

**LEIGH CREEK COAL MINE LOOKOUT
ADDRESS**

Discussion of Heritage Significance

The nomination is specifically for the Leigh Creek Coal Mine Lookout located in Lobe B of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine, approximately 12km north of the Leigh Creek township. The lookout is located adjacent to one of the coal seams that was mined using the open cut method. A Bycus Eyre 9W walking excavator and Titan truck both used in the operation of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine are associated with the Lookout.

Heritage Significance of Leigh Creek Coal Mine Lookout

The potential significance of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine Lookout are considered under each criteria in turn:

(a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history

The Lookout is not representative of the Playford era as it was not created until the 1980s. The Playford era ended in 1968. Yulu's coal is an important part of the Adnyamathanha people's Creation Ancestor stories. However, the *Heritage Places Act 1993* only makes provision for places and objects of non-Aboriginal significance and cannot be considered.

(b) It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance

No evidence is provided to back the assertion that the site contains mining equipment that exists nowhere else. However, even if that is the case, the *Heritage Places Act 1993* s16(2)(c) states that an object is of heritage significance if 'it is intrinsically related to the heritage significance of a State Heritage Place or a State Heritage Area'. Currently, there are no Places or Areas listed in the State Heritage Register to which the potential heritage significance of the 9W Dragline walking excavator and the Titan truck can be attached nor does the Lookout meet any of the criteria.

(c) It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history, including its natural history

The lookout is not essential to the story of coal in South Australia as the story is told through a variety of other sources including period publications, images, historical research, maps,

plans, oral histories and a range of documents held at State Records South Australia and the State Library of South Australia.

(d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of place of cultural significance

That the Lookout is unique and spectacular is a matter of opinion, no evidence is provided to validate that claim or to support that it is a notable example of a lookout. Four Lookouts with State Heritage significance have been listed in the State Heritage Register including:

- 14736 Ironstone Hill & Alex's Lookout Kangaroo Island
- 14092 Freeman Lookout Port Elliot
- 10355 Freeman Lookout Port Elliot
- 16069 Scenic Lookout Loxton

In each case these lookouts have been listed because they meet other criteria and not because they are outstanding examples of a lookout.

(e) It demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics

The Lookout is not a tribute to the engineering of the day nor does it illustrate the vision of the 'coal visionaries' as it was created in the 1980s and was not a part of coal mine engineering or the coal vision. It is a piece of levelled ground that does not in any way demonstrate a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment, neither is it an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics.

(f) It has a strong cultural or spiritual associations for the community or a group within it

The association to the residents, past and present, of Leigh Creek and the Adnyamathanha people is made with regard to the objects located at the Lookout and not with the Lookout itself. As with criteria (b) the *Heritage Places Act 1993* s16(2)(c) states that an object is of heritage significance if 'it is intrinsically related to the heritage significance of a State Heritage Place or a State Heritage Area'. Currently, there are no Places or Areas listed in the State Heritage Register to which the potential heritage significance of the 9W Dragline walking excavator or Titan truck can be attached.

(g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance

There was no evidence provided or identified to support the claim that the Lookout has strong associations with the workers of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine or the tourists who have visited it.

In addition the Lookout is not associated with the life or work of a person, organisation or event of historical importance.

Historical background for the Leigh Creek Coalfield

Brown coal was first discovered at Leigh Creek in 1888 but high transportation costs meant that mining of the site, at that time, was unviable. Strikes by coal miners in NSW and shipping shortages during World War Two led to unstable supplies of black coal from NSW and resulted in the development of the Leigh Creek mine from 1943; the first coal was produced in February 1944. The brown coal mined at Leigh Creek was used to fuel the new Port Augusta power station (opened 1954) and upgraded boilers in the existing Osborn Power Station offering industry a secure source of electricity. South Australia's ability to provide secure electricity supplies was critical to the success of Premier Playford's industrialisation strategy for South Australia in the post-World War Two decades.

