Gulf country as it is lived by low-caste whites and lower half-castes".[6] 'The Bulletin' judged that the book "makes clear that White Australia, in the increasing number of northern half-castes, has a home-grown color [sic] problem on its hands".[7] And 'The Australian Quarterly' deemed miscegenation to be the book's main theme; it called the book "a challenge thrown in the face of the nation".[8]

In response to, and perhaps defiance of, the huge success of 'Capricornia', one of Tennant's motives for her post-World War II writing about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples was to indict Herbert for being so "wrong" about them. As she summed it up in 'The Bulletin' in April 1962: "It is ungrateful of Mr. Xavier Herbert to abuse the aborigines [[…]] for the lust, drunkenness and misery out of which he has made his writing reputation".[9] (Of course, Alexis Wright's landmark 2006 novel 'Carpentaria' was also a later, very powerful riposte to Herbert.)

My interest in Tennant includes her transitional role in Australian cultural awareness of colonial inequalities and racism. Her writing challenged the impact of Xavier Herbert and may have helped to open the door, for example, for prominent Aboriginal poet Kath Walker/Oodgeroo Noonuccal's huge readership from the 1960s.

First in 1955 and then again in 1957 Tennant travelled to the far north of Queensland. The first trip was specifically to the Lockhart River Co-operative Mission

4 The Workers' Weekly, 17 May 1938, p. 2 (Frank Ryan: Book Reviews. 'Capricornia').
5 Sydney Morning Herald, 18 February 1938, p. 5 (Novels of the Day. The Colour Question).
6 The Telegraph [Brisbane], 10 February 1938, p. 12 (A Novel of the North).
7 The Bulletin, 30 March 1938, p. 2 (North Australian Canvas).
8 Furnley Maurice: The Literary Value of Human Agony.
9 The Bulletin, 14 April 1962, p. 26 (Kylie Tennant: How wrong is Xavier Herbert? The Case for the Aborigines).

on Cape York, and the other extended to Moa Island in the Torres Strait (Fig. 1). Both times she funded the travel there herself, through earnings from her own journalism and creative writing.[10] Both were research trips, which resulted in the

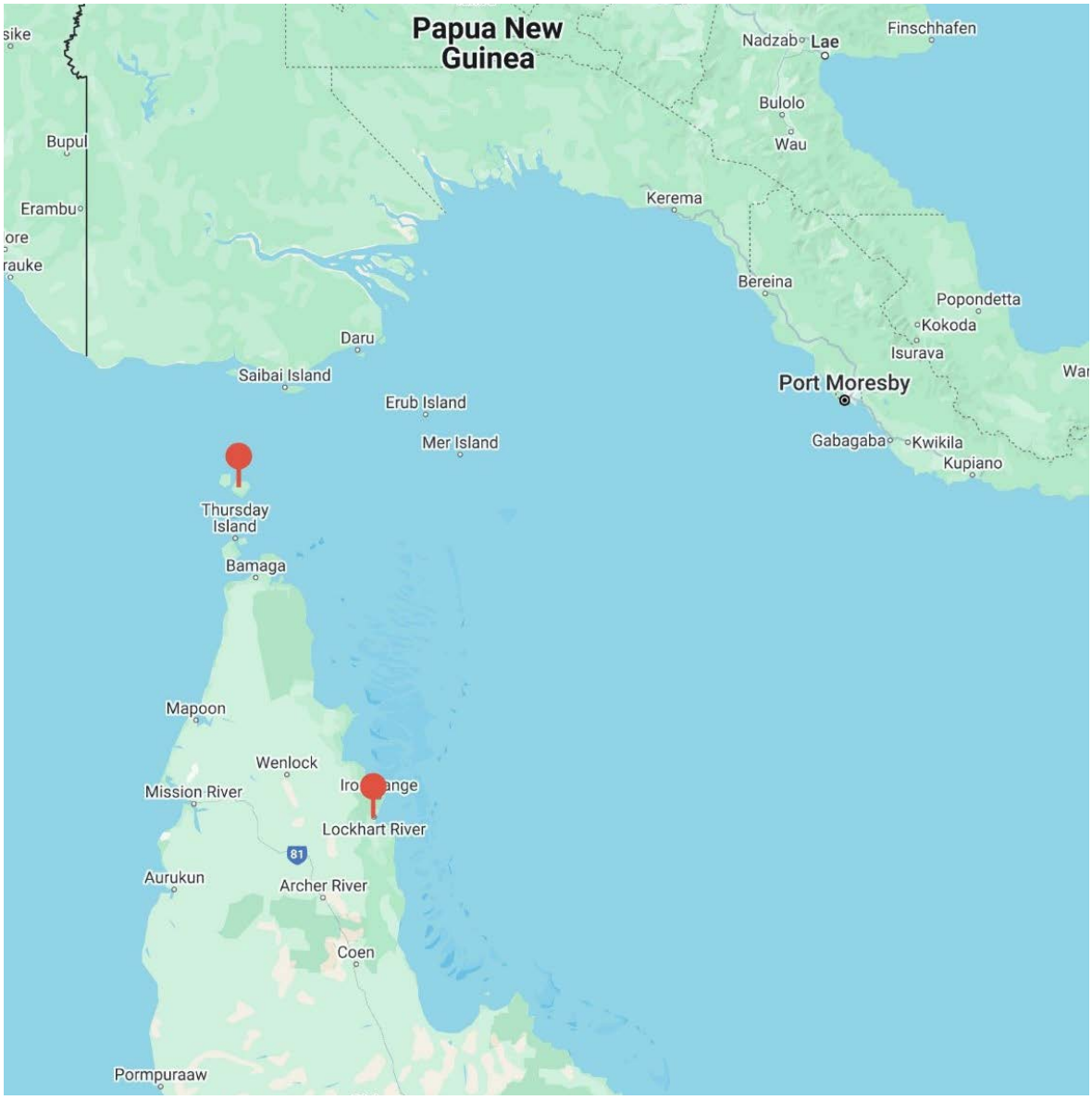

Fig. 1. Far north Queensland and its proximity to Papua New Guinea, indicating Lockhart River and Moa Island

publication of two of her most successful books: 'Speak You So Gently', published by Gollancz in 1959, and 'All the Proud Tribesmen', published by Macmillan in 1959. While Tennant had previously shown support for Indigenous rights, she had not before made them as central to her writing as they were in the late 1950s.

