

Department for Environment and Heritage

Heritage of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks

Part of the Far North & Far West Region (Region 13)



**Historical Research Pty Ltd
Adelaide**

in association with
Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd
Lyn Leader-Elliott
Iris Iwanicki

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It was carried out by heritage consultants Historical Research Pty Ltd, in association with Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd, Lyn Leader-Elliott and Iris Iwanicki between April 2001 and December 2002.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project

The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey was undertaken by Historical Research Pty Ltd in association with Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd, Lyn Leader-Elliott of Flinders University and Iris Iwanicki in 2001-2002 for Heritage South Australia of the South Australian Department for Environment and Heritage. The project brief is appended to this report. The project was managed by a steering committee which included, besides Heritage South Australia and the Australian Heritage Commission, the SA Tourism Commission and State Aboriginal Affairs.

This project differs from all earlier surveys in the South Australian regional survey program in three respects. First, because its project area extends over the state border into Queensland in two places, by agreement with the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, second in making recommendations for Places of National Heritage Significance, and pioneering a methodology for assessment of these places, and third in making tourism management recommendations for places of cultural heritage value within the region. As 2002 is the Australian Year of the Outback, this aspect of the project is particularly apposite.

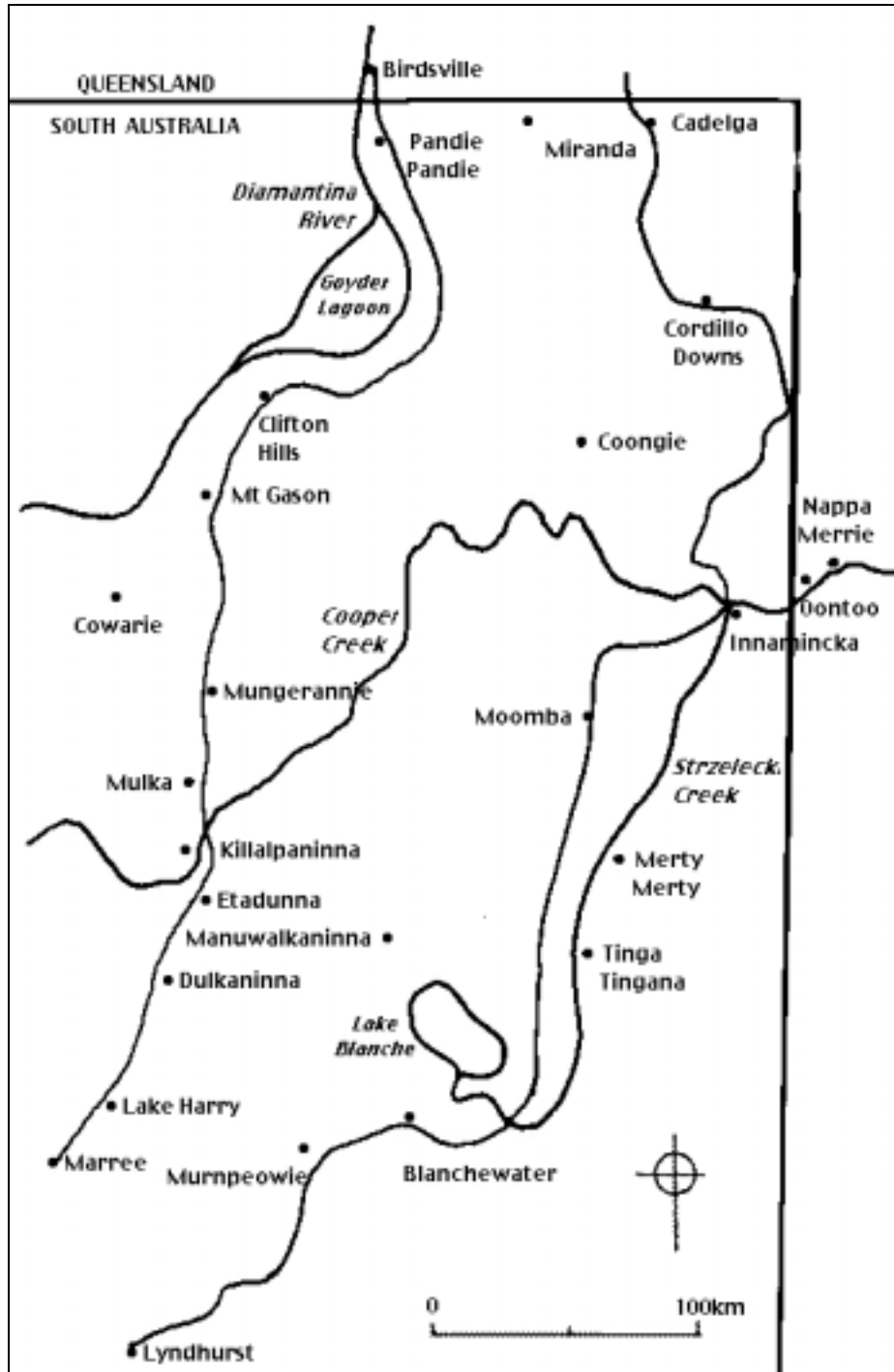
1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey is assessment of cultural heritage resources associated with the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks to test assessment methodologies and recommend places for listing in National, State and local heritage registers, and as an input to developing a regional heritage tourism strategy for the Lake Eyre Basin.

Specifically, the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey will:

- (a) make recommendations about potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area;
- (b) test appropriate methodologies for identifying and assessing nationally significant places;
- (c) make recommendations for the entry of places in the State Heritage Register;
- (d) make recommendations for the declaration of State Heritage Areas;
- (e) identify places of local heritage value within the Survey Area, for inclusion in the Out of Hundreds Development Plan;
- (f) Identify areas within the Survey Area which could be declared Historic (Conservation) Zones/Policy Areas and included in the Out of Hundreds Development Plan, and
- (g) make recommendations about the potential and suitability of heritage places within the Survey Area for use in heritage tourism itineraries.

Figure 1: Study Area



Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Region

1.3 Study Area

The survey area, which lies chiefly in Region 13 (Far North & Far West) of South Australia, includes the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks and a corridor fifty kilometres wide on either side of each. The Birdsville Track commences at Marree and terminates at Birdsville. The Strzelecki Track commences at Lyndhurst and terminates at Innamincka, although for the purpose of this survey the road continuing north of Innamincka to the Queensland border near Betoota has been included. The 50km corridor extends into Queensland in the Birdsville and Nappa Merrie areas. The southern part of the project area overlaps with that of an earlier heritage survey of the Flinders Ranges (Region 11). See Figure 1.

1.4 Survey Methodology

The methodology adopted for the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks heritage survey followed broadly that recommended by Susan Marsden in *Historical Guidelines* (1980) and adopted by Heritage South Australia and its predecessor agencies for 20 years since - with evolving modifications - as the basis for heritage surveys. This consisted essentially of the following stages: (1) carrying out historical research on the region, (2) identifying historical themes and likely places for investigation, (3) obtaining local information and advice, (4) undertaking field work to visit and record all known likely significant places, (5) assessing the significance of the places recorded, (6) formulating recommendations and (7) compiling a report setting out all this information.

While the surveys have become more demanding over the years, and the reports larger, the brief for this survey broke new ground in several directions simultaneously, adding a number of new tasks to the formula outlined above. Briefly, the new elements of the survey were:

- joint State and Commonwealth task formulation and reporting,
- greater oversight of the project by the Australian Heritage Commission,
- use of the Australian Historic Themes as a historical tool,
- extension of the project area into Queensland,
- recommendations for National Heritage Places,
- pioneering new methodology for assessing national significance, and
- making recommendations for tourism management of heritage places.

Heritage surveys commissioned by Heritage South Australia are concerned only with the built historic environment, that is the landscape created since European settlement of South Australia in the nineteenth century. The natural environment, and places of significance in Aboriginal culture, are managed by other State government agencies, and fall outside the brief for this survey. In practice however, in an arid landscape the three areas cannot be treated in isolation, as all human activity is determined by the landscape and the climate. Many places of significance to European culture were also places of Aboriginal cultural value.

The first stage of the survey - historical research - established very quickly that the north-east of South Australia has a rich history. A century ago there were many more people in the region, and many more industries than there are today. Although it did not have the

long-distance railway and telegraph routes that shaped the Oodnadatta Track region, there has been a complex legacy of activity from the time of the German missionaries in the 1860s, through a vicious period of inter-racial conflict, the decline of the wool industry, traditional transport routes re-shaped by sinking artesian bores, the feats of the Afghan cameleers who supplied the pastoral industry and the drovers bringing Sidney Kidman's cattle to market, to the modern oil and gas industry. All human activity in the region has been shaped by the availability of water, and efforts to manage and conserve water are its most fundamental historic theme. Other natural forces also determined many human destinies, as much of the economic history of the region in the last 110 years has been shaped by rabbits and dingoes.

Seeking to classify this history into the Australian Historic Themes did not re-shape it, nor provide any useful insights, but simply provided a series of labels or headings. Much of what happened in the region seems not easily or appropriately described by the existing themes, and most of the 222 themes and sub-themes have little relevance to life in the region. The themes which were used as a framework for the historical overview are:

- 1 Tracing the Evolution of the Australian Environment
- 2.1 Living as Australia's Earliest Inhabitants
- 3.3 Surveying the Continent
- 3.5 Developing Primary Production
- 3.7 Establishing Communications
- 3.8.6 Building and Maintaining Railways
- 2.6 Fighting for Land
- 8.6.7 Running Missions to Australia's Indigenous People
- 4.5 Making Settlements to Serve Rural Australia
- 3.8 Moving Goods and People
- 3.7.1 Establishing Postal Services
- 7.6.3 Policing Australia
- 3.11 Altering the Environment
- 3.16 Struggling with Remoteness, Hardship and Failure
- 3.26 Providing Health Services
- 3.4 Utilising Natural Resources
- 3.8.7 Building and Maintaining Roads
- 3.23 Catering for Tourists

With the historical background established, a list of over 90 places in the region was drawn up as warranting investigation. These included the major missions, early homesteads, townsites, places marked on early maps, and many places mentioned in local historical accounts such as Pearce (1980) and Litchfield (1983). When fieldwork commenced, one important task was to check the veracity of this list with local information. Pastoral lessees, police officers, tourism operators, surveyors and other knowledgeable people were contacted about places in their district. This resulted in many of the places on the original list being crossed off as insignificant, inaccessible or simply unknown. However, at least as many new places were added from local knowledge. Eventually about 110 places were visited in the course of the project.

Sixteen places in South Australia were already on the State Heritage Register and a State Heritage Area existed, all as a result of fieldwork done by Heritage Conservation Branch

staff in 1984, and three places within the town of Birdsville were on the Queensland Heritage Register. Most of these were important and conspicuous historic monuments such as the Blanchewater homestead ruins of 1858, the sites associated with Burke's expedition, and the magnificent Cordillo Downs woolshed. The brief called for these places to be checked for significance and integrity.

The initial fieldwork was planned to take three weeks, which proved to be an accurate estimate. Not all the sites on the original list were visited; some of the early homestead sites are lost to modern knowledge, and others have left virtually no trace. Here the consultants relied on local knowledge in assessing whether the significance of a site justified a visit. If a place was not accessible by track, and its location was uncertain or the lessee had no knowledge of its whereabouts, no attempt was made to visit it, hence Lake Hope, Old Berlino and Kanowana were left out as unlikely to repay the drive. Many of the early homestead sites remained in use as outstations, sometimes to the present, and consist today of a modern set of yards and a windmill, with no early fabric visible. Some other sites were inaccessible because of local flooding; places in the Andrewilla, Alton Downs, Old Clifton Hills and Callabonna districts were out of reach during the survey.

There was a further constraint in the Strzelecki Regional Reserve, where recent rains and the absence of rabbits (in the wake of the calicivirus epidemic) had combined to cover the land in lush green flowering vegetation, a sight few people had seen there for a hundred years. The downside of this splendid sight was that it concealed evidence on the ground, including tracks to sites, and the Senior Ranger was concerned that new wheel tracks off the road would encourage others to follow, creating a vehicle track which would remain conspicuous for years. Curiosity is a powerful force at work creating new tracks in the outback. For a combination of these reasons, off-road sites in this district were only visited if their location was exactly known, and the way was clearly evident along an already-visible track. As a result, Tinga Tingana, Chidlee Well, Montecollina and Carraweena homestead sites were not visited.

However, many remote sites were easily found, and some of these were of great interest because they have survived in a more intact state than sites close to roads, which are subject to theft and vandalism. The abandoned Haddon Downs, Miranda and Manuwalkaninna homestead sites were of this category. Almost all the homesteads occupied at present are modern, typically dating from the 1950s after being abandoned and then taken up again, although some are on the sites of older buildings. Innamincka, Nappa Merrie and Murnpeowie are the only homesteads in the region which have never been abandoned since they were built, and Cordillo Downs (which was abandoned for a few years in the 1930s) and Murnpeowie are the only nineteenth century homestead complexes in the region which survive reasonably intact.

When sites were visited, they were recorded at a level of detail depending on their complexity and an estimate of their significance. All sites were photographed on black and white, colour transparency and colour print film, cursorily if they were small and simple such as Ooroowillannie homestead ruins or the Mirra Mitta Bore, in detail if they were large and complex like Miranda homestead or Oontoo township sites. A site plan was drawn if the initial assessment suggested the place was of State heritage significance. In some cases such as Killalpaninna Mission or Cordillo Downs homestead the site had

already been comprehensively photographed and plans drawn by past researchers. Here the emphasis was to check for changes since the sites were recorded.

Another consideration during the initial fieldwork was the preliminary selection of places for tourism management recommendations. Naturally there are clusters of historic places in and around the townships of Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka. Besides inspecting the places, owners, lessees, administrators and tourism operators were consulted. The issue of public access to sites on pastoral leases and on the gasfields is controversial in the region, and responsibility for public risk and liability insurance are at present unresolved. Partly for these reasons, it was decided to take a conservative approach to recommending tourist access. For the most part, places were recommended for access only if they were located on public land or accessible along a public road, and if owners and lessees were happy to encourage visitors. No places were recommended for access if they were in remote or difficult-to-find locations, were in a fragile state, or potentially dangerous to visitors.

Once historical and site-based information had been gathered, the next step was to make an assessment of each place's significance. The number of recommendations which this survey could make to five or more different heritage and planning agencies was formidable:

- World Heritage List (Commonwealth)
- Register of the National Estate (Commonwealth)
- Proposed National Heritage List (Commonwealth)
- State Heritage Register (SA)
- State Heritage Area (SA)
- Local Heritage Place (SA)
- Historic Conservation Zone (SA)
- Queensland Heritage Register (Qld)
- Local Heritage Place (Qld)

The level of significance - and thus the appropriate recommendation - was assessed by consideration of criteria and thresholds, and a check against earlier recommendations in the same region. For the most part, the match between historic themes and physical evidence on the ground was self-evident; what it left unanswered were questions of significance and representativeness. Matching a site to a theme does not give any information on its significance, or answer the question of how many sites should be selected to represent a theme. In fact, sites representing pastoral settlement in the form of homesteads, yards and outstations, and water supply in the form of waterholes, wells, tanks, bores, windmills and pumps are endemic throughout the region. Assessment of such abundant sites was done very selectively; a site needed to have either a strong historical case or notable physical evidence (or both) to be recommended as a place of State significance. Other site types such as early missions were considered to be both scarce and fragile, and were assessed more generously. One site type completely unrepresented on the South Australian State Heritage Register was identified: the scene of a massacre of Aborigines at Koonchera Waterhole. Another seven or eight such places may exist in the region, but there is little information on their exact locations or the events that occurred there.

The large number of places that were assessed as below the threshold of State heritage significance were recorded as places of local heritage value. This is a recommendation to the Diamantina and Bulloo shires in Queensland and the Development Assessment Commission in South Australia that these places should be considered for inclusion in local development plans. One place already on the South Australian State Heritage Register (Gray's Tree at Lake Massacre) was found to have been recommended on the basis of incorrect information, and our recommendation is to remove it from the Register.

Local level and national estate level include those of local level significance value and all levels of significance above. Local lists are limited to the land controlled by the respective local government authority, The National Estate covers any tenure within Australia. State heritage level significance include places of State level significance and all levels above with the State. National heritage significance is proposed to cover places of national level and World Heritage significance throughout Australia. World Heritage significance is only for those places on the World Heritage List.

A Bill for establishing national level significance was introduced into Federal Parliament (2002). If passed the Bill will amend the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and a new National Heritage List and a Commonwealth Heritage List will be developed. The Commonwealth Heritage list relates to places that are Commonwealth tenure or under Commonwealth management.

In the case of National Heritage Places, there were no thresholds or previous statutory assessments to use as a guide, for these were among the first to be recommended anywhere in Australia. Only draft criteria were in existence, and these have been modified during the course of this study. A discussion of proposed methodologies for assessing national heritage significance forms part of this report. Three places were recommended, on the basis that they are clearly of great cultural significance to the nation as a whole, and their significance transcends State boundaries. All the places assessed as being of national heritage significance are very large; the smallest over 60km in length.

Having formulated a draft list of recommendations, sample reports on selected places were prepared and circulated to the various agencies who would be acting on the survey's recommendations. A second field trip returned to the places recommended for tourism management, and collected further information and engaged in a second round of public consultation, leading to the formulation both of specific site-by-site management recommendations, as well as broad principles of management to guide outback tourism, not only in this region but elsewhere in Australia.

The results of the project to this point were compiled as a draft report which was circulated to client agencies and selected stakeholders in May 2002. A meeting of interested parties with the consultants allowed discussion of the draft report, and identification of the tasks and issues still to be covered. Feedback from the participants has been taken into consideration when completing the report.

1.4.1 Recommendations

Summary of the overall number of places for which recommendations have been made:

National Heritage Places

This report recommends that three places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be declared Places of National Heritage Significance. Places that have been so recommended have been assessed according to draft criteria developed by the Australian Heritage Commission. A discussion of proposed methodology for the assessment of national heritage significance forms Section 4 of this report.

State Heritage Places (SA)

This report recommends that five places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be entered in the State Heritage Register. Places that have been recommended as being suitable for entry in the State Heritage Register have been researched and inspected during the survey process and assessed according to the criteria laid down in the Heritage Act 1993.

It is recommended that places which have been recommended for entry in the State Heritage Register in this report but which are rejected by the State Heritage Authority should be considered to be places of Local Heritage Value and should be processed accordingly.

The report also recommends that one place already entered in the State Heritage Register be removed, as more recent research suggests that the events for which the place was considered significant did not happen at that place.

State Heritage Places (Qld)

This report recommends that one place in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be entered in the Queensland Heritage Register. Places that have been recommended as being suitable for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register have been researched and inspected during the survey process and assessed according to the criteria laid down in the Queensland Heritage Act 1992 as amended 1995.

State Heritage Areas (SA)

One place in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area is recommended as a State Heritage Area.

Local Heritage Places (SA)

This report recommends that twenty-nine places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be added to local heritage lists under the Out of Hundreds Development Plan. Places that have been recommended as being of local heritage value are considered important to the local community or region.

Local Heritage Places (Qld)

This report recommends that ten places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be included as local heritage places in the Diamantina and Bulloo shires' planning

schemes. Places that have been recommended as being of local heritage value are considered important to the local community or region.

Historic Conservation Zones (SA)

No places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended as Historic (Conservation) Zones.

1.5 Recommendations

Summary of the overall number of places for which recommendations have been made:

National Heritage Places

This report recommends that three places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be declared Places of National Heritage Significance. Places that have been so recommended have been assessed according to draft criteria developed by the Australian Heritage Commission. A discussion of proposed methodology for the assessment of national heritage significance forms Section 4 of this report.

State Heritage Places (SA)

This report recommends that five places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be entered in the State Heritage Register. Places that have been recommended as being suitable for entry in the State Heritage Register have been researched and inspected during the survey process and assessed according to the criteria laid down in the *Heritage Act 1993*.

It is recommended that places which have been recommended for entry in the State Heritage Register in this report but which are rejected by the State Heritage Authority should be considered to be places of Local Heritage Value and should be processed accordingly.

The report also recommends that one place already entered in the State Heritage Register be removed, as more recent research suggests that the events for which the place was considered significant did not happen at that place.

State Heritage Places (Qld)

This report recommends that one place in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be entered in the Queensland Heritage Register. Places that have been recommended as being suitable for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register have been researched and inspected during the survey process and assessed according to the criteria laid down in the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* as amended 1995.

State Heritage Areas (SA)

1.0 Introduction

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

One place in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area is recommended as a State Heritage Area.

Local Heritage Places (SA)

This report recommends that twenty-nine places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be included in a list of local heritage places under the Out of Hundreds Development Plan. Places that have been recommended as being of local heritage value are considered important to the local community or region, and have been assessed according to the criteria in the *Development Act 1993*

Local Heritage Places (Qld)

This report recommends that ten places in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area should be included as local heritage places in the Diamantina and Bulloo shires' planning schemes. Places that have been recommended as being of local heritage value are considered important to the local community or region.

Historic Conservation Zones SA)

No areas in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended as Historic (Conservation) Zones.

1.6 Consultation

Community involvement regarding the project occurred on a number of levels.

- initial contact was made by letter to key local informants, pastoralists, mining companies and others along different parts of the tracks.
- phone contact was made with key people to coordinate face-to-face visits during field work in the region.
- this was followed up by visits to key people as the consultants travelled through the area on two separate field trips.
- after the field trips, further contacts were made by phone or letter as necessary to follow up information or advice.
- the progress of the survey was monitored by Heritage South Australia. The consultants were responsible to Heritage South Australia, to which progress reports were submitted during the survey.
- the progress of the survey was further overseen by the steering committee representing key stakeholders in the survey. The working party was kept informed by Heritage South Australia.

1.7 Note on Placenames

Placenames in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region require a comment, for they are not always as they seem. While this report attempts to be consistent in its spelling of names, that does not mean that the form adopted here is necessarily more correct than another. The great majority of names in the region are from Aboriginal languages, and

many - such as Mungerannie, Kopperamanna, Nappa Merrie and Killalpaninna - have beginnings or endings like 'appa', 'nappa', 'anna', 'manna', 'annie', 'nannie', 'ninna' and so on, which not surprisingly refer to places where water is to be found. There have been many variations in spelling since these names were written down from the 1860s onward, and this report adopts different spellings from different contexts without attempting to sort out the inconsistencies. Koonchera has been spelled as Kooncherra, Koonchira, Coonchere and Kooncherry in the past. The first consonant is often dropped in English renditions of Aboriginal words, hence Appamanna is also Nappamanna. It is far beyond the ethnographic and linguistic expertise of this project to decide which is correct.

Nappamerrie, Nappamerry, Napamerri, Napamerrie, Napamerry, Nappa Merrie and Nappa Merry (probably from the Wongkumara words ngappa = water; and merri = sand hill) are all the same place. This report has adopted Nappa Merrie, simply because those are the words painted on the homestead roof in letters four feet high, which is a more assertive statement than has been made for any other spelling variant.

After the spelling has been sorted out, there remain some surprises in the local pronunciation. Bucaltaninna is pronounced Bull-cat-aninna and Apatoonganie is Apatookna. For over a hundred years, Etadunna has been pronounced as Ether-dinner, and Murnpeowie as Mumpy-owie or usually just Mumpy (the diary of Joseph Mannion in 1897 spelled these placenames Eitherdina and Mumpyowie), It is not possible to argue with a century of local practice.

European names also have their variations. Herrgott Springs is spelled in this report as Joseph Herrgott (whose pious Lutheran surname meant 'the Lord God' in German) would have wished. The common variation Hergott is simply a spelling error which means nothing at all. Modern conventions such as Cooper Creek have been adopted in the text, although for most of the 157 years since it was first seen by Europeans, it has been known as Cooper's Creek. It is an old joke in western Queensland that the country is so dry that it takes two rivers to make a creek - the Thomson and Barcoo rivers join to form Cooper Creek. In the mid-nineteenth century the words 'river' and 'creek' meant a permanently-flowing or perennial stream and an intermittently-flowing stream respectively, and the name they were given by explorers depended on the year - or even the month - in which they were first seen.

There are many 'lakes' shown on maps of the region, and this report has retained that term, with some hesitation. For a few years each century they are indeed expanses of blue water, alive with ducks and pelicans, as lakes in the English meaning of the word should be. But for most of the time they are flat expanses of brown clay or glittering salt crystals, strewn with the bones of animals. The English language has no words for such features, unless we use the Spanish-derived technical names - playas or salinas - familiar only to geomorphologists.

Some names are difficult to attribute to places. Pastoral leases were absorbed into others, so that the famous early run Cullamurra for example disappeared, to become part of Innamincka, and Mount Hopeless and contradictory Lake Hope nearby both became synonymous with Blanchewater, and all three were later absorbed by Murnpeowie. Nearly every homestead in the region has moved at least once, so that it is quite normal to find modern Alton Downs and the ruins of Old Alton Downs on the map a few kilometres apart.

1.0 Introduction

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

The name Mulka has been unusually mobile, for in a short distance along the Birdsville Track there are the ruins of Old Mulka and New Mulka and then modern Mulka homestead. In addition, Old Mulka was for a while worked jointly with nearby Ooroowillannie, and the names Mulka and Apatoonganie seem for a time to have been interchangeable. Here too this report seeks to be consistent in using these names, while accepting that a hundred years later, it is difficult to be absolutely correct.

1.8 Acknowledgments

This survey of the heritage resources of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks was carried out by Historical Research Pty Ltd, Austral Archaeology Pty Ltd, Lyn Leader-Elliott of Flinders University and Iris Iwanicki. Those who actually wrote the text of the report were: (a) Peter Bell and Iris Iwanicki wrote the historical overview and chronology, (b) Peter Bell, Iris Iwanicki and Justin McCarthy prepared the site reports, (c) Lyn Leader-Elliott wrote the tourism management overview and provided the management recommendations in individual site reports. Justin McCarthy and Robyn Gray of Austral Archaeology were responsible for fieldwork planning, vehicle logistics and field catering. Peter Bell of Historical Research managed the project and compiled and produced the report.

Many others contributed to this project, and the team wish to thank the following people for their support and assistance:

Hamish Angas, Kimberley Doman, Chris Giovannucci, Sarah Laurence, Duncan Ross-Watt, Brian Samuels and Gillian Strickland of Heritage South Australia, and Fiona Gardiner of the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency who provided administrative support throughout the project, as well as access to lands titles information and their organisations' respective files and report libraries;

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Christine Crafter, NPWSA Senior Ranger at Innamincka,
Senior Constable Andrew Dale, Marree Police Station,
John Deckert, Westprint Maps,
Val Donovan, Queensland Heritage Trails Network,
Greg Drew, Primary Industries and Resources South Australia,
Kym Fort, Birdsville Hotel,
Tom Gara, Native Title Unit, South Australia,
John Hammond, Mungerannie Hotel,
Colin Harris, Department for Environment and Heritage,
Dr Luise Hercus, Australian National University,
John Hoysted, Queensland Heritage Trails Network,
'Bomber' Johnson, Nappa Merrie,
Dr Ruth Kerr, Royal Historical Society of Queensland,
Robert Khan, Marree,

John Mannion, Pekina,
Stuart Nicol, Royal Automobile Association of South Australia,
Lyall and Shirley Oldfield, Oasis Cafe, Marree,
Ray Osborne, Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland,
Howard Pearce, Environmental Protection Agency, Queensland,
Vlad Potezny, Aboriginal Heritage Branch, South Australia (retired),
Bruno Rescignano, Primary Industries and Resources South Australia,
Don and Lyn Rowlands, QPWS Rangers, Birdsville,
Lloyd Sampson, Primary Industries and Resources South Australia,
Joc Schmiechen, Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Group,
Susie van der Linden, Tourism Coordinator, Birdsville,
Jim Vickery, South Australian Pastoral Board (retired),
Leith Yelland, Outback Areas Community Development Trust, South Australia.

Property owners and managers who contributed to the project are too numerous to name individually here, but the project team received generous support, assistance and encouragement from everyone we contacted, without exception, throughout our fieldwork in the region.

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Overview History

Authors: Peter Bell and Iris Iwanicki)

Introduction

The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks are the traditional transport corridors across the north-east of South Australia, to the east of Lake Eyre, connecting the former railhead at Marree to the Channel Country of south-western Queensland. Between the two tracks lies an arid land of deserts, dunes and the flood plains of the Diamantina and Cooper river systems. Both tracks originated as stock routes overlanding sheep and cattle from the middle of the continent to southern markets as pastoral activity established itself in the arid areas of central Australia during the mid to latter part of the nineteenth century. Both tracks have an earlier history and are part of Aboriginal trails, trade and custom. Neither has ever been a single fixed route for long. Over time, the footprint and hoofprint trails of both tracks have shifted, wavered and at times disappeared, to revive again later.

In a land where all human activity depends on the presence of water, both routes have been defined by a succession of watering places. The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks wend their way more than 500 kilometres across some of the most arid land on earth, separated by a distance ranging up to 200 kilometres. Their combined length is not much less than the distance from Adelaide to Sydney, or London to Berlin. For the purpose of this study, the Strzelecki Track will be surveyed from Lyndhurst to the end of the Cordillo Downs Road on the South Australia-Queensland border near the Cadelga ruins, and the Birdsville Track from Marree to Birdsville in Queensland. The survey area extends over the Queensland border in places to take in the Birdsville and Nappa Merrie districts. The project area for this survey is a corridor 100km wide straddling both tracks, a land area of about 90,000 square kilometres, roughly three times the size of Belgium. The only townships in that area today are Marree, Innamincka, Moomba and Birdsville. There has never been a church built in the region, although there were once three mosques.

The Politics of Corners

The study area takes in that area of South Australia which now shares a border with the Northern Territory in the north-west, Queensland for a distance of 600km in the north and east, and New South Wales in the south-east. In that region where three states and a territory adjoin, the places where the borders meet or change direction are well-known landmarks, named after the surveyors who established them: Cameron Corner, Haddon Corner and Poeppel Corner. But when Europeans first set foot in the region in 1840, the lands that are now Queensland and the Northern Territory were all part of New South Wales. Queensland was created in 1859 with its western boundary at 141° longitude

The piece of New South Wales remaining on the north coast of Australia was tantalising to all the colonial governments, but none of them knew very much about what it contained. The result in 1860 was an inter-colonial race to be the first to explore the unknown land and open up a route across Australia from the southern cities to the north coast, and the

events of that race were to shape the European settlement of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region for the next hundred years. The winners were Queensland and South Australia, who divided the northern land between them; the larger part west of 138° longitude becoming the Northern Territory, under South Australian administration.

The adjacent lands of the Northern Territory and New South Wales have had little impact on events within this part of South Australia, but the destinies of Queensland and South Australia have been closely intertwined since the 1860s. Because of the pattern of the watercourses and lakes which bring water from Queensland into Lake Eyre, travellers' routes have taken them across the border; Aboriginal trading parties, European explorers and pastoralists, travelling stock routes and modern roads have all linked south-west Queensland with north-east South Australia.

This study will look at the history of the region from both sides of the border, seeing how European explorers from both colonies penetrated the region and formed their own impressions, and how the pastoralists arrived, bringing two separate settlement traditions, two sets of pastoral legislation, and very different methods of dealing with indigenous land owners. In the early years these different colonial ways of doing things complicated life in the region, because in the absence of accurate surveys the pastoralists were sometimes unsure in which colony their lease was located. Few regions of Australia have had their histories so strongly determined by events in two colonies.

Predecessors

Some aspects of the history of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region are extremely well known; probably none more so than the Burke and Wills expedition of 1860-61, which has given rise to a vast quantity of literature, most recently Sarah Murgatroyd's *The Dig Tree* earlier this year, sadly followed by the author's death only weeks later. This project is able to draw on a number of accounts of life in the region, commencing with George Farwell's journalism in the 1940s, and including Grace Francis' and Mona Henry's reminiscences of nursing in Birdsville and Elizabeth Burchill's of Innamincka, Eric Bonython's writings on Lake Eyre, and Joc Schmiechen's and later Howard Pearce's accounts of the extraordinary German missionary era.

Luise Hercus has recorded much of the language and oral history of indigenous people in the north-east. Howard Pearce's *Homesteads of the Stony Desert* (1978) was among the first books to draw attention to the stark and sad beauty of the region, and his photographs provide a record of the deterioration of many sites in recent decades. Lois Litchfield's *Marree and the Tracks Beyond* (1983), with an introductory essay by Hans Mincham, began to draw together the many historical themes of life along the tracks, and has been supplemented by more detailed recent work such as Helen Tolcher's *Drought or Deluge* - the best book yet written on the Cooper region - and her three other books on the Innamincka district published between 1986 and 1999, and Philip Gee's history of the grazing industry around Lake Eyre South.

Specialised histories of topics such as the Australian Inland Mission and Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Afghan camel drivers, the Strzelecki Track, the Mound Springs, the oil and gas industry, the Dog Fence and Sidney Kidman's empire have helped to fill in gaps in the historical record. Earlier surveys commissioned by Heritage South Australia in the

adjacent regions to the south and west, *Flinders Ranges Heritage Survey* and *Heritage of the Oodnadatta Track* have helped put the project area in context. The modern traveller is provided with a wealth of information by John Deckert's maps and Stuart Nicol's RAA touring guide.

These and all other sources used are fully acknowledged in the bibliography of this report. The sub-headings of this account have been expressed in the words of the Principal Australian Historic Themes, adopted by the Australian Heritage Commission.

Historic Theme 1: Tracing the Evolution of the Australian Environment

The Land

Complex and diverse, the north eastern deserts of South Australia traversed by the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks contain the Simpson and Strzelecki dunefields, the great playa lake and river systems of Lake Eyre, the Cooper and Diamantina Creeks, gibber plains and stony dome shaped anticlinal structures. State boundaries arbitrarily cut through the arid land, which is situated in the south-eastern part of the Great Artesian Basin. The two major tracks cross over the surface of the Great Artesian Basin beneath, the world's largest subterranean water basin covering an area which lies in roughly equal proportions in the states of Queensland, the Northern Territory and South Australia, with its eastern edge encroaching into the north-west of New South Wales. A series of mound springs are studded along the southern and southwestern margins of the Great Artesian Basin. Formed by the upward movement of artesian water through saturated rock, mound springs are variously seepages, flowing springs or pools of standing water. All are characterised by the accumulation of sediments that form mounds ranging from tens of metres across to temporary mud heaps that dry up and re-form over time. Herrgott Springs, discovered in 1859 by Joseph Herrgott of John McDouall Stuart's exploration party, prompted the establishment of a nearby settlement of the same name, later re-named Marree, the southern termination of the Birdsville Track.

Geology

The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks skim the surface of a thick sequence of sedimentary strata deposited over a period of 500 million years. Changes in global climates and weathering of the earth's crust have led to different environments recorded in the rock beneath the surface of the land across which the two tracks traverse. Periods of warm, wet and forested landscapes are represented geologically by coal seams and organically rich mudstones. When drier conditions prevailed, the huge lake evaporated leaving extensive limestone sheets and arid, windy dunefields developed. Periods when shallow seas covered the area were replaced by periods of global cooling when glaciers and ice caps formed, scouring the landscape and leaving a blanket of moraine and outwash debris as the icecap retreated. Extended periods of stability, during which very little erosion or sedimentation occurred resulted in the bleaching or colouration of near surface rocks, now revealed in the multi-hued bluffs and vivid white of the tableland country.

Evidence of major climatic changes has been confirmed by the discovery of fossils and footprints in the areas of the dry salt lakes of the Tirari desert and on Lake Callabonna. The first of these were discovered in the 1880s and represent 'a veritable necropolis of

gigantic extinct marsupials and birds which apparently died in their hundreds.' (Brown 1894) Of inestimable scientific value, the lake floor was declared a scientific reserve in 1901.

Drillhole intersections have penetrated the geology of the area to depths of around 4 kilometres and have revealed the oldest strata to be of the Cambrian period of about 530 million years ago. Unconformities (major time intervals where no rocks are present) represent periods of no deposition or weathering. Geological strata in the northeastern deserts have been identified into five, unconformity bounded sediment 'packets' superimposed above the other. Each is a distinct depositional entity and occupies a separate sedimentary basin. In order of antiquity, the five entities include the Warburton Basin (570 -345 million years), Cooper and Pedirka Basins (280 -195 million years), Simpson Desert Basin (230 -195 million years), Eromanga Basin (190-90million years) and the Cainozoic Basin (50-1.8 million years). (Tyler *et al* 1990, pp. 2-4)

Notably, the area has the largest hydrocarbon deposit on the Australian continent, discovered from 1963 onwards. The oil and gas fields of the Permian Cooper Basin and the oil fields of the Mesozoic of the Central Eromanga Basin supply natural gas and prolific quantities of hydrocarbons annually. Despite high exploration costs caused by the remoteness and difficulty of terrain, the reserves are economically valuable and a major Australian energy resource.

On the surface of this rich and ancient geology, a range of landscapes frame the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. Salt lakes abound in the southern part of the region. The largest of these, Lake Eyre, lies to the west of the Birdsville Track. It provides a terminal drainage basin fifteen metres below sea level for the Lake Eyre Basin, one of the world's largest inland drainage systems, covering approximately 1,400,000 square kilometres of Australia. In Queensland, the Mulligan and Diamantina watercourses drain across into the Warburton-Macumba and Kallacooah creek systems into Lake Eyre. Water from peak monsoonal rains flow south through the Thompson and Barcoo rivers in Queensland becoming the Cooper Creek system into South Australia. In a characteristically arid environment, episodic flooding occurs through a complex myriad of lakes and waterholes along the Cooper at times sufficiently to partly or fully fill the water's final destination in Lake Eyre. Terminal points along the Cooper, where silt is deposited, are found at Barioola, Coongie, Lake Hope/Perigundi, and Lake Eyre. The gradual gradient of the Cooper in a southerly direction is 10 inches to the mile, with shallow flooding over a wide area. The system is characterized by a lack of intervention in the form of dams, weirs or other man made structures. During the 1930s there was the Bradfield Scheme to divert additional eastern rivers in to the area, but it was discredited by Cecil Madigan and Sir Douglas Mawson who pointed out that the scheme would fail because of evaporation rates of large bodies of shallow water. Early seismic shot lines, which disturbed the gradual gradient, affected natural flow. Like Lake Eyre, other salt lakes in the region; namely Kanuka, Palankarinna, Ngapakaldi, Blanche, Callabonna and Frome, are usually dry.

When the Cooper carries water, its course does not have a uniform flow pattern. For hundreds of kilometres coming down through south-western Queensland, its flow is divided into dozens or even hundreds of braided channels, in places spreading out across level flood plains with no perceptible channels at all. This is the Channel Country, lush with

grass after rain, and legendary cattle fattening land. But its shallow channels mean that the water holes are ephemeral, evaporating rapidly after flow ceases. Then for a distance of about sixty kilometres from Nappa Merrie down to Innamincka, the Cooper flows between rocky hills and gathers itself into a single deep channel. The implications of this 'Innamincka choke' are twofold, first in providing the most convenient crossing place for hundreds of kilometres around, and second in creating deep permanent waterholes which have shaped thousands of years of Aboriginal occupation and 130 years of pastoral settlement. The Diamantina also has a similar pattern, narrowing down to just two channels at Birdsville, whose location was also determined by its convenient crossing place and reliable water source.