The original Leigh Creek township was a planned community located close to the mine in Lobe B and was developed from 1946. However, when an extensive coal seam was discovered under the town it was relocated to the present site in the early 1980s and the area was mined. The buildings in the original township were sold and relocated to various unspecified sites.

The Leigh Creek Coal Mine Lookout was created in the 1980s and the Bucyrus Erie & Co 9W Dragline walking excavator and Titan Truck were relocated to the Lookout in 1982. The 490-ton Bucyrus Erie & Co 9W Dragline walking excavator arrived in South Australia from South Milwaukee, USA 29 May 1950 in 232 packages and was assembled on site. The excavator played a significant role in the open cut mine and was heralded as the means to reduce the 'overburden' being experienced on the coalfield (Lobe B) in 1950. It is unclear at this stage how long the excavator was used for. The excavator is viewed by the Friends of the Flinders Communities as a means of drawing tourists to Leigh Creek. Alinta energy closed the Leigh Creek Mine in November 2015 and subsequently, Flinders Power sold the excavator - for scrap metal. However, it has yet to be removed from the lookout.

The Government of South Australia's *Leigh Creek Futures* report outlines possible uses for the Leigh Creek Coal Mine in the future. The Report acknowledges that the mine is a tourist draw but maintains that outback tourism is seasonable in nature making it less important than other strategies. The primary future strategies for the mine is for it to operate as an extractive and industrial site. Minerals rather than coal would be mined and a variety of industrial uses are also being considered in collaboration with private industry.

Previous Assessments of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine

No part of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine or township have been registered as a State Heritage Place.

Lobes C & D of the Leigh Creek Coal Mine were identified by Austral Archaeology and Donovan & Associates in the 1995 Flinders Ranges Heritage Survey as meeting criteria (a), (e) and (g) for listing as a State Heritage Place. Lobe B where the Lookout is located was not.