Tennant's motivation for these two, generically different, evocations of Indigenous life in the far north sprang from her Christian socialism. She and her schoolteacher husband, Lewis Rodd, shared an active and long-standing commitment, albeit with differing emphases: for Tennant, her emphasis was on the socialism, while Rodd's was on Christianity. Rodd was active in the High part of the Church

10 See Kylie Tennant: The Missing Heir, p. 138.

of England; Tennant converted to it for his sake.[11] As noted above, while Tennant had even joined the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) in 1935, she quickly left, alienated by the party's workings, and settled on socialism. Christian socialism was an important strand within Australian radicalism in the mid-century decades. Tennant recalled being at the foundation meeting of the Sydney branch of the Christian Socialist Movement, describing the group colourfully as a: "rabble of individualists, Quakers, old lady suffragettes, students, pacifist parsons, vegetarian cranks, crackpots and intellectuals".[12] Her jaundiced views of the CPA are clear in the pleasure with which she reported that Communist Party attempts to gain control of the movement failed.

In Tennant's account, Christian socialism in Sydney was anchored at Christ Church St Laurence (near Central Station) under the Reverend John Hope; Lewis Rodd served as a rector's warden there. Through Christ Church St. Laurence, Rodd met the Rev. Alf Clint whose determined work for social justice began with coal miners in rural New South Wales. Rodd, Clint and Tennant developed a strong friendship which they shared for decades.

Clint's first job had been with the Balmain Co-operative store. In 1930 he was involved in the shearers' strike; his whole life he was connected to the trade union movement. His early priesthood was spent among the New South Wales coalmines. After World War II, Clint went to New Guinea to proselytize about both Christianity and co-operatives.[13] According to Tennant, Clint's mission in New Guinea included combatting both endemic illness and the planters who were exploiting local labour. His program to do this was to teach the New Guinea people to form co-operatives, to work their own plantations and use their own boats to raise and sell crops of rice, copra and coconuts. Goals included tribal self-sufficiency, a higher standard of living and health, and independence from the exploitative colonizing planters. Particularly, the aim was to help the tribes to retain and claim back their own lands. After establishing his work in New Guinea, Clint was stricken with a serious skin disease, which required months of treatment first in Port Moresby and then Sydney. He was devastated when doctors told him he must not go back to Papua New Guinea.

Instead, he was appointed Director of Native Co-operatives for the Church of England's Australian Board of Missions (ABM). His remit was to found co-operatives among Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. The first was established in 1954 at Lockhart River Mission, which had been founded as an ABM mission in 1924 close to the tip of Cape York Peninsula, on the eastern side. There would soon be another at Moa Island in the Torres Strait. These Christian co-operatives represented a radical development in mission policy and the administration of Aboriginal communities; a significant shift when considered in national context. But Clint was disappointed that they attracted little media attention: just one ABC story and some commentary in small publications.[14] So he enlisted Tennant – a successful and prominent journalist as well as an award-winning novelist –

11 See Jane Grant: Kylie Tennant, p. 15.
12 Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, p. 98.
13 See Noel Loos, Robyn Keast: The Radical Promise, p. 289.
14 See Noel Loos, Robyn Keast: The Radical Promise, p. 293.