Downstream from Innamincka the Cooper branches again, and the northern outflow of the north-west branch episodically spreads out into a complex series of freshwater shallow lakes known as the Coongie Lakes. Sequential flooding through the major water bodies of the Coongie Lake system provides vast ephemeral floodplain areas abundant in waterbirds, fish, frogs, macroinvertebrates, zooplankton and phytoplankton. The landscape is an intricate complex of floodplain and dune fields the latter running 12-20 degrees west of north unless interrupted by the incidence of floodplains. Dryland and wetland habitats occur as floods and dry spells succeed each other. Both terrestrial and aquatic environments within the Coongie Lakes support complex and diverse flora and fauna. The concentration of birds in the Coongie Lakes area when water is abundant is spectacular, with over 70 species of birds recorded. Along the permanent Kudriemitchie waterhole are found eight species of frogs whose greatest activity (and noise) occurs when summer torrential rains fall in the region.

The Cooper Creek floodplain and part of the sandy country of the Kanowana Block between the two tracks form part of the Coongie Lakes Wetland, listed under the Ramsar Convention for Wetlands of International Importance. There are a number of vulnerable native species in the region, including the Kowari, a medium sized mammal weighing up to 120 grams, the Kultarr (*Antechinomys laniger*) a mouse sized carnivore, the Ooari or Fawn Hopping Mouse (*Notomys cervinus*), the Grey Grass Wren (*Amytornis goyderi*) and Mount Gason Wattle (*Acacia pickardii*).

The sandy deserts, typified by the Strzelecki and Simpson dune fields, provide sections of the two tracks with a challenging experience for the traveller. In fact both tracks have moved in response to the movement of the sand dune areas. Tales of sandstorms that last for days are frequent along both tracks, when vehicle and beast are buried and visibility is reduced to zero.

Climate

The climate is characteristic of the central Australian desert. At Birdsville Police Station and Moomba Airport, the weather records over the past twenty years show nearly-identical maximum summer temperatures of about 49.5°C, and minimum winter temperatures of about minus 1.5°C. The entire region has an average annual rainfall below 150mm, or six inches, making it one of the driest regions on earth. By comparison, average annual evaporation is more than 3,000mm, so all surface water in the region is extremely ephemeral. The average rainfall is spread throughout the year, because the region can receive winter rain from the weather systems of the Southern Ocean coast, but is far

enough north to receive summer rain from monsoonal depressions coming down from the tropics.

However, average rainfall is almost irrelevant in this region, because the whole period of European occupation has been characterised by marked variations in rainfall. These occur in cycles, not regular enough to permit prediction, but frequently following patterns in which there may be from say three to eight consecutive years of abundant rain, followed by a similar period of devastating drought. The region often sees huge floods, and other years in which almost no rain falls at all. The failure of the rain usually led to huge stock losses; on Kanowana station in 1897, only half an inch (12mm) of rain was recorded in the course of the year. At the end of the year, the manager reported that about 15,000 cattle had died of starvation. (Cooper 1965, p. 48)

Much of the region's water comes from rain which falls far away. The Diamantina and Cooper systems rise in higher rainfall areas of north-west and central Queensland, and these unpredictable long-distance seasonal flows provide most of the water that enters the region and fills the overflow lakes. Exceptional floods like those of 1949 and 1974 usually occur when tropical cyclones or rain depressions inundate the Queensland catchments, although on the flat terrain the resulting flood is a leisurely event, taking weeks to work its way down the channels.

These fluctuations in rainfall have been the principal determinant of the fortunes of grazing industry, the major form of economic activity in the region for most of the period since European occupation. The economic implications of the fluctuations are dramatic: in good seasons there is good feed and water over almost all of the region; in bad seasons there is almost no feed or water at all. Great droughts have occurred at intervals averaging roughly twenty years: in the 1840s, 1860s and 1880s, at the turn of the twentieth century, during the First World War, the late 1920s and the Second World War.

For a century these climatic variations were incomprehensible, but in recent decades meteorologists have achieved some understanding of Australia's climatic extremes, after recognising how they relate to events in neighbouring parts of the world. These cycles relate to patterns of air circulation across the South Pacific, driven by ocean surface temperatures. In what we regard as a normal year, vigorous circulation from the Pacific drives humid air over Australia, and rainfall is high. In some years for reasons unknown there occurs a phenomenon called *El Nino* in which eastern Pacific waters become warmer, the trade winds lose energy, and Australia and South-east Asia experience drought. When established, this pattern usually persists for a few years. (Colls & Whittaker 1990, pp. 77-79) While this Southern Oscillation is still only partially understood, it sheds some light on the mystifying cycles of prosperity and disaster which shaped the pastoral industry throughout most of Australia.

Vegetation

Lacking high mountains and far from the sea, with its low, erratic and non-seasonal rainfall, the north-east region supports only a scattered and intermittent plant cover; meagre vegetation is the norm over relatively large areas. One recent study identified four vegetation habitats which characterise most of the region: dunefield, floodplain, gibber plain and salt lake. (Wiltshire & Schmidt 1997, pp. 3-4) The vegetation however, has

undoubtedly changed since European settlement. Once some areas of the region were covered by mulga scrub, but this has been much reduced by a century of rabbit infestation. (Gee 2000) Large trees, usually eucalypts and acacias, are found only along major creek lines: river red gum (*Eucalyptus camadulensis*) beside the permanent waterholes of Cooper Creek, and coolibahs (*Eucalyptus coolibah*) beside creek channels and on floodplains everywhere in the region, even forming areas of scrubland around the Coongie lakes. In the Channel country, outwash areas regularly inundated with floods from the high rainfall country of northern Queensland support ephemeral mixed grasses, saltbush, nitrebush, coolibahs and a wide range of herbaceous species. Polygonum grows in dense thickets along waterholes and flood channels.

Away from the creek channels, over most of the land there are no trees, sparse acacia and other scrubby bushes forming the only vegetation above ankle height. Canegrass and spinifex grow in the sand dune country. For most of the year the gibber plains are completely bare of vegetation. Indeed, much of the region has little visible vegetation, although after rain most areas will be covered briefly in opportunistic plants, some of them, like Sturt's Desert Pea, providing a vivid display of flowers.

Over most of the country, vegetation comes and goes with the rainfall fluctuations, causing dramatic change in the appearance of the land. Sturt described the utterly bare landscape of the north-east in horrified language during the drought of the mid-1840s:

We had penetrated to a point where water and feed had both failed From the summit of a sandy undulation close upon our right, we saw that the ridges extended northwards in parallel lines beyond the range of vision, and appeared as if interminable. To the eastward and westward they succeeded each other like the waves of the sea my companion involuntarily uttered an exclamation of amazement when he first glanced his eye over it. 'Good Heavens', said he, 'did ever man see such country?' (Sturt 1849. pp. 262-63)

A hundred years later, George Farwell visited the same landscape when it was flourishing and green during the great inundation of Lake Eyre, and described it as: 'a flower garden - mile upon mile of yellow, purple, green luxuriance.' (Farwell 1949, p. 79) These extreme and unpredictable changes have dominated all aspects of life in the north-east for the last 150 years, and probably much longer.

Historic Theme 2.1: Living as Australia's Earliest Inhabitants

The indigenous peoples of the north east of South Australia were made up of a network of fourteen or so tribes with complex and intricate kinships identified through common languages in the Lake Eyre Basin and adjoining areas. Tribal areas were strictly observed in terms of hunting but the boundaries of each tribal area were not clearly delineated and were sometimes shared for ritual and foraging activities, subject to protocols. In the top end of the state, the Yawarawarrka and Ngamini occupied the areas north of the Cooper Creek, and the Yadruwantha around Innamincka and south of the town. The Strzelecki Track traverses territory once occupied by the Yadruwantha, Wadikali, Maljamngapa and Yadliyawara peoples. (Hercus 1990, p. 152) To the north of the Yadliyawara, the Adnjamathanha and Pirlatapa occupied the areas west and north of Lake Frome, while

further to the west a number of tribes; the Kuyani, Dieri, Tirari, Arabana and Wangkangurru occupied the areas around Lake Torrens and Lake Eyre.

Luise Hercus describes how the indigenous people who lived in the deserts belonged to a number of sub-groups of linguistic groups of the 'big language family' covering most of Australia, Pama Nyungan. The tribes lived in a matrilineal moiety system, in which there was no desert or wasteland, with everything in their environment 'belonged' both in custom and mythology of every day life. Traditional life was lived in a landscape that identified people closely with geographical features, plants and native animals. Hercus explains:

The expression 'History Time' was used in the north east deserts for the concept of 'Dreamtime'. The Ancestors of the History Time are associated with prominent features of the landscape, they traversed the land in their travels and various happenings on these journey s are reflected in the landscape. This however cannot be viewed simplistically. There is not a one to one relationship between the myth and the land: one single myth may refer to two different areas, and one single prominent place may have a number of myths associated with it. Some Ancestors are major Cult Heroes, they travel afar and their adventures are celebrated in long song cycles and ritual, often in more than one language. Thus the Urumbula describes the return journey of Malbunga, the Native Cat Ancestor and his group from Port Augusta to Alice Springs. This song cycle is entirely in Aranda. Each group through whose territory the myth passed, had its own section, and there would be great meetings where the whole cycle would be performed. (Strehlow 1970) Similarly the Mindiri Emu ritual and song cycle united all the people from the Wadrawadrinna Waterhole southwest of Innamincka as far as the Lower Cooper. A Duck Egg cycle belonged to all the Cooper people including those further up on the Wilson River. A Wangkumara man, the late George McDermott, could still 'call all the country', he could intone all the names of the sites for this cycle, which formed part of an increase ritual. (Hercus 1990, p. 155)

The Mound Springs were obviously a valuable resource to indigenous people in the region. Before the arrival of Europeans in the mid-nineteenth century the land supported a small population of people whose way of life depended on the mound springs and the waterholes, and whose mythology reflected the importance of these places. Their ancestors had lived in the land when it received much more rain and was far more fertile, covered in savannah grasslands supporting the Australian megafauna, large grazing marsupials up to the size of cattle. Like the ancient mound springs, these animals were extinct long before Europeans arrived, and both the climate and landscape had changed.

In the Simpson Desert, the Wangkangurru lived without permanent surface water. They survived by ranging across the swamps and claypans after rain and were able to prolong surface water supply by building dams across the deeper claypans to retain water. When this water ran out, they camped near native wells that provided water of varying quality, eating small marsupials and other animals:

We had meat and we were satisfied. We weren't really worrying about food, not like today when people eat every five minutes. We had plenty of water. There were a lot

of humpies there and we all got water from the well, we had a big camp there. (Hercus 1990, p.154)

We now know that the Aboriginal population seen by the earliest European travellers in the area from the 1840s onward was already severely depleted by a severe wave of smallpox which had swept through eastern Australia before Europeans entered much of the region, perhaps in about 1830. (Campbell 2002, pp. 125-135)

The nature of the land and its climate meant that the places in the region where people can live for extended periods are extremely restricted; essentially the few semi-permanent water holes in the major creeks, and the mound springs. This rule - geographical determinism in its purest form - applied to everyone, ensuring that the coming European settlement of the region would see a closer association between Aboriginal and European people than was the case in most other parts of Australia.

Historic Theme 3.3: Surveying the Continent

The Explorers: South Australia

The formal occupation of the South Australian mainland by Europeans began with the foundation of Adelaide and the proclamation of the Province in December 1836. It was a free enterprise settlement; established under a Royal Order-in-Council and managed by a Board of Colonisation Commissioners to a utopian plan drawn up Edward Wakefield. In some ways it had more in common with seventeenth century Massachusetts or Virginia than with the other Australian colonies with their convicts and soldiers. At the time the new colony was proclaimed, all that was known of South Australia was the coastline charted by Flinders and Baudin in 1802, combined with Charles Sturt's map of the course of the River Murray in 1830, but the appointment of Colonel George Gawler as Governor in 1838 commenced a period of land exploration as the colonial administration sought to learn more about the interior. The pattern of exploration in the eastern colonies had already been established by New South Wales Surveyor-General Major Thomas Mitchell as a series of military-style expeditions in search of watercourses and grazing land. Gawler, a former Indian Army officer and personal friend of Sturt, applied the same principles to the exploration of South Australia. The principal object of exploration was to find good sheep grazing land, for wool production was the most profitable industry in Australia, and one of the best investments possible.

The first inland explorer to be sent north by the new regime was Edward Eyre. In May 1839 he set out from Adelaide and travelled up Spencer Gulf to Mount Arden, the northern-most feature in South Australia named by Flinders thirty-seven years before. (Feeken & Spate 1970, p. 128) That expedition was only a small step into the outback, but was the forerunner of many more. In 1840, Eyre was again sent north by the Northern Exploring Committee, a syndicate of hopeful pastoralists in search of grazing land. He pushed further north past the Flinders Ranges and found a chain of salt lakes - Torrens, Eyre, Blanche, Callabonna and Frome - which he believed to form an impassable obstacle of one continuous horseshoe lake encircling the northern Flinders, a mistake which was to persist for eighteen years. It was a very dry year, and Eyre reported the land inside the horseshoe was a 'dreary waste'. Standing on a small hill near Lake Blanche and looking

north over the Cobbler sandhills, he named his viewpoint Mount Hopeless to sum up what he thought of the region's prospects.

Eyre was followed in 1844 by Sturt, whose aim was to reach the centre of the continent. He travelled a long way east of Eyre's lakes, up the Murray and Darling river system, well into New South Wales. Heading north across the desert in the summer of 1844-45, his expedition was trapped at a waterhole he called Depot Glen until the winter rains came. Then in a series of expeditions northward in the second half of 1845, Sturt first found the Strzelecki Creek - which he named after his colleague, Polish scientist and explorer Paul Edmond de Strzelecki - and the main watercourses feeding Lake Eyre: Cooper Creek, Eyre Creek and the Georgina River. Turned back by the sand dunes of the Simpson Desert, Sturt's party had managed to get much further north than Eyre, but he too returned disillusioned to reinforce Eyre's bleak reports of impassable deserts and country too arid for grazing. In fact Sturt had found the strategic water resources of the region, the permanent waterholes of the Cooper and Strzelecki creeks, but two more decades would elapse before their significance was fully realised. (Feeken, Feeken & Spate 1970; Sturt 1849) No-one had known what to expect in the interior of South Australia, but there were hopes of great rivers and fertile savannah like those in parts of the eastern colonies. There was little to show for ten years of exploration but a crushing sense of disappointment.

There was a pause in the northern exploration program, partly because of these disillusionments, but also because demand for pastoral land was being met from the known land further south. Graziers had been moving north in the footsteps of Eyre from 1839 onward, but there were limits to how fast they could move. One was the pace of government surveys, for orderly land tenure was an important principle of the Wakefield Plan, which frowned on leasehold and encouraged land purchase. Before graziers could buy land in South Australia, they had to wait for surveys to be completed, and these tended to proceed slowly outward in bureaucratic order. In 1839 Anlaby on the Light River - now only an hour's drive from Adelaide - was the frontier of northern settlement, and the surveys crept slowly north as far as the Clare district over the next two years.

The danger with this methodical process was that impatient graziers might simply drive their flocks out beyond the surveys, and occupy outside land without legal entitlement. This practice of 'squatting' was common in New South Wales, and there it led to disputes over land ownership, as well as depriving the colony of revenue. Therefore in 1842 the Legislative Council made the first break from Wakefield's land tenure principles, passing *An Act to Protect the Waste Lands of the Crown from Encroachment, Intrusion and Trespass*. This created Occupation Licences to give pastoralists annual renewable tenure to an area of land which was identified by a system of sight-lines between landmarks rather than a formal survey. (Love 1986, p. 4) This was a rough-and-ready compromise, and a departure from the Wakefield plan, but at least it served notice on the South Australian squatters that their tenure was only temporary, allowed a record to be kept of who was occupying the land, and brought in some licence fees. The Occupation Licences of 1842 accelerated the pace of pastoral settlement. In the four years from 1843 to 1846 the next wave of pastoralists took up much of the better country as far as Wirrabara and Pekina in the southern Flinders Ranges.

The graziers had reached the limit of well-watered land, and were on the verge of the arid country which had received unanimously discouraging reports from all Europeans who

had ever seen it. The problem for pastoralists was that the risks of grazing in the arid lands were so great that they would need a long period to recoup their establishment costs. They were beginning to understand the variability of the seasons, and realised that to obtain and conserve water on the northern runs, they had to invest in wells, tanks, troughs and fencing. Annual leases did not provide sufficient incentive for capital expenditure on this scale.

For ten years, pastoral tenure had been on an annual licence basis, then in 1851 there was a second major revision of pastoral land policy. The *Waste Lands Act* replaced Occupation Licences with Pastoral Leases of fourteen years duration, a system which was to become standard practice in most of the Australian colonies for many decades. This greatly improved the graziers' security of tenure, and reduced some of the risks of their enterprise. An added attraction was an incentive scheme whereby the discoverer of new grazing land received first option to lease it. (Gee 2000, p. 7) This naturally had the effect of blurring the boundary between explorers and graziers. Encouraged by a run of good seasons in the early 1850s, there was a second wave of pastoral expansion into the marginal lands of the Flinders Ranges, to Aroona, Arkaba, Wilpena and Oraparinna. In 1854 the government established Port Augusta at the head of Spencer Gulf to serve the northern runs. By now the frontier of settlement was 400km north of Adelaide, and was still moving north, reaching Beltana in 1854 and Mount Chambers in 1857. The managers of these northern runs made an important discovery when they learned the value of saltbush as stock feed; Eyre, in ruling out the northern plains for grazing, had assumed it was inedible. This improved the outlook for raising healthy sheep in arid conditions, but stock watering and the location of homesteads were still dependent on the discovery of a permanent waterhole in a creek bed.

The Breakthrough of 1858

The 1850s were a time of dramatic pastoral expansion, for several completely independent reasons. First, the seasons were good; the decade saw one of the high-rainfall cycles and South Australia was blessed by abundant water and grass for year after year. Second, the price of wool was high in London, and the business of sheep grazing had never been more profitable. Third the advent of fourteen year Pastoral Leases provided the security of tenure graziers needed to run the risks of taking up outside land. And fourth was the goldrush era providing a sudden increase in Australia's wealth, so the banks could offer abundant finance for grazing ventures.

An expedition in 1856 was to have a profound effect on the future of the South Australian pastoral industry. It was a very good season, and engineer Benjamin Babbage rode over the well-grassed plains north of the Flinders Ranges. He was searching for gold rather than pastoral land, but his report was in glowing contrast to Eyre's account of a 'dreary waste' in the 1840s. Only a few miles from Eyre's Mount Hopeless south-west of Lake Blanche, Babbage discovered two long permanent waterholes in the MacDonnell River which he named Blanchewater and Saint Marys Pool. His observations also led him to believe he could find a way through the impassable 'horseshoe'. A place as attractive as the MacDonnell River was quickly occupied, and in February 1858 Blanchewater Run was taken up by John Baker. (Newland 1960-61) The frontier was now 600km north of Adelaide. Only a few months later Augustus Gregory arrived from Queensland down the Cooper and Strzelecki creeks, having ridden without difficulty through the eastern side of

the 'horseshoe', and the true nature of the lake system became clear. Gregory's first sight of European settlement since leaving the Darling Downs was at Blanchewater homestead. (Feeken & Spate 1970)

The contrasting experiences of the explorers of the 1840s and the 1850s led some later writers to speculate whether Eyre and Sturt were incompetent, or whether Babbage and Gregory were simply lucky. Neither theory is true; everything we know about their expeditions is explained by the effects of the Southern Oscillation. Gregory could not have made it through alive from Queensland in the dry 1840s; on the other hand Sturt would probably have found the Cooper Basin a green paradise in the wet 1850s. Even at the time, thoughtful observers realised that central Australia was obviously subject to markedly different rainfall patterns in different seasons.

Babbage's 1858 expedition was to have another important outcome; he and Police Commissioner Peter Warburton independently saw something unexpected near Lake Eyre South in October 1858: 'some bright green mounds rising out of a saltpan' which 'proved to be a large collection of fine fresh-water springs'. (Harris 1981, p. 26) They had discovered the Mound Springs.

Early the following year, John McDouall Stuart led an expedition north to investigate the new discoveries. He found more springs further east, including Herrgott Springs which he named after his botanist, Joseph Herrgott, and a permanent waterhole in what he called Chambers Creek, but which was soon re-named Stuart Creek. Within only a few months, both the curving north-west trend of the Mound Springs complex and their significance for European settlement had become clear. The springs now became the focus for a new generation of pastoral runs registered with the speed and excitement usually associated with a gold rush. Within two years of Stuart's return in 1859, graziers had taken up Stuart Creek, Finnis Springs, Mount Hamilton, Mount Margaret and Strangways Springs across the south of Lake Eyre. As a result of the events of 1858, the pastoral industry had broken outside the psychological barrier of Eyre's 'horseshoe', the frontier of settlement was now 800km from Adelaide, and a new age in the European occupation of central Australia had commenced.

To the east of Lake Eyre, the Mound Springs had little influence on settlement, for they faded out north of Herrgott Springs. In 1857, government surveyor Samuel Parry was sent to do a triangulation survey of the northern Flinders Ranges to facilitate the registration of pastoral leases. Parry continued on past Herrgott Springs, and by 1858 had busily triangulated his way as far north as Etadunna, well outside the 'horseshoe'. The stone piles he built as trig markers can still be seen throughout the district today. Encouraged by the continuing good seasons, Hack, McDonald and others all set off on private expeditions further north, which resulted in Thomas Elder and Samuel Stuckey leasing the Lake Hope run in 1859, 150km north of Blanchewater. The pastoral occupation of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region had begun.

The Explorers: Queensland

The coast of Queensland was known very early in Australian history, commencing with the voyages of Dutch explorers Willem Jansz in 1606 and Abel Tasman in 1644, followed long after by Cook in 1770 and Flinders in 1802. From 1788 to 1859, Queensland was the

northern part of the colony of New South Wales. Although a convict settlement had been established at Moreton Bay (now Brisbane) from 1824 until 1842, there was very little inland exploration and no significant free settlement there until the 1840s, when a few graziers began to occupy the Darling Downs. In fact, very little had been done to explore the inland of New South Wales until the 1820s and 1830s, when a series of expeditions by John Oxley, Alan Cunningham, Charles Sturt and Thomas Mitchell traced the river systems onto the western plains and into what would become South Australia and Victoria. Little was known about the country further north, but there was a hint of good grazing country in 1841, when hydrographer John Stokes in the *Beagle* charted the coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria, naming the Albert and Flinders river mouths, and exploring a short distance inland, called the well-grassed land between them 'The Plains of Promise'. The name sat on the map of Australia for the next twenty years, a beacon to graziers in the south.

The first expedition to penetrate far into the interior of what is now Queensland was that of Ludwig Leichhardt, who set off from the Darling Downs with seven others in 1844 to travel to the Port Essington military settlement on the north coast of what is now the Northern Territory. His party disappeared for eighteen months and were presumed dead, until at the end of 1845 they walked into Port Essington, having travelled diagonally across a quarter of Australia, following the great east coast river systems, and accurately mapping grazing land, geology and vegetation all the way, with the death of one member of the party to an Aboriginal attack. If Leichhardt had retired then, he would be remembered as a very successful explorer, but he wanted to top that achievement by crossing Australia from east to west. In 1848 he headed west from the Darling Downs again leading a party of seven, this time to disappear forever.

In 1846, Mitchell led an expedition north from the Darling River into the centre of Queensland, the first European party to see the grassy blacksoil plains. He discovered the tangled river system flowing in all directions from the central tablelands, and followed one of the major rivers west and then northwest through lush green pastoral country before turning back. Mitchell must have chanced on the country after recent local rain. He described it as 'the best part of the largest island in the world', and was convinced he had discovered a river which flowed to the north coast of Australia, perhaps providing a transport route across the continent. In his excitement he named it the Victoria, apparently believing it to be the head of the great river mouth in north-western Australia. which Stokes had named in 1839.

Like Eyre's horseshoe lake, Mitchell's Victoria River was another of the great delusions of Australian exploration. The following year his assistant Edmund Kennedy led another official expedition into western Queensland to follow the Victoria to its mouth. From the point where Mitchell had turned back, the river swung immediately to the southwest, joined another large river which Kennedy named the Thomson, and split into braided channels continuing on in the direction of Lake Eyre. Approaching the South Australian border, Kennedy realised he was heading directly for the desolate country Sturt had mapped two years before, and that the river he was following must be the same one that Sturt had named Cooper Creek. The river that Mitchell had called a 'paradise on earth' was part of Sturt's 'earthly hell'. Turning back to Sydney, Kennedy gave Mitchell's 'Victoria' its Aboriginal name Barcoo. (Feeken & Spate 1970; Beale 1970, pp. 90-112)

An expedition in 1856 showed that it was possible to travel long distances across inland Australia without incident. Augustus Gregory, a Western Australian surveyor, led a party from Stokes' Victoria River in the north-west of Western Australia right across northern Australia and then followed Leichhardt's tracks to Brisbane, driving stock all the way. Two years later, he was commissioned by the New South Wales government to trace the missing Leichhardt expedition. He followed Leichhardt's path west from the Darling Downs to the Barcoo, then, finding too little feed to proceed further west, he calmly followed in Kennedy's and Sturt's footsteps down the Cooper and Strzelecki creeks to South Australia, returning home by sea from Adelaide. On 26 June 1858 Gregory astonished the manager at the newly-established Blanchewater homestead by appearing out of the trackless north-east deserts. He had exploded both Eyre's 'horseshoe' and Mitchell's 'Victoria' myths, found that Kennedy's Barcoo was indeed the Cooper, and established the land route between Queensland and South Australia. He proposed the name Cooper River for the watercourse he had followed, but that logical suggestion was ignored. Gregory was arguably the most successful European explorer in Australian history, crossing the continent from west to east and then north to south without fuss or casualties. Because of his quiet success, he is largely unknown, as Duncan Waterson has commented on his achievement: 'Paradoxically it was too successful to be recognised as one of the most significant journeys led by one of the few unquestionably great Australian explorers.' (Feeken & Spate 1970; Waterson 1972, p. 294)

Queensland remained part of the colony of New South Wales until 1859. The New South Wales administration was never very interested in settling the north. It was too far away, too expensive in its infrastructure demands of roads, bridges, wharves and court houses, and it was unnecessary to go to all that trouble while there was still copious grazing land available closer to Sydney. In the New South Wales land system, pastoral leases could only be taken up in those districts which had been declared open. Northern pastoral lands were opened to leasehold at a leisurely pace, and only a few districts in the south-east of Queensland were gazetted for pastoral settlement by the Sydney administration.

The situation changed dramatically when Queensland became a separate colony at the end of 1859. The new Brisbane administration was keen to increase the colony's population and generate income by promoting export industries. The Treasury was also short of cash, and one of the quickest ways for a nineteenth century government to raise revenue was to sell or lease land. In 1860 the Queensland *Lands Act* created 14-year pastoral leases as the standard form of grazing tenure. Gregory was snapped up as the new colony's Surveyor-General. The following year the government, led by grazier Robert Herbert, resumed the practice of opening up land for leasehold in a series of declared districts, but at a much faster rate.

The Kennedy, Maranoa and Mitchell districts were opened in 1861, the Flinders district in the north-west was opened in 1863, and finally in 1864 the Burke and Cook districts were opened, extending the pastoral lands all the way to the north coast. The government threw open the entire west and north of the colony to pastoralists within five years of separate government, in the process creating an extraordinary land rush. About an eighth of the Australian continent was opened to pastoral leases in the colony's first five years, and a great wave of pastoral settlement swept across western and northern Queensland in the early 1860s.

The black soil plains were opened up by the declaration of the Mitchell district for settlement on 1 October 1861, and land was soon taken up as cattle and sheep were driven up from the south. Bowen Downs, Mount Cornish, Enniskillen and Nive Downs stations were all occupied in 1862, pushing pastoral settlement west to the headwaters of Cooper Creek.. The earliest towns in the west, Tambo, Blackall and Aramac, grew up soon after European settlement as commercial centres to service the pastoral industry.

These events were hastened by dramatically increased knowledge of western Queensland, provided by a series of expeditions in 1860-62, coinciding with the release of pastoral lands for leasehold. But these exploring expeditions were not initiated in Queensland, and to understand them we need to return to what was happening in Adelaide and Melbourne.

Across the Continent

The European expeditions in South Australia up to 1858 had been a series of forays originating in Adelaide and extending further and further north into the interior. By that year there was emerging some understanding of the terrain and climate, and a fairly sophisticated awareness of the inland water resources which could sustain exploration even further north. These included the exposure of the 'horseshoe' myth, first tentatively by Babbage in 1856 and then decisively by Gregory in 1858, the Cooper and Strzelecki waterholes discovered by Sturt in 1845, the Mound Springs independently discovered by Warburton and Babbage in 1858, and Stuart Creek the same year.

These developments in geographical knowledge, combined with increased post-goldrush prosperity and a growing spirit of inter-colonial rivalry, sparked off an epic era in Australian exploration. In the space of a few months in 1860, rival expeditions set out northward from Adelaide and Melbourne. These were not simply going out like earlier explorers to push the frontier of settlement a little further into unknown territory; the aim of both was far more ambitious: to cross the continent from the Southern Ocean to the north coast and return. To put the scope of this ambition into perspective, the northernmost expeditions so far, those of Sturt and Warburton, had travelled only about a third of the distance across the continent, and both had been turned back by desert.

The results of these expeditions commencing in 1860 were complex and partly unexpected. The one from Adelaide to the west of Lake Eyre led by Stuart was eventually successful, and brought about pastoral settlement throughout the Mound Springs region, the annexation of the Northern Territory, and ultimately the construction of a telegraph line and a railway. The one from Melbourne to the east of Lake Eyre led by Burke was a disastrous failure, but the reports of the Cooper area and other country traversed by the search expeditions led to pastoral settlement throughout western Queensland, north-west New South Wales and the Cooper basin. From 1861 the European settlement of the South Australian interior diverged along the separate paths established by these two expeditions, and the histories of the Oodnadatta region and the Cooper region went different ways.

John McDouall Stuart was a surveyor by training, and had been a member of Sturt's journey of 1844-46, where despite having been only five years in the colony, he so impressed the veteran army officer Sturt with his bush skills that he was promoted to

second-in-command. Stuart returned to private surveying in Adelaide until 1858, when he was commissioned by a syndicate of graziers to lead an expedition further north beyond Babbage and Warburton's discoveries. His first expedition in 1858 found Stuart Creek, which was to become his base for future expeditions. When he set out again in 1859 he knew of the discovery of the Mound Springs, which changed everything. He found more, including Herrgott Springs, explored the country west of Lake Eyre, then followed the chain of springs north nearly to the site of Oodnadatta, establishing the tactics needed to cross the continent.

In 1859 the South Australian government offered a reward of £2,000 for the first successful crossing to the north coast of Australia. Of course, Gregory had already crossed the continent, but his intelligent use of the watercourses was not what the South Australian government had in mind; their territorial ambitions demanded a confrontation with the unknown desert. Charles Todd, the Director of Telegraphs, had in mind a route for a transcontinental telegraph which would link with an undersea cable to India and Britain. In March 1860 Stuart's fourth expedition, and the first to attempt a transcontinental crossing, left Stuart Creek. They made rapid progress north to the end of the Mound Springs system, across the MacDonnell Ranges, and all the way to Tennant Creek, about two-thirds of the way to the north coast before they were turned back. The fifth expedition was an overt race against the Victorians, for Stuart knew that Burke and Wills had set out in August 1860. In January 1861 he again travelled north the 2,000 kilometres to Tennant Creek and beyond, but again failed to break through to the north coast, and again returned sick and blind in September. Only a month later, in October 1861, Stuart tried again, taking ten men and seventy horses. In June 1862 they broke through to the Roper River, and on 24 July Stuart washed his face in the Arafura Sea east of where Darwin now stands. He had established the definitive route to the north coast. Stuart had never had a death on six expeditions, an enviable record among Australian explorers, but his own health was ruined by his experiences. He retired to England and was dead less than three years after his triumphal return to Adelaide. (Feeken & Spate 1970; Kinhill Stearns 1984; Stuart 1863)

The Burke and Wills Expedition

On 20 August 1860, while Stuart was making his way back from Tennant Creek, the Victorian Exploring Expedition left Melbourne with the intention of crossing the continent to the Gulf of Carpentaria. It was the most lavishly equipped exploration party in Australian history to that time, with nineteen men, twenty-six camels, twenty-three horses and six wagons. The events of what is usually called the Burke and Wills expedition are well known, and need only be summarised briefly here, but the background and motives behind it have rarely been thoroughly scrutinised.

The Burke and Wills expedition was funded by the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society of Victoria, an interesting combination of scientific expertise, grazing interests and political influence. Scientific knowledge was stressed among its aims, and the membership of such eminent figures as botanist Ferdinand von Mueller gave the committee highly respectable credentials. However, the expedition's covert goal was to gather information about grazing land and other resources in the unclaimed strip of territory between South Australia and the Gulf of Carpentaria. The process of drawing colonial boundaries to 1860 had left a slab of land on the north coast of Australia, still

nominally part of New South Wales, which had very little interest in it. This land included Stokes' Plains of Promise. Both South Australia and Queensland had put in bids to the Secretary of State for the Colonies to claim the land, or to divide it between them. Victoria, although the wealthiest of all the colonies after a decade of gold rushes, was frustrated by being the only mainland colony with no adjacent unclaimed land for expansion. The real interests of the Exploration Committee can be seen in Burke's orders and the composition of the party: (a) it was to explore very specifically in the vacant corridor between 138° and 141° longitude, (b) it was to travel fast, and (c) it included no scientifically-qualified people whatever. Its aim was not scientific observation, but to pre-empt the other colonies' claims to the north coast land. (Murgatroyd 2002)

The expedition did reach the north coast, but in every other respect was a catastrophic failure, for two principal reasons. First, its leader, Police Superintendent Robert O'Hara Burke, was monumentally incompetent. He was a product of that heroic age of empire which believed that a gentleman of good breeding with a confident military manner and an impressive beard must make an effective leader. In fact, Burke was notorious among his troopers for being unable to find his way back to camp after a visit to town. Second, the strategy for the expedition - partly directed by the Exploration Committee and partly improvised by the impetuous Burke - was fundamentally flawed, for it involved taking a large well-equipped party and travelling quickly. These things were mutually exclusive, so to achieve quick results Burke split his party, effectively leaving most of it behind, not once but twice. When the expedition's vast resources were finally needed, they were hundreds of miles away.

The lumbering expedition had only reached Menindee on the Darling River by October, so most of their goods and animals were left there under the command of William Wright, with instructions to follow in the next few weeks. Burke and a smaller party travelled north to the country Sturt and Gregory had explored on the Cooper, arriving in mid-November. They were unsuccessful in finding any waterholes to take them further north, so Burke split the party again, choosing a site for a depot - their Camp 65 - on the bank of Bulloo Bulloo waterhole. They were at the furthest point known to Europeans, and Burke's plan involved heading north across the unknown interior at the height of summer. He left William Brahe in charge of the depot with three other men, and taking six camels and a horse, headed north on 16 December 1860 with William Wills the surveyor, John King the camel handler, and Charlie Gray, a burly sailor. Only King had any outback experience. There was confusion about Burke's objective, for he told Brahe that if the party ran short of food, they might head east looking for pastoral settlements in central Queensland. Brahe's instructions were to wait three months and then return to the Darling.

Brahe's party spent the summer at the depot. Wright and the wagons never arrived from the Darling. The Aborigines were friendly, but inclined to steal anything left lying around, so the explorers built a defensive stockade of saplings about 6m square in plan to protect the expedition's supplies, and called it Fort Wills. Brahe waited over four months, long after Burke's food supplies must have been exhausted and his own men were ill with scurvy, then decided Burke's party had gone to Queensland. He packed up the supplies and returned to Menindee as ordered. Before leaving the depot, Brahe buried a cache of food with a note, and blazed a coolibah tree 'DIG UNDER 40 FT W'. Someone also blazed on a branch nearby the dates of the party's stay there: 'DEC 6 1860 - APR 21 1861'. The day was Sunday 21 April 1861.

(There is debate about exactly what Brahe inscribed on the famous tree; 'DIG UNDER 40 FT W' is what John Conrick said he read on the tree when he took up the land in 1873, but the Melbourne Royal Commission evidence recorded the inscription as 'DIG 3 FT NW'. Other variations on these wordings have been recorded in published sources, and it is likely that Alfred Howitt later added to Brahe's inscription. The inscription is no longer legible, although the blaze in the tree bark can still be seen.)

Burke's party travelled nearly due north for eight weeks, and with amazing luck - for their bush skills were negligible - found intermittent water supplies which took them through the Coongie Lakes and the Diamantina Channel Country, over the rugged Selwyn Range and all the way to the north-flowing Flinders River. They were stopped by impassable mangroves before they saw the Gulf of Carpentaria, but on 10 February 1861 they reached tidal salt water and knew they had achieved the expedition's purpose. Now they had to get back to the Cooper in mid-summer. They were all weak, and had eaten more than two-thirds of their food.

The return was a nightmare struggle back along the same path, sick and exhausted, with their animals dying one by one. Gray was caught stealing flour and beaten by Burke. On 17 April Gray died near Coongie Lakes - the extent of the injuries he had received from Burke are open to question - and the others spent a day burying him. On the evening of 21 April the three survivors stumbled into Camp 65 and found it abandoned. They dug up Brahe's note and learned to their horror that he had left only a few hours before - the campfire ashes were still warm!

Burke's party left the following day, planning to make for Blanchewater station, which Burke called Mount Hopeless. They were apparently unable to find the Strzelecki channel which Gregory had followed south three years before, or failed to realise its significance, and headed further west. Turned back from their trek south by desert, Burke's party returned to Cooper Creek. The three survivors spent the next two months on the Cooper, living part of the time with Aboriginal groups. In another terrible irony, Brahe's party returned to check Camp 65 and left again, unaware that Burke and his party were only a few kilometres away. Burke and perhaps the others seem to have gone into emotional decline, consumed with irrational resentment at the failure of the expedition. Although starving, they abandoned the bodies of their last camels, and Burke died of malnutrition with his revolver in his hand beside a waterhole teeming with birdlife. He and Wills were both dead by late June, and only John King survived, living with Aborigines until Alfred Howitt's relief party arrived three months later. On 15 September 1861 Howitt's surveyor, Edwin Welch, was riding along the Cooper when he came upon an emaciated, filthy, naked man. 'Who in the name of wonder are you?' Welch asked King incredulously. (Murgatroyd 2002, p. 289) It was not the end to the Exploring Expedition that the Royal Society of Victoria had hoped for.

They had achieved one of the worst disasters in the history of Australian exploration. Not only Burke, Wills and Gray were dead; in all there were seven deaths on the expedition, from malnutrition and exhaustion. By comparison, 1848 had been the *annus horribilis* of Australian land exploration, when seven disappeared without trace on Leichhardt's attempt to cross the continent from east to west, and ten including Kennedy died on Cape

York Peninsula in an expedition which discovered little more than that it was very difficult to take drays through rainforest.

All Burke had achieved was to travel to a part of Australia already reached along more sensible routes by both Leichhardt and Gregory. The most important outcome of the catastrophe was a year of inspired exploration, as John McKinlay from South Australia, Alfred Howitt from Victoria, and Frederick Walker and William Landsborough from Queensland led four separate search expeditions - which were also unashamedly reconnoitering for grazing land - in the process comprehensively and successfully exploring many thousands of square kilometres of inland Queensland, reaching the Gulf of Carpentaria without difficulty, and without a single casualty. Among their finds was the other great Queensland river feeding Lake Eyre - and traditional Aboriginal trading route - at first rather dully named Mueller's Creek by McKinlay in honour of Ferdinand von Mueller, then exquisitely re-named the Diamantina River after the wife of the Queensland governor, the Contessa Diamantina Roma Bowen. The grazing resources of western Queensland and the Cooper basin were established beyond doubt by these expeditions, and in 1862 the Queensland administration pressed successfully to have their border shifted westward from 141° to 138° longitude. The following year South Australia was granted the Northern Territory, taking in all the country to the west of that line.