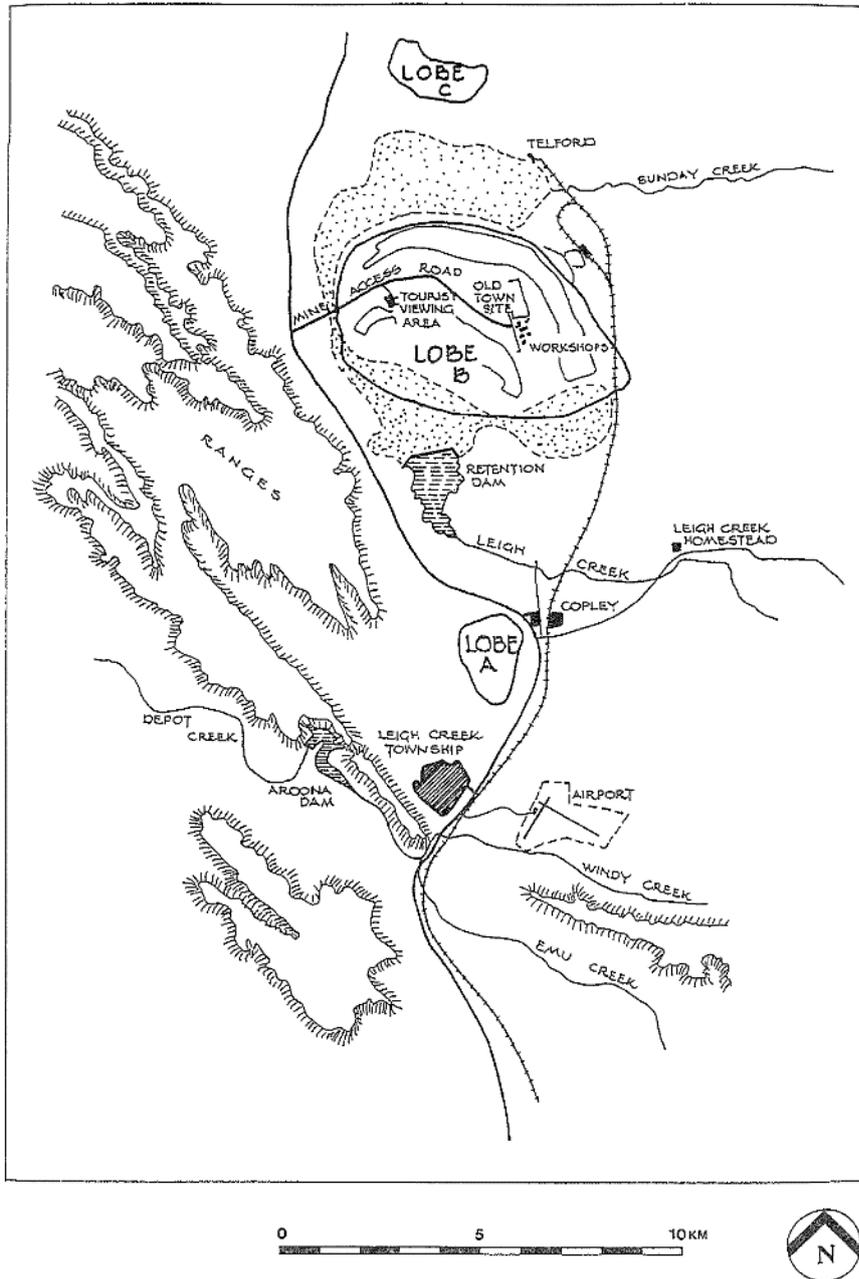
Meeting Date: 01 March 2017

Prepared by: STATE HERITAGE UNIT

IMAGES

A 360 degree view taken within the lookout can be found at this link.

http://www.panoramicearth.com/3359/Leigh_Creek/Leigh_Creek_Open_Cut_Coal_Mine



FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY LEIGH CREEK MINE

Location of the Lookout – Lobe B Tourist Viewing Area.

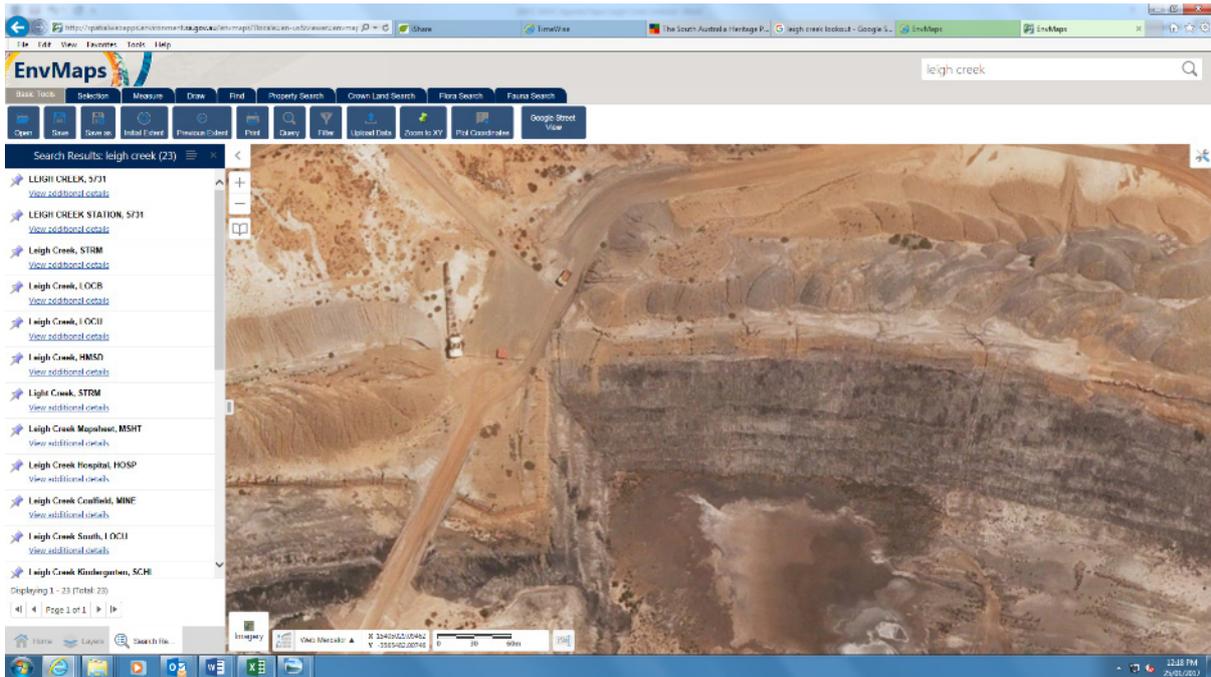
(Source: Austral Archaeology, Flinders Ranges Heritage Survey, vol.8)