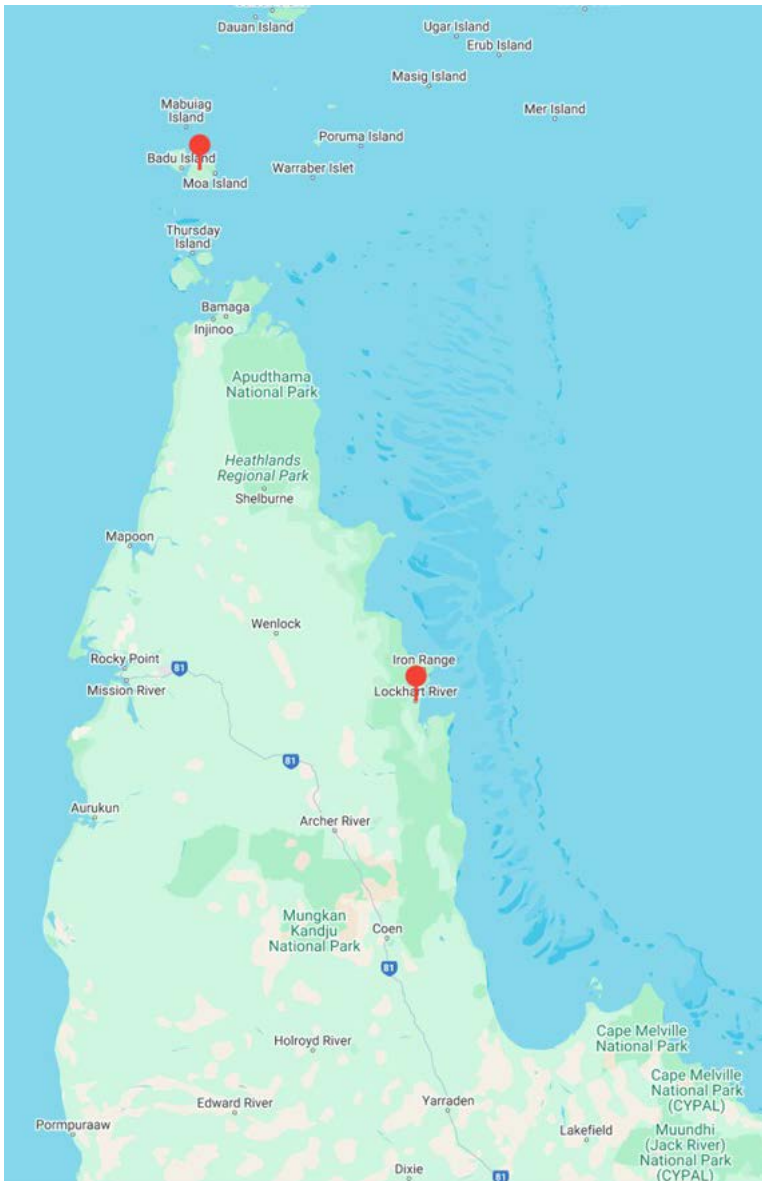

Fig. 2. Close-up of the area, including Moa Island and Lockhart River

to write their stories.[15] In effect, Tennant agreed to undertake her extended visits to Cape York in order to become the publicist for Clint and the Aboriginal co-operative movement (Fig. 2).

Tennant's earlier books had been driven by her desire to tell the stories of people's struggles for daily life and the widespread suffering in the Depression. One interviewer claimed that: "Anyone knowing nothing about Kylie Tennant could deduce when she was born by reading two or three of her novels. They are the novels of a writer who, in her own words, 'is not so much interested in emotions as in how people make a living, because I belong to the generation who couldn't get jobs'". John Hetherington contended that Tennant learned about life in the Depression years. Yet, she was not cynical but a realist. Indeed, what impressed him most about her was "her almost boundless enthusiasm, her elasticity of mind, and her surging joy of life […] her vitality is prodigious". She told him that while she'd always been interested in politics and sociology, she chose to write novels "'because back in the depression you couldn't get the truth published unless you pretended it was a lie. My writing principles are simple. Try to make it interesting, and, if you can, make it funny. While they laugh they'll think. And every writer wants to make people think'".[16]

On her project that became 'Speak You So Gently', Tennant asserted in 1956 that "Lockhart is an important place, because it has the first registered aboriginal [sic] co-operative in Australia, and the co-operative, which has been in operation for several years now, has shown just what aborigines [sic] can do when they

15 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently , pp. 9-16.
16 The Age, 24 September 1960, p. 18 (John Hetherington: Kylie Tennant. A Novelist Who Knew The 'Great Depression').

are working together as an economic unit".[17] She described the Lockhart River community as comprised of around 300 Aboriginal people, from five different First Nations whose lands met at that place, as well as eleven settlers. Today, Lockhart River is an Aboriginal community of around 640 people, of six language groups: the Kuuku Yau, Wuthathi, Kanthanumpu, Uutaalnganu, Umpila and Kaanju peoples.

Tennant's first visit in July 1955 came when the co-operative had established its trochus diving and was looking to expand its enterprises into cattle raising. She even put out a call for a man familiar with cattle to go north to help them out, casting the Aboriginal co-operative movement as "their long-delayed 'New Deal '".[18] In the late 19th and early 20th centuries First Nations people in this area had suffered terribly from dispossession, disease and malnutrition. They had been vulnerable to labour exploitation by settler fishermen and woodcutters, and the women had been sexually abused. After the ABM mission was set up in 1924 the community existed on a subsistence level, with many of the men absent while working on cattle stations and fisheries further afield. The move towards community self-sufficiency and enterprises began in 1951 with the appointment of John Warby as superintendent. He sought to embed profitable work to keep the men home, particularly through trochus shell fishing with the community's own boat; small-scale cattle raising, and even attempting to grow cotton – which worked but proved financially unviable. He instituted adult education to develop people's skills and capacity for self-management, laying down a basis for the co-operative system which Alf Clint introduced. Warby would recall how during Clint's visits in 1953 and 1954, he would explain cooperativism to the people: "we used to gather at 9 o'clock each morning before starting the day's work and hear Alf expound, illustrate and answer questions, day after day for about three months".[19] At first the co-operative made a modest profit, but the economic viability of their enterprises continued to be a challenge for various reasons.

In 1957 when Tennant returned for a second extended visit the stakes were even higher. The Presbyterian mission at Weipa on the other side of the peninsula was being moved because bauxite had been found and big corporations were grabbing the land. Lockhart River was threatened because BHP wanted to prospect there. The Aboriginal cooperative, now turning some profit, could be closed with no compensation for its Indigenous members. Tennant's public plea was impassioned:

> The only thing that can save the colored [sic] people and their cooperative movement from being swallowed up by the big monopolies is public support, a firm stand in their favor [sic] by people and Parliament. For 150 odd years the original inhabitants of this land have been killed off or driven into deserts. Their land has been taken from them and is still being taken from them. It is not just in the past, it is happening today. It is still going on. And only the people of Australia, when they know the facts, can stop it.[20]

17 Tribune (Sydney), 25 July 1956, p. 8 (Kylie Tennant: Lockhart – Not On The Map But It's An Important Place).
18 Farmer and Settler (Sydney), 26 August 1955, p. 2 (Aborigine Cattle Plan).
19 Noel Loos, Robyn Keast: The Radical Promise, p. 292.
20 Tribune, 27 November 1957, p. 5 ('Only the people can save them': Writer hits out at monopoly grab of Aborigine lands in North Queensland).