Victoria gained nothing. Perhaps if the Royal Society had chosen any of these four explorers as leaders of their 1860 Exploring Expedition - or Gregory, Stuart or Warburton - the Channel Country and Mount Isa Mines might today be part of Victoria. The Victorian government held a Royal Commission into the affair, which was a predictable exercise in allocating blame among the leaders of the expedition, most of whom were dead. The remains of Burke and Wills were brought back to Melbourne for a heroic funeral in January 1863. The death of Charlie Gray was mentioned only in passing at the Royal Commission, and his remains were left in the desert, the nature of his wounds perhaps too embarrassing for scrutiny. After all, he was not a gentleman.

Historic Theme 3.5: Developing Primary Production

The Early Pastoral Industry

Burke and Wills made a sensational news story, assisted by the scriptural overtones of their desert sufferings, betrayal by followers and sacrifice in the wilderness. By the time they were buried in 1863, every grazier in Australia must have read the newspaper reports of their travels, and the published accounts of Howitt, McKinlay and Landsborough. The waterholes of Cooper Creek, the Diamantina and the Coongie Lakes were household words throughout Australia. Not surprisingly, there was a new pastoral rush for the Cooper basin.

While the land had been made famous by Burke's death, no-one followed his route to it. Gregory had established how to reach the region - down the Cooper from Queensland, or up the Strzelecki from South Australia - and these two watercourses became the principal routes for driving stock into the region. The rush did not begin immediately, for the 1860s saw the commencement of another drought cycle, and the years 1864-66 were almost completely dry across the north. The graziers who had rushed to take up leases around Lake Eyre a few years earlier saw their investments devastated by what became known as

the Great Drought, although there would be greater ones in the future. The climate had been through a full Southern Oscillation cycle since the first explorers saw it, and now the country again looked as Eyre had described it: 'The optimism of the 'fifties was quite dispelled, and Eyre's description of the country as he saw it in 1840 was made manifest before everyone's eyes'. (Newland 1960-61, p. 18) Tens of thousands of stock died, and nearly all the northern runs, including the sadly-named Lake Hope, were abandoned for the rest of the 1860s.

The end of the drought was signalled by some epic feats of droving. The Moravian and Lutheran missionaries took up Kopperamanna and Killalpaninna on outflow lakes of the Cooper in 1866 and 1867; while their principal business was saving souls, they also stocked the land as grazing properties, and drove sheep up from the south as the drought was breaking. The Strzelecki stock route had first been used as a route from Queensland to South Australia by Gregory in 1858, but popularly, the title of 'first' is attributed to Harry Redford, a cattle duffer in 1870. To this time, pastoralists were still wary of the area because of the uncertainty of water supply during the 1860s drought. Redford put together a mob of 1,000 head of cattle belonging to the large Bowen Downs station in central Queensland. Instead of taking the stolen stock to the east coast, he decided to disappear south into the Channel Country to escape detection and walked the cattle down the Cooper and the Strzelecki watercourses to South Australia. He was lucky, travelling on the wave of a good season over country that for years had been inhospitable. At Blanchewater Station he sold the stock under an assumed name, and travelled on to Adelaide to catch a steamer to Melbourne. Unfortunately for Redford, the stolen stock included a conspicuous pedigreed white bull, which had received so much publicity that it was recognised even in South Australia. He was arrested in Victoria. Harry Redford's exploits became an outback legend, especially when an admiring jury found him not guilty at the conclusion of his subsequent trial for cattle stealing, to the outrage of the presiding judge. (Tolcher 1996, p. 46). Today, a statue of the white bull stands in the main street of Aramac, near Bowen Downs. Rolf Boldrewood's novel *Robbery Under Arms* is partly based on this incident, so the historical Harry Redford and the fictional Captain Starlight have become almost synonymous in the public mind. Redford's clandestine journey confirmed to graziers that in a good season the route was feasible for droving stock from the Cooper to markets in South Australia.

While Redford is the most famous of the early overlanders, he was not alone. A few months after Redford, George MacGillivray and an Aboriginal stockman named Jerry rode from near the Gulf of Carpentaria down to south-western Queensland in the summer of 1870-71. They became hopelessly lost and stumbled through the stony deserts east of the Diamantina for weeks, then emerged into the valley of Cooper Creek. MacGillivray wrote a newspaper article about his experience, contributing to the chorus singing the praises of the Cooper:

The gum trees are the finest I have ever seen, the country on both sides being well suited to either sheep or cattle. What puzzled me afterwards was to find old settlements at the north of Lake Torrens on such miserable country, and such fine country on Cooper's Creek left vacant, where there is so much finely-grassed country, and to all appearance a never-failing supply of water. (Tolcher 1986, p. 47)

Ralph and John Milner began a famous journey from the Cooper with a less happy outcome. By Ralph Milner's own account, he had heard that the South Australian government had offered a reward of £2,000 for the first sheep to be driven overland to Darwin. They set out from Adelaide in 1863 intending to follow Stuart's route, were delayed by the Great Drought, and were still grazing their sheep around Bucaltaninna in 1868. They assembled a droving party of 14 with 25 dogs and 300 horses, and 4,000 (some accounts say 7,000) sheep, partly their own and others bought from the missionaries at Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna. While there, Ralph Milner's wife died and is buried at Killalpaninna mission. They left the Cooper in September 1870, travelling down to Herrgott Springs and along the Overland Telegraph survey. John Milner died when he was speared at Attack Creek in the Northern Territory. Ralph and his surviving party reached Darwin with 2,000 sheep in 1872 to learn that there was no reward; either it was only a rumour, or the offer had been withdrawn during their long journey! At least the sheep brought a good price from the telegraph contractors. (Pearce 1980; Litchfield 1983, p. 100; Deckert 2000)

With the return of good seasons, graziers began to move into the region. Debney and Woodford leased Mundowdna near Herrgott Springs and Etadunna further north. Thomas Elder made large investments in the area, taking up Manuwalkaninna run in 1868, buying Blanchewater and restocking Lake Hope by 1872, and taking up Monte Collina on the Strzelecki in 1873. These were to become the basis of the Beltana Pastoral Company's holdings. The construction of the Overland Telegraph Line probably helped settlement in the north-east. Constructed in 1870-72, the line ran north from Port Augusta to Herrgott Springs, then headed west along the Mound Springs, following Stuart's route to the new port at Palmerston (now Darwin) in the Northern Territory. While it did not pass through the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region, it brought some government infrastructure, traffic and better communications to part of the north-east, and established Herrgott Springs as a regional administrative centre.

The Cooper attracted most interest among the graziers, and there was active competition for creek frontage to the deep waterholes of the Innamincka choke. Robert Bostock and John Conrick both moved stock onto properties beside superb Cooper waterholes in 1873, calling them Innamincka and Nappa Merrie respectively, and rode to the nearest Queensland Lands Office in Charleville to register their leases. Between them was Cullamurra, a block of land reserved by the South Australian government in 1867 for a mission to the Aborigines as an expression of gratitude for their treatment of Burke, Wills and King. But the missionaries for whom the land was intended had settled at Killalpaninna instead, so in 1875 it was leased to Edward Laughton, wholesale butcher of Port Adelaide. However, Laughton was nervous about whether his land was in South Australia or Queensland, and left the land unstocked until it was surveyed.

Further afield, runs were being taken up along the Strzelecki at Tinga Tingana in 1874, Clifton Hills and Pandie Pandie on either side of Goyder Lagoon in 1876, and in the far north-east at Cadelga in 1877 and Cordillo Downs in 1878. As the run of good seasons went on, Cowarie and Muloorina over near Lake Eyre were stocked, and Tirrawarra and Coongie in the Cooper lakes. In Queensland, Glengyle (now Roseberth) on the Diamantina was taken up in 1874 and Cacoory and Arrabury in 1877. In later years as the nature of the Channel Country became clear, it was the south-west of Queensland that attracted most attention from graziers; Sidney Kidman noted 'how the Queensland-South

Australia border fairly accurately marked the limit of good land.' (Bowen 1987, p. 73) In the Queensland tradition of naming grazing districts after explorers, the far south-west was called the South Gregory district. The commencement of leasing there seems never to have been officially gazetted, but after 1864 all of western Queensland was available for pastoral occupation. There was plenty of grazing land further east, so it was nine years before demand for land and good seasons combined to bring graziers to the Cooper.

The surveyors arrived in 1879, with William Barron working up from Parry's survey of the Flinders Ranges. Falling ill, he was replaced by August Poeppel, who stolidly worked on the Border Survey for several years, triangulating the line up to the northern border of South Australia at 26°S latitude, then west and across the Simpson Desert. When Poeppel reached the Cooper, Bostock found to his disgust that he had been paying rent to the Queensland government for six years on land that was in South Australia! Unwilling to accept the more onerous South Australian lease conditions, he abandoned Innamincka, and it was taken up by William Campbell. Conrick must have been better at estimating longitude, for Nappa Merrie was just inside Queensland as he had believed. Conrick, Bostock and Campbell were all Victorians attracted by the reports of the Burke and Wills search expeditions. (Litchfield 1983; Pearce 1978 & 1980; Tolcher 1986)

What is apparent from all the explorers' and early pastoralists' diaries is that they were dependent on local Aboriginal knowledge for their water and feed. MacGillivray only survived his desert ride because of the bush skills of his companion Jerry. From the beginnings of pastoral settlement, there were Aboriginal people working in the industry. On some properties there was violent conflict, but on many others there was accommodation between graziers and traditional owners, as the conditions of grazing leases required. As homesteads were established near existing water sources, some Aborigines were absorbed into the running of the station. They were valued by the pastoralists for their knowledge of the land and its water and other resources.. Many Aborigines became expert at horseriding and were valued for their skill at working with cattle. It was common for Aboriginal family groups to live a semi-traditional life, staying at homesteads or outstations for part of the year, and travelling to visit family and take part in ceremonies at other times.

In the early years, both sheep and cattle were driven north. Elder and the majority of the graziers preferred to stock with sheep, and some of the early homesteads like Etadunna had large impressive woolsheds. There were several reasons for this, first the profitability of wool growing, widely recognised as one of the best investments possible in a country like Australia where land was cheap. Wool also had the advantage of being a durable commodity, not vulnerable to spoiling or deterioration on the long wagon trip to Port Augusta and the much longer sea trip to London. The principal alternative was grazing beef cattle, but this was much less attractive to land owners. There was simply not enough market for beef; before the advent of freezing in the 1880s, meat had to be eaten fresh, salted or canned. Canned and salted meats had a small market, but they were unattractive to consumers, subject to high spoilage rates, and made little profit. Fresh meat had to be driven to market and then fattened again before slaughtering, and there were simply not enough customers in the colony to provide a profitable market. (Farrer 1980)

On the other hand, cattle were tougher and less labour-intensive, and could defend themselves against dingoes. A few runs like Innamincka were grazing cattle from the outset, although in bad years the beef market became inaccessible because of drought on the stock routes, and the owners were reduced to slaughtering stock for the value of their tallow and hides. As time went on, most of the region's grazing industry was to convert from wool to beef; by the time the Dog Fence was built across the continent in the twentieth century, the land north of the fence was almost exclusively cattle country. One effect of the change to beef was to reduce the region's population, as sheep required a lot more tending, and the stations that ran them employed many more shepherds and station hands.

The graziers took time to become accustomed to the arid region. In the early decades there was a tendency to stock the country when it was lush after rain, and then keep the stock on the land for too long as it dried out, with resultant over-grazing that damaged the vegetation and the soil. The Surveyor-General's Department, which regulated pastoral leases, introduced regulations governing stocking levels which many graziers considered too onerous, and the debate about over-stocking persisted for decades. But regardless of how well the graziers believed they were managing the land, they always tended to be over-optimistic, and every drought caught most of them with dying stock, and wind-blown sand drifting across what had been grazing paddocks a few months before.

The region's isolation made the colonial border almost irrelevant. From the adjacent Cooper Creek properties of Innamincka and Nappa Merrie, straddling the border, it was 600km to Port Augusta, the nearest port in South Australia, and twice that distance to Ipswich, the nearest port in Queensland. While the South Gregory graziers paid their annual rents in Charleville, they were economically part of South Australia, for that was the way their cattle and wool bales went to market.

Over time, the size of the grazing runs became steadily larger. Clifton Hills, Cordillo Downs, Innamincka and Nappa Merrie all began as small blocks surrounded by many competitors, but as time went on, because of better water resources or shrewder management, they survived where others failed, and gradually bought out the neighbours' land, growing until they dominated the surrounding district. The practices of large companies also accelerated this consolidation; the Beltana Pastoral Company added Cordillo Downs to its holdings and converted it to sheep grazing in the 1880s, over the next twenty years merging it with Cadelga and Haddon Downs to form one of the largest properties of the region. A generation later, Sidney Kidman bought up a sweep of properties along the Diamantina in Queensland and on down the Birdsville Track to Marree, converting them all to cattle grazing and centralising their management at a few homesteads.

Historic Theme 8.6.7: Running Missions to Australia's Indigenous People

Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna Missions

One unexpected outcome of the Burke and Wills disaster was the establishment of evangelical Christian missions among the Aboriginal people of the north-east. The two missions first established in 1866 in the wake of the Great Drought in the Cooper Creek area arose apparently independently from an impulse on the part of both missionaries of

the Moravian Brethren sect at Herrnhut in Germany, and a joint venture between the two branches of the Lutheran Church in South Australia which sought support from the Hermannsburg Mission Society in Hanover. In 1862 the Moravian Brethren, moved by the accounts of sympathetic treatment King had received from Aborigines, negotiated with the South Australian government for land to establish a mission in the area. There was a long delay, partly because of drought in the north, but they were eventually granted the Cullamurra Mission Block on Cooper Creek. A missionary party of four pastors from the European headquarters were sent to Victoria in 1866, where the Moravian Brethren Mission Society in Melbourne directed them to Cullamurra. The object of their mission was:

... to bring the blessings of the Gospel to the still numerous tribes of the newly-discovered Burke-Land and Albert-Land, before the white settlers arrive with their diseases and brandy. (*Der Australische Christenbote* 1862, quoted in Pearce 1980, p. 97)

On reaching Blanchewater, the Moravians learnt that there was a Lutheran missionary party with pastors from Hanover and South Australia a few weeks behind them with similar intentions. The situation had also changed because of the racial violence which had broken out on Blanchewater, and the police and local Protector of Aborigines advised them not to go as far north as Cullamurra, where there was as yet no European presence. The Moravians were persuaded to go to Lake Hope instead, where there was a police camp. When the Lutheran missionaries arrived, the two missionary teams amicably established themselves 16km apart in Dieri land on two outflow lakes of the Cooper floodplain, called Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna. (Proeve 1953) The Moravians had made arrangements to distribute government rations to the Aborigines and in early February 1867 established a ration depot on the south east shore of Lake Kopperamanna on a little knoll overlooking the lake, several hundred metres south of where the Cooper-Kopperamanna channel enters. Kopperamanna was an old trade centre for the Lake Eyre clans where they met periodically to confer and barter in an extensive system of inter-tribal communication. Alfred Howitt explained the meaning of the place:

... the name Kopperamanna is a mutilation of the true name Kappara-mara, from Kappara meaning 'hand', and Mara meaning, 'root'. But Marae also means "hair" of the head, which is connected with the head as the fingers are with the hand. The meaning of the name really is, that as the fingers all come together in the "root" of the hand, so do the native tribes come together at Kopperamanna to confer together, and especially to exchange their respective articles of barter. Kopperamanna is, therefore, one of the trade centres for the tribes allied to the Dieri. (Howitt 1908, pp. 714-715)

The Lutherans also established the Hermannsburg Mission on Lake Killalpaninna in January 1867 and erected a stone store and some huts of bush materials. While some Dieri welcomed the missionaries, others were not happy at their intrusion, and a large group from surrounding clans gathered in the district in February-March 1867. According to informants, they were intent on a large-scale rebellion to clear the Europeans from their territory. After a few hostile demonstrations, the police moved their camp to Kopperamanna, but in May 1867 both missions withdrew to Bucaltaninna, Milner's old stock camp south-east of Killalpaninna. A month later the Lutherans withdrew from the

district completely on the orders of the Evangelical Lutheran Society. The next year the Moravians too abandoned Bucaltaninna and left the district permanently. The Lutherans returned to Killalpaninna for a few years, but in 1871 abandoned it a second time, disillusioned by poor feed and water, and lack of response from the Dieri. A small settlement remained at Bucaltaninna for a few more years, but the Hermannsburg Mission Society re-directed its main efforts to a new site which they called Hermannsburg on the Finke River in central Australia. (Pearce 1980)

Killalpaninna revived in 1878 under the auspices of the South Australian Immanuel Synod Mission. Following good rains Pastors Flierl and Vogelsang returned to the north, and shifted the Bucaltaninna settlement back to the shore of Lake Killalpaninna, where they established the Bethesda Mission, building a handsome mud brick church with a 13m tower. They also set the mission up on a commercial basis, registering the Killalpaninna pastoral lease. Violent conflict in the district was over, and many Dieri were happy to live in close proximity to the mission station. An inspection of the mission in 1882 recorded twenty-one buildings including the church, missionaries' house, a school, three staff houses, five dwellings for Christian Dieri, separate dormitories for single men and women, and all the usual outbuildings of a pastoral property: kitchen, eating house, smithy and tack shed. This second revival of Killalpaninna would be a remarkable success, and a major settlement in the region for the next twenty years. (Pearce 1980)

Etadunna sheep run had been taken up nearby in the 1870s, and the missionaries cooperated with the lessees in building the Etadunna shearing shed, which was shared between the two properties. Kopperamanna remained in use as an outstation, and Pastor Vogelsang moved his family into a new mud brick house there in 1895. The property was increased in value when the government sank the Kopperamanna bore in 1897 on the Birdsville-Marree stock route, and it became a horse change station on the mail route. The drought at the turn of the twentieth century hit the mission badly and the pastoral activity began to sink into unprofitability and inefficiency. The mission sheep were devastated by drought and dingoes in 1897, the number falling from 28,000 to 6,000 in only a few months.

The mission's role as a rations station continued, and the following years saw a dwindling number of missionary families and an aging Dieri community living an austere life together, still dominated by strict and conservative Lutheran teachings. In 1910 there were eighteen deaths at the mission and only one birth. A Royal Commission into Aboriginal Welfare in 1914 was not impressed by the mission's work. Kopperamanna was abandoned by the missionaries in 1916. The following year the school was closed by the government, along with all other German schools in South Australia. To wind down the mission, the church reduced the never-generous ration issue, forcing the Aboriginal people to disperse. Bethesda Mission was effectively closed by 1920 when Lance Powell took over the pastoral lease, only to abandon it in the drought of 1929. A small number of mostly elderly Aboriginal people continued to live intermittently at the Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna settlements through the 1930s, the last probably abandoning them and moving to Finnis Springs or Marree about the time of the Second World War. (Proeve 1945; Pearce 1980)

Historic Theme 3.7: Establishing Communications**The Overland Telegraph Line**

The return of the rain in 1866 did not bring investors rushing back to the scene of the disaster, and most of the region was to remain empty of graziers and their stock for the next few years. Instead, the next development was an engineering project, which would have a profound impact on European settlement in the region: nothing less than the construction of an Overland Telegraph line more than 3,000km from Adelaide to Darwin.

Stuart's successful journey to the north coast in 1862 had altered the shape of Australian geopolitics. Previously, the largely unknown mass of the continent north of the 26th parallel had been part of New South Wales. There had been a number of military settlements along the north coast from 1824 onward, but the last of these at Port Essington was abandoned in 1849. In 1860 when the race to the north coast began, the only Europeans living in the entire northern half of the Australian continent were a handful of recently-arrived graziers and gold miners in central Queensland and the Kimberleys.

Stuart changed all that. By demonstrating that it was possible to travel from Adelaide to the Arafura Sea and come back alive, he had given South Australia a stronger claim to the northern lands than either New South Wales which owned them, or Queensland which had hopes to acquire them. On 6 July 1863, the imperial government annexed the Northern Territory to South Australia. In 1864 a settlement was established at Escape Cliffs at the mouth of the Adelaide River. The site was useless as a port, and for five years the government dithered over where to establish another settlement. Then in 1869 they sent Surveyor-General George Goyder who sailed straight to Port Darwin, one of the finest harbours in the world, and laid out the town of Palmerston, later Darwin. (Powell 1982)

The South Australian Superintendent of Telegraphs, Charles Todd, had arrived in Adelaide as an ambitious 29-year-old astronomer in 1855, and immediately set about connecting South Australia with Melbourne by electric telegraph. He soon had lines running north to Burra, Melrose and Port Augusta, revolutionising communication throughout the colony and further afield.

Todd's ambition was to connect Adelaide with London by telegraph. There were already land lines from Britain to India and Singapore, and an undersea cable to Batavia (now Jakarta) in the Dutch East Indies. Todd saw that Darwin was now the closest settlement to Asia on the Australian coast, and he could use it as the landfall of an intercontinental telegraph line. In April 1870 a representative of the British-Australian Telegraph Company arrived in Adelaide, and within two months Todd had arranged a deal whereby the company would land an undersea cable at Darwin, and South Australia would build a land line across the continent to meet it. That meant nothing less than erecting a row of wooden poles more than 3,000 kilometres from Adelaide to Darwin, every pole topped by an insulator carrying a single copper wire.

The project went ahead with extraordinary energy. By June, tenders were called, by July leaders were appointed, and surveyors were at work from both the Port Augusta and Darwin ends of the line. Construction began in September. The route that Todd chose was

almost exactly that of Stuart's final expedition, the only proven path across the continent. It would go north up the west side of the Flinders Ranges, then follow the Mound Springs. In the Northern Territory the line would follow the chain of rivers, creeks and waterholes which had taken Stuart to the north coast. Construction proceeded in four places simultaneously: north from Port Augusta, south from Darwin, and outwards in both directions from a depot in the MacDonnell Ranges. For the next two years, the Mound Springs would see more activity than ever before, as the construction parties and all their poles, wires, insulators and other supplies travelled the road north. (Taylor 1980)

Despite its energetic start, construction of the line took nearly two years, hampered by floods, droughts, fires, shipwreck, and workers who became lost and died of thirst. There was a pole every 100 yards, a total of about 36,000 poles, mostly callitris trunks cut in the Flinders Ranges, three-quarters of them carried north by dray, the rest shipped to Darwin. The government and the Telegraph Company both became anxious at the delay. A rival line being built across Queensland to the port of Kimberley (now Karumba) on the Gulf of Carpentaria was finished nearly a year earlier, but the British-Australian Telegraph Company preferred the closer landfall of Darwin, and stuck to the agreement. On 22 August 1872 the wires were joined, and the telegraph line was open from Adelaide to Darwin. (Taylor 1980)

The construction of the telegraph had a number of effects on the inland region. The repeater stations at The Peake and Strangways Springs became permanent settlements, and line repair gangs maintained a constant European presence throughout the region. New settlements were created along the Overland Telegraph at Charlotte Waters and Alice Springs, encouraging a steady flow of traffic into central Australia, and further north, workers on the line discovered gold in the Pine Creek region in 1872, sparking a rush of investors from Adelaide and bringing to life the Northern Territory mining industry. The construction track along the line became the new road north, and grazing industry extended even further north because of the telegraph.

The effects on the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region were less dramatic, but still considerable. The telegraph increased confidence and reduced costs, while its workforce created a local market for beef and mutton. It was no coincidence that Lake Harry run was taken up in 1870 just as the telegraph line was being poled through Herrgott Springs, 30km to the south. Further north, stations on what would become the Birdsville Track such as Etadunna, Cowarie, Mundowdna, Muloorina, all the way up to Clifton Hills and Pandie Pandie were established, and Killalpaninna was revived during the decade after 1870.

Historic Theme 3.8.6: Building and Maintaining Railways

The Great Northern Railway

The opening of a transport and communication corridor from 1870 onward encouraged permanent European settlement in the Herrgott Springs district, and the decade of the 1870s also saw the best run of seasons since the colony was founded. It was a prosperous time, and successive South Australian governments spent lavishly on railway construction. Agitation for a railway north from Port Augusta arose from graziers and mining interests in the Northern Flinders Ranges in the 1860s. In 1870 the northernmost railway in the colony had just reached Burra, but within a few years construction was

pushed further north, following the expanding wheat frontier to Petersburg in 1880, then to Quorn on the Willochra Plain by 1882. Almost immediately the line was continued even further north past the Flinders Ranges to Farina, then to Herrgott Springs, which was renamed Marree when it became the northern railhead at the beginning of 1884.

The line was now being called the Great Northern Railway. There was never really a plan that said what its ultimate destination would be, but in that great age of railway enthusiasm there were many visionaries who believed it would eventually parallel the Overland Telegraph line all the way to Darwin. Pastoralists in the north-east lobbied for the railway to travel east of Lake Eyre, but the South Australian Railways engineers decided to follow the water supply of the Mound Springs, taking the line west of the lake. The route of the Great Northern Railway was being determined not by market forces or regional planning, but by its own engineering requirements.

By the early 1880s, many of the northern runs had again been abandoned because the country was in the grip of the second major drought since European settlement, but railway enthusiasm had its own momentum, and the line continued northward anyway. Construction from Marree began in July 1884, heading west along the line of the Mound Springs. The line was opened as far as Coward Springs by February 1888, then to William Creek in June 1889 and to Warrina in November. (Quinlan & Newland 2000)

The north-eastern graziers persisted in their lobbying, and the South Australian Parliament established a Royal Commission to report on the feasibility of a railway to Birdsville. But before it reported in 1891, the colony was sunk in economic depression. The Great Northern Railway reached Oodnadatta in January 1891, but was halted there by the economic crisis. Parliament would not authorise any more outback railway lines for many years to come; South Australia's extraordinary burst of railway building was over.

As the railway reached Farina and Marree, it established an alternative to droving stock all the way to markets in Adelaide. Farina became a major supply centre, providing a trucking place for northern stock and wool and copper ore. The work generated by Farina traffic kept five blacksmiths busy and a Farina storekeeper opened other stores at Marree, Innamincka, Birdsville and Oodnadatta.

Soon Marree succeeded Farina as the main point where overlanded stock could be railed south to markets. Initially the costs of railing cattle south was high, although this was to some extent offset by the lowering of freight costs of supplies. Freight cartage prices fell from £15 to £5 per ton for cartage from Port Augusta. (Gee, 1998, p.112) Railing stock to Adelaide cost about five times as much as droving, but offsetting this, there was a significant saving in time and reduction in weight loss of the stock being moved to market, and the railway continued to operate when the stock routes were closed by drought. Twenty years after the railway reached Marree, it would play a strategic role in Sidney Kidman's beef cattle empire.

The railway created Marree as the major town in the region, both the source of most supplies coming north, and the destination of most stock and wool travelling south. In time, Birdsville would become its counterpart in Queensland, and the track linking them would become one of outback Australia's great transport arteries. In both Marree and

Farina, Afghan cameleers dominated the transport industry of the north-east for the next forty years, forming their own communities beside the townships.

The Great Northern Railway and its successor, the Central Australian Railway to Alice Springs, never extended northward from Marree, but there were several episodes of political agitation to extend a branch railway north to Birdsville or north-east to Innamincka. In 1916 the members of a Parliamentary Railways Standing Committee set out on the adventure of a lifetime: a fifteen-day tour in four motor cars up the Birdsville Track and down the Strzelecki. Horse and camel teams were stationed in advance at difficult sand dune crossings to pull the cars through. (Cole 1917) No railway ever resulted, but instead the expedition probably helped to popularise the use of motor vehicles in the north-east.

The Great Western Railway

The Queensland government was also extending a railway line out in the direction of Cooper Creek, but it had too far to travel and arrived too late to have much impact on life in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region. When John Conrick took up Nappa Merrie in 1873, the nearest railway station in Queensland was at Dalby, 900km to the east. The nearest railhead in South Australia was already much closer at Burra, and by 1883 it would be at Farina, less than half the distance. (Quinlan & Newland 2000)

Queensland's Great Western Railway pushed steadily westward across the plains, but when it reached its terminus at Charleville on the Warrego River in 1888 it was still 450km from Nappa Merrie. A branch line was extended south to Cunnamulla in 1898, but it was only in 1917 when another branch line went west to Quilpie that there was actually a railhead in Queensland closer to the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region than Marree. Even then it was not on an established overland transport route, and presented a much longer journey to the port. The western Queensland railway network was too far away to have much influence on the Cooper Creek region, which from the beginning of European settlement was always within Adelaide's economic hinterland.

Historic Theme 2.6: Fighting for Land

The European explorers of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region almost without exception established cordial relations with Aboriginal people, and relied on them for information and sometimes for survival. Eyre, Sturt, Stuart, Burke and Wills, McKinlay and Howitt all reported peaceful and helpful contact with the people of the Cooper basin. Significantly however, while King was living with the Cooper people, he found that his initial welcome began to wear thin when they realised he intended to stay and compete with them for resources over an extended period. Water and food in the region are scarce, and cannot be shared with strangers for long. Conflict began throughout the region soon after Europeans and their stock occupied traditional water resources, and it became clear that they were going to stay.

Not surprisingly, the first recorded conflict began during the drought of 1865. The Dieri people at Lake Perigundi on Blanchewater run protested at the presence of cattle at their waterholes by spearing them, and Henry Dean the manager took punitive measures:

Peaceful measures against the blacks totally failed, and Mr. Dean used forcible methods in order to establish the authority of the white man. He burned down three of their camps which had been erected for plunder, and sent out a party of station hands to clear the country northwards. (Cockburn 1927, vol. 2, p.175)

This account, told in the context of pioneers' reminiscences collected by Rodney Cockburn sixty years later, is written in the customary frontier code. It means that Dean was annoyed that some of his cattle were being stolen, and sent his employees out on raids to destroy Aboriginal camps, with no regard for the guilt or innocence of their occupants. Aboriginal people over a large swathe of country as far north as the Cooper were harassed and terrified, and an unknown number were killed. These acts were vindicated when butchered cattle were found in some camps - 'full of beef' - was the way Dean described them. The Dieri response was a surprise night attack on a mustering camp, killing a stockman and wounding five others, including Dean. Rifle shots were fired in retaliation, but again the number of Aborigines killed went unrecorded. Dean recognised this as a mutual declaration of war.

We must have more men and more arms to defend our position and our property, otherwise this country will have to be abandoned by the settlers. (Cockburn 1927, vol. 2, p.175)

Dean and his station hands had committed murder - although they would not have described it that way themselves - and they had also seriously breached the conditions of Baker's pastoral lease, which guaranteed Aboriginal people 'the right to access, hunt and live on pastoral lands'. (Gara 2001, p. 2) In 1866 a Police Corporal and two troopers arrived in the district. They were not there to arrest Dean and revoke the Blanchewater lease, but to establish a police camp on Lake Hope to protect the settlers' stock from further Dieri raids. (Pearce 1980, pp. 92-97) This episode of violence spreading out from Blanchewater seems to have destabilised the region for some years; we have seen that the police at Lake Hope advised the German missionaries not to travel north to Cullamurra in 1866, and the ongoing threat of Dieri resistance forced them to abandon the Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna missions for several years.

The Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region was to see a bitter inter-racial contest for land and water resources, and the most violent race relations in South Australia. This is in dramatic contrast to the Oodnadatta Track region only a few hundred kilometres away to the west of Lake Eyre, where European occupation of the land occurred peacefully, with no known cases of violence. Why the north-east region was more violent than other parts of South Australia is not easily explained. One possible explanation is the presence of a high proportion of Victorian and Queensland graziers bringing more violent traditions of dispossession over the colonial borders into South Australia. Certainly the pattern of violence in the north-east extended over the border into the Birdsville and Nappa Merrie districts of Queensland.

Henry Dean had established the pattern which would be repeated for the next twenty years: both the events and the justification for them. In the view of the European settler the incident almost invariably commenced with illegal stock-spearing. (In the view of the Aboriginal perpetrator, the incident had commenced much earlier with the illegal occupation of waterholes.) The response would be violent dispersal and punitive

executions. In several cases, this amounted to a carefully planned raid on an Aboriginal encampment and a massacre of a large number of people, perhaps in some cases hundreds. Although neither colony has any official records of such incidents, there is evidence that some of these raids were carried out not by angry graziers, but by South Australian and Queensland police. Each such incident was treated as a local punishment for a local crime, but they formed an overall pattern whose intention was, in Cockburn's words, 'to clear the country' and 'establish the authority of the white man.'

Conrick's reminiscences of the journey down the Strzelecki Track in 1874 describe large groups of Aboriginal people camping on water holes and relate confrontations over stock access to the sources of water along the track. The Yawarawarrka people north of Innamincka are remembered in oral tradition along the eastern Lake Eyre Basin peoples as victims of a large scale massacre in the 1880s. They were excluded from their territory at Coongie by station manager J.W. Wylie who came to the area in 1881. He fenced out and poisoned or shot any Aborigine who returned. Specific details are sparse, but there is a shadowy reference to a massacre of Aborigines in the vicinity of Tirrawarra swamp in the early 1880s. (Hambidge 1942-43) The local Aboriginal people moved to more tolerantly run station properties such as Cordillo Downs and Cadelga, living at a distance from the homestead and co-existing in a semi-nomadic existence influenced by the handouts of blankets, flour and sugar arranged by the Protector of Aborigines. (Hercus in Tyler *et al*, 1990, pp. 157-159; Tolcher 1996, p. 138)

While these events were happening, Aboriginal people were demonised in print to justify their treatment by settlers. The Dieri were singled out as they were the first group to offer overt resistance. Police Trooper Samuel Gason had been based at Lake Hope and knew the Dieri people better than almost anyone; he even published a booklet on their ethnography and language. Yet he said of them: 'A more treacherous race I do not believe exists They will laugh and smile in your face, and the next moment, if opportunity offers, kill you without remorse.' (Gason 1874, p. 11)

Linguist Luise Hercus has investigated the oral history of the Aboriginal peoples of the north-east more thoroughly than any other researcher. She has identified six major massacres in a relatively small area of the region, and believes that the Karangura people, in the vicinity of Pandie Pandie north of Goyder Lagoon, were specifically targeted in three of these as revenge for the killing of a station cook at Cooninghera in Queensland. After these massacres, the Karangura were reduced to a small remnant who sought refuge at Killalpaninna, the last few elderly survivors dying about the turn of the twentieth century. A large area of the north-east from around the Coongie Lakes east to the Queensland border became depopulated, and was known to the surrounding people as *Ngura-warla* or empty camp. (Hercus 1990, p. 156)

The other massacres Hercus lists were on the Georgina River, at Giri Giri waterhole, and at Koonchera waterhole on Clifton Hills. (Hercus 1991) The Koonchera incident is one of the better-known of these events, independently recorded from oral accounts in the past sixty years. As far as the facts can be pieced together from conflicting accounts, it took place in the 1880s or 1890s - Hercus suggests about 1885 - and 200 Aboriginal people are said to have been killed; one account says perhaps as many as 500. (These numbers must be treated very cautiously, for not only do they add up to a very large proportion of the Aboriginal population of the north-east, but they are based on secondhand accounts of

confusing events, told by people without cultural reasons or linguistic means to express large numbers accurately.) The killings took place in a surprise raid on members of the Yandruwandha, Yawarrawarrka, Karangura and Ngamini peoples camped along the southern shore of the waterhole in large numbers for the Mindiri ceremony. The event seems to have been in retaliation for a stock-spearing incident, and the perpetrators were apparently South Australian police troopers from Andrewilla Police Station near the Queensland border. (McLean 1986)

The first published account of the Koonchera massacre was collected by journalist George Farwell in his travels along the Birdsville Track in the late 1940s. It is remarkable for being published as early as 1950 at a time when most white Australians were still either unaware, or denying, that such incidents had occurred in our history. Farwell's account is inaccurate in detail, and uses language that may be considered offensive today as both salacious and racist, but it presented many modern Australians with their first knowledge of events such as this, and is worth relating in full:

Beneath the big white Coonchere sandhill, near the Diamantina Plain, another terrible scene was enacted. A large party of "salt-water blacks" had come down for a corroboree, making friendly advances to a white man living at Nappamanna Station, now part of Clifton Hills. But his interest in one of their lubras antagonised two blacks, one of whom wanted her for his wife. One morning, when they had supposedly left for a day's hunting, they entered his tent, clubbing him to death on her breast with boomerangs. They took the woman away, and killed her later.

No remorse was expressed over the seduction, but lynch law was set up. The policeman at Andrewilla, a more clement man this time, sent his trackers to cut out the culprits from the innocent before the white men rode up. He lacked the resources to do more. But they came too quick. Fleeing men, women and children were mustered like scrub cattle, shot down as they ran for cover. Many blacks rushed into the nearby waterhole, swam out amid the rushes with firesticks in their hair. But not one escaped. This is said to have been the biggest massacre known, for several hundred people had come in from the Kallikoopah. (Farwell 1950, p. 160)

The story was recorded again by Hercus from Aboriginal informant Mick McLean in 1971. She published a translation of McLean's story which begins: "The police from Andrewilla killed them all, hundreds of men, hundreds of women and many children, all because of a bullock, just a small one, a mere calf, at Koonchera." (McLean 1986, p. 187) The story goes on to describe in detail how one man - ironically a former police tracker - escaped the massacre by smearing himself with his grandmother's blood and lying among the dead until the police moved out of sight, then swimming away across the waterhole.

There are some obvious discrepancies between Farwell's account and McLean's. Farwell attributes the cause to reprisal for a murder done to punish sexual misconduct, and identifies the perpetrators as pastoralists, not police, although in the preceding sentence he described another atrocity committed by the Andrewilla police themselves. Pamela Watson, noting this confusion, has suggested that there may have been two separate massacres at Koonchera (Watson 1998, p. 100), but it seems more likely that some of the details in the story Farwell was told had become confused with the separate incident at Appamanna (or Nappamanna) further north. There can be little doubt that the two stories

recorded twenty-five years apart describe the same massacre in the same location, and both agree that the victims were numbered in the hundreds.

Independently of Farwell's and Hercus' record, there are accounts of other massacres carried out by parties of both police and settlers at Lake Hope, Appamanna, Coongie (probably by Wylie) and Innamincka (near Wills' grave) in South Australia, and at Oontoo waterhole in Queensland. The Oontoo massacre on Nappa Merrie seems unlikely to have been connected with Conrick, who, while firm in his dealings with Aborigines, had no record of violence. (Tolcher 1996) It is more likely to have been the work of the Queensland Native Mounted Police acting without Conrick's knowledge. For obvious reasons, all these events were poorly-documented at the time; even if the participants' behaviour was silently condoned by some other pastoralists, they did not wish to be identified as having committed murder.

Logic's Journey

An episode in the 1880s gave the north-east an unlikely folk hero in the shape of an Aboriginal murderer. In 1878 an Aboriginal stockman called Logic killed his overseer, Cornelius Mulhall, on Tinga Tingana station, and disappeared into the Strzelecki Desert. Although some of the press tried to portray the event as part of the conflict between traditional Aboriginal society and white settlers, it was obviously a violent dispute between work colleagues. Using his bush skills, Logic managed to evade capture for two years before making the mistake of returning to Tinga Tingana, where he was arrested.

At his trial in Adelaide, it became clear that there were very strong mitigating circumstances, as Mulhall had treated Logic brutally, repeatedly whipping him and even shooting him in the buttocks before Logic finally retaliated, killing his tormentor in a struggle. Logic was sentenced to fourteen years for manslaughter, a punishment that many considered excessive, and served five years in Yatala Labour Prison as a model prisoner. There was a petition before the Governor for his early release in October 1885, when Logic seized an opportunity to escape from the bluestone quarries one afternoon, and with warders in pursuit firing shots at him, vanished into the surrounding wheatfields.