Meeting Date:

01 March 2017

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Satellite Image of the Lookout and adjacent mine.

(Source: Envmaps)



9W Dragline walking excavator.

(Source: Flickr)

Meeting Date:

01 March 2017

Prepared by:

STATE HERITAGE UNIT



9W Dragline walking excavator.

(Source: Flickr)

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FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

Leigh Creek Coal Mine — Lobes C and D

UNM-RSR-02

LOCATION

Pastoral Station	NUA — Old Leigh Creek
Owner(s)	Electricity Trust of South Australia
Local Government Area	Unincorporated

State Heritage Status	Nil
Other Assessments	Nil

Film/Neg Number	13/21, 22
Photographer	P.F. Donovan



FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

Leigh Creek — Lobes C and D

DESCRIPTION

Lobes C and D are no longer used, most of the coal having been extracted from these basins. The Electricity Trust of South Australia describes the general geology of the area as:

The Leigh Creek hard brown coal deposits are Triassic (200-240 million years old) being the remnants of deposits laid down on a Pre-Cambrian basement. They occur in four isolated basins or lobes over a distance of 20 km.

The coal occurs in saucer shaped deposits underlying a flat plain between two arms of the ranges and lies between conforming carbonaceous mudstones which vary from light to dark grey in colour. The later surface deposits of clays, gravels, sands, sandstones, conglomerates and calcareous sediments mask the underlying Triassic measures throughout the coal bearing area.

However, Lobes C and D were more specifically described by the Electricity Trust of South Australia at the time:

The two basins at the North Field, known as Lobe C and Lobe D, are joined by a narrow neck. Lobe D contains two seams of coal separated by about 20 feet thick and the lower, 35 feet thick. The top seam is only 140 feet from the surface at its deepest point and the whole of the coal at the North Field, some 29 million tons, can be won by open-cut methods.

HISTORY

Of all the mines in South Australia, the Electricity Trust of South Australia owned coal fields of Leigh Creek have endured to be the State's most valuable apart from the more recent Olympic Dam. Although the Moonta and Wallaroo Copper mines lasted from 1860 until 1923, the state owned Leigh Creek coal fields have been in continuous operation since 1943 with a projected life expectancy until at least the year 2020.

The coal mine contradicts all notions about romance as has often been associated with semi-precious mines discovered and often operated by small syndicates or individuals. Further, the coal mine with its service town of 1250 people is an anomaly within a basically pastoral environment upsetting a variety of regional statistics.

The search for coal was one of Colonel Light's objectives upon arrival in South Australia in 1836. But because South Australia was deficient in bituminous coal deposits it was 1885 before lignite was discovered at Pidinga. The first evidence of coal in the Leigh Creek area was discovered by contractor John Henry Reid in 1888 with the sinking of a railway dam. As a consequence of this discovery, a geological survey of the area was carried out by the Government Geologist, Henry Y.L. Brown, and an underground shaft sunk by the Leigh Creek Coal Mining Company floated in Adelaide in 1889 and which carried out exploratory work. Although approximately 200 tons of coal was raised from the area no markets could be found and in October

FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

Leigh Creek — Lobes C and D

1897 the company was forced to close. Little work was undertaken over the next few years.