It wasn't only that the Lockhart Indigenous cooperative might not be properly compensated. The Lockhart site was traditional land for all of the tribes who comprised the community – a conjunction and connection which could not be replicated. Further, they had laboured hard for years at this point: they had painstakingly laid a pipeline, established vegetable gardens, and built houses, a school, a hospital, a kindergarten and a child centre as well as their cooperative enterprises.[21]

Stephen Davies, who was Bishop of Carpentaria from 1922 to 1948, told Tennant that the threats presented by mining to mission reserves in the far north were evident from the early 1920s – noting that some government officials then held shares in the tin mines. Davies had sought to locate the Lockhart River settlement so that it wasn't too close to tin and iron deposits, to prevent the potential exploitation of Aboriginal labour. He decided that the most secure future lay in teaching the Aborigines agriculture and encouraging commercial fishing that they could control themselves rather than do for others for nothing. He oversaw the introduction of cattle raising, and crops ranging from bananas, yams and paw-paw to cotton – the latter to sell to Japanese shell divers. Some crops worked, others did not.[22]

Reviewers of 'Speak You So Gently' grasped the significance of co-operatives' potential benefits for First Nations peoples.[23] The 'Tribune' asserted that this account of "the remarkable and little known co-operative of Aborigines known as the Lockhart River Mission" is "[o]ne of the most beautiful and powerful books recently published"; and called it "a travel book of unusual fascination".[24]

The book's success was also due in part to Tennant's vivid writing and character detail. A reviewer in the 'Manchester Evening News' commented: "until I read Mrs Kylie Tennant's bracing, sprightly and entirely engrossing 'Speak You So Gently', I had not realized that barren land [the northernmost tip of Australia] bristled with so many muscular Christians. To be a Church of England parson up there, it seems, you need to have the enthusiasm of a good Boy Scout, the physique of a professional footballer, the guile of a trade union organiser, and the cheerful dedication of St. Francis of Assisi … I salute a book and an author who reminds us that religion can still be a joyous thing".[25] For the reviewer in the 'Canberra Times', it was a book to be welcomed: "The writing is refreshing, sensitive, vivid and she makes her reader share her experiences in living among these so-called 'primitives' of Northern Australia".[26] It is possible that the book's serious purpose was a bit lost on the advertising copy writer who called it "a vivid and intensely interesting book about her 'walkabout' in Northern Australia

21 See Sydney Morning Herald, 24 October 1957, p. 25 (Native Centre in the North).
22 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, pp. 173 ff..
23 See The Birmingham Post, 8 September 1959, p. 26 (Gilbert Thomas: Round the Shelves).
24 Tribune, 28 October 1959, p. 7 (Books); Tribune, 2 December 1959, p. 6 (Outstanding Xmas Books).
25 Manchester Evening News, 5 September 1959, p. 2 (David Brett: They find their parish in the wide, open spaces).
26 Canberra Times, 19 September 1959, p. 13 (Books … Speak You So Gently).

and Cape York Peninsula".[27] Nor would she have appreciated the 'Birmingham Post''s comment on her "charming pen-pictures of a simple and lovable people".[28]

More insightful was the reviewer for 'The Observer', who said the book had "wit, tenderness and a fierce and engaging irony":

> Miss Tennant describes these warm, haunted communities, their pioneering struggles to put down roots [Lockhart was a merged community of five distinct language groups], the fearless and selfless white men and women who live among them, sharing their feasts and festivals, their dancing, and spearthrowing and trochus-diving [the trochus mollusc was harvested and sold], and who fight their battles for recognition.[29]

The 'Guardian's' review captured Tennant's surprising stoicism and constant enjoyment of the physical and cultural novelties she encounters. Isabel Quigly noted: "Irony, indignation, amusement, an unfastidious acceptance of people – all these, with her very great charm, make up this very personal account of her work and journeys, with its sidelong looks at Australia's present policies and its backward looks at the long disgrace, in relation to the aborigines [sic], of its past".[30]

'All the Proud Tribesmen', aimed at adolescents, won the Australian Children's Book Council 1960 Book of the Year Award. [An interesting footnote here is that the judge for the award was feminist writer and critic Nettie Palmer.] Tennant would later say that 'All the Proud Tribesmen' was her best-selling book, which is notable because earlier books had sold widely and won prizes. And she had this to say about *why* she wrote it: "I can con myself that I wrote 'All the Proud Tribesmen' because Macmillan's wanted a children's book but I know damned well I wrote it because at Lockhart River the aborigines [sic] had no books to read that were not about The Little White Boy and I was determined there was going to be a book about A Little Brown Boy".[31]

The novel was based on her 1957 trip to the Torres Strait during which she visited Thursday Island, the Strait's commercial entrepot which she described as dispiriting and seedy, and Moa Island which she enjoyed. Tennant's eleven-year-old daughter Benison accompanied her.

The 'Little Brown Boy' character Kerri was an adolescent Islander who had been given by the village as an infant to schoolteacher Miss Buchanan, who adopted him and mentored him educationally with a view towards his succeeding her as teacher. Tennant based Buchanan on a historical missionary who had gathered together a mixed group of Pacific Islanders, deported from Queensland after the prohibition of Islander labourers under both Queensland and Commonwealth legislation, and founded a community at Moa Island.[32] The character of Miss Buchanan – transparently one of the story's heroes – was also shaped by practical and stoic women missionaries whom Tennant encountered at both Moa

27 The Age, 5 September 1959, p. 20 (At Angus & Robertson Ltd.: Speak You So Gently).
28 The Birmingham Post, 8 September 1959, p. 26 (Gilbert Thomas: Round the Shelves).
29 The Observer (London), 6 September 1959, p. 25 (Alan Ross: Back to the Outback" [review of Speak You So Gently]).
30 The Guardian, 25 September 1959, p. 6 (Isabel Quigly: Shadow in the Mind of Australia).
31 Untitled typescript article, Box 23, Series 3, File 27, Papers of Kylie Tennant: MS 10043, National Library of Australia.
32 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, p. 148.