What happened next was the truly extraordinary part of the story. Logic headed north on foot, back toward his own country on Strzelecki Creek. On the way the newspapers reported sightings of him near Gawler, then Kapunda, then Jamestown, then Quorn, but the police could never catch him. He became a folk hero, fed and sheltered on his journey by wheat farmers struggling with drought and debt, who recognised him as a battler like themselves. Logic walked for two months and made it nearly two-thirds of the way home before he was caught by the police near Blinman, over 400km from the Yatala quarries. As before, he surrendered without a struggle, and was polite and cooperative to his captors.

The handcuffed Logic arrived back in Adelaide to a hero's welcome, with crowds thronging the railway station for a glimpse of him. There was enormous public pressure for his release, and the government succumbed to it, sentencing him to a one month good behaviour bond before pardoning him, thus effectively condoning his escape from prison. Logic was put on the train to Beltana, from where he walked to Tinga Tingana and

resumed his old job as a stockman in early 1886. He remained a local hero in the north-east until his death at Innamincka in 1903.

Logic's case was most exceptional, for there were similar stories which evoked no such official response. Aboriginal stockman Jacky killed Richard Marrack on Dulkaninna station in almost identical circumstances in 1889, and there were strong arguments for clemency, citing Logic as a precedent. The pressure succeeded in having Jacky's death sentence commuted, but he died in Yatala Prison. Logic's story alone captured the public imagination with the moral force of someone who had been treated unjustly, and responded with dignity, courage and amazing perseverance. (Foster *et al* 2001, pp. 113-138)

The End of a Way of Life

Not all the decline in Aboriginal society was caused by direct violence; displacement and exposure to European diseases, especially the influenza epidemic that swept Australia in the first two decades of the twentieth century caused a rapid and devastating decline in the Aboriginal population in the north-east. In the Innamincka area, two independent sources indicate that many deaths amongst Aborigines from the Spanish influenza epidemic occurred in 1915-16. Captain White reported seeing a veritable graveyard of recent burials in the area in 1916, showing that 'in recent years the mortality among the blacks had been much greater'. He observed:

There are no children to take their places, so it only means a year or two and the last full blooded blacks, the members of a dying race, will be gone forever. When we look back, what a very little has been done to take records of these most interesting people's lives, their traditions, customs and etc. (White 1916, p. 64)

Jim Vickery, who worked on the station for many years, also dates the Spanish Influenza epidemic there at 1916 and had many conversations with the Aboriginal stockman who lived on the station for many years as station hand, official rainmaker and police tracker. Wilpie recalled many violent incidents between pastoralists and his people during his lifetime. He died at the age of 96 in 1958. Those who escaped to Innamincka from the Yawarawarrka have descendants who lived in Birdsville, Quilpie and Port Augusta during the 1970s.

To the south around Lake Eyre the Wangkangurru people, who probably first heard about the white newcomers when on their traditional ochre expeditions to the Flinders Ranges in the 1860s, simply moved away from the areas occupied by incoming herds of stock and their keepers. Some settled around Killalpaninna mission or at places like Marree and Birdsville and the railway settlements that serviced the Great Northern Railway. There are also accounts of gatherings of tribal groups for traditional purposes and resistance to the pastoral invasion of the area. Police were stationed at various points along the tracks to keep the peace between the traditional occupiers of the land and pastoralists. In any event, the displacement from different tribal territories brought Aboriginal people to the mission for refuge. For this reason, the work of the missionary, the Reverend Reuther at Killalpaninna on languages and traditions of the eastern Lake Eyre Basin includes a substantial input from Wangkangurru as well as Dieri people. When the Killalpaninna mission finally closed in 1918, many of the people went to nearby stations, and railway

townships in the area. Herbert Basedow, on a medical expedition to the area in the 1920, wrote:

Although the western Aluridja groups and their western neighbours the Wonga Pitchas, are still represented by goodly numbers, the population along the more civilised central tracts has suffered alarming losses. The recent influenza epidemic was disastrous, having in many centres like Herrgott Springs and Oodnadatta, almost completely annihilated the resident groups. We were surprised also to note the appalling decrease in the numbers at Anna Creek, once a veritable stronghold of the local tribe. (Basedow 1920)

In 1931, Hermann Vogelsang found that there were 40-60 Dieri Christians still living at Killalpaninna, with about 20 children, as well as other tribal people. When he returned a few years later, he found that a number of the Dieri people had died. (Proeve 1945, p. 21) A further visit in 1944 by Brother Schmidt, Pastors Reuther and Proeve found a native camp at Marree and 32 men, 19 women and 50 children at Finniss Springs, a settlement run by the United Aborigines Mission west of Marree. (Proeve 1945, p. 38) By 1960 all of these outlying places were abandoned as fulltime settlements, and the Aborigines from them were living in Marree and other townships, although the practice of visiting traditional lands has continued to the present.

Traditional languages, once spoken by hundreds of people, were reduced to the memory of a few surviving speakers, and vanished altogether when the last individuals died. Luise Hercus believes that Karangura was lost altogether in the early years of the twentieth century, Wadikali in the 1930s, Pirlatapa and Wiljakali in the 1960s. (Hercus 1990, p. 151) Likewise the last traditional initiation ceremonies were held at Nappamanna in the 1920s and at Innamincka in 1941. (Hercus 1990, p. 159)

The 1960s was a watershed of change; there were few local Aboriginal people remaining in north-east South Australia and south-west Queensland as a result of the removal of the people in the previous decade. The Federal Government's construction of roads across the north of Australia changed forever the movement of cattle from droving to cattle trucking in road trains, with further associated losses in demand for skilled drovers, many of whom were Aboriginal. Legislation to further Aboriginal interests to some extent hardened negative attitudes and prejudices of people who resented the advances in equal pay, access to alcohol and land grants. In South Australia at the end of the Second World War, there were still Aboriginal people working on most of the pastoral stations and maintaining a link with their country. However, from the 1950s onwards, changing station management meant fewer jobs, resulting in a decline of local employment. The general movement away from their traditional lands to townships to cities was continued through the official practice of removing Aboriginal children into institutional or foster care.

Historic Theme 3.8: Moving Goods and People

Droving South

The *raison d'être* of European settlement in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region was the production of beef and wool, and from the time of Redford's journey south in 1870, it had been established that the best route to the markets lay south toward Port Augusta along Strzelecki Creek. The construction of the railway to Marree in 1884 increased the economic value of this route, and later the provision of government bores opened up a reliable route along the Birdsville Track.

From 1863, stock route reserves were established by the Surveyor-General in South Australia, giving drovers the right of stock movements and grazing along these routes, and requiring lessees of land adjoining the stock routes to supply water and charge for the supply. In all, ten long-distance stock routes were created, including the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks, which were the two main stock routes from the Queensland channel country into South Australia.

In later decades, these tracks became part of a network of stock routes across Australia that would provide an Australia-wide travel plan and food source for a calf from its place of origin, and deliver it up to three or even six years later to the slaughter house. Prior to Federation, customs duties were payable crossing from one colony to another along the stock routes and as a result customs stations, officials and police were a part of the droving landscape along the track.

Large mobs of 'stall' cattle were driven over a two year period from the Ord and Victoria Rivers in the Kimberleys across to the Fitzroy river and waters on the Barkly Tableland, and depending upon the season, onto the Channel country for fattening and then to the railheads at Cockburn, Marree or Quilpie, terminating in Portland, Adelaide or Menindie.

Stall cattle were moved in big mobs of up to 2,000 head by a team of seven or eight men. They were moved as quickly as possible to be fattened on the lush pastures of the Channel Country. As 'fats' they were moved more slowly, usually in smaller mobs of 500 to 600 head from the Channel Country to the railhead at Marree at the rate of about 8 miles a day. Droving from Nockatunga in Queensland to Menindie (south of Broken Hill) along the Strzelecki Track usually took about eight weeks. Unlike the stock routes in New South Wales and Queensland which were both pegged and formally proclaimed, the Strzelecki and Birdsville Tracks were neither marked nor gazetted, but were generally known.

The government sought to install reliable watering points at regular stages along the routes from the 1890s onwards. Even with wells installed, droving down the stock routes of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks could be perilous, with heavy losses of stock possible in summer when wells dried up and dust storms raged. In 1902 Sidney Kidman lost 2,000 store bullocks and a second mob of 1,000 cows trying to evacuate them from Carcoory in Queensland. In the late 1890s, a drover by the name of Jack Clarke attempted to take a mob of 500 bullocks sold to Sidney Kidman by Elder Smith and Company from Warrenda Station in Western Queensland for delivery to Birdsville. His experiences demonstrate the difficulties that could be experienced. Clarke drove the cattle

down the Georgina River to Glengyle and upon reaching Birdsville, received a letter from Kidman's stock agent requesting him to travel on to Andrewilla waterhole where he would meet him. Upon arriving there, Clarke found the agent had failed to turn up and negotiated an order with the customs official for one thousand pounds on Elder Smith as the legal owners of the mob to cover the duty charged per head of cattle to cross the border between South Australia and Queensland. He then received a letter from Kidman refusing to take delivery of the cattle except at Herrgott Springs (later Marree). It was too far to return north, and the Birdsville Track was in the grip of a major drought with little or no feed and unreliable water supplies. He drove the stock 117 miles from Potato Tin Sandhill on the Diamantina floodplain through sandstorms to Mungerannie where the cattle were spelled. To avoid the heat, Clarke drove the cattle from midnight on towards Mulka and was enveloped in a dust storm at 9.00 in the morning. During the day that followed, the drovers could only huddle helplessly in the wind, as cattle were smothered by blowing sand. Out of 500 head of stock, only 72 survived. Kidman refused to accept the cattle and Elder Smith lost at least four thousand pounds. As for Clarke, he had anxious moments because he had pledged one thousand pounds to the border customs officer, but Elder Smith paid the bill. Under such conditions, Clarke's survival earned the admiration of people who lived through sandstorms and drought on a regular basis. (Farwell 1950)

The Strzelecki Track

When the Cooper Basin was taken up for grazing in the 1870s, Strzelecki Creek came into its own as a long-distance droving route. In November 1872, twenty-year-old John Conrick set out from Warrnambool in Victoria to take up land on Cooper Creek, accompanied by Robert Bostock and four others, droving 1,600 head of shorthorn cattle. (Conrick 1923-24, p. 2) They did not use the Strzelecki route on their outward journey to the region, but followed Burke's route to the Darling, and then followed the Bulloo River up to Eromanga in western Queensland, and crossed over to the Cooper. Nappa Merrie, Innamincka and Coongie runs nearby were initially stocked by this circuitous route.

Once Conrick was established on his land at Nappa Merrie, he realised there must be a more direct route to bring stock and supplies up from the south. Knowing of the journeys of Gregory and Redford, he questioned local Aborigines about the Strzelecki channel, and on Boxing Day 1874 he set out from Innamincka for Port Augusta with a stockman, driving two drays with an Aboriginal guide leading. They moved from waterhole to waterhole down the Strzelecki in a series of wary but generally peaceful encounters with large parties of Aborigines. Living on ducks nearly all the way, they arrived at Blanchewater homestead on 6 January 1875, the third party from Queensland in 17 years to startle the station hands. (Conrick 1923-24, pp. 39-43) A few weeks later the party was back at Nappa Merrie with a load of supplies.

Conrick's journey established that Strzelecki Creek was feasible not only for travelling stock, but for supply wagons, and that it was easier to bring cattle and supplies to Cooper Creek from South Australia than from Queensland, New South Wales or Victoria. From 1875 onward, the Cooper Basin was part of Adelaide's hinterland. Conrick's reminiscences did not understate the significance of his journey: 'Along this route hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle have since been travelled, and scores of thousands of bales of wool have been sent via Farina and other northern trucking stations to Port Augusta, Adelaide and the world's markets.' (Conrick 1923-24, p. 44)

The coming of the Great Northern Railway changed the significance of Strzelecki Creek. When the railway reached Farina in 1883, the lower Strzelecki was only two days travel from the terminus, and Conrick's route south down the line of waterholes became the standard supply route for the north-eastern runs. Teams of Afghan cameleers formed a new base at Farina, which like Marree became an important railhead interface between train and camel transport. Cordillo Downs in the far north-east beyond Innamincka was among the first stations to make use of the new transport route. Thomas Elder, Robert Barr Smith and Peter Waite bought the property in 1883 and stocked it with sheep, in the process carrying out improvements including a huge stone vaulted-roofed woolshed and outbuildings in 1885. Their wool scouring machinery was carried north on the backs of camels. On the return journey they carried wool bales, four per camel, down to the railhead at Farina.

This consortium of Elder, Barr Smith and Waite was to become the Beltana Pastoral Company, owners in later years of both Cordillo Downs and Murnpeowie, both of which absorbed their neighbours and became the dominant sheep properties north and south of the Cooper Basin. Their links with camel transport were not a new development, for it was Elder and his partner Stuckey who had realised the potential of camels for supplying outback pastoral industry, and had imported the first large camel teams for their Beltana station in 1866. During the Beltana Pastoral Company's heyday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Strzelecki Creek was the central axis and principal transport route of their north-eastern landholdings. It was probably during this period that people began to refer to the route as the Strzelecki Track.

The role of the Strzelecki Track in supporting Innamincka and the Cooper country continued well into the twentieth century. A fortnightly mail coach ran between Farina and Innamincka from 1878, with six horse change stations along the route near Mount Lyndhurst, Murnpeowie, Mount Hopeless, Carraweena, Tinga Tingana and Nappacoongie. After the 1890s, rabbit infestation devegetated the landscape and dunes of loose sand encroached on the track, the most notorious the Cobbler dunefield, where the creek swung west away from the road south of Monte Collina. Horses could not cope, so camel teams were stationed there to pull the coaches through. Cordillo Downs continued to run sheep until 1942, and in some years the shearing teams rode bicycles there from Farina, posing for famous photographs outside the Innamincka Hotel; the only pub on a 500km outback bicycle ride! (Tolcher 1986, after p. 100)

Although it provided a transport corridor for graziers in the far north-east, Strzelecki Creek itself did not support many pastoral properties. While water supply along the creek channel was adequate, the difficulty was the quality of the feed. The surroundings dunefields could only support stock on an opportunistic basis after rain, and the distances between waterholes meant that for most of the year, cattle could not graze far from the creekline. Monte Collina, Carraweena and Tinga Tingana runs were taken up in the good seasons of the 1870s. They sank wells to water stock away from the creek, but all were abandoned again in the drought of the 1880s. The grazing industry along Strzelecki Creek was to remain ephemeral, coming and going depending on the seasons. Every homestead established there was abandoned at times. During extended droughts the track itself became impassable for supplies and stock, sometimes for years.

There was little government support for the Strzelecki Track. A campaign of sinking artesian bores between 1890 and 1916 kept open the stock route further west between Marree and Birdsville, creating the modern Birdsville Track. But along Strzelecki Creek there were only a few government wells - one took poor Harry Bird's life at Nappacoongie - and only one artesian bore, sunk at Monte Collina in 1903. Sidney Kidman followed the government bores and extended his empire along the Birdsville Track, but showed little interest in the Strzelecki. His company bought Merty Merty in 1924 and grazed it intermittently, but he didn't trust the Strzelecki waterholes to get his cattle south. During droughts, Kidman's cattle from Innamincka were driven west to Mount Gason bore and down the Birdsville Track to Marree.

The Birdsville Track

Before the provision of bores about the turn of the twentieth century, drovers were sometimes able to move stock down the Birdsville to Marree route from waterhole to waterhole, indicating that water and feed were available en route in good seasons. A diary of the journey from Marree to Birdsville in 1893 records the route passing by Cowarie homestead and the Andrewilla police station, both a long way from the modern road. (Ferber 1964) Then the government artesian bores straightened out the route and made it more reliable, sometimes supplementing an existing natural watering place. Joseph Mannion's diary describes a droving journey from the Flinders Ranges up to the Cooper with stock and then back in the winter months of 1897. His route started along the line of the new bores, from Herrgott to Lake Harry, but then he followed an erratic course, camping at Clayton and Dulkaninna - where there were bores later, but not then - Killalpaninna where he bought horses, Tidnacoorooninna (?), an unnamed swamp, and to Kopperamanna where they inspected the novelty of the new government bore: 'the water is boiling' he wrote, 'it will boil an egg in 3 minutes we made tea from the pipe'. Delivering their stock to Kannatalkanna (Cannawaukaninna?) on Cooper Creek, they returned along a different route which corresponds to no modern road: Bucaltaninna, Lake Gregory, Manuwalkaninna, Toncathyn (?), Blanchewater, Murnpeowie and Mount Lyndhurst, presumably forced onto this tortuous path by the availability of water. (Mannion 1897)

The modern Birdsville Track did not exist until the government bores stretched all the way from Marree to Goyder Lagoon. The bores did not create a new route, but simplified and formalised an existing one. They also made the route safer, so that the catastrophic stock losses of the early years could not happen again. But the bores provided only water, not grass. In the absence of feed along the route, the Birdsville Track still closed down during times of drought.

The Coming of the Trucks

The droving era began to decline after the Second World War. Shortly after the war ended, thousands of second-hand trucks came onto the market. A few trucks had been around since the 1920s, but they were regarded as a rare and expensive novelty rather than a real transport option. Now every carrier and every pastoral station could afford to buy a truck. The proliferation of cheap trucks meant that roads everywhere in rural Australia were upgraded for truck haulage.

Since the 1930s there had been experiments with hitching a prime mover to two or more articulated trailers to haul large quantities of freight or stock on outback roads. The name 'road trains' had been coined before the war for these contraptions, but they were only seen in the remote north and west of Australia, where there was no competition from railways. Now in the post-war years, conditions were right for them to compete everywhere. The first generation of heavy road transport in the late 1940s and 1950s were ex-military trucks: English Bedfords and Leylands, and American Internationals and GMCs. However, as these trucks aged by the late 1950s they were mostly being replaced by bigger Macks and Kenworths imported from the USA, purpose-built to haul heavy loads for long distances on rough surfaces.

The transition from droving to road trains was swift. The watershed came in 1960; in that year, the percentage of cattle transported on the hoof was 80%, and by rail, 20%. The following year, the percentages were reversed; with 80% transported by road trains and 20% by hoof. (Information from Jim Vickery). This was a result of the Federally-funded program to upgrade the Beef Road network, with about one million pounds spent on the Birdsville Track alone. From this time the Birdsville Track was not a stock route, but a road.

There was another major change in route ahead for the Birdsville Track. The last 100km into Birdsville followed the Diamantina River. Government bores had never been drilled there, because there were reasonably reliable waterholes along the river channels. During the transition from horse and camel to truck the old 'inside track', which followed the west side of the Diamantina River and had been used by drovers as the main stock route because it was shorter and had better water supplies, began to fall into disuse. Instead the 'outside track', turning east at Clifton Hills and going around Goyder Lagoon as far as Pandie Pandie, began to be preferred for vehicles, because it was not as boggy after rain. The transition appears to have occurred about the mid 1960s when the inside track was used less as traffic took the outside track. Soon after, the whole Birdsville Track was substantially upgraded with federal funding as a beef road, confirming the new route.

The road trains ended a way of life for thousands of people in the outback. Generations of people had worked as drovers on the long stock routes, and it was a traditional means of alternative income for a pastoralist living through hard times. The slow process of droving generated its own stories and songs of endurance, humour and fortitude, characterizing the popular culture of the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks. Faster transport is more efficient, but denies the opportunity of long periods of solitude, reflection, camaraderie and skill characteristic of the droving world. This had become a form of white man's dreaming: of a time when sophisticated communication systems and refrigeration were unknown and there were few intermediary comforts to cushion the white man from the arid inland environment. Reminders of these droving days are the stock route reserves, the watering points, mustering yards and drafting yards. Today, road trains have cut the journey and the risks dramatically.

The Afghan Cameleers

South Australians realised very early that camels would be ideal for exploring the arid interior. The first camel imported to Australia arrived at Port Adelaide in 1840, the only survivor of a larger batch shipped from Tenerife which had died on the voyage; its fate is

unknown. Another batch shipped in 1844 also left only one survivor. This camel - its name was Harry - was taken north by John Ainsworth Horrocks on an exploring expedition into the desert in 1846. The trip was regrettably brief, for while Horrocks was unloading a gun beside the camel one morning, the beast moved unexpectedly, the gun fired and Horrocks was fatally wounded. The next camels to feature prominently in the Australian story were the thirty assembled by the Burke and Wills expedition in 1860; four rather improbably imported as circus animals by show business entrepreneur George Coppin, which proved useless, and twenty-six working camels imported from Afghanistan for the expedition. With them came four experienced handlers from Peshawar - Samla, Dost Mohamed, Esau Khan and Belooch - vaguely described as 'Sepoys' and paid two shillings a week. (Murgatroyd 2002, p. 83) By the end of the expedition, these camels were mostly dead or abandoned in the outback as Australia's first feral camels.

Both of the first two attempts to use camels in the Australian outback had been miserable failures, but no-one blamed the camels. The animals had many advantages over horses. Most obviously, they were adapted to arid conditions, needing very little water, and able to work hard on rough bush feed, whereas horse teams needed water every day and had to carry high-energy fodder such as oats or they lost condition quickly. In addition, camels were much bigger and stronger; a large bull camel could carry a load of nearly half a ton, four times as much as a horse. On the move, a camel train seemed slower than a horse team, but it would walk till sunset without stopping, long after horses were exhausted. Camels also had tough broad feet which could cross soft sand and walk unprotected on most surfaces (although they were sometimes fitted with leather shoes on stony ground), whereas horses sank in sand and were easily lamed, and the maintenance of their iron shoes was a constant chore. But camels required expert handling, something few Europeans were willing to learn, so the Afghan cameleers became indispensable to outback transport.

The large-scale use of camels in Australia was the initiative of pastoralist Thomas Elder, a senior partner in both Elder Smith and Company and the Beltana Pastoral Company. In 1866, Elder's business partner Samuel Stuckey arrived by ship at Port Augusta from Karachi with 122 camels and their drivers, with the intention of utilising them for transport in the north. The event proved to be the beginning of the long association of the camels and their Afghan drivers with the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, and with inland exploration generally. Elder took the majority of the camels to Umberatana station, near Lake Hope. Arriving during the great drought, they were stricken by mange and about seventy died, but the herd was successfully bred up again. Later, many of them were based at Beltana station in the northern Flinders Ranges.

The camels drivers were mostly from Baluchistan in what is today southern Pakistan, and writers looking at modern maps frequently criticize historical usage, pointing out that the so-called 'Afghans' were in fact Pakistanis. This is incorrect; most Afghans were really from Afghanistan. They came from a loosely-defined and disputed area between expanding British India and the declining Khanate of Afghanistan. Before 1893, when the modern border was negotiated to Britain's benefit, both Peshawar and Karachi were in Afghanistan. Other Australian cameleers came from Kabul or Kandahar, indisputably Afghan cities. (Stevens 1989, pp. 1-3) The one marked Afghan grave in the Marree cemetery is of Wahub from Kandahar.

Most of the cameleers moved on from being Elder's employees and established their own carrying businesses, based first at Marree and later Oodnadatta as the railway was extended north. Many more came to Australia in the next few decades before 1901, when the new Commonwealth's *Immigration Restriction Act* abruptly shut them out. They lived separately from the rest of the community, the majority being devout Muslims, although there were also Hindus and Parsees among them. Their camel teams, often in trains or strings of up to 60 camels, carried supplies, food, machinery, building materials and other goods to the network of isolated stations up the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. When the Cordillo Downs station north of Innamincka ran sheep, improvements to the station included the building of a huge stone, barrel vaulted roofed woolshed and outbuildings in 1885. The wool scouring machinery was carried north on the backs of camels. On the return journey they carried wool bales, four per camel, down to the railhead at Farina.

From South Australia the use of camel transport spread throughout outback Australia, and by the early twentieth century there were Afghan communities operating camel teams out to remote pastoral homesteads and mining camps from the railheads at Broken Hill, Bourke, Cloncurry and Coolgardie. A few Afghan entrepreneurs such as Faiz Mahomet and Abdul Wade operated major businesses with hundreds of camels based in widely-separated parts of Australia. The cameleers had a reputation as skilful, reliable and hard-working, and being mostly Muslim they had a further advantage over many European teamsters in not touching alcohol. This meant that their teams were not subject to the lengthy delays outside isolated pubs that plagued the rest of the transport industry, and crates of rum arrived at their destination miraculously intact.

Despite these virtues, the Afghan cameleers were ostracised by the rigidly race-conscious Anglo-Australian mainstream society. They were segregated into separate communities called Ghantowns in the railhead townships, and treated as alien, untrustworthy and socially inferior. In townships such as Marree and Oodnadatta the Afghan men mixed with the Aboriginal and Chinese communities rather than the Europeans. Journalist George Farwell described the Marree Ghantown in the late 1940s:

In reality, Marree is two towns - a western and an eastern town, divided by the railway line. This distinction between west and east is not simply a question of geography, for to walk 'across the line' - using a local phrase - means entering a different world. East of the railway the inhabitants are predominantly Eastern; they are Mohammedans, with the exception of a few Aborigines and half-castes who also live there. Their tin shacks and cottages are not so well appointed as those on the other side of the line, but there is a fine sense of community, a picturesqueness in the turbans and baggy trousers of the older Afghans, a grace in speech or gesture that is alien to the laconic Australian opposite. (Farwell 1949, p. 66)

The state government was slower to realise the benefits of camel transport, but from the 1890s established a number of camel depots to supply transport for outback police, surveyors and bore-sinkers along the tracks north. Whereas the Afghan cameleers usually loaded their camels individually, Europeans often treated them like horses and trained them to work in harness, hauling wagons. The Lake Harry camel depot supplied camels for government engineers sinking bores along the Birdsville Track until about 1919. After 1900 many of the camels were transferred to Muloorinna on the eastern shore of Lake Eyre. Other government camel depots included one at Mount Searle to the south of the

Strzelecki Track, which was described in 1905 as an area of 30 square miles, divided into six paddocks:

The headquarters are the old homestead of the Mount Searle station and consist of a splendid five roomed house, substantially built of stone, a store, a stone woolshed, men's quarters and numerous outbuildings, besides very large cattle and sheep yards. A splendid supply of good water is obtained from the well, over which is erected a large windmill, and the water is pumped into a large stone tank, having the capacity of 28,000 gallons. Troughing to allow 160 camels to drink at one time is provided.... The present stock consists of 75 camels – 30 males and 45 females – a number of calves... Among this number is an old camel which is the property of H.Y.L Brown, the Government Geologist. This camel carried his owner many thousands of miles in the northern and western portions of the almost waterless districts of the Northern Territory, and at the present time is in splendid condition and appears capable of carrying his owner on his expeditions into unexplored regions for many years to come. Another identity is a large camel fifteen years old, known as Simler which has the following history: In 1896 he was lost at Coolgardie from the late Captain Hubbe's expedition to open up a stock route to the west, and in 1897 turned up at Lake Phillipson, having travelled over 1,000 miles to return to his old headquarters. (Donovan 1998, p. 64)

The use of camels began to be supplanted by the increased use of motor vehicles from the 1920s onward. In 1926 the mail was carried from Marree to Birdsville by truck for the first time, and this signalled the end of the camels, although surveyors and police patrols in sand dune country continued to use them. In dry seasons, mail contractors such as Cobb and Company used camels to haul coaches through the 65km stretch of fine white sand of the Cobbler sandhills that their horses could not negotiate. Often camels continued to serve the same role in conjunction with cars; in 1916 when the Railway Standing Committee toured the north by motor car, there were camels teams waiting to tow the cars through the Natterannie and Cobbler sand dunes, and when Elizabeth Burchill travelled to Innamincka in 1930, the luggage was unloaded from the mail truck and carried over the Cobbler on camels. As late as the 1940s, camels proved invaluable to police stationed at Innamincka and those at Marree who were responsible for patrolling an area of 40,000 square miles from the Queensland border to Mundowdna Station south of Marree.

During the early twentieth century the Afghans gradually declined in numbers at Marree, with many returning to Afghanistan or Pakistan and others taking up hawking and shopkeeping around Marree and Port Augusta or travelling south to Adelaide. By the late 1940s, a small community of elderly Afghans was concentrated around the mosque in Little Gilbert Street, and there are Afghan sections in both the West Terrace and Centennial Park cemeteries. George Farwell described the fading years of the Afghan community at Marree:

There used to be a large Afghan population in Marree. Today many have drifted away, or diluted their racial characteristics by inter-marriage with whites. Most of those who remain are old-timers, eking out an inactive life or living on pensions. There is no vision left to them now, only the descending scale of reminiscence -

bygone exploration and achievement. Paradoxically, the only camels consistently worked today are owned by white men. (Farwell 1949, p. 61)

Muloorina station remained a government camel depot until closed in 1918. The remaining camels ran wild along around the shores of the salt lake. They acclimatised well and by 1936 their numbers had increased to over 1,500. In order to control their numbers, over 1,000 were shot and the lease was taken up by the Price brothers who re-stocked the station with sheep. The Afghans found their pack animals, once worth £40 to £50 each, had become a feral pest, and were only of value for their skins from the 1940s onwards. A few camels continued to be used by Australians; for example by Mounted Constable Homes during his patrols from Marree and by a few boundary riders checking the dog fence north of Marree and on station properties for cleaning dams or shifting drift sand. There are still thousands of feral camels on remote pastoral stations, immune to predators. In recent decades many camels have been domesticated and used for tourism purposes.

Historic Theme 4.5: Making Settlements to Serve Rural Australia

There are only three early townships in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks study area today: Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka. All were founded in the 1880s as government administrative centres, and Marree and Birdsville have retained that role for nearly 120 years. Innamincka however faded away and was completely abandoned for nearly twenty years before being revived by the tourism industry in the modern era. A visitor in 1890 would have found other townships - Oontoo in Queensland had a pub and a customs house, Mungerannie on the Birdsville stock route had a pub and a police station, Killalpaninna mission was a sizable settlement - but all were abandoned in the early twentieth century.

Marree

Marree has been South Australia's gateway to the northern interior since the 1880s. The mound springs outflow at Herrgott Springs nearby was named by Stuart in 1859, and the Overland Telegraph line was poled through the area in 1870. When the railway was extended north from Quorn, its ever-shifting destination was at first Government Gums (Farina) and then Herrgott Springs. South Australian Railways initially intended to use the mound springs to water their locomotives, but by the time the railway was approaching Herrgott Springs, artesian water had been struck at Tarkaninna nearby. This more convenient and reliable water source changed everything; a railway bore was sunk two miles south of the springs, and the resulting water supply determined the terminus of the railway.

1883-84 were busy years: the bore was sunk; the Great Northern Hotel was built, the railway arrived and a township was surveyed. The township was officially called Marree, although local usage retained the older name, frequently abbreviating and mis-spelling it Hergott. Marree was briefly the railway terminus for the entire north, but within a few months the Great Northern Railway was extended west toward Strangways Springs and ultimately Oodnadatta. No railway was ever built to the north-east, so from 1884 Marree was the railhead for the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region.

Immediately an Afghan community was established at Marree to provide camel transport to the north-east, and this interface between steam and camel transport was to provide much of Marree's economic activity for the next forty years. A regular mail service to Birdsville in Queensland opened in 1886. The township also became the regional centre for police and medical services and has retained those roles to the present day.

Stock movement in the early years was opportunistic, based on rainfall and the state of the waterholes, but between 1890 and 1916 the South Australian government sank a chain of artesian bores along the stock route north, which by the early twentieth century had come to define the modern Birdsville Track. One of the principal beneficiaries was Sidney Kidman, who bought a chain of pastoral properties extending down the stock route from the channel country to Marree, and drove fat cattle in easy stages down to the railhead. Kidman's cattle yards and railway loading ramp were on Mundowdna station, just south of Marree.

From 1926 the mail was carried by truck, and motor vehicles were beginning to displace camel transport. Some of the aging Afghan cameleers retired in Marree, but more moved south to Adelaide. The closure of the Finnis Springs mission in 1960 brought a community of Arabana and other Aboriginal people into Marree. Technological change came to Marree in 1957, when Commonwealth Railways converted the railway from Port Augusta to standard gauge, but left the Central Australia Railway to Alice Springs at narrow gauge. For the next twenty-three years Marree became a break-of-gauge station, and overhead gantries hauled goods from one train to another across its long platform. The railway closed in 1980, leaving four narrow gauge diesel locomotives stranded in Marree. The principal business of Marree today is servicing the expanding outback tourism industry. (Litchfield 1983)

Mungerannie

Mungerannie is now the only stopping place where the traveller can buy food or fuel on the Birdsville Track, and it held the same role for a few years in the nineteenth century. Mungerannie Waterhole on Cowarie Run became a stopping place on the Birdsville to Marree stock route in the late nineteenth century, and a hotel traded there from about 1887 to 1894. A government bore was put down in 1900, and a police station was established there for a while in the early twentieth century. The bore-keeper, police officers, a store, eating house, coaching stables and a blacksmith shop made up a little settlement until the drought of the 1920s, although it was never really a town. Mungerannie Station was subdivided out of Cowarie in 1914, and has existed since, intermittently abandoned during droughts. However, the hotel did not revive for nearly a hundred years until the present roadhouse was licensed in 1989.

Birdsville

The Diamantina River was known from the early 1860s, but the frontier of pastoral settlement was still hundreds of miles away to the east, and the great drought came and went before the first pastoral runs were taken up in the mid-1870s: Glengyle and Cacoory on the Queensland side, Pandie Pandie and Clifton Hills on the South Australian side.

The Diamantina Crossing, just north of the colonial border, was a convenient crossing point beside a permanent waterhole, and by the late 1870s carrier Matthew Flynn had established a store there. Another was built by Robert Frew, lessee of Pandie Pandie, and by 1880 there was a small informal settlement known locally as Diamantina Crossing. Folklore says that the first race meeting was held there in 1881.

When the Queensland government came to provide services to the South Gregory district, the crossing was the site chosen, at exactly the same time as Marree was being established 400km to the south. The colonial border was surveyed and fenced in 1883 (its location along the east-west alignment had never been controversial, as latitude was much easier to measure than longitude), a police station and border customs post were built and a town gazetted. Two hotels, the Birdsville and the Royal, were trading soon after, and the town of Birdsville was surveyed in 1885.

Birdsville rapidly became the administrative centre for the region, head office of the Diamantina Divisional Board (later Shire) in 1886, with a handsome sandstone courthouse completed in 1890. By 1893 the town had a population of about 260, and the doctor's wife, newly-arrived from Adelaide, described it in her journal:

There is a Chinaman's garden, a river (fish in it) three hotels, three stores, customs house (two officers), three policemen, police magistrate, and as far as we know, the house we are to occupy has four rooms, detached kitchen, bathroom, and underground tank, and mail comes from Herrgott once a week. (Ferber 1964)

Another account of Birdsville's businesses and social institutions that year said there were an aerated water manufacturer, auctioneer, blacksmith, two booksellers, two builders, butcher, medical man, saddler, two storekeepers, cricket club, two jockey clubs, lawn tennis club and three hotels: the Birdsville, Royal and Tattersalls. (*Pugh's Almanac* 1894) It says something about the audience that this entry was written for that it mentions the lawn tennis club and leaves out the Chinese garden, which made a far more fundamental contribution to Birdsville's life and health.

The sinking of artesian bores confirmed the importance of the Birdsville-Marree stock route in the early twentieth century, and Birdsville has remained a major regional centre in south-west Queensland ever since it was founded. A school opened in 1899, and an Australian Inland Mission Nursing Home was established in 1923 in the former Royal Hotel: the re-use of the building making a comment on changing priorities in outback settlements.

For the past century, the fortunes of Birdsville have fluctuated with the rainfall and the price of beef. The town shrank in size during the great drought of the 1930s, but was never abandoned, and thrived again by the 1960s with trucks replacing drovers on the Commonwealth-funded beef road. The town waterhole was supplemented by an artesian bore in 1961, giving Birdsville not only clean reticulated water, but domestic electricity generated by a water-powered turbine at the bore head. In recent decades air transport, radio communications and the Birdsville Developmental Road from Windorah have greatly improved the quality of life in the district. Birdsville now has a thriving tourism industry, with thousands of people annually travelling through the district to experience the Birdsville Track, the Simpson Desert National Park and the annual Birdsville Races

Oontoo

Queensland's little-known far western township of Oontoo had a brief life on the north bank of Cooper Creek, within sight of South Australia. During the 1880s, Queensland sought to raise revenue by increasing its border customs charges, and establishing customs posts on its borders with South Australia and New South Wales to collect the fees. The other colonies naturally retaliated in kind, and for the last fifteen years of the colonial era, pointless bureaucratic battles were fought at remote little government offices across the Australian outback.

In 1886 an area of land was resumed from Nappa Merrie run and surveyed as Oontoo township on the stock route running down Cooper Creek. The border customs collector started work in a tent, but within a few months the Oontoo Customs House had been built beside the road west; a mud-walled cottage with an iron roof. Because of a surveyor's error, it was built on the Police Reserve, but as no police station was ever built at Oontoo, this didn't matter much. Collecting customs dues at Oontoo was a farce; the drovers simply detoured around the township. If someone was caught committing an offence, the only way to lay a charge was to escort the offender to the court house at Thargomindah, leaving the border post unattended for up to two weeks. (QSA A41618)

A second government program also brought life to Oontoo later in 1887 when the Queensland government let contracts for fencing the border to keep out South Australian rabbits. Tons of fencing wire and posts were stockpiled, and a tent encampment of fencers and woodcutters grew up near the customs house; the biggest population Oontoo ever saw. (Tolcher 1986, pp. 114-116) Thirsty workers attract hotelkeepers, and the Oontoo Hotel was licensed early in 1888 by William Nankervis. Within a year his licence was bought by Thomas Costello, who invested in the township's most impressive building, a seven-roomed hotel in attractive stonework with its own stables and yards. (*Queensland Government Gazette* 1888-89) John Conrick of Nappa Merrie was incensed; when he arrived in 1873 the nearest pubs had been on the Barcoo River or in the Flinders Ranges, and now he worried that his stockmen would be led astray.

Conrick had little to fear, for Oontoo's heyday was to be brief. For a while the township supported a store, a school and a doctor. Then a series of floods in the Cooper, the first in 1891, showed that the site was badly chosen, as the town was completely cut off for months whenever the creek rose. The fencing contractors soon moved on, by 1897 the population had shrunk to 14, and Costello was forced to take up the Innamincka mail contract to supplement the pub's earnings. By 1899 depression and the general drought had all but closed down the cattle industry, and a visiting police officer reported, 'Oontoo is a quiet place, and there are very few people pass through there.' (QSA A41618) In 1900 Costello sold the hotel to John Hayson, but it did not appear in the list of publican's licenses in 1901. Probably it burned down, as unprofitable outback pubs so often did. The final blow was Federation, which did away with colonial border tariffs. It took two years to wind down the colonial customs services, but in 1903 the Oontoo customs post closed, and the only residents left in Oontoo were the rabbit fence rider and his family. (Tolcher 1986, p. 116)

Innamincka

As Helen Tolcher said, the town of Innamincka has had two lives. (Tolcher 1990) In the first few years of pastoral settlement, a steady stream of droving parties were using Cooper Creek, and there were complaints from pastoral lessees about horse stealing and sly grog sales. In 1882 a police camp was established at the strategic crossing place on the Cooper, just above the junction with Strzelecki Creek. The location was roughly midway between the places where Burke and Wills had died 21 years earlier. By 1884 a stone police station was under construction on the south bank of the crossing, there was a store trading beside it, and in 1885 the Innamincka hotel was licensed. On the north bank was a Chinese garden. In 1886 the Queensland government established a customs post on the Cooper stock route just across the border, and the township of Oontoo was surveyed. The Innamincka police collected the South Australian customs duties when they weren't out on patrol.