In January 1906 the lease was taken up by a director of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, John Darling, and then in July of the same year was transferred to the Tasmanian Copper Co. Ltd. The Company raised 12,455 tons of coal for use in general mining and smelting purposes, particularly at the Blinman copper mines, while some was sold as household fuel. Experiments were also conducted to see if the coal would be suitable for use in the railways, but results were not encouraging. The company did not renew the lease when it expired on 30 June 1908. In the meantime, the South Australian government reserved the coalfield under the provisions of the Mining Act, the proclamation being issued on 27 August 1908.

In 1910 the South Australian Department of Mines purchased some of the machinery left at mining sites from the Tasmanian Copper Co. Ltd, and later that year £5,000 was allocated in the Estimates for the government to develop the former Company mine. While a further bore was sunk in 1911 by the Department, tests on the coal extracted from bores were not encouraging. Further drilling and tests carried out after a strike on the Newcastle Coalfields in 1916 and a report presented by a government committee appointed to look at Leigh Creek and the feasibility of using the coal for industry only reinforced earlier views that the field could not be 'successfully developed to alleviate the rising cost of fuel in the State.' Work ceased after the sixth bore was sunk by the Department of Mines in 1919.

However, difficulties experienced in obtaining sufficient coal supplies from New South Wales in the early period of World War II brought about a renewed interest in the Leigh Creek fields by the Playford Government. Premier Thomas Playford was committed to a policy of advancing industry in the State and ensuring its self-sufficiency in energy resources. In line with this policy, the search for coal at Leigh Creek was recommenced in August 1941 by the Department of Mines and in the following October a main seam of coal was struck. Excavation of the open-cut work was vested in the Engineering and Water Supply Department (the formal transfer took place on 9 March 1943), and the first dragline operations commenced in January 1943. In the meantime, Royal Assent was given to the *Leigh Creek Coal Act* on 5 November 1942.

Production steadily increased: from 18,000 tons in 1944 to 128,000 tons in 1947. With the major portion of coal produced being earmarked for the generation of power, the Playford Government moved to establish the Electricity Trust of South Australia by nationalising the Adelaide Electric Supply Company on 1 September 1946. The Trust took over the administration of the coalfield on 6 February 1948, and in October 1948 work began on the construction of the Port Augusta Power Station complex designed to burn Leigh Creek coal. The Station began operating in July 1954, although it did not become fully operational until 1957. As well as the Power Station at Port Augusta, two new boilers in the Osborne 'A' Power Station (1950) and five new boilers in the Osborne 'B' Power Station (1951) were installed capable of operating efficiently on Leigh Creek coal. The reconstruction of a standard gauge railway line to run between the Port Augusta Power Station, Stirling North and Leigh Creek, was the final link in the development of the coalfields. It was completed in 1956.

FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

Leigh Creek — Lobes C and D

Coal production has continued at Leigh Creek, although in 1976 mining ceased in Lobes D and Lobe C while operations recommenced in Lobe B. In 1990 coal despatched from the area amounted to 2.9 million tonnes.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Leigh Creek coal mine has been of immense economic significance to South Australia, comparable to that of the early copper mines that operated in the mid and later nineteenth century. It is of additional significance because of its particular identification with the endeavours of Premier Thomas Playford to industrialise the State and to ensure its self-sufficiency in energy resources. It is also significant for the manner in which it demonstrates modern mining practices which contrast markedly with those associated with other significant mines in South Australia.

RELEVANT CRITERIA

- (a) it demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history, particularly new features of the mining history of the State and the endeavours of Premier Thomas Playford to industrialise South Australia and ensure its self-sufficiency in energy;
 - (e) it demonstrates a high degree of creative, aesthetic or technical accomplishment or is an outstanding representative of particular construction techniques or design characteristics, particularly in the open-cut method of mining;
 - (g) it has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance, particularly the Electricity Trust of South Australia and its contribution to the economic development of the State.
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FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