Island and Lockhart River: women whose efforts to improve the locals' health, nutrition, literacy and general living standards, in Tennant's estimation, weighed more in the moral balance than their religious evangelising.

The book was so successful that, in 1961 when Gollancz published a collection of stories for adolescents by authors from fifteen countries, Tennant wrote the Australian one with a story from Cape York Peninsula called "Such a Long Way Home".[33]

At the time of its release, the book was reviewed positively around the globe. A reviewer for the 'Chicago Tribune' called it "a thrilling and genuinely moving tale" by "a well known Australian novelist" in "her first book for children".[34] A brief notice in London's 'The Observer' praised Tennant as "one of the best" Australian novelists, and the book's story as "gripping and moving".[35] One press notice of its winning the Children's Book of the Year Award commended Tennant as a "distinguished and distinctive author", describing the book as "a gripping story for 12 to 14 year olds that has as well a serious theme: the impact of our culture upon those of neighbouring islands".[36]

Some press coverage of the book was evidently written by people who had not read it, such as the journalist for 'The Age' who called its imaginary Torres Strait community "fun-loving islanders" – and also confused Tennant's daughter as a son.[37] A Canadian newspaper suggested that the story's location was somewhere between New Zealand and Australia.[38]

As late as 1982, when the 'Sydney Morning Herald' ran a column during "Book Week" asking four children from different suburbs, ostensibly dissatisfied with that year's Children's Book award winners, to choose a favourite older book, Shawn Whelan from Rozelle declared that 'All the Proud Tribesmen':

> [W]ell deserves a medal now […] [T]he book is now out of print. I think it should be readily available for school students to read […] I seriously think that publishers should consider reprinting this book so that today's generation of youngsters can enjoy it the way I have.[39]

More recently, 'All the Proud Tribesmen' has been criticised for its positive portrayal of some of the white settler characters and the deference of the islanders towards them. In 1998 it was condemned because the story showed "'the childlike faith of the local people in [school-teacher] Miss Buchanan and white officialdom'".[40] This criticism is sound, but overlooks the fact that the adolescent Islander boy Kerri is the hero of the story, who takes charge of events towards the end, and who was mentored – culturally and in diving – by a clan elder and other

33 Sydney Morning Herald, 25 February 1961, p. 20 (Kathleen M. Commins: Books for Children).
34 Chicago Tribune Sunday, 11 September 1960, p. 182 (Polly Goodwin: The Junior Bookshelf).
35 The Observer (London), 29 November 1959, p. 39 (Marghanita Laski: Novels for the Teens).
36 The Age, 9 July 1960, p. 52 (Talking of Books).
37 The Age, 9 July 1960, p. 7 (Woman Writer Winner of Book Award).
38 See The Leader-Post (Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada), 27 August 1960, p. 11 (Charles Paul May: Books can be linked with school activity).
39 Sydney Morning Herald, 24 July 1982, p. 39 (Older books are not forgotten).
40 The Age, 9 August 1998, p. 14 (Jane Sullivan: Childhood's naïve racism revisited). Sullivan quotes the criticism from 'The Oxford Companion to Australian Children's Literature'.

senior men. Tennant's term "Proud Tribesmen" reflected her intention to show this passing on of cultural traditions.

Dale and Lynne Spender, in their obituary of Tennant for the 'Sydney Morning Herald', saw her as linking an older generation of writers and a younger. In the 1930s she was published alongside Flora Eldershaw, Marjorie Barnard, Dymphna Cusack, Eleanor Dark and Miles Franklin. The Spender sisters saw Tennant as the start of a new generation, noting that "her commitment to Aboriginal rights was characteristic and enduring".[41] Within two years of her death, Tennant was published in an anthology of women writers supposedly representative of the mid-century decades; several others – Katharine Susannah Prichard, Judith Wright and Dorothy Hewett – were also outspoken on Indigenous matters.[42]

The mid-century movement for Aboriginal co-operatives fits into the longer history of co-operatives in Australia. Research by Greg Patmore, Nikola Balnave and Olivera Marjanovic tells us that co-operatives began in Australia in the 1820s, with waves of interest in them from 1882 to 1894, 1916 to 1924, 1943 to 1950 and 1953 to 1972. Their high point was in 1981, after which they declined.[43] Balnave and Patmore suggest that "consumer co-ops tended to be established at the back-end of an economic slump, or when prices and the cost of living were increasing" and "there was disillusionment with the prevailing economic system".[44] Indigenous co-operatives have sprung up in Australia in two waves, the first being that partly instigated by Alf Clint in the 1950s and of which Lockhart River and Moa Island formed key components, and all of which faced the big challenge of "the economic sustainability of remote communities". Another prominent instance in the 1950s was the Aboriginal mining cooperative formed at Pilbara in Western Australia following the strike there in the late 1940s.[45] That the Aboriginal co-operative movement was growing in the mid-1950s is evident too from Tennant's mention of one started in Armidale, NSW, by a Roman Catholic priest around 1957.[46] The second and more successful wave came in the wake of the 1967 Referendum and the Commonwealth government funding which flowed from it. In this wave, Indigenous co-operatives hit a peak of 49 in 1975, at least 30 of which were in Queensland.[47]

One difference between the Moa Island co-operative and Lockhart River was the former's longer roots. Tennant attributes its origin to the London Missionary Society's arrival in the Torres Strait in 1867 and its subsequent promotion of basic co-operative production systems: in boat-building and in establishing coconut plantations for copra. The Society maintained its missions in the Strait until World War I, which disrupted its finances. Their missions were taken over by the

41 Sydney Morning Herald, 1 March 1988, p. 14 (Dale Spender, Lynne Spender: An outsider who will be missed).
42 See The Canberra Times, 17 February 1990, p. 22 (Marian Eldridge: Restless years for women storytellers).
43 See Greg Patmore, Nikola Balnave, Olivera Marjanovic: Worker co-operatives in Australia 1833-2024, p. 7.
44 Nikola Balnave, Greg Patmore: Rochdale consumer co-operatives in Australia, p. 999.
45 See Anne Scrimgeour: To Make It Brilliantly Apparent to the People of Australia, pp. 16-31.
46 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, pp. 105 f.
47 See Greg Patmore, Nikola Balnave, Olivera Marjanovic: A History of Australian Co-Operatives 1827-2023, pp. 159 f.