In 1890 a township was surveyed, following the model laid down by Surveyor-General George Goyder: a miniature Adelaide with a square grid plan surrounded by parklands, although in this case the parkland was mostly red gibbers. South Australia's Governor the Earl of Kintore named the new town Hopetoun after his friend Lord Hopetoun, Governor of Victoria, but this name was ignored completely by the local people, and two years later the name was re-gazetted Innamincka. (Manning 1990, p. 155)

Innamincka was never as large or stable a settlement as Marree or Birdsville. It was never more than a police outpost and a stopping place for travellers, and its population probably never reached 30. The customs service ceased after Federation and the township of Oontoo over the border was abandoned. Innamincka township briefly had enough children for a government school from 1904 - the publican had a family of six - but it closed again in 1906. In 1904 Sidney Kidman bought the surrounding Innamincka station, and his smaller labour force and austere regime probably did nothing for business in the town.

Medical services came to the north-west in 1929 when the Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home opened at Innamincka. It was an initiative of the Presbyterian church's Australian Inland Mission, founded by John Flynn, who had already built nursing homes at Beltana, Oodnadatta and Birdsville. A two story concrete building designed for the hot dry climate, the nursing home was an imposing landmark; the largest building north of the Great Northern Hotel at Marree.

As the twentieth century advanced, long periods of drought closed the Strzelecki Track to droving, and little traffic passed through Innamincka. Under the combined effects of depression, drought and a declining rural population, Innamincka faded away to a population of only five at the end of the Second World War; nothing remained but the hotel, the police station and the nursing home. In 1952 the publican was faced with demands to improve the premises and responded by closing the hotel. Without a hotel, the police had nothing to do, and the government closed the police station. The following year the Flying Doctor Service made an experimental flight from Broken Hill, and concluded that the needs of the Innamincka district could be met by air. The Australian Inland Mission closed its nursing home, and Innamincka was deserted. (Tolcher 1990, pp. 28-29) Over the next few years the roofs of the hotel and the nursing home were taken away - unused roofs rarely last long in the outback - and the police station burnt down.

That would have been the end of the story, with Innamincka abandoned and all but vanished like its neighbour Oontoo, but for the oil and gas surveys of the 1950s which brought better roads and activity in the local area. South Australia's first exploratory gas well, Innamincka Number One, was drilled just north of the township site in 1958. It found nothing, but in 1963 gas flowed from the Gidgealpa field to the south, and the district had a new industry. In 1972 a syndicate built a new hotel and store in the Innamincka town site, and tourism has dominated the local economy since. In 1988 the Innamincka Regional Reserve was created to conserve the natural heritage values of the Cooper outflow lakes, and in 1994 the Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home was reconstructed within the original concrete walls to become park headquarters.

The Chinese

The population of the townships included an ethnic minority which has received little attention either from historians or in folklore. In the late nineteenth century, Chinese gardeners were active supplying vegetables in Birdsville, Marree, Innamincka as well as Oodnadatta further west. The usual pattern was for a gardener to establish a patch in the fertile alluvial soil on the river flat beside a reliable waterhole and plant a market crop which could be watered by hand: usually including potatoes, cabbages, watermelons and maize. A Chinese garden, cleared of stones, can still be seen on the bank of the Diamantina at Birdsville. Some of the larger homesteads such as Cordillo Downs also had Chinese gardeners.

In larger towns, the garden sometimes supplied a nearby Chinese eating house, but the only record that this happened in the north-east of South Australia was in 1890, when Chinese proprietor William Bing opened an eating house at Innamincka. (Tolcher 1999, p. 54) Other Chinese gardeners presumably sold vegetables to the hotel cooks, or hawked them in the township. While it was well known in the outback that Chinese-grown vegetables provided a valuable dietary supplement which reduced the incidence of scurvy, the Chinese were everywhere ostracised by the European community. The numbers of Chinese gardening in the region must have been small, and there is no record of what became of them; they are not mentioned in the documentary record after the late nineteenth century, although local informants say the Birdsville garden operated until the 1950s.

Historic Theme 3.7.1: Establishing Postal Services

Delivering the Mail

Mail deliveries in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region were first established on a regular basis through local contracts from Farina and Herrgott Springs. In 1883, when the Great Northern Railway terminated at Farina, mail contracts were let for mail stages from Farina to The Peake and Cowarie, and there was a separate contract from Cowarie to Haddon Downs, via Birdsville. The Birdsville mail contract was to be a fortnightly service, using packhorses or horse drawn vehicles, but in the drought of the 1880s it was to be three years before a mail service got through; the Birdsville Police daily occurrence book records that on 10 April 1886, 'Mr. Ellon arrived with the first mail coach from Marree with four good horses'. The journeys were feats of endurance, and the next mail did not get through to Birdsville until 5 months later. In 1889, the Birdsville Police daily occurrence

book noted 'mail arrived by packhorse as rain at Herrgott held up the coach'. There were changing stations for horses at Clayton, Blazes Well, Kopperamanna, New Well, Mungerannie, Mirra Mitta, Mulka, Mount Gason, Goyder Lagoon, Andrewilla, Pandie Pandie and Birdsville. (Litchfield 1983, p 48) These stations each provided a *de facto* post office service for the communities that lived on and around the station.

In early 1884, Mr. J. O'Brien was the stationmaster transferred from Farina to open a Post and Telegraph Office in the then Herrgott Springs railway yard. O'Brien's home and Post Office were initially in a railway truck. As there were over 1,000 navvies camped within four miles of the township working on the construction of the Great Northern railway; the telegraphic and money order services were constantly in demand. With only small boy delivering messages as his assistant, O'Brien worked up to 20 hours a day, and his customers were a handful:

To describe the letter deliveries on Saturday night is beyond me. Suffice to say that it took three police officers all their time to manage the crowd and the tent was often in danger. The Government provided me with a six chambered revolver and ammunition. (Litchfield 1983, p. 35)

Facilities improved over the years, with the present Post Office and quarters erected in 1891. Marree continued to be the main clearing post office for mail sent up the Birdsville Track for many decades.

Further south, a fortnightly mail coach service ran between Farina and Innamincka station from the end of 1878, and the service continued until the 1920s. The first trip, with a bullock wagon of supplies for properties along the Strzelecki Creek, took five months to reach Innamincka in April 1879, and from 1909 donkeys were used. Camels were used to negotiate shifting sandhills along both tracks when needed. John Patterson held the mail contract from 1913 until the 1920s, and appointed his nephew Arch Burnett to care for the stage coach horses at Tilpiree waterhole. Many travellers on the coach stayed overnight at the homestead in what was a seven day journey (without mishaps) to Innamincka. The route was seriously considered for a rail extension to Innamincka during the first few decades of the twentieth century. The South Australian Parliament formed a party to investigate the possibility, but their experiences on the Strzelecki Track in 1916 soon dissuaded them from proceeding.

Motor vehicles were used early in the 1920s, when the mail contract for the Strzelecki Track was awarded to Scott Napier, who provided a one tonne Model T Ford truck. Deliveries of mail, supplies and people were all accomplished by the contractors in conditions that put both beast and vehicles to the challenge. In 1933, the Strzelecki stock route virtually closed when the Engineering and Water Supply Department stopped maintaining the wells and bores along the track. Mail was then delivered via Tibooburra in northwest New South Wales from Broken Hill.

Along the Birdsville Track, the fortnightly mail run from Marree was the only regular freight service up until 1926, when contractors began using motor vehicles, usually a light truck or utility. In July 1936 Harry Ding took up the Birdsville Mail run, supplied with two tons of corrugated iron sheets from the South Australian government. Eight sheets were carried on his five ton truck, as well as up to 22 passengers at a time. The slow process of

travelling over sandhills was accomplished by laying the iron sheets over the sand. Journeys varied from three trips a week in good weather, to sixteen days for one trip. It was no wonder that camels in strings of up to 70 in number were still competing with trucks on the Birdsville Track until the 1930s.

In 1948, Harry Ding handed over the Marree-Birdsville contract to his off-sider Tom Kruse, who continued with the deliveries for nearly 20 years, until the 1960s. The writings of George Farwell established the legend of Tom Kruse, who is now by far the best known of the outback mail drivers. (Farwell 1949, pp. 41-43; Litchfield 1983, pp. 56-60) But he was in fact just one of eight or nine Birdsville mailmen who routinely made epic journeys by truck through seemingly impassable outback conditions from 1926 onward.

Communication along the Birdsville Track was provided by the Flying Doctor Service using the pedal radio developed by Alf Traeger for John Flynn during the 1930s. Harry Ding came to an agreement with Alf Traeger to provide a radio base and Ding purchased transceivers lent to the occupants of Lake Harry, Mungerannie, Mirra Mitta and Mulka stations along the Birdsville Track. Ding's long distance trucks carried transceivers as well, so it was possible to maintain communication in transit to learn how much rain had fallen ahead, and other local conditions from the stations.

At Marree, long distance telephone services replaced the telegraph in 1931. A local telephone exchange opened in April 1938 with Harry Ding as the sole subscriber. Development of the service was slow, and it was not until 1975 that 20 subscribers were connected. Internet and telephone services have since improved with the result that outback communication is no longer the problem it used to be.

Historic Theme 7.6.3: Policing Australia

The early European settlers of the north-east were a mobile, predominantly male population, a long way from the civilising influences of both families and courtrooms. Since the 1860s the region has always been policed by a small number of officers from both the South Australian and Queensland jurisdictions, who became accustomed to carrying out an extraordinarily wide range of duties as well as travelling very great distances in the course of their work.

The first police sent into the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region in 1866 were there to protect European sheep and cattle herds from the Dieri people, inflamed by the treatment they had received from the employees of Blanchewater Run. While there were vague sentiments expressed in Adelaide about 'keeping the peace', it is clear that the police in the region never saw their role as protecting Aboriginal people from white settlers; they were there to guard economic property and facilitate occupation of the land for grazing purposes. In the early pastoral period, these police camps were usually transient, consisting of little more than a tent and a stockyard, but camps of this kind were based for quite long periods at Lake Hope, Andrewilla, Mungerannie and Kopperamanna.

As the number of Europeans in the district increased, crime among the European population became of more concern, and police stations were established at Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka in the 1880s. It was not entirely coincidental that in the townships, a police station was usually built at about the same time that a hotel was

licensed. A few years later in 1890, a Police Magistrate was stationed in Birdsville, and a sandstone courthouse was built. (Johnston 1992) South Australia had a more centralised judicial structure, and there was no courthouse north of Port Augusta. This meant that on the relatively infrequent occasions when someone was charged with a crime, the prisoner had to be escorted south by train for trial.

While the deterrent effect of having the police stationed alongside the public house was undoubtedly desirable in outback townships, the reality was, as Helen Tolcher pointed out, that 'the bulk of their work was concerned with duties other than law enforcement.' (Tolcher 1986, p. 101) The area for which they were responsible was immense - something like 100,000 square kilometres in the case of the Marree police - and they spent extended periods of time simply travelling from place to place, either on specific errands or on routine patrols, which were usually completely uneventful. The police at Marree and Innamincka were given camels for their patrols, and they remained in use until the 1940s. Their most common law enforcement activity was investigating reported stock thefts, but police were also expected to search for missing travellers, and to identify and bury those found dead. When not out on patrol, police officers in the north-east were usually checking travelling stock, collecting customs duties or filling in forms. Among their duties, they were required to:

... act as Assistant Returning Officer at election time; Bailiff and Clerk of the Local Court; Customs Officer; Crown Lands Ranger; Collector of Agricultural Statistics; Commissioner for Taking Affidavits; Destroyer of Wild Dog Scalps; Issuer of Miners' Rights; Issuer of Rations to Aborigines; Inspector of Stock; Inspector of Public Houses; Inspector under the Rabbit Suppression Act; Inspector of Hides; Inspector of Slaughter Houses; Public Vaccinator; Registrar of Dogs and of Births, Marriages and Deaths, and Sanitary Inspector. (Tolcher 1986, p. 102)

Not every police officer in the district was a model citizen. Mounted Constable James de Pury, while based at Innamincka between 1924 and 1928, reported that he had paid bounties on the astonishing number of 25,716 dingo scalps. Local graziers thought this very odd, as the number of live dingoes on their land was increasing steadily throughout the period, and an investigation found that de Pury had falsified the scalp records and pocketed the bounties. He was jailed for fraud, but swindling the Treasury obviously brought little public disapproval in the Innamincka district, for after being released from prison, de Pury returned to the township and ran the Innamincka hotel from 1930 to 1949. (Tolcher 1999, pp. 114-116)

As time passed, the outlying and transient police stations were all closed by the early twentieth century, leaving only the three in the townships. The population of the region progressively shrank, and police and administrative work diminished even further, so that in the 1950s the Innamincka police station closed, shortly after the pub. In the modern era, radio and aircraft have made it possible for police to keep in touch with events over the enormous distances of the region without going out on camel patrols lasting weeks. Today there are only two police officers based at Marree and Birdsville, who are responsible for the entire region.

Historic Theme 3.11: Altering the Environment

Water, bores and pests

Pastoral industry in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region was utterly dependent on a reliable source of water. Before the Great Artesian Basin was discovered, the getting and storing of water was an uncertain and difficult business. Many of the natural waterholes that sustained the Aboriginal peoples of the area became silted up as a result of years of intensive stocking and grazing along their banks. The mound springs were impacted by unprecedented demands from sheep flocks and cattle herds. When it did occasionally rain, the disturbed banks collapsed into the waterholes and further siltation occurred. The importance of locating reliable water supplies became a major objective in the development of pastoralism in the area.

Dam construction to conserve rainwater runoff was an expensive and laborious process in a country where rainfall was sporadic and unreliable. The sinking of wells was much preferred, if sub-surface water was available. The first recorded well sinking in the region occurred in 1860 (SAPP 177 of 1860, p. 1). Even well sinking did not guarantee a reliable result. When found, often well water turned saline and unpalatable to stock, with a number of dry wells the result of ground waters being too deep to reach. Raising water from reliable wells was a labour intensive process, and required water raising machinery or animals, to lift the water out of the well and transfer it into a stock trough. In some instances, it became a job for a person as a well lifter. The job involved being at the well site constantly and using camels, horses or mules to operate a water whip along a towpath or whim, a circular structure around which the horse or camel walked. A typical whip utilised two 70 litre buckets on a rotating cable, so that as one bucket rose from the well full of water, the other empty bucket descended into the well. The full bucket was then guided to a trough to channel the water into a tank reservoir. A typical whip could equal the capacity of a six horsepower motor or an average windmill. In the early twentieth century, the Beltana Pastoral Company spent lavishly on water improvements on properties like Cordillo Downs and Murnpeowie, building stone tanks and troughs, and installing gas engines to power pumps at a chain of bores. By about the 1920s the reliable steel windmill was becoming the most common means of raising water to tanks and stock troughs.

(The words 'bore' and 'well' sometimes became blurred in the north-east. A well was traditionally dug by hand to an aquifer at relatively shallow depth, whereas a bore was drilled mechanically, usually to very great depth. After the artesian basin was opened in the 1880s, the common availability of drill rigs meant that they were often used to put down shallow bores to aquifers, in place of more labour-intensive wells. Hence 'bore' became an ambiguous term, which could be either artesian, meaning it was very deep and produced hot water flowing under its own pressure, or sub-artesian, meaning it was relatively shallow and produced cold water which had to be pumped to the surface.)

In 1882 the South Australian government adopted a policy for water conservation for the development of the interior and appointed J.W Jones as Conservator of Water (SAGG 4 October, 1883) Over the next six years Jones and his team had improved or repaired 125 wells and 130 reservoirs, with the aim of providing a watering point every 20 miles along a stock route. But shortly after his appointment, a revolutionary development was to transform water supply throughout much of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region. In the late 1870s, deep artesian water had been discovered in a borehole in western New

South Wales, and the implications of the discovery had quickly been grasped in South Australia and Queensland. A test bore at Tarkaninna, north-east of Marree, struck South Australia's first artesian water in 1883. Shortly afterward a railway bore was drilled at Marree to water locomotives, defining the location of the township, and as the Great Northern Railway was constructed north-west toward Oodnadatta over the next few years, more bores were drilled along its route.

The South Australian government next proceeded to construct ten bores between Marree and Goyder Lagoon between 1890 and 1916 at a cost of £84,655 to assist in moving stock from the Channel Country in south-western Queensland down to the railhead at Marree. Commencing with the Marree Town Bore which supplemented the railway bore in 1889, the drill teams then moved north, putting down the Lake Harry Bore in 1890, the Kopperamanna Bore in 1897, Dulkaninna Bore in 1898, Mungerannie Bore in 1899, Mount Gason and Mirra Mitta Bores in 1904, Mulka Bore and Goyder Lagoon Bore on Clifton Hills station in 1906, the Clayton Bore in 1908 and Cannuwulkalanna Bore in 1916. (Walpole 1916) By the time the process was well underway, the erratic zigzag course between waterholes was no longer necessary, and stock were following a route between bores that was recognisable as the modern Birdsville Track. From early in the twentieth century, the Birdsville Track and the Strzelecki Track ran roughly parallel across the north-east deserts, about 150km apart. But from this time on, the Birdsville Track would increase in importance, as it headed straight for the railway, and its artesian water was more reliable than the waterholes of Strzelecki Creek.

Originally the government employed a bore keeper to maintain each artesian bore, and their cottages at regular intervals, some with cheerful fruit orchards and vegetable gardens watered from the bore, provided points of human contact in the arid landscape. But the austerity of the early twentieth century put a stop to that tradition, and by 1953 most Water Reserves on which the watering points were originally established had been cancelled and incorporated into the surrounding pastoral lease. As a result the pastoral lessees were required to maintain the appliances at the bores and ensure a 'satisfactory drink' for travelling stock. Over time, many of the bores deteriorated, their originally controlled flow blowing out after the iron bore casings corroded. A government inspection of the bores in 1953 reported that few lessees had done anything to provide a satisfactory watering place for travelling stock and that where such existed they were 'due primarily to the nature of the bore site and secondly to the absence over recent years of serious dust storms in the area'. One recommendation of the report was that "the attention of each lessee be drawn to his obligation to provide a suitable watering point for travelling stock and his responsibilities to maintain the bores and appliances in good order and condition". (Johnson 1953)

A further recommendation of the report was that a 'qualified technical officer make an early inspection in order to advise on the repair of those bores already damaged and the correct maintenance procedure to be adopted in future'. Repairing the blown-out bores was no easy matter, given that most bores had water ejected by high pressure from depths of up to 5,000 feet in a scalding hot stream. Some of the bores had been running out of control for the previous 30 years. For example, at Dulkannina Bore a million gallons of water a day came from a depth of 2,226 feet, reaching the surface at a temperature of 64 degrees Celsius. Today blown-out bores are repaired from a safe distance by skilled drill crews, but that technology was in its infancy in the 1950s.

The repairs were carried out by the Superintendent of Boring in the Mines Department, Mr. R.J. Wilson, who had taken on a daunting task. Wilson tackled the job of repairing the bores by donning a rubber suit, headpiece with goggles, gloves and rubber boots, all filled with cold water. During the heat of summer, he repeated the process for each of the hot artesian bores in need of repair, where broken casings and pipes had corroded and parts needed replacing. A newspaper article reported he had been scalded a few times, but not seriously, resisting the temptation to take his goggles off when they became steamed up. He went on to repair the Goyder Lagoon, Mungerannie and Mulka bores as well as Dulkaninna, his work drawing editorial endorsement in the *Advertiser* newspaper. The episode was certainly one of the more bizarre water management actions in the droving history of the Birdsville Track. (*Advertiser* 13 & 14 August 1957)

Pests

The most dramatic environmental impact to strike the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region was a plague of rabbits, which in combination with other pests and droughts rendered the landscape into a shifting nightmare of erosion and devastation in the first half of the twentieth century. The origins of the rabbit problem occurred during the 1860s when a few rabbits were released by Samuel White in South Australia. Like their Victorian counterparts released in 1859 by Thomas Austin, they were released in the spirit of colonial philosophy to introduce species for practical and recreational purposes. From these unrelated events, dreadful consequences ensued. The rabbits spread north and east and proliferated, providing a plentiful food source for the dingo and devastating the countryside. Combined with massive numbers of sheep and cattle, the rabbits added another pressure onto a landscape that was very different in both character and climate to that of England. Their impact was swift: the Murray River pastoral districts that prior to the arrival of the rabbit could carry 80 sheep per square mile, were reduced to a carrying capacity of 25 to 30 sheep per square mile. (*SAPP* 33 of 1891, p. xxvii) In South Australia, legislation was passed in 1875 to force local government bodies to initiate destruction programs to control the rabbit population. References to the rabbit plague are frequent in the proceedings of the Pastoral Land Commissions of 1891 and 1898.

The arrival of the first rabbits in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region was precisely documented, for on 1 November 1886, the manager of Blanchewater wrote to Elders' head office in Adelaide: 'I am very sorry to report rabbits have made their appearance on the run.' (Cooper 1965, p. 42) The Queensland government moved quickly to stem the South Australian epidemic, and by 1887 tons of wire netting were being stockpiled beside Cooper Creek as contractors set out to build a rabbit-proof fence along the colonial border. (Tolcher 1986, pp. 114-116) It did nothing to slow the rabbit plague. The helplessness of graziers in the face of the rabbits was described years later by William Oliffe, the manager of Stuart Creek Station, west of Marree:

About 1890 the rabbits came in thousands and appeared to travel from east to west. they took everything before them in the way of feed and ringbarked all the young trees, such as mulga, box and young gums. They were a curse to the country as the country deteriorated every year. The company (Willowie Pastoral Company) spent a lot of money on the run trying to cope with the rabbits. We tried just about everything we could think of - poison water and trap yards we found the most effective - but

where we could kill 500 or 600, as many would come to the funeral. There were no vermin fences then. The wild dogs were not so plentiful but they came later, and as they had plenty of rabbits to eat, they soon bred up. Stuarts Creek was one of the best runs in the North for fattening stock until the rabbits overran the country and destroyed the bush. They ruined miles and miles of young mulga and other edible bush which never grew again. (Gee 2000, p. 69)

The rabbits altered the fragile surface soils, in some places already weakened by over-grazing. They stripped all plant cover right at ground level, bared the soil so that it was vulnerable to wind erosion, forming hard crusts so that new seedlings could not emerge. These bare crusted surfaces, if level, pooled rainwater so that it evaporated before the soil could absorb it, and if sloping, eroded into gullies. (Wright *et al* 1990, p. 72) the result was to transform vegetated areas into bare eroded ground which would sometimes persist for generations.

A new industry arose in the north-east: rabbit trapping. Its main purpose was simply to kill rabbits, but there was an economic by-product in rabbit skins, which were used for low-grade furs, or more often processed into felt to make hats. A rabbit processing plant was set up at Lyndhurst south of Marree, and 'rabbiting' provided a subsistence income for a small number of men throughout the early twentieth century. It was a lonely and arduous life, but it kept a few families fed in times when there was no other work available.

The rabbits exacerbated a general depression that was settling over the northern grazing industry. In the same year that Oliffe observed the advent of rabbits at Stuart Creek, a Commission was appointed by the South Australian government 'to inquire into the best means of dealing with available pastoral lands of this colony'. Rabbits had added another woe to a pastoral industry beset by a worldwide depression, low wool prices and other pests such as feral goats, donkeys, foxes and weeds. The pastoral properties along both the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks reflected the rest of the industry, when sheep numbers did not recover to the 1890s levels until 1926. In 1916 the members of the Railways Standing Committee observed the effects of rabbits on the Strzelecki landscape:

Years ago (in 1885) this was a fertile and attractive spot, being covered with verdure and studded with multi-coloured wild flowers. But rabbits roamed over the land in millions, and ate off every bit of vegetation. At one time 10,000 head of sheep were to be seen depastured at Carraweena and Montecollina, now not a sheep could live for miles round. Not only was vegetation destroyed, but the country was so honey-combed with rabbit-burrows that it is now a vast sand-swept area As a fact, the party encountered the biggest sandhills here - the Carraweena, the Accalana, and the Cobbler, the last-named being four miles in length, over which the cars were drawn by camels and a big team of donkeys. (Cole 1917, p. 21)

The Cobbler sand dunes on the Strzelecki Track and the Naterrannie sand dunes on the Birdsville Track became famous in travellers' folklore for decades. Once again the landscape resembled what Sturt saw in the drought of 1845, when he described the dunes as 'like the waves of the sea.' But now the sand sea did not just exist in time of drought; the rabbits kept the vegetation from growing in even the best of years. The Pastoral Board, appointed in 1894 under the *Pastoral Act* that resulted from the 1890 Commission

of Enquiry, acknowledged the role of the rabbit in urging the pastoralists to rest their leases from grazing pressure:

Practically the whole of the pastoral runs of the State held under the provision of the Pastoral Acts 1904 to 1929 are areas with a very low rainfall and are dependent to a large extent for their grazing possibilities on perennial fodders such as salt bush, blue bush and cotton bush, with top feed of mulga, Myall gidgee and other acacias. No doubt, before the advent of stock and rabbits (particularly the latter) the severe droughts to which the country is subject, had no serious effect on the regeneration of these fodders, on the contrary, probably the rainless periods were Nature's fallow for the land, compensating by increased production in the years that follow but unfortunately, through the stocking with cattle and sheep (and in some cases severely overstocking, particularly around water supplies) and the ravages of vermin, rabbits particularly, Nature has not been allowed to bring about the regeneration of the indigenous fodders which are so essential to the successful occupation of this type of country with its low rainfall. (Donovan 1995, pp. 78-79)

The Board refused to reallocate the Montecollina, Carraweena, Tinga Tingana and Chidlee blocks on the Strzelecki Track when they were abandoned in 1935 in order to allow the land to recover from stocking pressure. This however did not stop the rabbits who continued to eat out the country, and the land was used for agistment purposes and restricted grazing by adjoining lessees for another 30 years. Every time there was a good season, the rabbits proliferated and it was not until the 1950s with the release of myxomatosis that the rabbit population was checked. Even then, in one year 12 million rabbits were processed at the rabbit receiving depot in Lyndhurst from Innamincka station alone. This represented more meat than from the cattle sent to market from the station in that year. (Information from Jim Vickery)

The impact of rabbits on both tracks resulted in increased dust storms and sand drifts as the vegetation that anchored the soil was consumed. In combination with drought and other grazing pressure, the impact of rabbits on the vegetation and through the digging of warrens destabilised large areas of dunes, and dust storms intensified following the 1930s droughts. Traffic travelling the Cobbler sandhills of the Strzelecki and those of the Birdsville Track found them increasingly harder to negotiate, as tracks disappeared beneath the drifting sand and homesteads were threatened with engulfment by sand during dust storms. The storms generally lasted three or four days in searing heat and wind. Sand piled up outside buildings, collapsed ceilings and blew in through cracks and under doors of homesteads. Litchfield writes of the 'devastating sensation of checking a sleeping baby in his cot, only to find him completely covered with sand, ears and eye sockets full, as though he'd been there for months rather than minutes.' (Litchfield 1983, p. 73). Eradication programs had little effect as the rabbit was superbly adapted to the environment, dying in their thousands and choking wells and other water sources during times of drought but able to breed up rapidly in good seasons and regain the population numbers that were destroying the country. Rabbits developed immunity over time to the myxomatosis virus released in the 1950s which initially had a dramatic impact on the population.

The escape of the calici virus in the 1990s from Wardang Island where it was being trialled has again reduced the rabbit population throughout the north-east. The rapid spread of

the virus again demonstrated how few barriers there are to rabbit migration throughout the state and how markedly their wholesale destruction will improve vegetation cover. On the whole, the rabbit proved to be a more rapid traveller and hardy settler than human beings, who have always struggled to establish a lasting presence along the tracks.

Dingoes

Destruction of stock by dingoes had been a nuisance to the north-east pastoral industry from the commencement of grazing in the 1860s. However, in the 1890s it grew rapidly from more than a minor annoyance to a major problem. In the first seasons after rabbits arrived in the north, graziers noticed the numbers of dingoes also steadily increasing. There is much debate about the ecological role of dingoes in Australian history, but it is widely believed that there were few if any wild dingoes in Australia before European settlement. They were introduced into Australia by Aborigines as domestic and hunting dogs, and were not tolerated as competitors for food. The journals of early European explorers in the north-east do not mention seeing or hearing dingoes, although they are a daily occurrence today. It was only after dispossession and the collapse of traditional Aboriginal society that feral dingoes began to appear in the landscape in great numbers, and in the arid north, it was only after the arrival of rabbits as an abundant new food source that they flourished.

The Railways Commission of 1916 was shown figures on the deaths of sheep in South Australia attributed to dingoes and foxes, a total of over 650,000 sheep in just seven years:

1908	76,029	
1909	94,938	
1910	83,574	
1911	93,148	
1912	136,409	
1913	96,307	
1914	71,528	(Cole 1917, p. 29)

Graziers responded to the dingoes much as they had to the rabbits, by poisoning, shooting, trapping and fencing, and all of these activities still continue to the present day. The worst impact was on the wool industry, for while adult cattle could defend themselves and their young against dingoes, sheep were completely defenceless. Killalpaninna and Etadunna had their sheep flocks savagely attacked, and gave up wool production in the early twentieth century. This spelled the end of sheep grazing in much of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region, although the Beltana Pastoral Company which owned Cordillo Downs and Murnpeowie persisted in running sheep until well into the twentieth century, at great cost in doggers and shepherds, and even extensive wire fencing, a practice previously unknown in the region.

Historical accounts are silent on the effect of the rabbit and dingo plagues on the Aboriginal people still living a traditional lifestyle. It is likely that they would have found hunting and food-gathering more difficult, and that the changes in the environment hastened the tendency to drift to the townships. Certainly by early in the twentieth century

there were semi-permanent camps of Aboriginal people at the townships and large homesteads throughout the region.

Dingo predations on sheep resulted in the construction of fences to keep them out. The more affluent pastoralists constructed dingo proof cells of wire netting fences to protect their flocks; the Beltana Pastoral Company fenced the entire northern boundary of its Murnpeowie run. The 1896 *Vermin Act* offered bounties for wild dog scalps and encouraged enclosure areas in the north of the state, although it was also concerned with feral camels, goats and foxes. It was 1912 before the *Wild Dogs Act* specifically aimed government powers at the dingo problem. The early vermin fences were formalised into the establishment of Vermin Fenced Districts, outside of which individual pastoral lessees continued dog proof fencing in the northeast.

Early in the 1940s the pastoralists and government considered joining together the dingo proof cells to form one continuous fence. This dog fence was to run 2,230km across the State from the New South Wales border to the Great Australian Bight. In 1946 the *Dog Fence Act* came into effect, creating a Dog Fence Board to administer the management of the fence. The fence continued on through New South Wales and Queensland under separate jurisdictions, and is now claimed to be the world's longest human-made barrier, extending 5,490km from the Great Australian Bight near Ceduna in western South Australia to Jimbour, about 200km west of Brisbane in southern Queensland. The South Australian fence is unique in that each section is owned and maintained by the pastoral lessee abutting it on the 'inside' or southern side of the fence. Income from a levy on all land in the rateable area is subsidised by the state government on a dollar for dollar basis and held by the Dog Fence Board in the Dog Fence Fund. The fence has been an effective barrier to the dingo, and demarcates the southern inside (sheep country) from the outside (cattle) country north of the fence. It crosses the Birdsville Track 42km north of Marree, and on the Strzelecki Track forms the boundary between Murnpeowie and the Strzelecki Regional Reserve.

Historic Theme 3.5: Developing Primary Production

Sidney Kidman

Since its beginnings in the 1860s, the pastoral industry in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region had been transformed by recurring drought, economic depression, and now rabbits and dingoes. Some homesteads had been abandoned and re-occupied two or three times. The original small runs had all been amalgamated into larger holdings, and the population of the region was already beginning to shrink. By the 1890s the cattle industry was coming to dominate the region, but it was a long way from the markets and its profits were small.

However, the region's cattle industry had three assets working for it; one was the intermittently excellent fattening country of the Cooper and Diamantina channels, the second was the railhead at Marree, and the third, its potential scarcely realised, was refrigeration. Into this world stepped a new player who would shape its methods for the next hundred years. Sidney Kidman was to become one of the dominant figures in the Australian beef cattle industry, and the largest landholder in the country. His strategy was to build up large holdings in chains focused on the railways to the capital cities and export

ports, with sufficient geographical diversification so that he could control both breeding and fattening properties, and do his own agistment in time of drought. Unlike the nineteenth century grazing magnates such as Thomas Elder and Charles Fisher who concentrated on wool, Kidman was one of the new breed like William Angliss who made their fortunes from beef. Their markets were the metropolitan consumers, and the export trade to Britain, opened up by commercial developments in refrigeration since the 1880s. Whereas the cattle producers of the 1870s had hoped to sell their beef in Adelaide, Kidman sold his in London.

He did not share the optimism of earlier generations of owners who took up the country when it was lush after rain. On the contrary, Kidman frequently bought up the land at its worst, and used it to make profits during droughts. He lost at least 85,000 stock in the great drought of 1900-02, but he understood the effect of reduced supply on the market, for the cattle that made it to the abattoirs in those years fetched premium prices. (Bowen 1987, pp. 112 & 249)

Kidman acquired Cowarie station in 1895, his first in the north-east, then Haddon Downs, Pandie Pandie and Clayton in 1897. After the great drought at the turn of the twentieth century he bought Coongie in 1903 and Mundowdna in 1906, establishing a rough line down to the Marree railhead. The focus of this chain of holdings was at his Mundowdna cattle yards on the railway just south of Marree, where stock were loaded onto rail trucks for Adelaide and the overseas markets. In later years he would add Innamincka, Alton Downs, Mount Gason, Mungerannie, Tarkaninna, Tilcha, Merty Merty and Dulkaninna to his empire. His South Australian landholdings also dominated the Oodnadatta Track in the aftermath of the drought, acquiring an interest in The Peake in 1901, and in Blood Creek, Allandale, Strangways Springs and Stuart Creek in the next few years. Kidman also owned Annandale, Durrie, Glengyle, Carcoory, Thargomindah, Durham Downs and Bulloo Downs over the border in the Queensland Channel Country. These landholdings fluctuated during his lifetime, and have diminished since his death, but the Kidman Pastoral Company still controls large areas of this land today, notably Innamincka in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region. (Bowen 1987)

Kidman shaped the modern Australian cattle industry. Buying up adjacent properties allowed him to utilise economies of scale in working properties jointly, so that he was able to reduce the size of his workforce, sharing teams of stockmen between three properties and managing them all from a single homestead. There are legends about his meanness, which are probably reasonable - he certainly had a grim single-mindedness about cutting costs - and criticism of his attitude to conserving the land, which are probably unfair. However ruthless his methods seemed, Kidman's management had a lot in common with modern environmental philosophy; he did not try to alter the land to make it more productive as earlier generations of pastoralists had, but worked with the land and the climate as he found them. His stockmen and managers had a loyalty not found in any of the other great pastoral companies, and it was said in praise of their quality that 'a Kidman stockman was [equal to] a Vestey's manager'. (Bowen 1987, p. 98) Kidman's methods encouraged a dry masculine austerity in cattle grazing, a business without sentiment or frills. His aim was to create a lean, efficient beef-producing machine that would put meat on domestic tables at the lowest possible production cost, and the scale and success of his methods forced other producers to emulate them, shaping the whole industry to the Kidman model.

Historic Theme 3.16: Struggling with Remoteness, Hardship and Failure

The isolation of the early homesteads meant that each had to be a completely independent community for months at a time. When the runs were being taken up in the 1870s, the nearest post office was at Blinman in the Flinders Ranges, hundreds of miles away. (Lewis 1922, p. 71) Supplies of manufactured goods such as flour, blankets and clothing arrived from Port Augusta once or twice a year, and between supply wagons everything else had to be made on the spot or done without. Beef and mutton of course provided everybody's staple diet, but most station cooks tried to grow vegetables to combat scurvy. Station hands became expert at making their own harness, boots and hats. The homesteads were usually all-male communities, because it was believed women could not cope with the hardships, and the care and upbringing of children presented major problems, although Henry Colless and his wife took up an early run alongside Innamincka in 1874. She was the first European woman in the Cooper basin. (Tolcher 1986, p. 54) A few sheep runs preferred to employ married couples as shepherd and hutkeeper, because it encouraged them to stay longer.

Health was always an issue on remote pastoral runs. Legendary outback ailments such as Sandy Blight and Barcoo Rot were endemic; the former a painful form of ophthalmia brought on by fly bites, irritation and dirt, the latter an unsightly rash of skin ulcers resulting from the infection of minor scratches in a body deficient in vitamin C. Most people lived on a diet of fresh meat and damper, and generally poor nutrition left many people chronically short of vitamins, especially B and C. Scurvy was probably more common on the Cooper than it was on sailing ships. In wet weather, many people suffered from mysterious 'fevers', probably insect-borne diseases such as dengue and Ross River fever. In dry weather 'dysentery' increased, as it usually does among people practising primitive sanitation while drawing their drinking water from stagnant waterholes. If anything more serious happened, the nearest medical assistance was weeks away; in the event of severe toothache, the blacksmith's pliers provided the only remedy. Almost every homestead had a little row of grave mounds on a nearby sand ridge.

The way of life and work in the outback meant that death by accident or misjudgment was not uncommon. Stockmen died in falls from horses in the early decades, and when their four-wheel-drive vehicles overturned in more recent decades. Being gored or trampled by cattle was more likely to cause painful injury, but deaths in stock handling were not unknown. After rain, travellers were frequently drowned trying to cross flooded creeks. Police records tell of the many ways people succumbed unexpectedly to a hazardous work environment; by accidental gunshot wounds, falling from bore-sinking rigs, mistakenly drinking sheep dip, or in light plane crashes. Wellsinkers died when wells collapsed on them. A small number died in Aboriginal attacks. Loneliness and depression drove some to suicide. In the vastness of the outback, a few people simply disappeared in circumstances forever unexplained. But the most common cause of premature death was thirst.

Lonely Graves

One of the most sombre words in the vocabulary of the outback is 'perish'. It means to die of dehydration, and it has been the fate of many people in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region. It is customary today to write romantically of 'the stark beauty and changing moods of Australia's Outback' (2002 Year of the Outback website), but to take those changing moods lightly is to risk an unpleasant death.

A person who perishes is actually killed by their own bodily processes raising their temperature to fatal levels. The human body's metabolic processes are continuously generating heat which has to be shed in order to maintain our constant body temperature. In a temperate environment where the surroundings are cooler than the body, most of this heat is simply lost in our breath and by radiation from our skin. However, when the surroundings rise above our body temperature of about 37°C - as it does for hours nearly every day in summer in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region - these processes no longer work, and instead our body begins to gain heat from the environment. In these circumstances, the only efficient way our bodies can lose heat is by the cooling effect of evaporation of perspiration from the skin. In that process our bodies can lose as much as ten litres of water in a day. Unless that water is replaced, perspiration fails and our core body temperature rises, causing death. A person exposed to the sun in the extremely hot air temperatures of the outback summer, with no water to drink, can die within hours.