Leigh Creek — Lobes C and D

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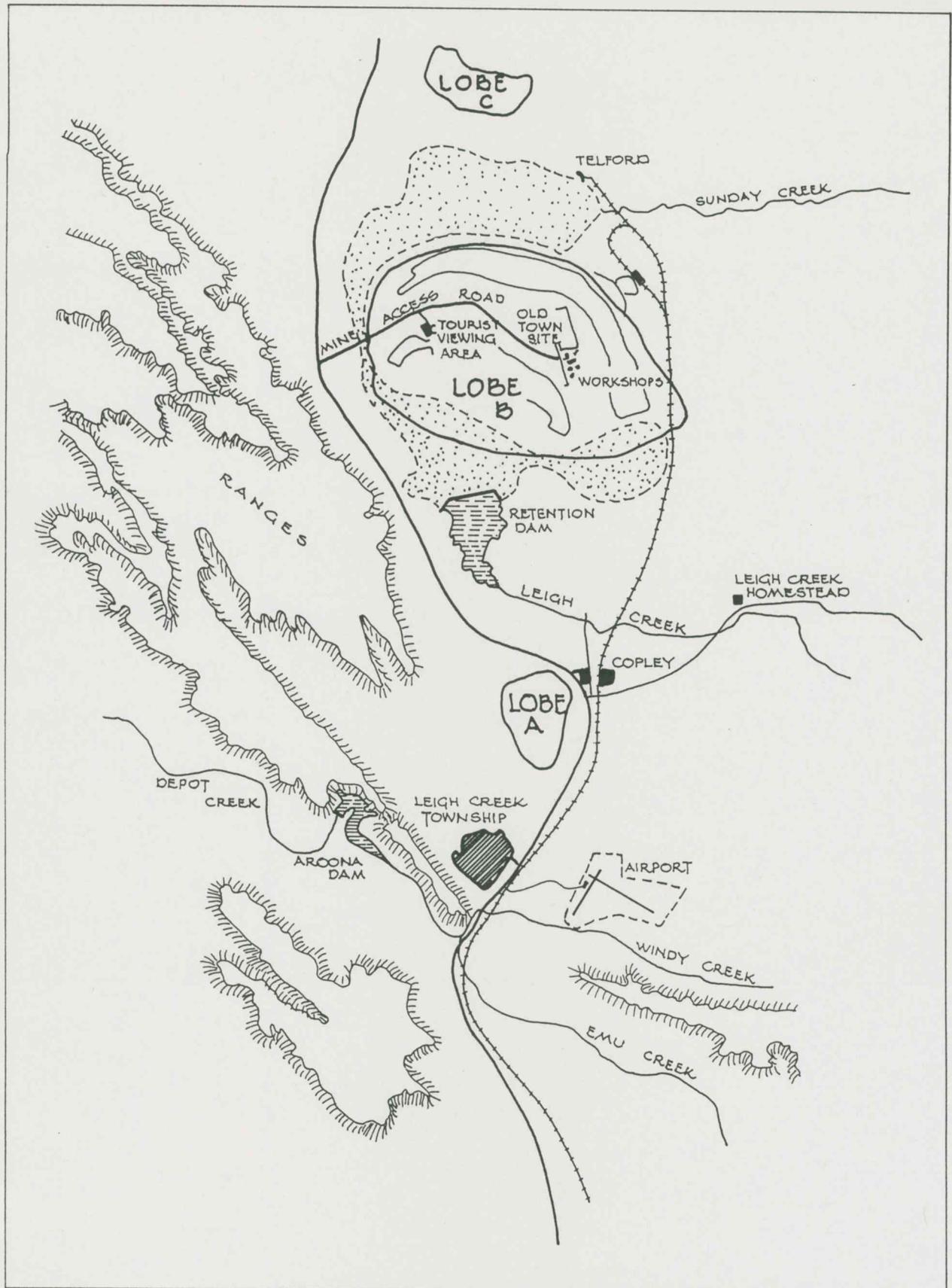
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Site Surveyor	P.F. Donovan/J. Donovan	Date(s) of Survey	20.11.1994
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FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY

Leigh Creek — Lobes C and D





FLINDERS RANGES HERITAGE SURVEY
LEIGH CREEK MINE