Department of Native Affairs, and the Church of England with its High Church rituals, under the Bishop of Carpentaria.

The 1950s advocacy of co-operatives for Aboriginal communities was caught between the policies of assimilation and its successor, that of self-determination. When Tennant returned to Sydney from her 1957 trip, she met with the chair of the Australian Board of Missions to raise her concerns about the mining prospectors at Lockhart. When she put it to him that the reserves had been given to First Nations people as land for them to live on, he contradicted her. Queensland's 1897 Act which set up those reserves, he said, had been based on the government's assumption that Indigenous people would die out. But they did not. In the late 1950s in Queensland around 9 000 Indigenous people lived across four government-run settlements and twelve missions; part of a total Indigenous population of over 43 000 in the state. The government had finally accepted that Indigenous people were not dying out, but they were not willing to let them live on land now found to have economic value. His view was that missions would be superseded, and ought to be turned into co-operatives. Co-operatives could provide Indigenous people with skills and training to help them assimilate.[48]

The historian who has produced the most work on the Aboriginal co-operatives is Noel Loos. In an article published in 1992, Loos and co-author Robyn Keast provide an assessment of the whole movement, focussing their research on Lockhart River. Loos and Keast see the cooperative movement of the postwar decades as an interim stage in the running of Aboriginal reserves: a transition point between church-run missions and government-administered communities. In the 1950s governments around Australia adopted assimilation as the broad policy towards Aborigines. Its main architect, Professor A. P. Elkin, was himself an ordained Anglican priest.[49] While the Christian co-operatives on Aboriginal reserves did not last long, Loos and Keast assess it as a mixed success. While it was founded on the "naïve" belief that cooperativism fitted well with traditional Indigenous communal life, they see it as "a radical attempt to effect an assimilation based on white working-class idealism".[50]

But the challenges for Lockhart River proved overwhelming. The market for trochus shell collapsed because buttons became made of plastic; even though their land contained minerals of commercial value, the community did not have land rights to mine it. Men again left to find work elsewhere. The cooperative was reduced to just a store, and was wound up in 1963. Problems included government and Church hierarchy hostility to Clint, whom they painted as a Communist. A Queensland government minister who visited Lockhart River even compared it to a "Russian collective farm".[51] As part of the ABM closing down its co-operatives program, in 1962 the Lockhart River community was moved to a different location within the reserve, closer to a wharf and the aerodrome.[52] In 1967 the Queensland government assumed responsibility for the Lockhart com-

48 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, pp. 172 f..
49 See Noel Loos: From Church to State, p. 77.
50 Noel Loos, Robyn Keast: The Radical Promise, p. 287.
51 Noel Loos: White Christ, Black Cross, p. 123.
52 See Noel Loos: From Church to State, p. 80.

munity. By the 1990s, an Aboriginal Community Council was in charge. Traditional ceremonies were still performed but attenuated; alcoholism was prevalent and life-expectancy still short; and Christianity continued in a somewhat reduced form with a priest from the Solomon Islands. The old mission site from before 1962 still retained cultural significance.[53]

Loos and Keast view the demise of the co-operative communities as perhaps inevitable considering the Church of England's unwillingness to fund them realistically for such development, combined with the lack of Aboriginal land rights that would allow them to decide their own futures or to borrow sufficient funds to establish sustainable enterprises. Yet there were lasting benefits. Queensland government administration with greater funding helped to improve aspects of the standard of living. And the Commonwealth government adopted parts of the co-operative movement as the basis for assisting Indigenous communities to implement self-determination. In Loos and Keast's assessment, the wonderful outcome was the establishment of Tranby Aboriginal Co-operative College in Sydney, by Alf Clint when he was director of the ABM's Co-operative Department.

On Tennant and Clint's 1957 visit to Moa Island, Alf Clint gave a lecture in the village of Kuban on co-operatives, with the local school-teacher assisting with translation. Clint explained co-operatives could be used for different economic purposes: gardening, fishing, trochus and pearl diving, building houses, and mining. He explained the origin of co-operatives at Rochdale in England, and urged that a co-operative system needed to be built slowly and democratically. His vision included the islanders becoming sufficiently independent that men would no longer have to sign up for work on pearling and shell boats that took them away from home for long periods.[54] After Moa, stopping at Badu island, Clint also lectured to the community on co-operatives, casting them as a practical way of practising Christianity by taking care of others. He sought to recruit young men to come to Sydney to attend Tranby, the college in Glebe he himself had established and which was run by the co-operative section of the Australian Board of Missions to train Aborigines for management and administrative roles not least in co-operatives.[55]

Tranby is located in "a charming old house" that had been bequeathed to Rector John Hope of Christ Church St. Laurence, who had used it as a hostel, then gave it to Clint for the co-operative section.[56] Tranby has trained many Aboriginal people with skills that empower them individually and also their communities. Loos and Keast's summary view of Lockhart River and Moa Island is that: "The surprising thing is not that the Anglican cooperative movement failed but that it was introduced at all in Queensland in the 1950s and that Tranby still exists as an instrument for the Aboriginal and Islander empowerment that the Christian Co-operative Movement hoped to achieve".[57]

53 See David Thompson: Bora, Church and Modernization at Lockhart River, Queensland, pp. 275 f.
54 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, pp. 183 ff., 189-192.
55 See ibid., p. 218.
56 Ibid., p. 99.
57 Noel Loos, Robyn Keast: The Radical Promise, p. 301.