The location of all European settlement in the arid north-east was determined by water; every homestead, shepherd's hut, mission, police station and roadside pub was located beside a natural waterhole, a well or a bore. But the nature of pastoral industry meant that at any one time, many people were on the move between these water sources for a dozen reasons: droving cattle, carrying wool, delivering mail, visiting neighbours, checking stock or looking for work. These were the vulnerable people, especially if they were unfamiliar with the district, for to lose the track, to take longer than planned to travel between homesteads, or to find a waterhole unexpectedly dry, were all ways in which travellers perished. One regular duty of outback police was searching for lost travellers; between 1892 and 1896 the Birdsville police found the bodies of nine people who had perished. (Johnston 1992, p. 52) In hot weather, death came so quickly that there was no possibility of rescue: 'by the time a traveller was missed in summer it was inevitably too late to save him.' (Tolcher 1999, p. 44)

Helen Tolcher documents the lonely deaths of dozens of people in the north-east, most of them travelling on foot, but some on horseback; a German well-sinker walking from Cordillo Downs to Innamincka, two stone masons walking from Innamincka to Haddon Downs, two Chinese gardeners on the same road, stockmen on Cordillo Downs, Innamincka, Cadelga, Coongie and Tinga Tingana. In December 1885 a group of nine men set out on foot from Birdsville to Innamincka to find work. Four lost their nerve halfway and turned back. The other five made it, but the four were found dead among the dunes on Clifton Hills a few days later, at a place remembered for decades as Deadman Sandhill. In all, ten travellers died in the north-east in that dreadful summer. (Tolcher 1986, pp. 182-189) There were other summers like it; in the month of January 1896, six people died in the Birdsville district. (Johnston 1992, p. 52) By that time, images of lonely death in the outback had become a part of Australian folklore and literature:

Out on the wastes of the Never-Never
That's where the dead men lie!
Out where the grinning skulls bleach whitely
Under the saltbush sparkling brightly;
Out where the wild dogs chorus nightly
That's where the dead men lie!
(Barcroft Boake 1891, in Jalland 2002, p. 246)

Even the experienced could fall victim; overseer Henry Smith or 'Little Jack' as he was known, was out checking waterholes on the Strzelecki in summer when his horse died. His grave beside Toolatchie waterhole has a marble headstone that says: 'Perished Feb^y 24th 1889'. A marble headstone was rare indeed; a rough wooden cross was a more usual monument, and some who lost the track simply disappeared without trace. In a short time after death, crows and dingoes left little evidence of the victims. On occasions, travellers' scattered bones were found in lonely places and buried years later, some of them never identified.

In hundreds of instances the man who is lost in the Australian waste disappears silently forever ... There are so many homeless wanderers tramping across the continent that the here and there one who drops out of the ranks is never missed. Maybe tears are shed in far-away lands, but the bush keeps its secrets well, and rarely lets slip a clue to the identity of its victims. (*Bulletin* 13 October 1894, p. 6; quoted in Jalland 2002, p. 248)

Stock losses of course were far greater than human losses; in a bad summer cattle died by the thousands. In 1914, at the onset of the fourth great drought, drovers taking cattle south for Sidney Kidman miscalculated the distance between water sources, and barely made it to the Koonchera Waterhole near Goyder Lagoon. Trapped there with weakened stock and no water within reach in any direction, they could only watch helplessly for the next few weeks as the water dried up completely, and 1,200 cattle died. (Farwell 1960, p. 159)

An appalling tragedy at Christmas 1963 reminded Australians that death by thirst on the Birdsville Track was not something confined to the pioneering past. Ernest and Doris Page lived in the little village of Shadoxhurst in Kent until they emigrated to Australia with their daughter and three sons, arriving in Melbourne in August 1959, and moving to Adelaide soon after. Ernest was fascinated by the arid interior, and in 1961 he found a job as a motor mechanic in Marree. After two years there, he bought a second-hand Ford Customline and announced to relatives in England and local friends that he was taking the family on a 'working holiday' to Queensland. Towing a trailer of possessions, the Pages left Marree on 21 December 1963 with their young sons Douglas, 12 and Gordon, 10. They began their journey at the height of a sustained heat wave affecting much of Queensland and central Australia. The following day the family reached Clifton Hills station, where they picked up their oldest son Robert, 19, who had been working there as a stockman, and headed north up the track for Birdsville.

A week later, a rabbit trapper found the Pages' abandoned car on a remote station track on Clifton Hills, south of Pandie Pandie homestead. Foot tracks heading away from the

car were covered by blowing sand. A note read: "The Page family from Marree. Ran out of petrol. Are heading south. Have only sufficient water for two days. December 24th."

It took the trapper another two days to reach Birdsville with the news. On New Years Day 1964 a search began, with police from Birdsville, Marree and Port Augusta, Aboriginal trackers, light aircraft from local stations and an RAAF Dakota. Within hours, a Cessna pilot spotted four people lying under a small tree by the dry Coocherapoonie waterhole nearly twenty kilometres west of the car, but they did not move when the plane buzzed them. Police arrived on the scene to find the parents and the two young boys lying dead. The next day the oldest boy was found dead a kilometre away in the direction of Clifton Hills homestead. The five family members were buried together by the coolibah tree.

Not long after leaving Clifton Hills, Ernest Page must have lost the Birdsville road in sand drifts and headed east on a station track. The car had only 16 gallons (72 litres) of petrol, which ran out while they were casting about, looking for the road. The family probably stayed with the car for two days in 50°C heat before setting out to walk on Christmas Eve. Inexplicably, a four gallon drum containing some water was found not far from their car; they apparently found it too awkward to carry. They headed for a line of trees on the horizon, but finding the waterhole dry they remained there in the shade, probably dying about Boxing Day. Robert struggled on a little further, but was dead long before the search began.

The place where the Page family died is not very far from Deadman Sandhill, and their deaths were a tragic reminder that the realities of life in the Birdsville-Strzelecki region had not changed in a hundred years. The Pages made several fundamental mistakes; to set out in a heavily loaded car on uncertain roads in the most dangerous possible weather was the first. They did not carry enough fuel or water, and they did not tell anyone where they were going or when to expect them. When they knew they were in trouble, they left the shade of their car - and amazingly, their meagre water - and set off to walk cross-country in conditions that meant certain death. Their grave is marked with a simple metal cross, inscribed: "The Pages Perished Dec 1963". An editorial in the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* spelled out their epitaph more fully as a warning to others:

... it can only be hoped that the publicity given to this tragedy will deter others from attempting similar motor trips during the inland summer. (*Courier-Mail* 3 January 1964)

Historic Theme 3.26: Providing Health Services

John Flynn's Mantle of Safety

In the early decades of European settlement in the north-east, there was simply no medical assistance available closer than Port Augusta, a journey which could take two weeks. Any illness or injury had to be taken very seriously in the outback, because many conditions that could be treated simply in the city - influenza or an infected wound - were likely to cause the victim to die before medical attention could be reached. Premature death was accepted stoically as one of the hazards of life in the region, but it had impacts on life and industry; many people were unwilling to live there because of the risk, childbirth was too hazardous for many women to contemplate, and elderly people, women and

children were rarely seen. As a result, few people in the region lived a normal family life, contributing to the transient life that many rural workers led.

This situation was not to change fundamentally until the twentieth century. There was intermittently a resident doctor in Birdsville by the 1890s, and briefly another at Oontoo, but these were private ventures which came and went with the state of the local economy, and were never able to serve more than a small part of the region. The arrival of more reliable health services in the north-east was to be the initiative of the South Australian Government and the Presbyterian church.

In 1906, the Presbyterian Church's Smith of Dunesk Mission sent a nurse to open a bush nursing home at Oodnadatta, which was the terminus of the Great Northern Railway, and serviced an enormous area of inland Australia. When a measles epidemic overwhelmed the service five years later, the Reverend John Flynn raised £350 and built a larger nursing home which opened late in 1911. Realising the need extended far beyond Oodnadatta, the following year Flynn formed the Australian Inland Mission, which was to be the major provider of health services in the outback for many years to come.

State services were getting underway simultaneously. From 1912 a visiting District Nurse held consultations in a room at the Great Northern Hotel in Marree. After an epidemic of enteric fever early in 1916, when the hotel refused to admit the patients, the Marree community raised £400 for a Cottage Hospital and Nursing Home, which opened in August. Hence both the early health initiatives in the South Australian outback were in the railway towns, and prompted by the circumstances of a local epidemic in the township. Both the Oodnadatta and Marree nursing homes have functioned continuously since, and have been on the Royal Flying Doctor Service circuit since the 1950s. Both are now operated by the South Australian Health Commission, and visiting medical and dental clinics operate from Port Augusta.

Birdsville's first nursing facility was opened by the Presbyterian Church's Australian Inland Mission, which took over the closed Royal Hotel in September 1923 and converted it to a Nursing Home, one of a chain which were being established through the outback. It was replaced in 1937 by a purpose-built hospital on the present site, but the new building burnt down in 1951. It was in turn replaced by the present building, which opened in August 1953.

By the early 1920s each of the region's townships had a nursing home, but between them was an enormous area stretching from Marree and Birdsville to Tibooburra in New South Wales, which remained without medical services. To plug this gap, the Australian Inland Mission built the Innamincka Nursing Home in the following years. Sir Josiah Symon of Adelaide made a substantial donation toward its cost and requested that it be named after his mother. The Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home opened on 11 May 1929, and for nearly twenty-five years provided the only nursing facility in the north-east corner of South Australia. Symon's donation enabled the home to be far more elaborate than the modest corrugated iron cottages in Marree and Birdsville. Designed by architect Thomas Macadam of Adelaide, it and the similar AIM home at Alice Springs were the state of the art in design for hot dry conditions, with high roofs, thick concrete walls and wide screened verandahs.

Flynn's vision extended well beyond scattering nursing sisters across the outback. He was one of the generation who had been deeply impressed by the new technologies of aviation and radio communication which had been developed during the First World War, and as early as 1918 had been pressing for their use in providing medical services to isolated parts of Australia. He described this as spreading a 'mantle of safety' over the inland. Early aeroplanes and radios were expensive and needed adapting to cope with outback distances and climate, so it was 1928 before an experiment was set up at Cloncurry in Queensland, using radio transmission to call in a doctor by chartered aircraft. By 1937 the first Flying Doctor Service base was established at Broken Hill, and Traeger radio transceivers were coming into use at homesteads and mining camps. Further bases across Australia followed, including Alice Springs in 1939 and Charleville in 1947, which between them put the whole of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region under Flynn's mantle of safety.

By about 1950, most of the outback had become much safer, and people were more confident about living in places that had once been dangerously isolated. For the first time, station owners and managers were happy about having their families living at outback homesteads. And to a greater extent than Flynn or anyone else had expected, the prevalence of these new technologies had implications far beyond the provision of medical assistance in an emergency. First, in a landscape that for generations had been inhabited mostly by laconic men in big hats, there were now many more families. The presence of more children and the availability of radio services led in 1950 to the establishment of the School of the Air, which still educates thousands of children in isolated areas today. Most pastoralists built a landing strip, at first for the Flying Doctor to land, but then in the prosperous years of the 1950s, many could afford to buy a light aircraft and park it in a little corrugated iron hangar; transport in the outback was transformed beyond recognition. The radio in every homestead also became a means for business communication, for organising social activities, or just for chatting with friends. The isolation of outback life, which had caused so much despair in the past, was now diminishing.

The most conspicuous monument to Flynn's services in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region today is the re-built Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home. By 1953, with the Royal Flying Doctor Service providing medical services throughout the outback, the Innamincka nursing home closed. The building was dismantled in 1954, and its timbers and roof cladding were taken to Mount Leonard station in Queensland to build stockmen's quarters, which were destroyed by fire in 1970. The town of Innamincka was completely abandoned, and the concrete walls of the nursing home stood as a gaunt monument for 40 years. In 1994, the building was reconstructed by National Parks and Wildlife SA as the headquarters of the Innamincka Regional Reserve, and is now the focus of conservation, government administration and tourist interpretation in the district. (Bilton 1961; Burchill 1960; *Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home* 1994; Idriess 1932)

Historic Theme 3.4: Utilising Natural Resources

The Oil and Gas Industry

The early twentieth century saw the slow decline of the far north-east of South Australia, the township of Innamincka and the Strzelecki Track. Extended periods of bad seasons and depression shrank the population. Drought and dingoes put an end to sheep grazing,

and the Beltana Pastoral Company sold its interests. There had never been much government support for the Strzelecki Track; while the government artesian bores kept open the stock route further west between Marree and Birdsville, along Strzelecki Creek there were only a few government wells and one artesian bore, sunk at Monte Collina in 1903. In the dry seasons the Strzelecki route simply became impassable to stock.

Sidney Kidman followed the government bores and extended his empire along the Birdsville Track, but showed little interest in the Strzelecki. His company bought Merty Merty in 1924 and grazed it intermittently, but he didn't trust the Strzelecki waterholes to get his cattle south. During droughts, Kidman's cattle from Innamincka were driven west to Mount Gason bore and down the Birdsville Track to Marree. The Farina mail coach ceased to run in the 1920s, and the town of Innamincka slowly shrank away to nothing over the next thirty years. By 1933 droving down the creek had virtually ceased, and the government stopped maintaining the wells along the stock route. By the 1950s, all the homesteads along Strzelecki Creek were abandoned.

What brought life back to Strzelecki Creek was the oil and gas industry. The rise of private motor vehicles as an important form of transport had created an enormous demand for petroleum-based fuels and lubricants, and petroleum prospecting was a booming industry all over the world. The new explorers in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region were geophysicists and geologists who combed the land for indications of oil. Early in the 1940s the government of Thomas Playford made much of South Australia available to private companies for mineral exploration under licence, and the Department of Mines played a significant part in early exploration. The remoteness of the area made exploration an expensive and difficult undertaking. In 1941 the *Petroleum Act* came into effect, but it was not until after the end of the Second World War that further investigation of the north-east region became possible, given the absence of encouraging signs. The new explorers were backed initially by the state government and later by private companies or state/private consortiums. Exploration was expensive, and the process was assisted by subsidies by the Playford government in South Australia and by the Federal government through its *Petroleum Search Subsidy Act 1957*.

After an overseas trip in 1953 where he observed seismic surveying in progress, Playford decided that the state should run its own seismic surveys. In the same year, the South Australian Northern Territory Oil Search (Santos) and Geosurveys of Australia were formed. Geosurveys carried out magnetic and gravity surveys in the Great Artesian Basin between Birdsville and Marree in mid 1956. After the Suez crisis in that year the search for oil and gas in Australia became more intense.

By 1958, geological surveys had identified prospective oil- and gas-bearing formations in the Innamincka area. Test drilling was the next step, but the district was virtually abandoned, and road access for heavy trucks was feasible only through Tibooburra in New South Wales. The Playford government was determined to build a road that would allow drill rigs from South Australia into the area. After a hasty reconnaissance of the deserted stock route, construction work began on a truck road from Murnpeowie to Innamincka. Under political pressure, the road was opened to Innamincka in January 1959, and the first drill hole, Innamincka No. 1, was commenced in March. (Donovan 1996, pp. 26-29)

The first wells at Innamincka were barren, and drilling moved south-west to Gidgealpa. The Delhi-Santos consortium unsuccessfully drilled a well at Gidgealpa No. 1 and were reluctant to undertake the expense of drilling a second well, prompting a reassessment by the Department of Mines of the area. When the Department insisted under the provisions of the *Petroleum Act* that the companies test the Permian section of Gidgealpa No. 1 or alternatively drill a second well, there was some controversy. It took the persuasive powers of Premier Playford to get Santos to agree to drill the second well. On 31 December 1963, Gidgealpa No. 2. struck a natural gas deposit later measured at 2.8 million cubic feet of gas. When news of the discovery reached Adelaide, Delhi recalled a supply plane that was already in the air bound for the Gidgealpa site, and loaded it with cartons of champagne, so that the discovery could be celebrated along with New Year. (O'Neill 1998, pp 205-209).

Encouraged by the first gas flow, operations expanded to Moomba and Tirrawarra in the later 1960s, and more gasfields were mapped out. Further discoveries of gas at the Moomba field in 1966 resulted from a flurry of exploration in all parts of the State and precipitated the establishment of the Pipelines Authority of South Australia (PASA) under the *Natural Gas Pipelines Authority of South Australia Act* in 1967. With a commercial gas flow assured, in 1969 a gas processing plant was built at Moomba, 40km west of Strzelecki Creek, the first new township established in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region since Innamincka in 1890. By July 1969, a 56cm diameter pipeline from Moomba to Adelaide was completed over a distance of 750 kilometres, making Adelaide the second city in Australia after Brisbane to be supplied with natural gas through a pipeline. Adelaide's gas supply converted from coal distillation to natural gas between 1969 and 1971 as a result of the Moomba development. (O'Neil 1998, p. 24)

The first discoveries were gas, not oil, but the search for petroleum continued. Activity in the Cooper Basin intensified when Delhi-Santos farmed out areas of their petroleum exploration licences, and eventually ten companies formed a consortium named the Cooper Basin Producers Unit to effectively control the development of the area. An oil flow from Tirrawarra No. 1 well in 1970 brought confirmation that the geology of the Cooper Basin contained excellent oil producing deposits. During the 1980s this was confirmed when the Cooper Basin was proven to contain Australia's largest known on-shore oil reserves and the Cooper Basin Liquids Project was commenced. The latter resulted in production facilities at Port Bonython, the first shipment of condensate through the Moomba-Port Bonython liquids pipeline for shipping to Geelong in Victoria, the commencement of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and the first shipment of LPG to Japan. Further discoveries of oil in the Eromanga Basin during the 1990s led to it becoming of interest after the deeper deposits of the Cooper Basin had been discovered. The producing oil and gas fields now extend far east into the Jackson Basin of south-western Queensland.

The Cooper Basin area through which the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks run became one of the most important economic resources discovered and developed in Australia during the second half of the twentieth century. More than 350 drill holes were carried out between 1977 and 1984, and thousands of kilometres of seismic data recorded. The oil and gas resource exploration program heightened an awareness of the fragility of the arid landscape. Early shot lines bulldozed across the desert landscape could be seen clearly from outer space, and it was clear that natural rehabilitation was a very slow process in an

arid environment. There was also unnecessary damage to historic sites; the ruins of old Tinga Tingana homestead were severely damaged by seismic line crews. Public criticism of the environmental practices of exploration activity led to the development of environmental codes of practice, with the first code for seismic work adopted in 1984 by Delhi and the Department of Mines. In 1989, an environmental assessment and a code of environmental practice became a mandatory requirement before exploration and development operations could be approved. During the last two decades of the twentieth century, the mining companies involved in the area have managed their activities with greater awareness and environmental care, and terms such as 'sustainable production' express regard for the ecological issues inherent in any exploitation of the arid landscape.

Historic Theme 3.8.7: Building and Maintaining Roads

Building Roads to the Interior

Although the Birdsville Track had become the main road to the north-east during the first half of the twentieth century, it was the Strzelecki Track that was resuscitated by the oil and gas surveys of the 1950s. More specifically, it was resuscitated by Premier Thomas Playford, who was determined not to have drilling equipment arriving in the district by way of the existing road through Tibooburra, which would shift some of the economic benefits to New South Wales. The Playford government was determined to build a road that would allow drill rigs from South Australia into the area, and issued orders to get road construction underway immediately. Laurie Steele, Mines Department engineer for the Far North, led a reconnaissance of the old route to the north-east in two Land Rovers in September 1958. Interviewed by Peter and June Donovan many years later, he gave an interesting description of the state of the abandoned Strzelecki Track:

We stopped the first night at Murnpeowie Station and got all the information we could and the next day we set out at first light. Our first aiming point was the lake crossing between the lakes because we found out there had been the odd dingo trapper who used to go up the Strzelecki after dingoes and they said that maybe we could follow some of their tracks. The first part of the trip was quite okay. The station had tracks out as far as Blanchewater.

After we got past Blanchewater the tracks were pretty vague and we actually had to use a compass to get towards the lake crossing. We hit it pretty well straight away. Just before we got to the lake crossing, we could see the Cobbler Sandhills. They were really frightening. All you could see was the high sandhills in the distance. They didn't look at all good. So we got across at this lake crossing alright.

Once we got into those Cobblers the going was dreadful. It was sandhills but they were sort of tusky spinifex-like tusks, and we had to ride our way around these tussocks. It was very, very slow going. One land rover got bogged and we had to pull it out. We were aiming by compass for the Monte Collina Bore. We had that location from the pastoral plan. We battled all day getting through these Cobbler sandhills, driving and taking rough notes. We were just getting an idea of what was involved in making a road, making a track through it. It wasn't very easy. The idea of making a road through there wasn't very appealing at all. But anyway we got to Monte Collina Bore and that was like an oasis. We could see it for quite some distance.. There was

a pipe sticking up in the air like a pole and of course, there was water flowing on the ground. It was obvious that any road we'd have to build we'd have to make for that as a point where we could get water because water was obviously needed for putting a road in. The supply of water was going to be quite a problem.

After the Monte Collina Bore we made for the crossing over the Strzelecki on the old pastoral route. It was obvious that around the crossing things were going to be pretty difficult. The sandhills seemed to come right down to the Strzelecki and getting a passage through them was going to be very difficult.

We passed the old Carraweena ruins and found the old Tinga Tingana homestead that had simply been abandoned. I remember we even saw an old chamber pot under an old bedstead, and there was a grave of one of the owners or lessees of the place there.

It was quite an experience travelling along the flats adjacent to the Strzelecki soon after rain. All the waterholes were full, there were ducks on every waterhole, there were brumbies, there were dingoes, wild camels and a few cleanskin cattle. On the flats there were broilgas, many of them dancing.

The next decent water point we came to was the Merty Merty Well that had been used up till a few years before by the Innamincka Station people. The last fifty miles was dreadful going because we were going across the clay flats called crab hole country. There were holes up to about a foot in diameter and six or eight inches deep and we lurched in and out of these. The whole area was pock marked with these holes. It was much more comfortable walking alongside the vehicles because they had to go very, very slow going through these things.

Eventually we got to Innamincka and were made very welcome by Jim Vickery who was the station manager there, where we stopped the night. (Donovan 1996, pp. 24-25)

After this hasty reconnaissance of the deserted stock route, construction work began on a truck road from Murnpeowie to Innamincka. Under political pressure, the task was urgent, and was pushed on through the summer months. No survey was done; a Land Rover simply went ahead cross-country to pick out a route, and the construction teams followed its signals. Generally the new road paralleled the western side of Strzelecki Creek, staying close to it to avoid the dunefields. The road was opened to Innamincka in January 1959 allowing the first drill hole to be commenced in March. (Donovan 1996, pp. 26-29)

Large convoys of trucks began to use the road immediately it opened, and heavy traffic continued for the next ten years. From 1959, the new Strzelecki Track became the principal route to the oil and gas fields of the Cooper Basin, first at Innamincka, then Gidgealpa where the first gas was struck in 1963, and expanding to Moomba and Tirrawarra in the later 1960s. When the underground gas pipeline was laid to connect Moomba with Adelaide in 1969, it ran parallel to the west of the road, crossing under it near Monte Collina bore and continuing south while the road swung west.

This energy infrastructure was to have a dramatic economic effect on South Australia, but it would also shape traffic patterns in the Strzelecki Creek region. The road built in 1958 had headed straight up Strzelecki Creek with Innamincka as its objective, and in the process its builders were essentially following Conrick's 1874 dray route past every waterhole. However, the Moomba processing plant and its service township were built in the desert to the west, and the new road to it diverged from Strzelecki Creek near Toolatchee waterhole. Relatively little traffic followed the creek north from there to Innamincka. From 1969 onward, the new Strzelecki Track began to part company from the old stock route.

Nature imposed even greater changes in 1974, when enormous floods from Queensland flowed down the Cooper, and Strzelecki Creek filled both lakes Blanche and Callabonna. It was the greatest inundation since Europeans had arrived in the Cooper Basin, and the Strzelecki Track was blocked by water for six months. Major roadworks followed, and most of the hastily-built 1958 route was abandoned for a new alignment further from the creek. With greater funds available, and no political need for haste, the gasfield roads were completely rebuilt to modern specifications. The new road diverged from Strzelecki Creek nearly 100km south of Moomba and followed the pipeline north. Another new road connected Moomba to Innamincka. The new generation of roads, completed in 1979, no longer followed any of the Strzelecki channel, simply crossing it at one point. Since then, only tourists have followed the old road alignment along Strzelecki Creek, and after more than 20 years without maintenance, much of it is now difficult to find. (Donovan 1996, pp. 41-52)

Historic Theme 3.23: Catering for Tourists

Tourism and Conservation

After decades of drought and disillusionment, depressed prices for beef, the thinning of the population by Sidney Kidman's grazing methods, and the drift to the cities, the population of the north-east had shrunk back to a few hundred people by 1945. Travelling from Marree to Birdsville with the mail truck in the late 1940s, George Farwell passed only five occupied homesteads in 330 miles: Lake Harry, Dulkaninna, Mungerannie, Clifton Hills and Pandie Pandie. (Farwell 1949, p. 88) If he made the same journey today, Farwell would be startled to see thousands of people using the Birdsville Track.

Motivated by new interest in the natural environment and a sense of adventure, and given the means to travel in the outback by modern four-wheel drive vehicles, tens of thousands of tourists now visit the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region every year. The influx is seasonal, occurring mostly in the winter months, and peaking during school holiday times, for many of the travellers are in family groups. This has brought new commercial life to Marree and Birdsville, which supply fuel, food and campground accommodation to tourists. Innamincka came back to life in the 1970s and Mungerannie in the 1980s to provide services to tourists on the two tracks. As the pastoral stations rely on long distance road transport and obtain very few goods and services locally, tourists now generate virtually all of the local townships' business. That business is not to be sneezed at; some tourist suppliers along the tracks now see bigger annual cash flows than the neighbouring cattle stations.

The re-opening of the north-east in the 1960s, and the extensive studies of flora and fauna that accompanied the geological investigations and the commencement of gas production, brought the first understanding of the environmental values of the Cooper Basin. Several areas were of particular interest: Lake Eyre, the largest salt lake in Australia, the relatively unaltered arid zones of the Simpson and Strzelecki deserts, and the Coongie Lakes and other wetlands of the Cooper outflow. The Simpson Desert Conservation Park was created in 1967, and Lake Eyre was declared a National Park in 1985.

However, there were potential conflicts in land use, for the Strzelecki Desert and Cooper outflow lakes were areas that were highly prospective for oil and gas; indeed the Tirrawarra, Dullingari, Della, Kidman and Toolachee fields were already in production in those areas by the 1980s. In a compromise intended to conserve the environmental values of these areas while permitting commercial production to continue, the South Australian government created a new form of land tenure called regional reserves. The Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves were created in 1988. These are effectively National Parks with conservation management plans, administered by Park Rangers, but they also permit both oil and gas production and cattle grazing, within environmental guidelines. Nearly three-quarters of the length of Strzelecki Creek is within these reserves; Strzelecki Regional Reserve takes in roughly the southern half of the Strzelecki Creek channel, and Innamincka Regional Reserve roughly its northern quarter. The newest industry on the Strzelecki Creek region is tourism, which has been growing steadily since the 1970s. Almost all the traffic along the old Strzelecki Track today is generated by tourists, and concentrated in the winter months.

The dominant heritage of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks is the nature of the land, with its unique ecology and character. Not surprisingly, the total park area within the north east of South Australia is 71,000 square kilometers representing 29% of the total area of the north east deserts. In 1990 Bonython identified five large parks, including Lake Eyre National Park, Witjira National Park, Simpson Desert Conservation Park, Simpson Desert Regional Reserve and Innamincka Regional Reserve. Others are the Elliot Price Conservation Park and an extension of the Gammon Ranges National Park into the north eastern desert area. (Bonython 1990, pp. 215-221) Conservationists view the status of the parks with some reservations, given that a wide licence is permitted for resource exploration and the regional reserves must reconcile the conflicts between potential resource exploitation with management of the environment and its ecology. In 2001, the tourist map of the Strzelecki Track traverses the Strzelecki Regional Reserve and the Innamincka Regional Reserve and visitors can purchase a 'Desert Pass' from the National Parks and Wildlife Service which advises of places within the area and provides information on sensible behaviour in a potentially hostile environment.

Summing Up

The early history of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region was the story of the intrusion of a European people bringing grazing animals into an arid landscape already occupied by Aboriginal people with a totally different economy and view of the world. The first thirty years of the region's history are mostly the story of the failure of those two groups of people to accommodate, so that one largely took possession of the land and dispossessed the other. The activity of the early decades - the flurry of explorers, surveyors, pastoral lessees, German missionaries, battles for land and water - had all calmed down to a steady state by the 1890s, with the Europeans in control of the land, but still coming to terms with it.

Then the Europeans began to alter the landscape, sometimes deliberately with stock routes, camels, wells and artesian bores, sometimes inadvertently with their over-stocking, rabbits and the feral dingoes that followed. Paradoxically, they created an environment in which it was much more difficult for their grazing industry to prosper, and sheep began to disappear from their landholdings. They were forced to amalgamate small land holdings into larger ones, and the population began to decline.

By the turn of the twentieth century the economic geography of the region was already taking on its present form; the staple cattle industry and the modern transport routes were taking shape, and today's towns (except Moomba) were all in place. All three townships established as administrative centres by 1885 are still there (or in Innamincka's case, there again) while all the later ones have vanished. This implies that government administration was a powerful force in shaping the settlements.

The changes that have happened since have mostly been brought about by three forces: Sidney Kidman, motor transport and the oil and gas industry. Kidman, for all his faults, converted cattle producers to accepting the land as it was instead of trying to change it, and did much to create the modern industry. The decades of austere but reasonably stable beef industry were his legacy. The discovery and production of fossil hydrocarbon fuels has transformed the regional economy of the north-east, bringing back population and infrastructure to serve a new staple industry.

And the third staple industry is tourism, created by wealth and leisure time among city dwellers, and made possible by the abundance of cheaply available motor vehicles. For a few weeks each year in the winter school holidays, there are more people in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region than there have ever been before. What most tourists want to see is the land itself, so tourism is closely linked to efforts to conserve the natural environment. The modern history of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region is the process of coordinating the activities of the three modern staple industries so that each has a viable future.

2.2 Chronology of Events

- 1824 Moreton Bay settlement in Queensland (NSW)
- 1836 Colony of South Australia established
- 1840 Eyre explores north and formulates theory of the 'horseshoe' lake
- 1842 Free settlement begins in Queensland (NSW)
- 1845 Sturt reaches Strzelecki Creek and Cooper Creek
- 1846 Mitchell names the 'Victoria' River
- 1847 Kennedy establishes that the 'Victoria' is the Barcoo, joining Cooper Creek
- 1851 Waste Lands Act (SA) creates 14-year pastoral leases
- 1856 Babbage explores north-west of the 'horseshoe'
Gregory drives stock from Kimberleys to Darling Downs
- 1857 Hayward and Sleep take up Mount Chambers and Rawnsley Bluff (SA)
- 1858 Baker takes up Blanchewater run (SA)
Gregory arrives from Queensland through the 'horseshoe'
Babbage and Warburton discover the Mound Springs
Parry surveys the Marree region
- 1859 Separation of Queensland from New South Wales (boundary 141° meridian)
Stuart names Herrgott Springs
Stuckey takes up Lake Hope run (SA)
Hack and McDonald explore Cooper Creek
Davenport and Chambers take up Finniss Springs and Stuart Creek (SA)
- 1860 Burke & Wills expedition to cross Australia leaves Melbourne
Goyder surveys and names Lake Eyre
Lands Act (Qld) creates 14-year pastoral leases
- 1861 Burke & Wills perish at Cooper Creek
Rescue expeditions led by Howitt, McKinlay, Landsborough & Walker
Mitchell District opened to grazing (Qld)
- 1862 Howitt returns to Melbourne with remains of Burke & Wills
Queensland border shifted west to 138° longitude
Enniskillen, Bowen Downs & Nive Downs runs taken up (Qld)
Stuart succeeds in crossing Australia from south to north
- 1863 Northern Territory annexed to South Australia
- 1864 Gregory District opened to grazing (Qld)
- 1865 Elder and Stuckey import camels from Pakistan
- 1866 Cullamurra Mission Block reserved
Moravians establish Kopperamanna mission
- 1867 Lutherans establish Killalpaninna as Hermannsburg mission
Queensland railway extended west to Toowoomba
- 1868 Elder takes up Manuwalkaninna run (SA)
Debney and Woodford take up Mundowdna (SA)
Durack takes up Thylungra (Qld)
German missions move to Lake Bucaltaninna
- 1869 Lutheran catechism published in Dieri language
- 1870 Overland Telegraph construction commences
Milner drives sheep from Kopperamanna to Darwin
Redford drives stolen cattle from Bowen Downs to Blanchewater
Lake Harry taken up

- 1871 German missions abandoned
MacGilliray rides from Queensland to South Australia
- 1872 Overland Telegraph opens
Debney takes up Etadunna (SA)
Elder buys Blanchewater (SA)
Bostock selects Innamincka (SA), believing it to be in Queensland
- 1873 Conrick takes up Nappa Merrie (Qld)
Elder takes up Monte Collina (SA)
- 1874 Campbell takes up Innamincka (SA)
Gilp and McCallum take up Tinga Tingana (SA)
MacGregor takes up Glengyle (now Roseberth) (Qld)
- 1875 Wilson brothers take up Land of Promise (later Coongie) (SA)
Hood brothers take up Tirrawarra (SA)
Laughton takes up Cullamurra (SA)
Helling and Paull take up Cowarie (SA)
- 1876 Pizey takes up Clifton Hills (SA)
Pain takes up Pandie Pandie (SA)
- 1877 Frew takes up Cadelga (SA)
Muloorina taken up (SA)
Wilson takes up Cacoory (Qld)
Costello takes up Arrabury (Qld)
- 1878 Vogelsang revives Killalpaninna as Bethesda mission
Chapman takes up Cordillo Downs (SA)
Whittingham takes up Alton Downs (SA)
Conrick drives first cattle from the Cooper to Adelaide
Logic murders Mulhall at Tinga Tingana
- 1879 Poeppel surveys Queensland-South Australia border
Burt establishes store at Diamantina Crossing (Birdsville)
Cave takes up Kalamurina (SA)
South Australian railway extended north to Quorn
- 1880 Spence takes up Goyder lagoon (SA)
Howie brothers take up Haddon Downs (SA)
- 1881 First Birdsville race meeting
- 1882 Police station established at Innamincka
Tirrawarra incorporated into Innamincka (SA)
- 1883 Great Northern Railway reaches Farina
Marree township surveyed
Queensland customs post established at Birdsville
Tarkaninna bore strikes artesian water (SA)
Great Northern hotel opens at Marree
Birdsville and Royal hotels open at Birdsville
Queensland-South Australia border fence built
Waite takes up Kanowana (SA)
Waite, Elder & Barr Smith buy Cordillo Downs (SA)
- 1884 Great Northern Railway reaches Herrgott Springs (Marree)
Marree railway bore sunk
Railway extended west from Marree toward Oodnadatta

2.0 Historical Background

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

- 1885 Birdsville township surveyed
South Australian customs post established at Innamincka
Etadunna homestead established (SA)
Cordillo Downs wool scour established
Logic escapes from prison
Bad summer - many travellers perish
- 1886 Marree-Birdsville mail service established
Diamantina Divisional Board (later Shire) established at Birdsville
Queensland customs post established at Oontoo
Oontoo township surveyed
Innamincka hotel licensed
Cullamurra incorporated into Innamincka station
Rabbits arrive in the region
- 1887 Betoota township surveyed
Mungerannie hotel opens
- 1888 Oontoo hotel opens
Great Western Railway reaches Charleville
Coal discovered at Kuntha Hill
- 1889 Marree town bore sunk
- 1890 Innamincka township surveyed (briefly named Hopetoun)
Birdsville courthouse built
Lake Harry bore sunk
Blanchewater run incorporated into Murnpeowie (SA)
Murnpeowie homestead established (SA)
Kidman buys Cowarie (SA)
- 1891 Birdsville Railway Royal Commission
Kidman buys Glengyle (Qld)
Tinga Tingana abandoned
- 1894 Mungerannie hotel closes
- 1896 Dulkaninna subdivided from Mundowdna
- 1897 Kopperamanna bore sunk
Kidman buys Alton Downs (SA)
- 1898 Railway reaches Cunnamulla
Beltana Pastoral Company buys Murnpeowie and Cordillo Downs
Dulkaninna bore sunk
- 1900 Lake Harry date plantation and Muloorina camel depot established (SA)
Mungerannie bore sunk
Kidman buys Cacoory (Qld)
Oontoo hotel closes
- 1901 Mirra Mitta bore sunk
Lake Callabonna Fossil Reserve created
- 1902 Oontoo customs house closes
Kidman buys Coongie (SA)
- 1903 Killalpaninna Aboriginal Reserve created
Cadelga incorporated into Cordillo
Kidman buys Pandie Pandie (SA)
Mount Gason and Monte Collina bores sunk
- 1904 Kidman buys Innamincka (SA)

- 1905 Kidman buys Mundowdna (SA)
Haddon Downs incorporated into Cordillo (SA)
Goyder Lagoon bore sunk
- 1906 Mulka bore sunk
- 1907 Machine shearing introduced at Cordillo and Murnpeowie (SA)
Marree school built
Marree township bore sunk
- 1908 Coongie incorporated into Innamincka station (SA)
Clayton bore sunk
- 1912 Aiston establishes Mulka store
- 1914 Mungerannie subdivided from Cowarie (SA)
Royal Commission into Aboriginal Welfare
- 1916 Marree nursing home established
Cannawaukaninna bore sunk
First motor car drives Birdsville Track
Visit of Railway Standing Committee
Kopperamanna abandoned
- 1917 Killalpaninna abandoned
Railway reaches Quilpie
- 1919 Merty Merty subdivided out of Innamincka, Tinga Tingana & Strzelecki
- 1920 Dulkaninna abandoned (SA)
Powell occupies Killalpaninna
Royal hotel at Birdsville closes
- 1923 AIM nursing home in former Royal hotel at Birdsville
- 1924 Aiston relocates Mulka store to New Well
- 1926 Commonwealth takes over Central Australia Railway
Birdsville mail carried by trucks
- 1929 Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home (AIM) opens at Innamincka
Killalpaninna abandoned
Government camel depot abandoned
Monte Collina abandoned
- 1931 Cordillo Downs abandoned
- 1932 Dulkaninna re-occupied
- 1935 Manu Main outstation occupied
- 1936 Cordillo Downs re-occupied
- 1937 Flying Doctor Service base at Broken Hill
Traeger radio transceivers in use
AIM vacates former Royal hotel at Birdsville
- 1938 Muloorina re-occupied
- 1939 United Aborigines Mission established at Finnis Springs
Flying Doctor Service base at Alice Springs
- 1942 Cordillo Downs grazing cattle - last sheep gone from region
- 1945 Clifton Hills homestead relocated to Goyder Lagoon bore
- 1946 Dog Fence Act (SA)
- 1947 Flying Doctor Service base at Charleville
- 1948 Manu Main outstation abandoned
- 1949 Large flood in Cooper Creek
- 1950 School of the Air established
- 1952 Innamincka hotel closes

2.0 Historical Background

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

- 1953 Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home closes
Innamincka police station closes
Birdsville nursing home opens
Mulka store abandoned
- 1954 Santos (South Australian Northern Territory Oil Search) formed
- 1956 Clayton subdivided from Mundowdna
- 1957 Marree railway converted to standard gauge
- 1958 Oil and gas surveys commence in Strzelecki-Cooper region
Strzelecki Track upgraded for oil and gas survey traffic
- 1959 Innamincka Number 1 Well drilled
- 1960 Finniss Spings Mission closes
- 1961 Birdsville town bore sunk
- 1963 Natural gas flow from Gidgealpa Number 2 Well
Page family perish at Clifton Hills
- 1964 Campbell breaks world land speed record on Lake Eyre
Dig Tree Memorial Reserve created
- 1965 Birdsville hydro power station operating
- 1966 Gidgealpa station subdivided from Innamincka and Merty Merty
- 1967 Natural Gas Pipelines Authority Act (SA)
Simpson Desert Conservation Park created
- 1968 Petroleum Act (SA)
- 1969 Moomba township established
Gas pipeline to Adelaide opens
Monte Collina incorporated into new Tinga Tingana
- 1970 Oil flow from Tirrawarra Number 1 Well
- 1972 Innamincka hotel re-opens
- 1974 Large flood in Cooper Creek
Strzelecki Track re-routed on higher ground
- 1975 Cooper Basin Ratification Act (SA)
- 1980 Central Australian Railway closes
- 1985 Lake Eyre National Park created
- 1988 Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves created
- 1989 Mungerannie hotel re-opens
- 1994 Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home reconstructed as NPWS office
- 1995 Rabbit calicivirus released