Tennant's support for Indigenous education and self-determination, subsequent to the two 1959 books, included fund-raising for Tranby.[58] In 1980 Tranby shifted to Aboriginal control when Kevin Cook, a Wandandian-Yuin man from the south coast of New South Wales, took over as general secretary from Alf Clint, who had first recruited him through their mutual trade union connections. From the mid-1960s, Tranby recruited Indigenous students from around Australia, the Torres Strait, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands. Clint even assisted a couple of Tranby students, including Cook, to enroll at Coady International Co-operative Institute in Canada.[59] In the 1970s and 1980s, those involved in Indigenous co-operatives included Eddie Mabo, who in 1971 was the initial secretary of Meriam Co-operative Trading on Murray Island in the Torres Strait and in the late 1980s director of the ABIS Community Cooperative Society in Townsville.[60]

If the Aboriginal co-operatives of the 1950s arose in the context of the policy of assimilation, and the transition from Church-run missions to government-administered communities, we need also to consider the significance of the impact of World War II. Xavier Herbert's blockbuster novel 'Capricornia' had been published just on the eve of war. When Tennant was writing in the late 1950s, the war had left its legacies. The Pacific theatre of the war, the presence of Australia's own forces in Queensland and the Northern Territory, and the large numbers of American troops stationed there all helped to draw southerners' attention to the north. Even though the extent of the Japanese bombing of Australia's north was largely concealed from the metropolitan public, Australians paid much more attention to the region than before the war. Aside from newspaper and radio reports, some Australians learnt details of the war zone from family members stationed there.

Historians who have studied the impact of the war on race relations in Australia mostly agree that, while it was a dynamic period, the institutional structures of White Australia were left largely intact. Of course there were changes. Karen Hughes has pointed to the mobility and opportunities the war allowed Indigenous women.[61] Scott Sheffield and Noah Riseman contend that the war accelerated the urbanisation of Aborigines, and provided greater economic opportunities; Aboriginal people who had been working on cattle stations under abysmal labour conditions found new jobs at the military installations in the Northern Territory and the myriad services they required.[62] The large numbers of African Americans among the US service personnel in Australia attracted both interest and controversy. Settler Australians gave them a mixed reception, while Indigenous Australians were often welcoming. Sean Brawley and Chris Dixon

58 See Sydney Morning Herald, 18 September 1965, p. 8 (Festival aids aborigines).
59 See Kevin Cook, Heather Goodall: Making Change Happen, Chapter 4: 'Tranby, co-operatives and empowerment'; Heather Goodall, Heidi Norman, Belinda Russon: Proper deadly, p. 2.
60 See Greg Patmore, Nikola Balnave, Olivera Marjanovic: A History of Australian Co-Operatives, p. 160; Noel Loos: Edward Koiki (Eddie) Mabo.
61 See Karen Hughes: Mobilising across colour lines, pp. 47-70.
62 See R. Scott Sheffield, Noah Riseman: Indigenous Peoples and the Second World War, pp. 162-190.

suggest that African Americans reported being treated with less discrimination in Australia than at home.[63] Yet they had to contend with systems of segregation imposed by both the US military command and Australian Commonwealth and Queensland governments. The war, several scholars suggest, sparked debates about race and racism, pointing to the potential for changes in the postwar period.[64] But in 1945 Australia was still White with systems of racial subordination still in place.

In the 1950s organisations ranging from trade unions to church groups, Christian socialists, Communists, feminists and others became active on questions of human rights and racial inequalities, despite the Cold War chill. In that context, some bold and motivated individuals spoke out. Kylie Tennant not only raised her voice but found a wide readership.

It is reasonable to think that Tennant intended her chosen epigraph for 'Speak You So Gently' to encapsulate her core message. She quotes Orlando in Shakespeare's play 'As You Like It', Act 2, Scene 7, a full stanza including the lines:

> Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you:
> I thought that all things had been savage here;
> And therefore put I on the countenance
> Of stern commandment…
> Let gentleness my strong enforcement be:
> In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.[65]

Certainly the book calls for the Australian nation to make reparations for the violence and oppression suffered by First Nations peoples. Tennant suggested that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community co-operatives were a plausible way forward. But they needed governmental and financial support; without such support they were vulnerable to mining companies and others' voracious interest in their land. In pointing to these needs, she presaged the cooperatives' mostly short life spans.

Far from being a lone voice drawing attention to Indigenous issues, interestingly, Tennant believed that in the mid- to late 1950s interest in Aborigines coalesced in radical Australia:

> I knew that at Lockhart was tied a knot that brought together all the strands of my lifetime, people I had not seen for twenty years were rising up out of distant places and joining, converging …. beginning to ask questions about what was happening to the aborigines [sic]. People who had pressed for legislation to protect children and animals, people who had queer, crank "questions" they wanted settled, suddenly decided that the aborigines [sic], the most despised of the population of Australia, were a symbol for them. I just happened to be part of a blind, many-motived consciousness that was aware at this particular time of what was called The Aboriginal Problem.[66]

Late in life Tennant explained to an interviewer that she had been "pretty far to the left" because "I just didn't like the society in which I found myself and thought it should be altered"; "I intended to make ordinary people understand factors in

63 See Sean Brawley, Chris Dixon: Jim Crow Downunder, pp. 607-632.
64 See Kay Saunders: Inequalities of Sacrifice, p. 145; Sean Brawley, Chris Dixon: Jim Crow Downunder, pp. 630 f.
65 See Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, p. 5.
66 Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, p. 102.

their society that they might otherwise ignore because they didn't know about them".[67] In the mid-1950s she thought that southern Australians were ignoring the disastrous effects colonialism had had on First Nations people in the north; and she wanted to bring them to metropolitan attention – as she had done in the 1930s and early 1940s with the unemployed and the very poor.