3.0 INVENTORY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 National Heritage Places

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry in a Register of Places of National Heritage Significance:

- Burke & Wills Sites on Cooper Creek NHP:001
- Dog Fence/Dingo Barrier fence NHP:002
- Strzelecki Creek NHP:003

3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

3.2 State Heritage Places (South Australia)

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry in the South Australian State Heritage Register:

- Marree Mosque Site, via Marree SHR:001
- Marree Afghan Quarter, Marree SHR:002
- Kopperamanna Mission Site, off Birdsville Track SHR:003
- Koonchera Waterhole, off Birdsville Track SHR:004
- Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins, off Strzelecki Track SHR:005

The following place within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area is recommended for removal from the South Australian State Heritage Register:

- Gray’s Grave, Lake Massacre, Innamincka Regional Reserve SHR:006

3.3 State Heritage Places (Queensland)

The following place within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area is recommended for entry in the Queensland Heritage Register:

- Dig Tree and Fort Wills site, Nappa Merrie station QHR:001

3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

3.4 State Heritage Areas (South Australia)

The following place within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area is recommended for declaration as a State Heritage Area:

- Strzelecki Creek SHA:001

3.5 Local Heritage Places (South Australia)

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry in a list of places of local heritage value in the Out of Hundreds Development Plan:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| • Railway Station | Marree | LHP:001 |
| • School | Marree | LHP:002 |
| • Hospital | Marree | LHP:003 |
| • Cemetery | Marree | LHP:004 |
| • Aboriginal Cemetery | Marree | LHP:005 |
| • Herrgott Springs | Marree | LHP:006 |
| • Dulkaninna Trig Point | Dulkaninna Station | LHP:007 |
| • Canny Trig Point (Milner's Pile) | Etadunna Station | LHP:008 |
| • Etadunna Woolshed Ruins | Etadunna Station | LHP:009 |
| • Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins | Etadunna Station | LHP:010 |
| • Apatoongannie Homestead Ruins | Mulka Station | LHP:011 |
| • Old Mulka Homestead Ruins | Mulka Station | LHP:012 |
| • Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins | Mulka Station | LHP:013 |
| • Mirra Mitta Bore | Cowarie Station | LHP:014 |
| • Mount Gason Bore | Cowarie Station | LHP:015 |
| • Page Family Grave | Clifton Hills Station | LHP:016 |
| • Old Pandie Pandie Homestead | Pandie Pandie Station | LHP:017 |
| • Miranda Homestead Ruins | Pandie Pandie Station | LHP:018 |

3.0 Inventory Recommendations

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

- Bull Hole Bore and Pump Ruins Cordillo Downs Station LHP:019
- Providence Dam Sheep Yards Cordillo Downs Station LHP:020
- Haddon Downs Homestead ruins Cordillo Downs Station LHP:021
- Coongie Homestead ruins Innamincka RR LHP:022
- Kudriemitchie Outstation Innamincka RR LHP:023
- Gidgealpa No. 2 Well Gidgealpa Station LHP:024
- Innamincka No. 1 Well Innamincka RR LHP:025
- Nappacoongie Homestead Ruins Gidgealpa Station LHP:026
- Toolatchie Homestead Ruins Gidgealpa Station LHP:027
- Manu Main Homestead Ruins Murnpeowie Station LHP:028
- Junction Well Hut Murnpeowie Station LHP:029

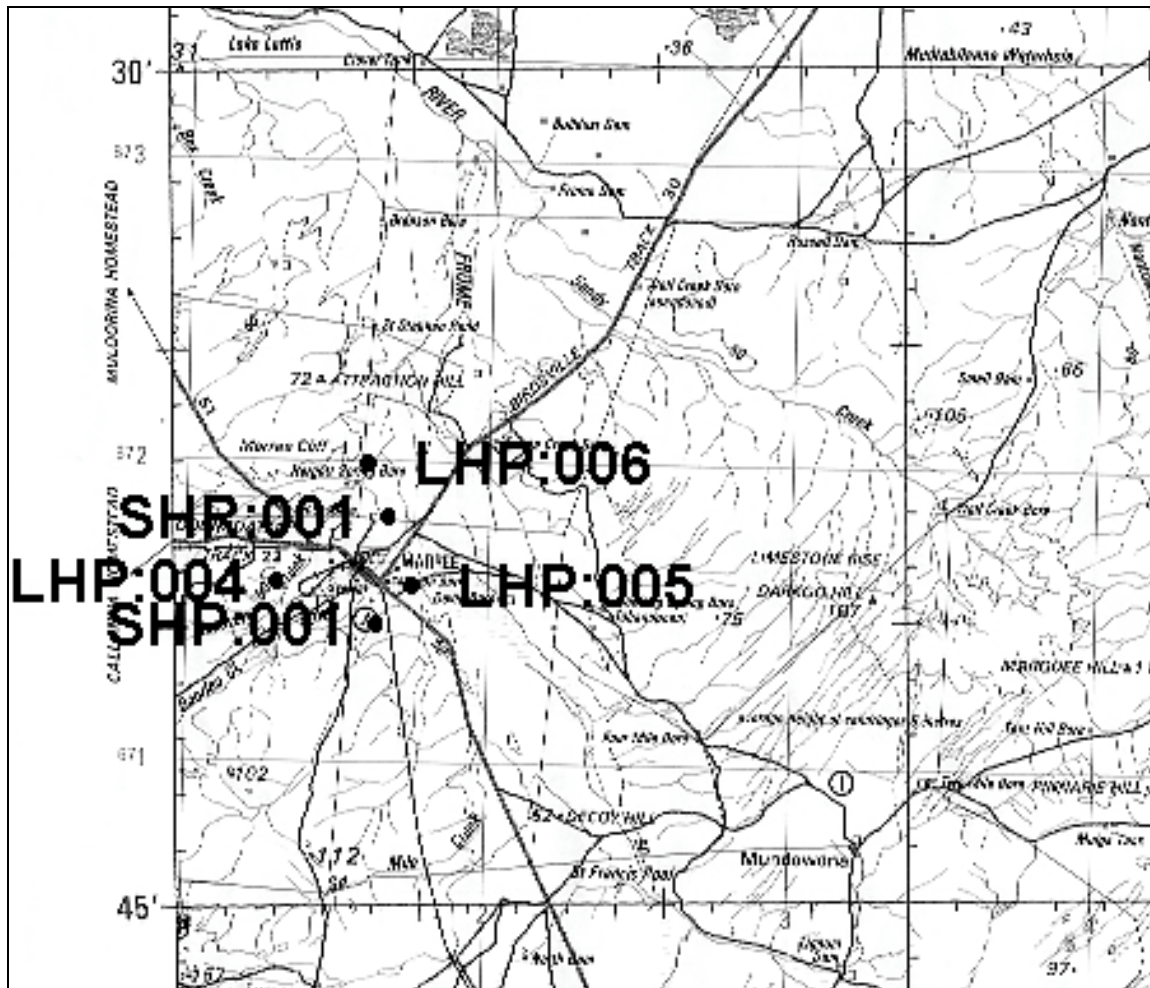
3.6 Local Heritage Places (Queensland)

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry as local heritage places in the Diamantina and Bulloo shires' planning schemes:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| • Birdsville Hospital | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):001 |
| • Birdsville Cemetery | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):002 |
| • Birdsville Aboriginal Cemetery | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):003 |
| • Birdsville Hydro Power Station | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):004 |
| • Birdsville Chinese Gardens Site | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):005 |
| • Birdsville Burke & Wills Tree | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):006 |
| • Diamantina Crossing | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):007 |
| • Nappa Merrie Homestead | Bulloo Shire | LHP(Q):008 |
| • Oontoo Hotel Ruins | Bulloo Shire | LHP(Q):009 |
| • Oontoo Customs House Site | Bulloo Shire | LHP(Q):010 |

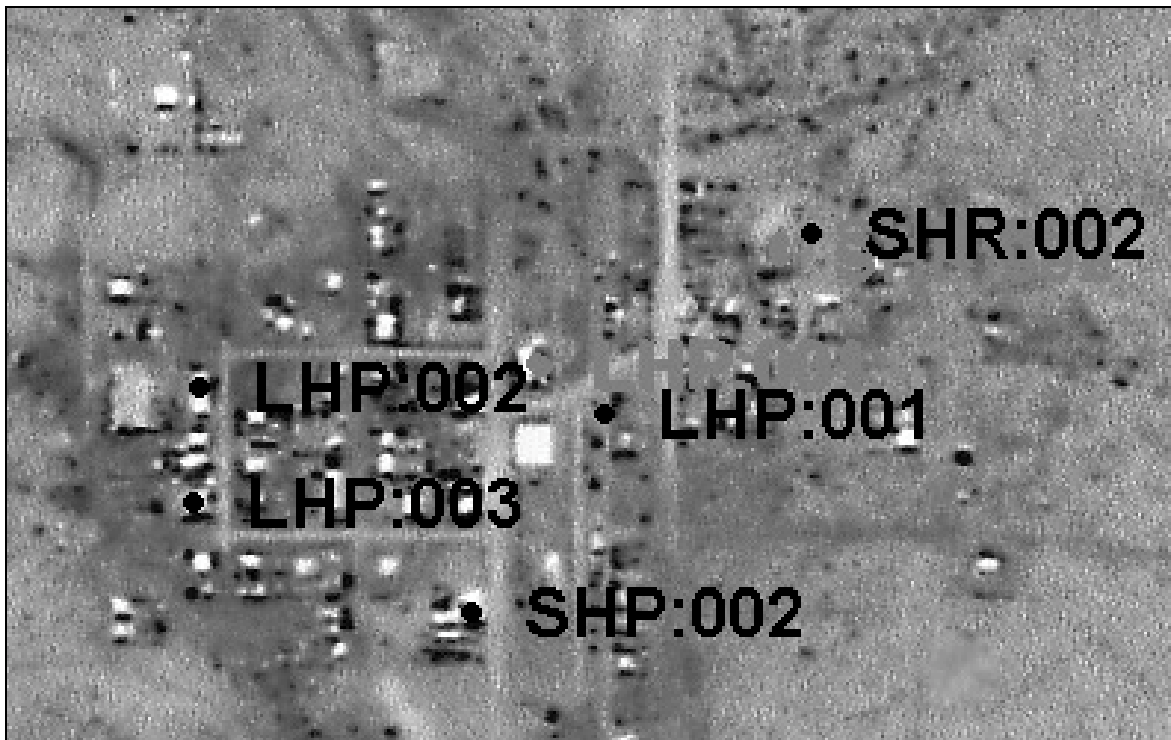
3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

3.7 Locality Maps of Heritage Places



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

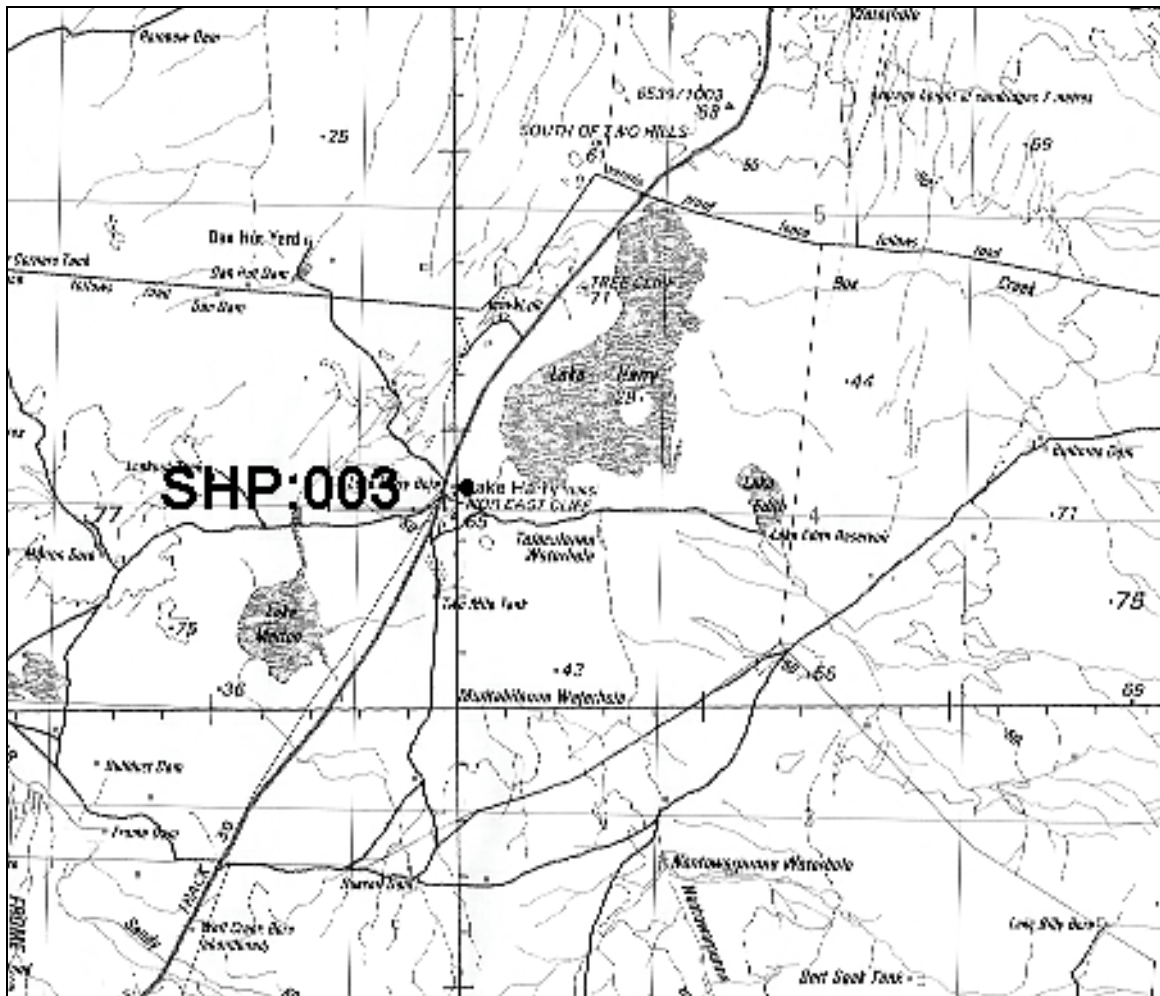
Source: Marree SH 54-5 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

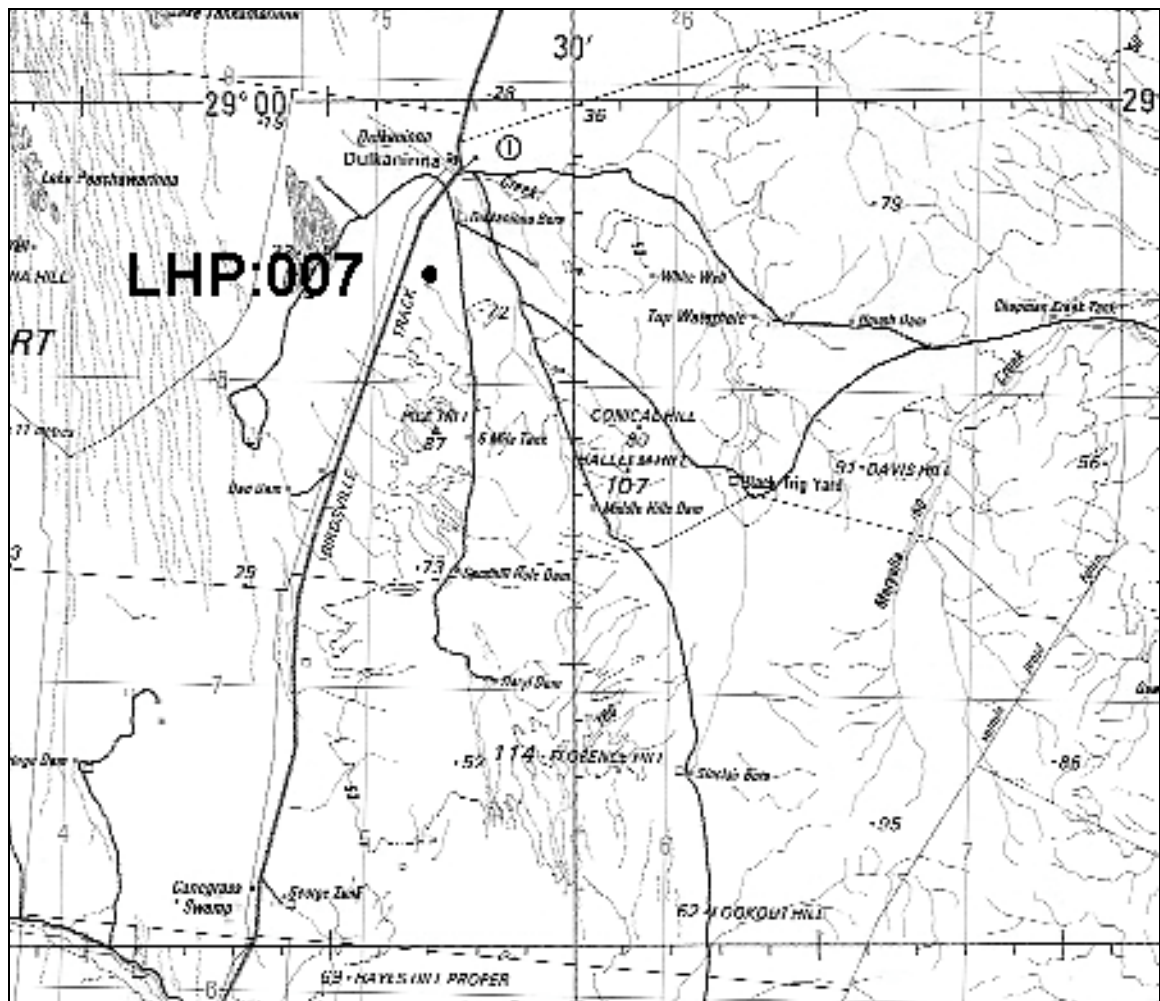
Source: Mapland Aerial Photograph of Marree 4863/0046

3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

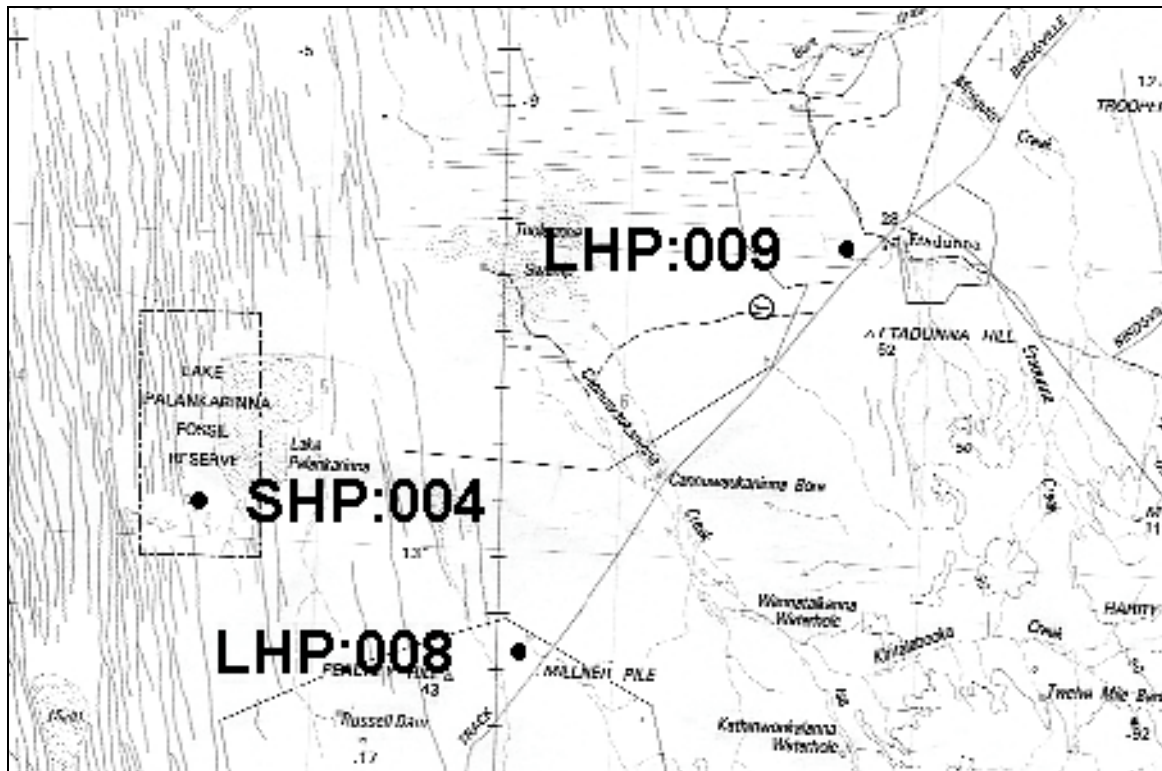
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Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

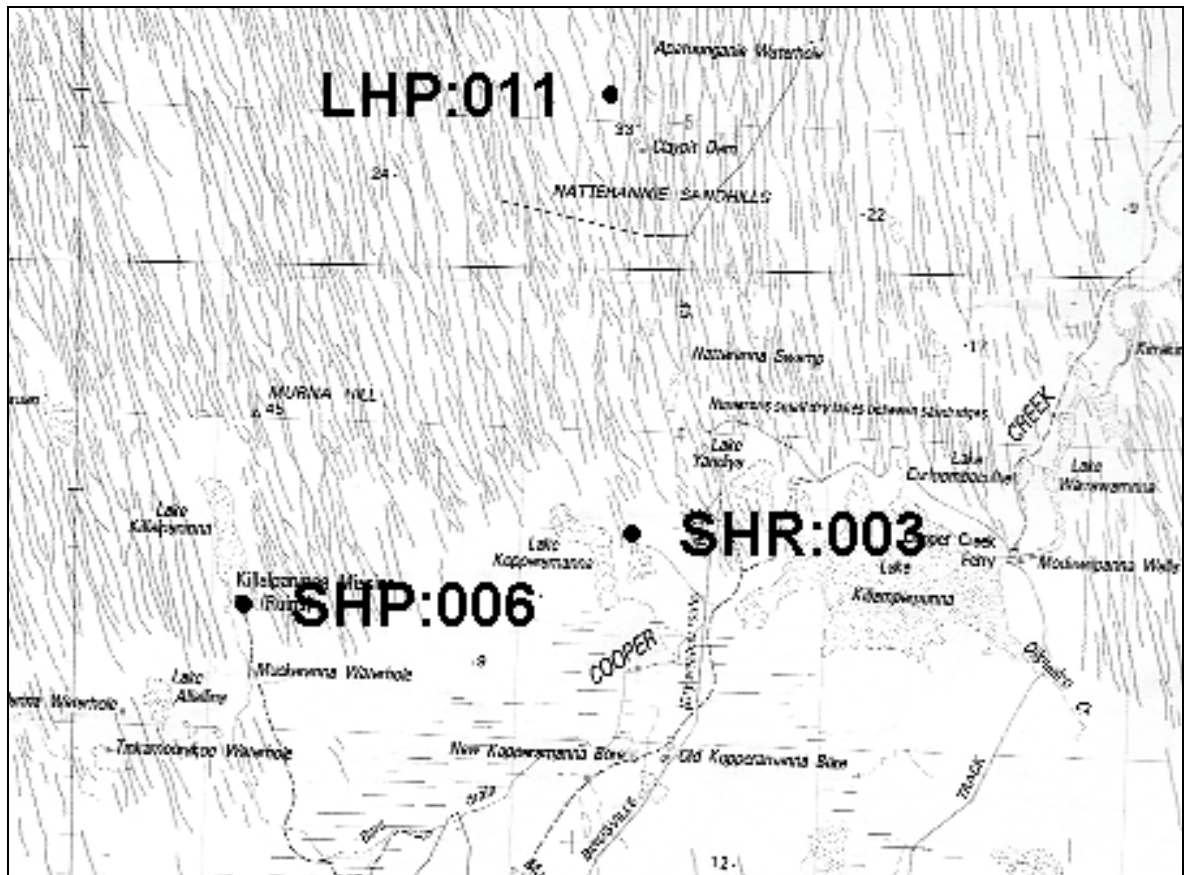
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



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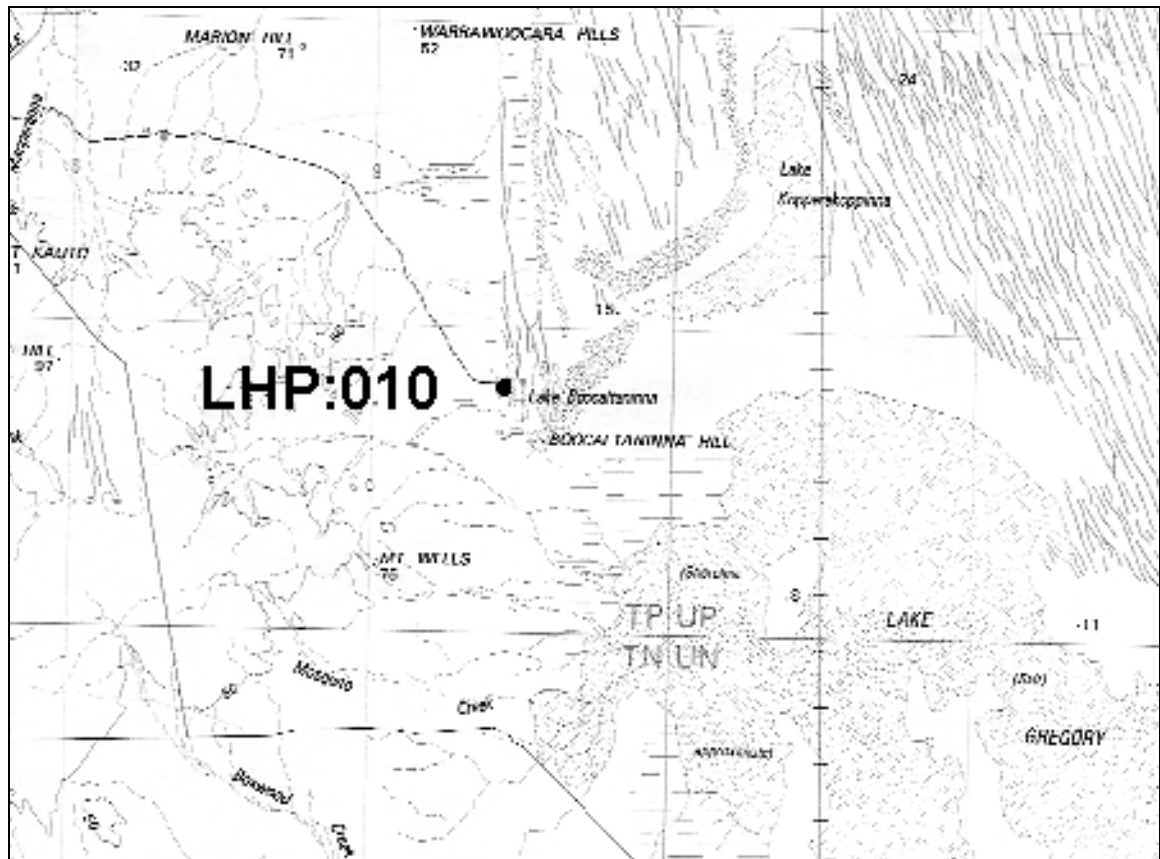
Source: Kopperamanna SH 54-1 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

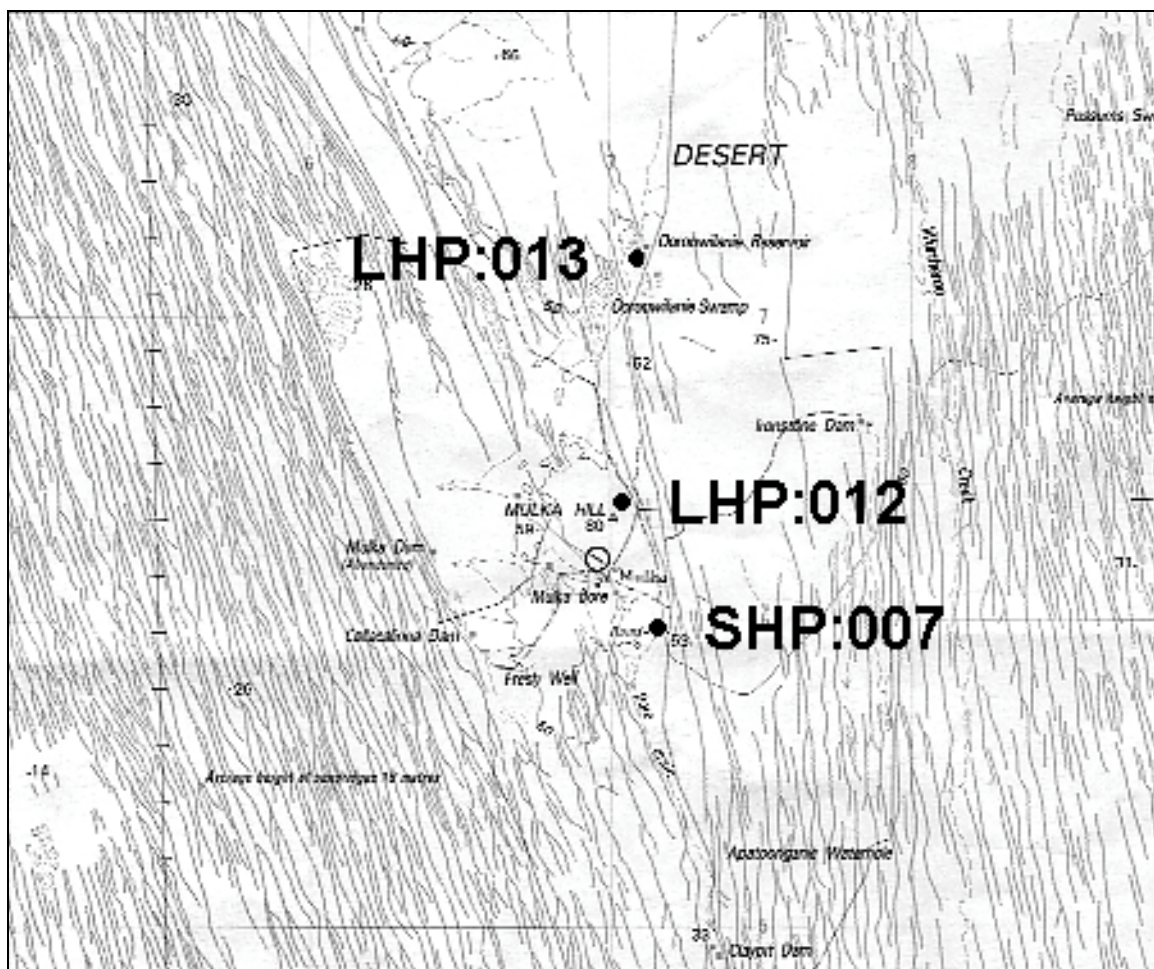
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

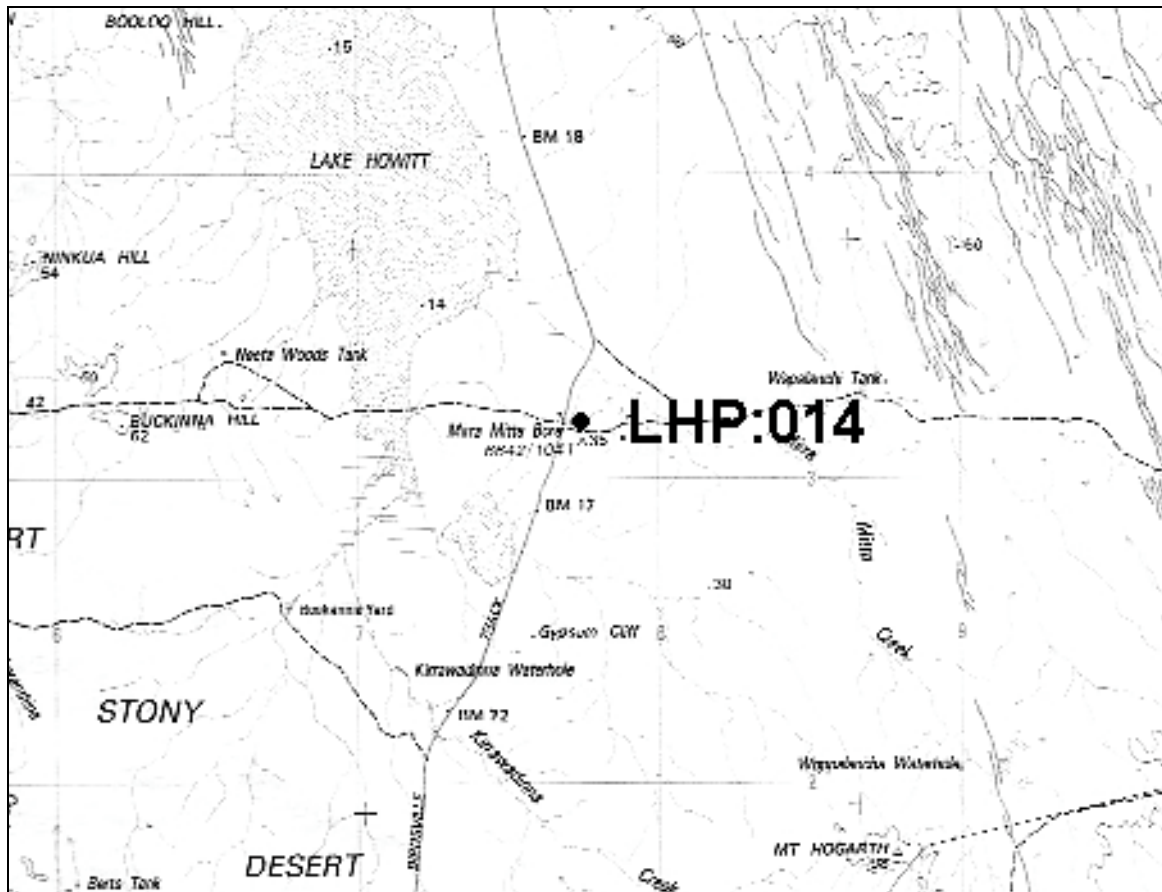
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Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

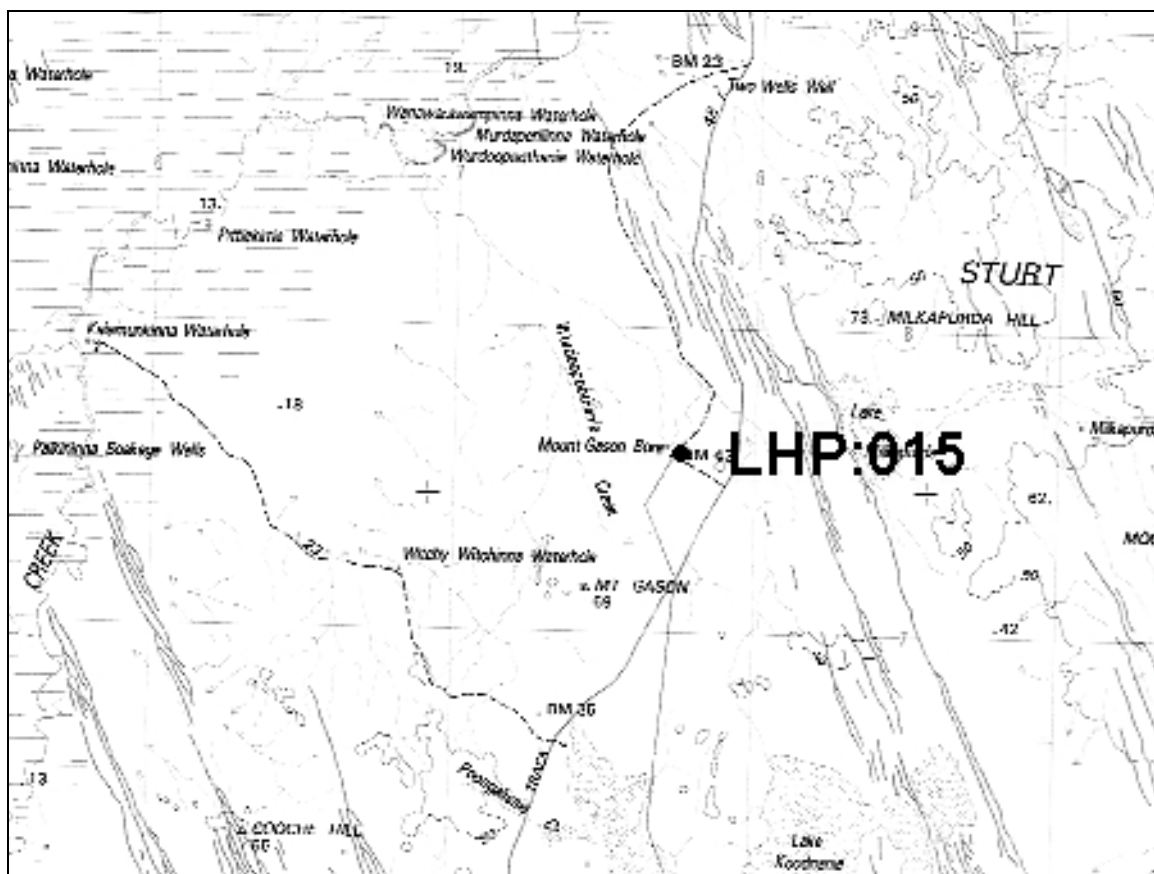
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