She noted too that her books were readily published in England and America. At a time when one international reviewer, at least, could refer to "Australia's Stone Age men",[68] Tennant's national and international literary fame gave her a platform from which to describe First Nations people's historic oppression and their desperate living conditions, and to promote a movement for their economic self-sufficiency. It was a movement which not only looked to governments for support but one which, at least temporarily, depended on the labour of missionaries – albeit in Tennant's rendition missionaries whose religious evangelism was yoked to their work for health, housing, education and cultural retention. She insisted that she was sceptical of religious evangelism: "I was not going to convert or improve or try to change aboriginal [sic] people. Nor did I care very much for some of the Christian doctrines they were taught, such as the power of sin".[69]

She was, however, very concerned about the ubiquity and power of racism, which she saw as subconsciously driven: "The emotional fear and hatred of dark people goes deep in the subconscious of white people. With white races it is significant that Satan is pictured as a black man".[70] Tennant's determination to show all of her characters – Indigenous and settler – as individuals with personalities was undergirded by her constant awareness of racism, not least on the part of some government officials and mining company prospectors. The gentleness, warmth, humour, intelligence and individuality that she evokes in portraying the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people among whom she stayed were integral to her books' appeal, and at once presented a stark contrast from the reductive depictions of Aborigines in earlier works such as Xavier Herbert's 'Capricornia'.

Perhaps we can see Tennant's impact in changing literary appreciation. By the 1980s, Oodgeroo Noonuccal – from Minjerribah in southeast Queensland – was a national and international Indigenous leader. Known first as Kath Walker, she became a prominent activist and published poet in the 1960s. One of her most powerful poems, written in 1962 – only three years after Tennant's books were published – is titled "Aboriginal Charter of Rights". Its lines include

> We want hope, not racialism,
> Brotherhood, not ostracism,
> Black advance, not white ascendance;
> Make us equal, not dependants…
> Give us welcome, not aversion,
> Give us choice and not coercion,
> Status, not discrimination,

67 s.n.: Undergrowth to orchard, p. 148.
68 The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post, 18 September 1959, p. 14 (Campbell Dixon: Australia's Never-Never).
69 Kylie Tennant: Speak You So Gently, p. 102.
70 Ibid., p. 101.

Human rights, not segregation…[71]

Walker's first collection of poetry 'We Are Going' was published in 1964, and by the late 1960s she won several national awards. According to one biographer, her poetry sold second only to the iconic early 20th-century verse-writer C.J. Dennis.[72] Without suggesting any direct causal link, perhaps there is an instructive evolution here of nationally prominent writers: from Herbert's writing which Tennant saw as abusive and exploitative of Aborigines; to Tennant's own 1950s empathetic, informative and engaging stories; to Walker/Noonuccal's 1960s and later searing testimonies.

References

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1: Far north Queensland and its proximity to Papua New Guinea, indicating Lockhart River and Moa Island. Map by Emily Gallagher.
Fig. 2: Close-up of the area including Moa Island and Lockhart River. Map by Emily Gallagher.

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71 Kath Walker: Aboriginal Charter of Rights, poem presented to the 5th Annual General Meeting of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement.
72 See Sue Abbey: Oodgeroo Noonuccal (1920-1993).

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Lyndon Megarrity, historian and author, is an adjunct lecturer at the College of Arts, Society and Education, James Cook University. He has published widely on Queensland political history, overseas student policy and Northern Australia. He won the 2019 Chief Minister's Northern Territory History Book Award for his book 'Northern Dreams. The Politics of Northern Development in Australia'. His latest book is 'Rex Patterson. A Voice for the North' (2024).

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Rebecca Fleming is a senior advisor in curatorial and collection research at the National Library of Australia. She is an experienced social historian and documentary screenwriter with expertise in women's history and Australian military history.

Celie Forbes explores how the Visual Arts in Queensland was shaped by the contribution made by artists, patrons, directors and cultural organisations. Celie was awarded her PhD at James Cook University in 2024, with her thesis 'In Defence of the North: The Narrative of Place and the Art of Becoming – Northern Queensland 1971 to 1981'. Celie has a background in the arts. Her family has a rich history as artists working in Queensland. Her father Clem Forbes (1938-1997) was a professional artist and her mother Dorothy Forbes (b. 1934) established the Bakehouse Art Gallery (Mackay) with Clem Forbes in 1972. Celie completed post-graduate studies in arts administration and subsequently had a role as administrator for the Brisbane Artist Run Space and Performance Art Group, Omniscient Gallery (established 1990). Her current work as researcher and curator includes the 2027 exhibition at Artspace Mackay 'Mid-Century Modernism in Mackay – The Bakehouse Art Gallery, 1972-1979' (with Professor Stephen Naylor).

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John Shied is a retired school teacher and historian. He is the co-author with Kathleen McLachlan of 'A Happy Corner. The Story of the Ubobo Soldiers' Settlement in the Boyne Valley', published by the Boyne Valley Historical Society in 2022. He has also published articles for 'Honest History' on the Soldier Settlement Scheme.

Margaret Strelow has spent 25 years in public life in Central Queensland, including serving as mayor of Rockhampton. She has also been on a number of government boards including the Queensland State Library Board, Queensland Heritage Council, and the Urban Land Development Authority. She has a background in education and is currently a Masters by Research candidate at Central Queensland University.

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Angela Woollacott is Distinguished Professor Emerita in the School of History at the Australian National University. This research has been supported by an Australian Research Council Discovery grant for her project 'Challenging colonialism' about ten influential Australian activists, writers and leaders who sought to dismantle White Australia and to promote human rights and racial equality. Woollacott is an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia, the Australian Academy of the

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