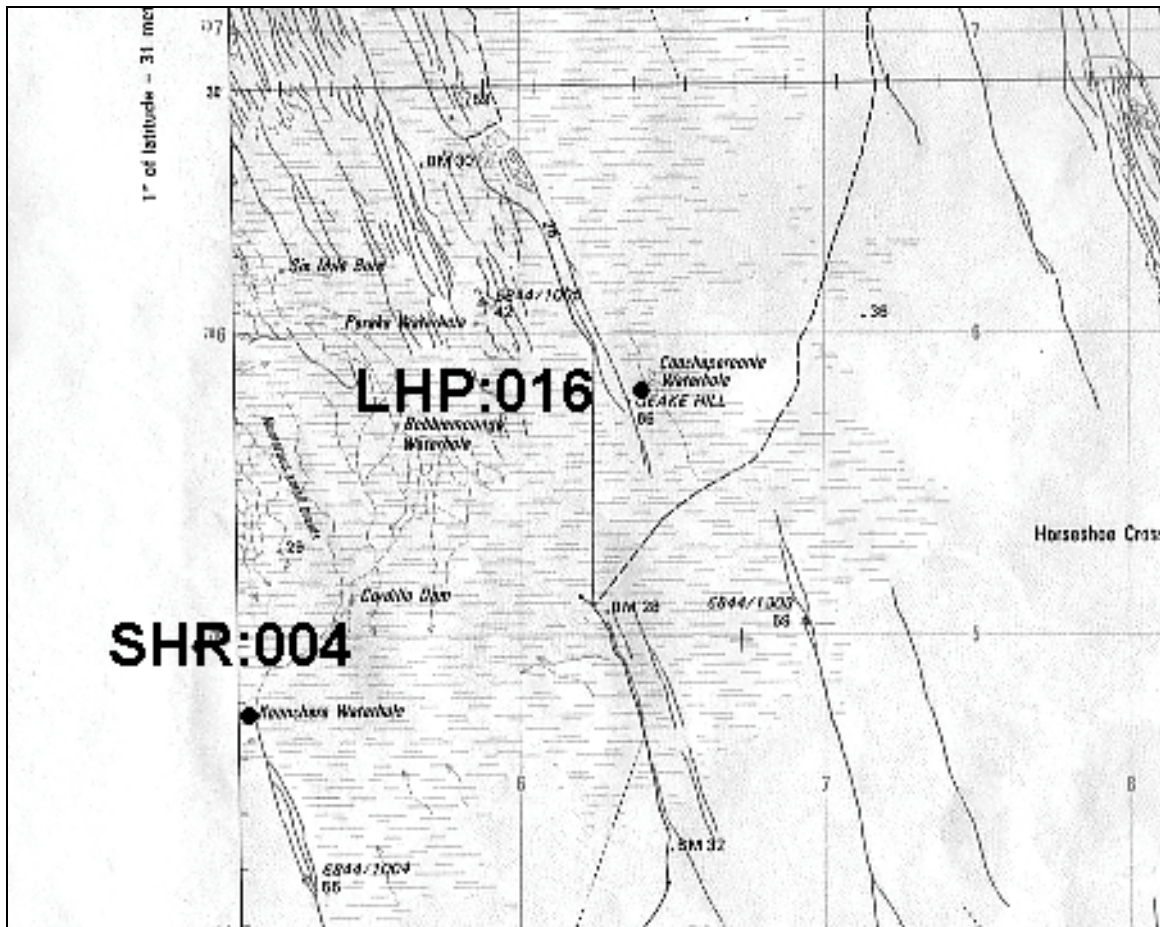
Source: Gason SG 54-13 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

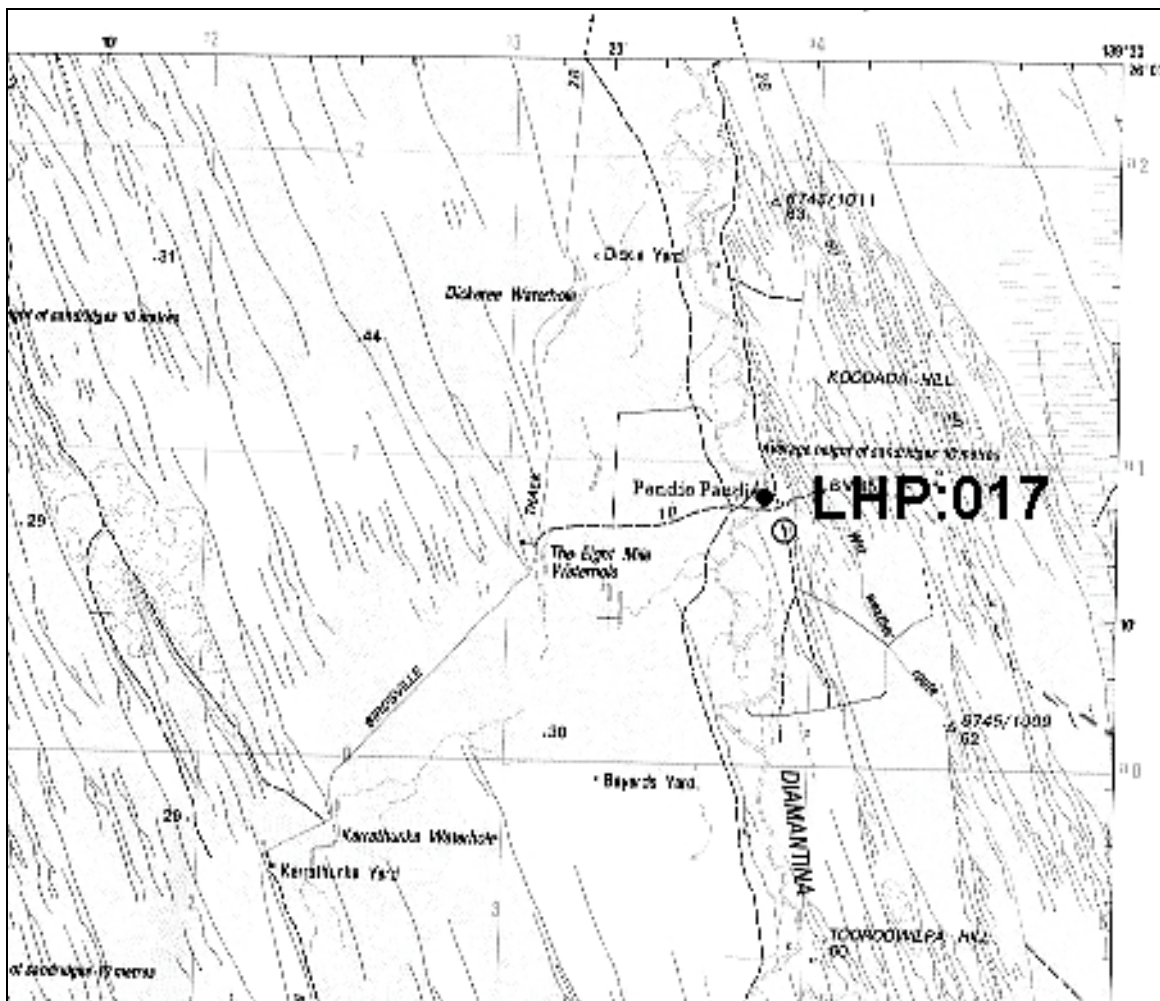
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

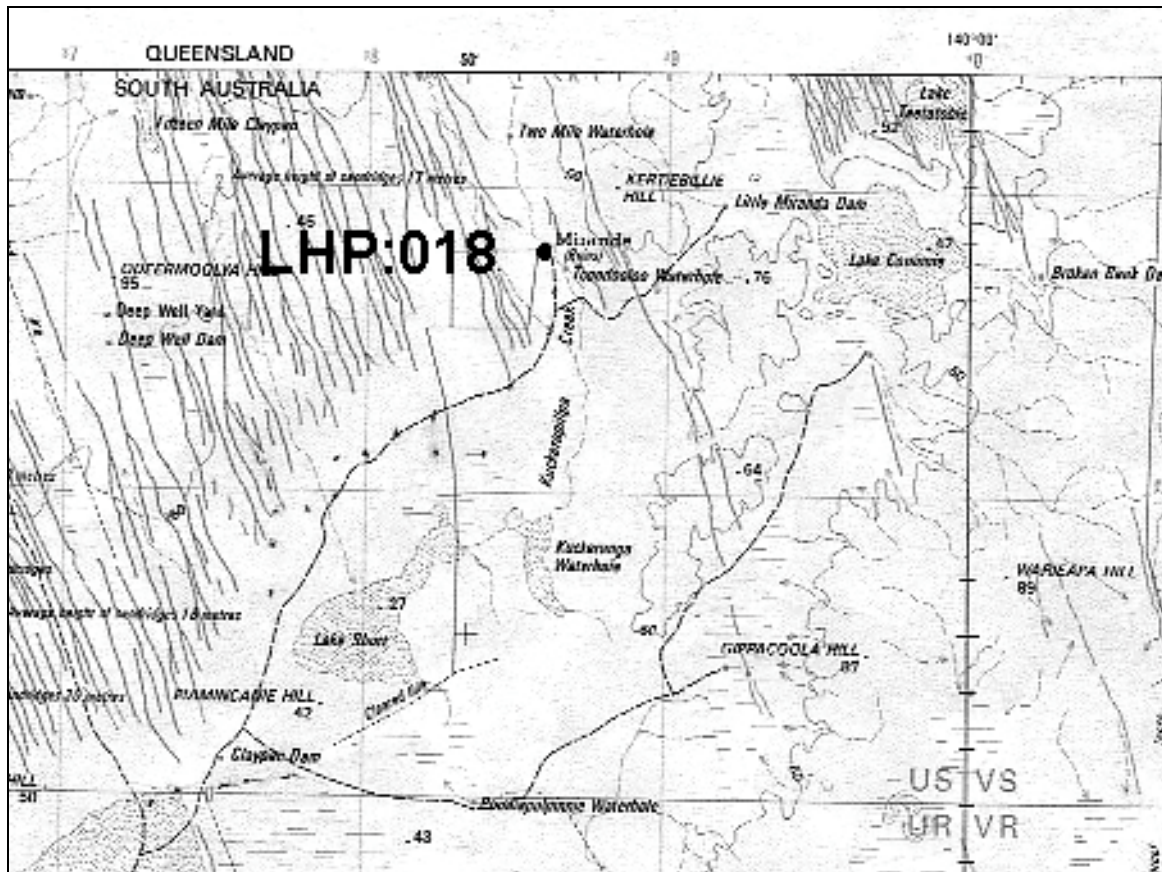
Source: Cordillo SG 54-10 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

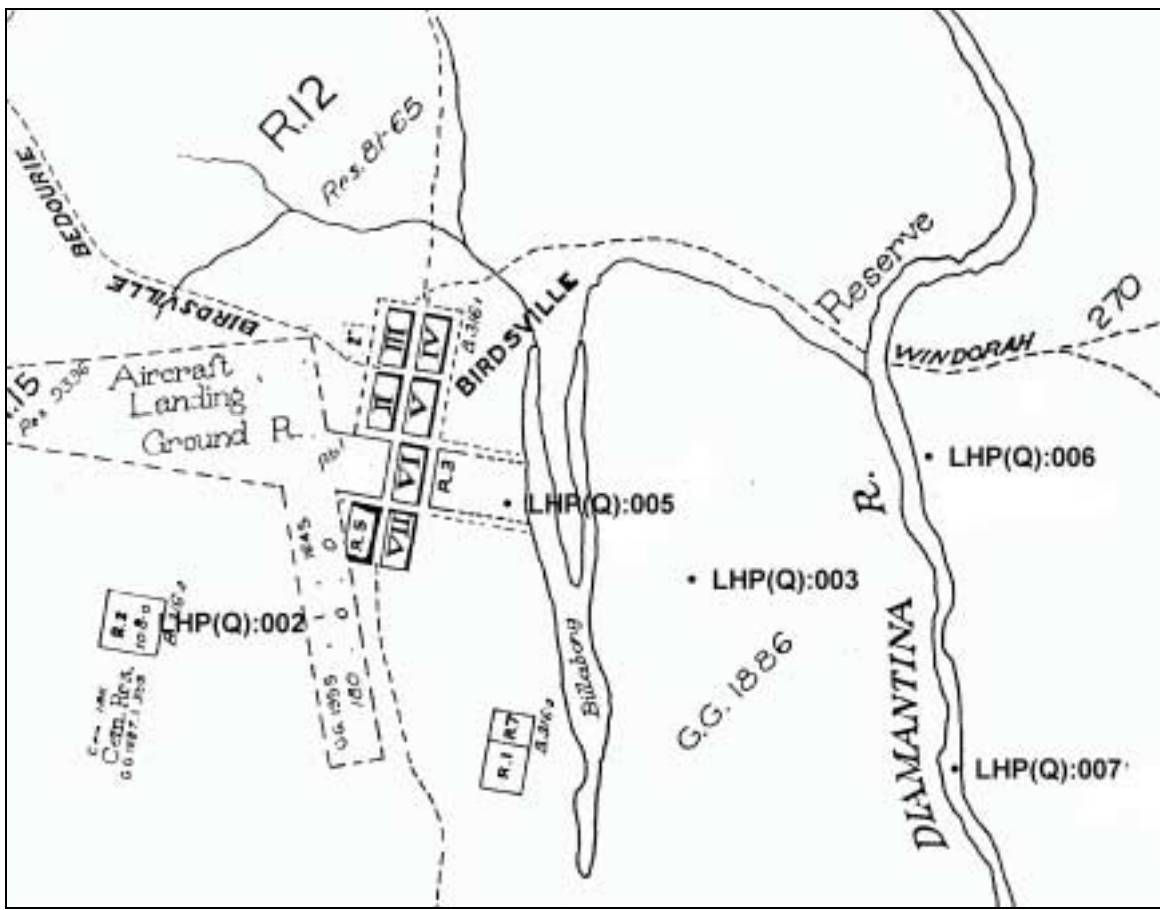
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

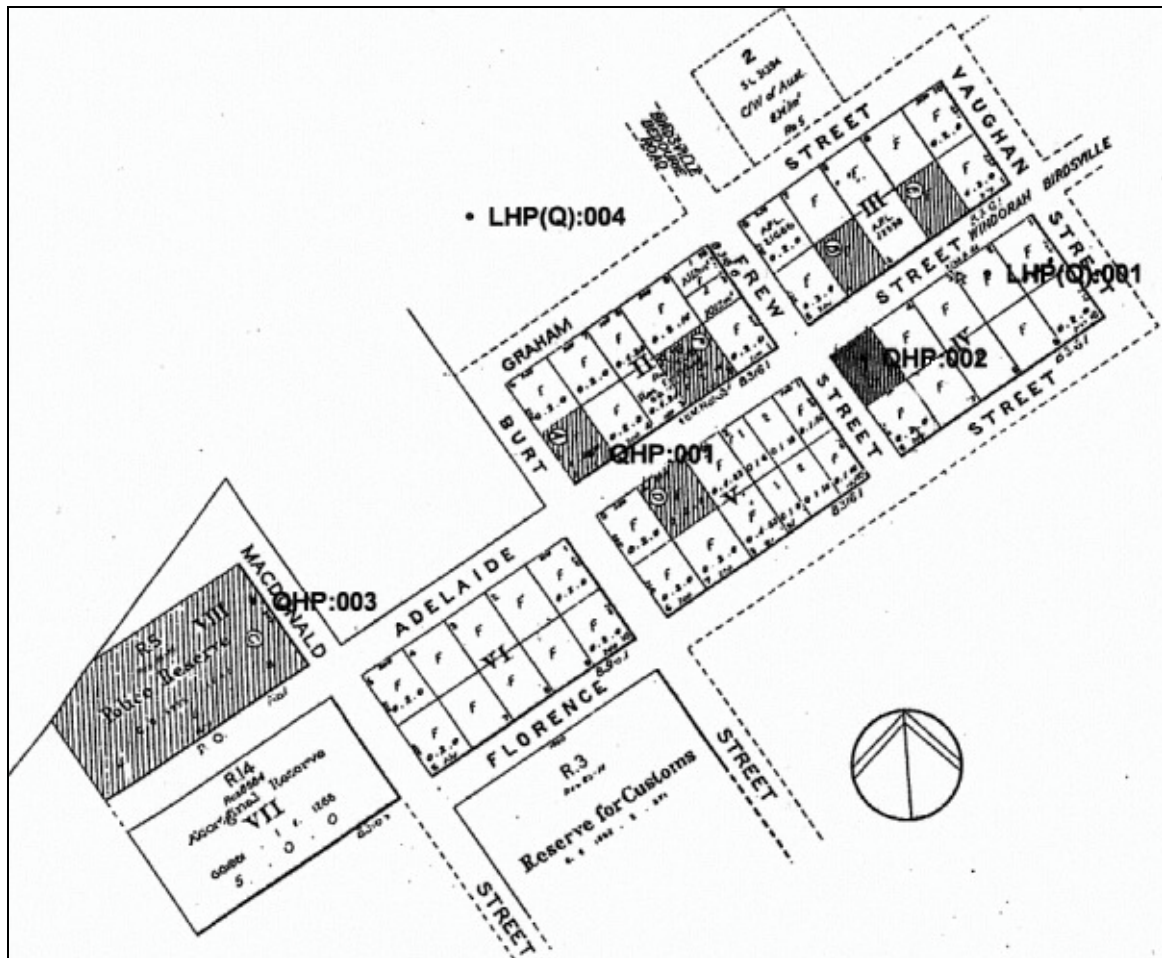
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Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

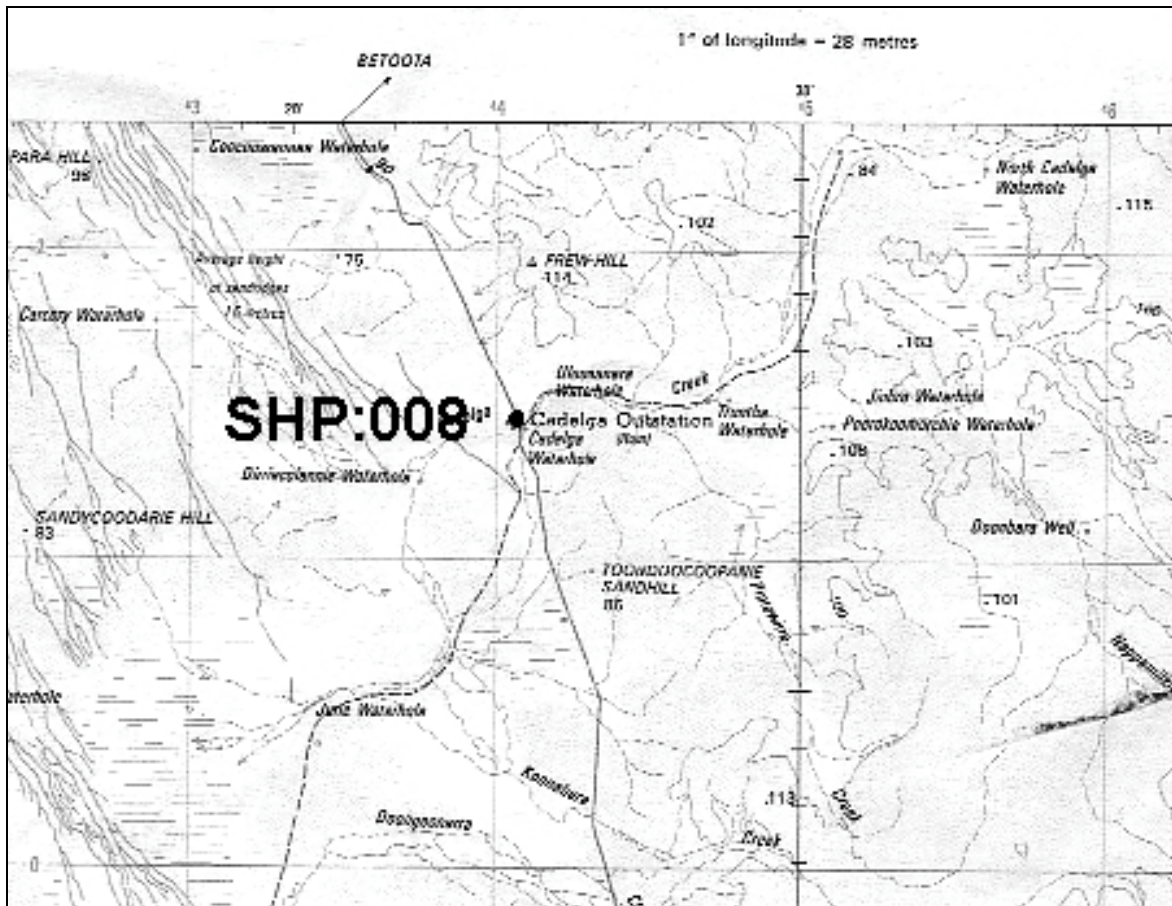
Source: Queensland Lands Department map: Town of Birdsville

3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

Source: Richard Allom Architects 1980



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

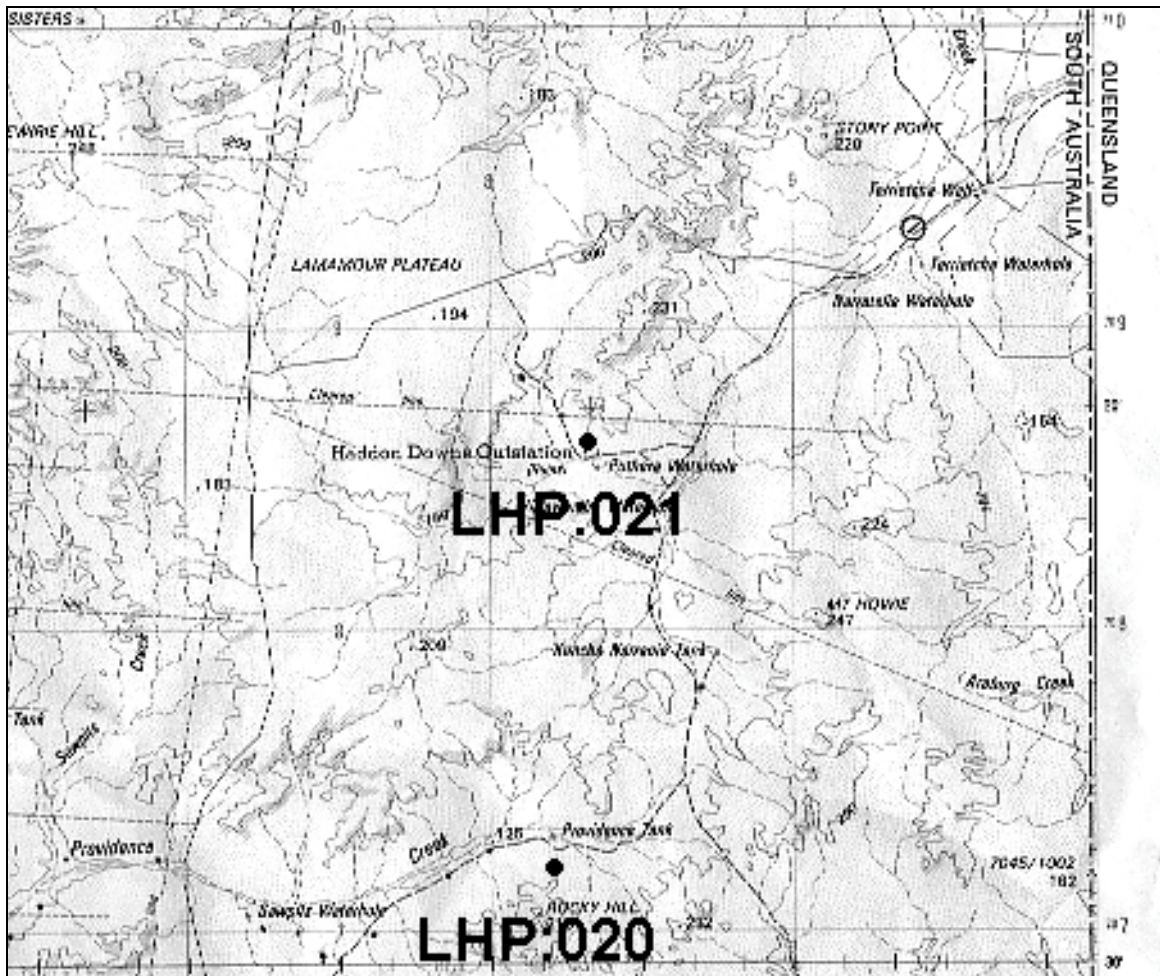
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



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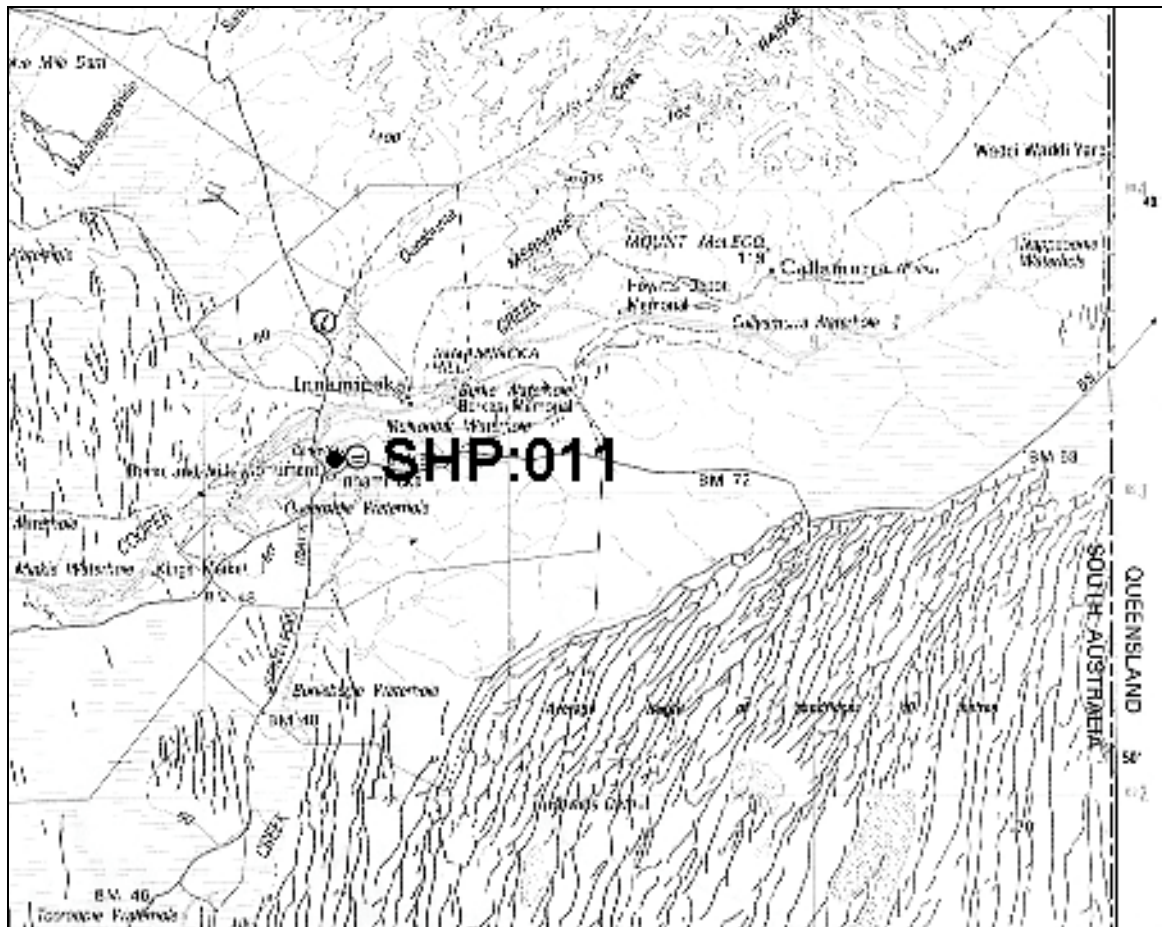
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Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

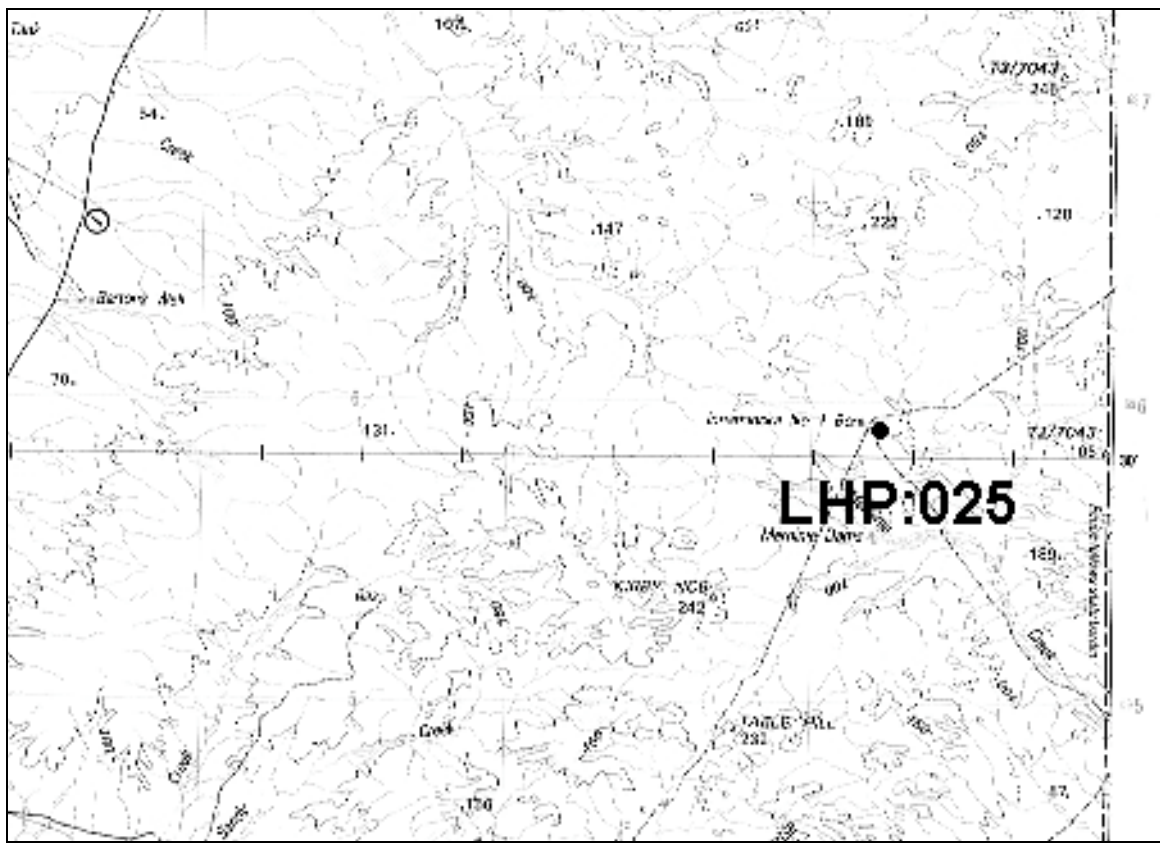
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

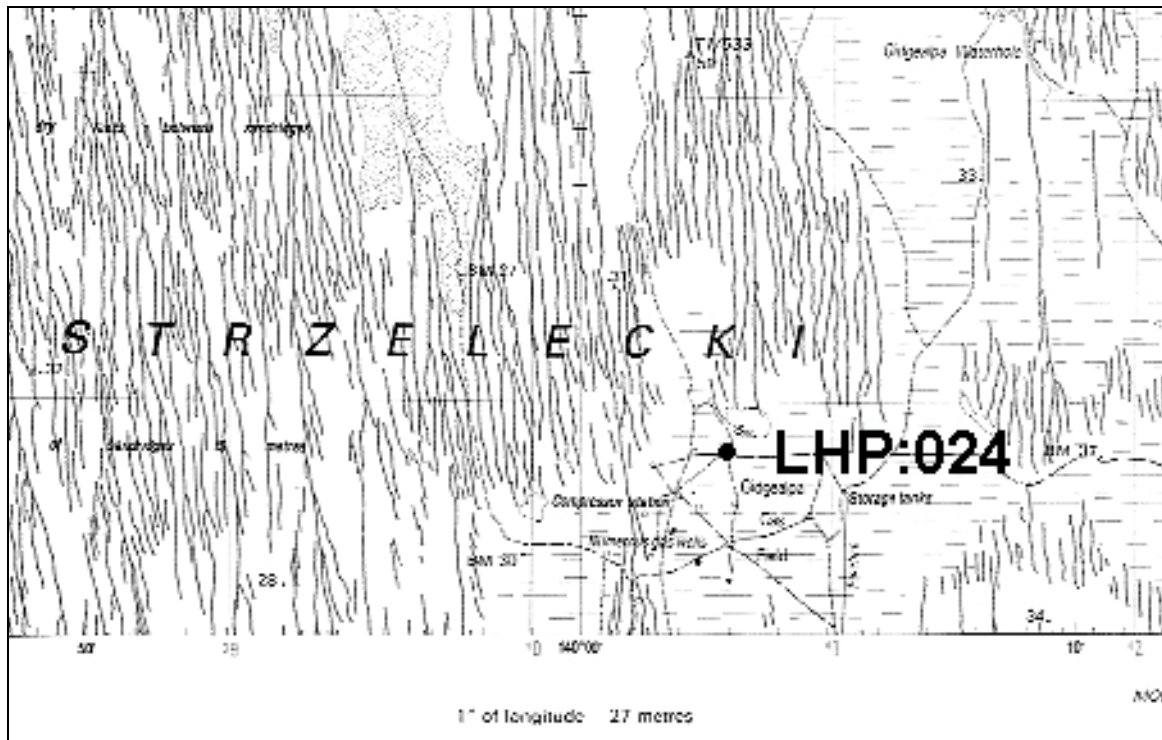
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Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

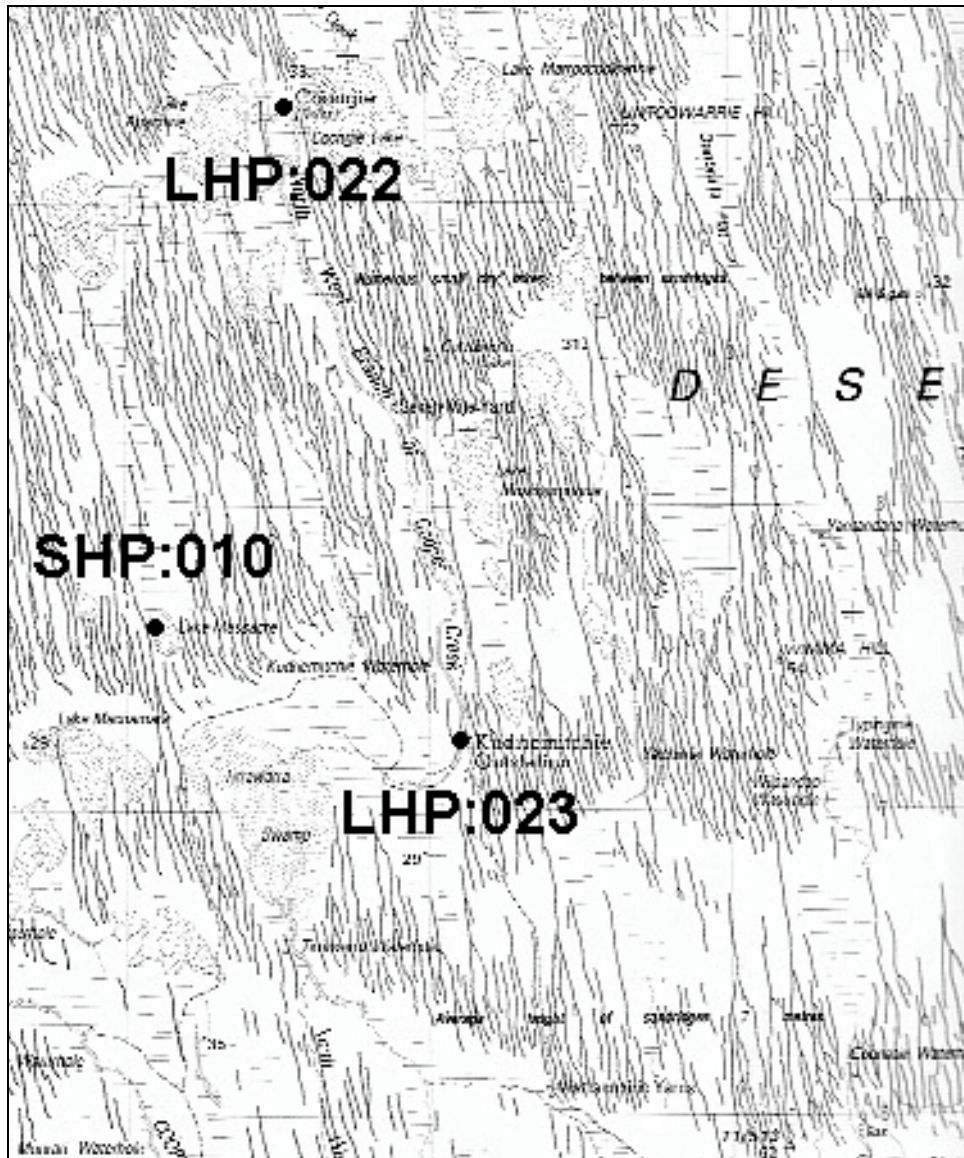
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

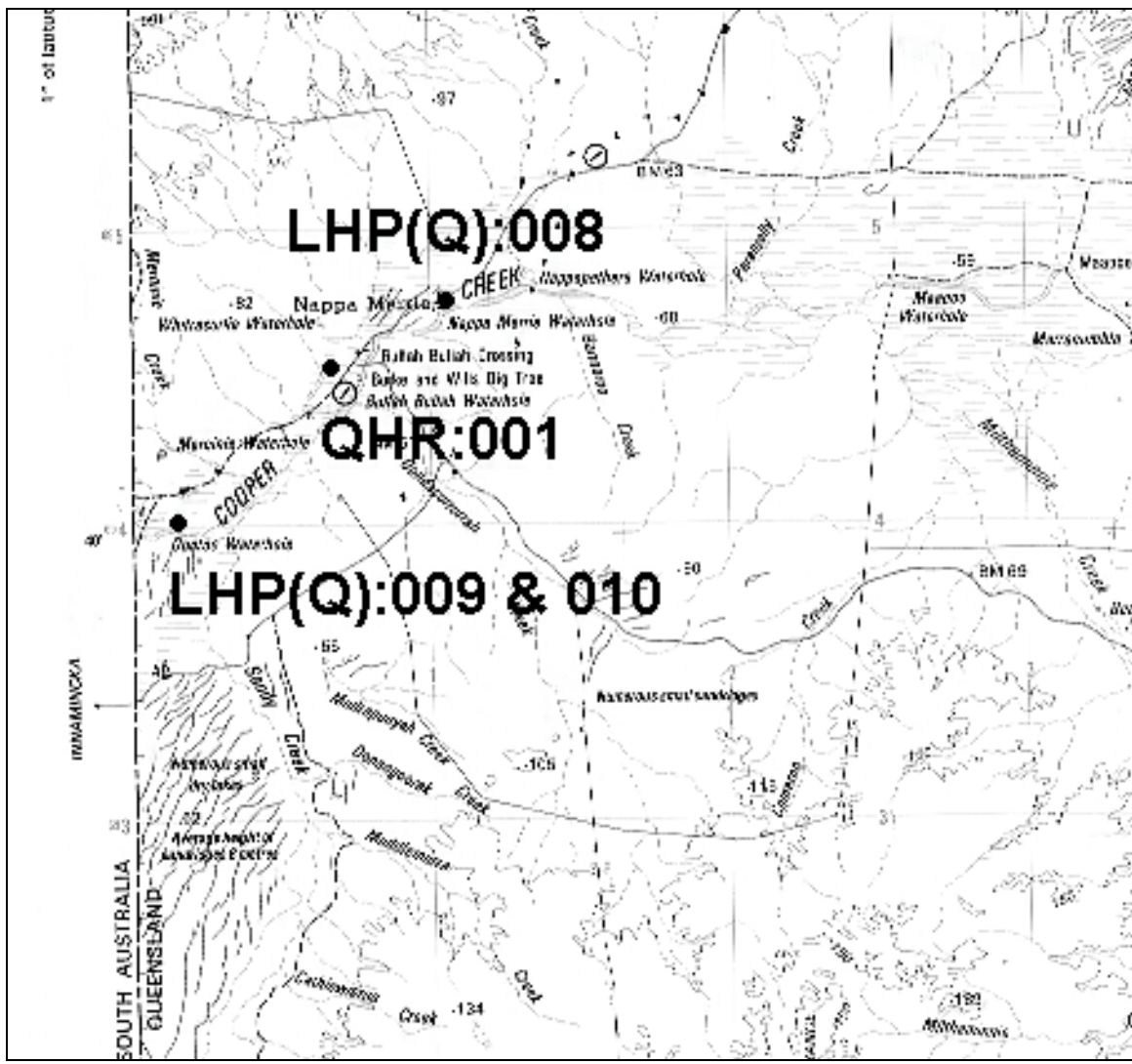
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Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

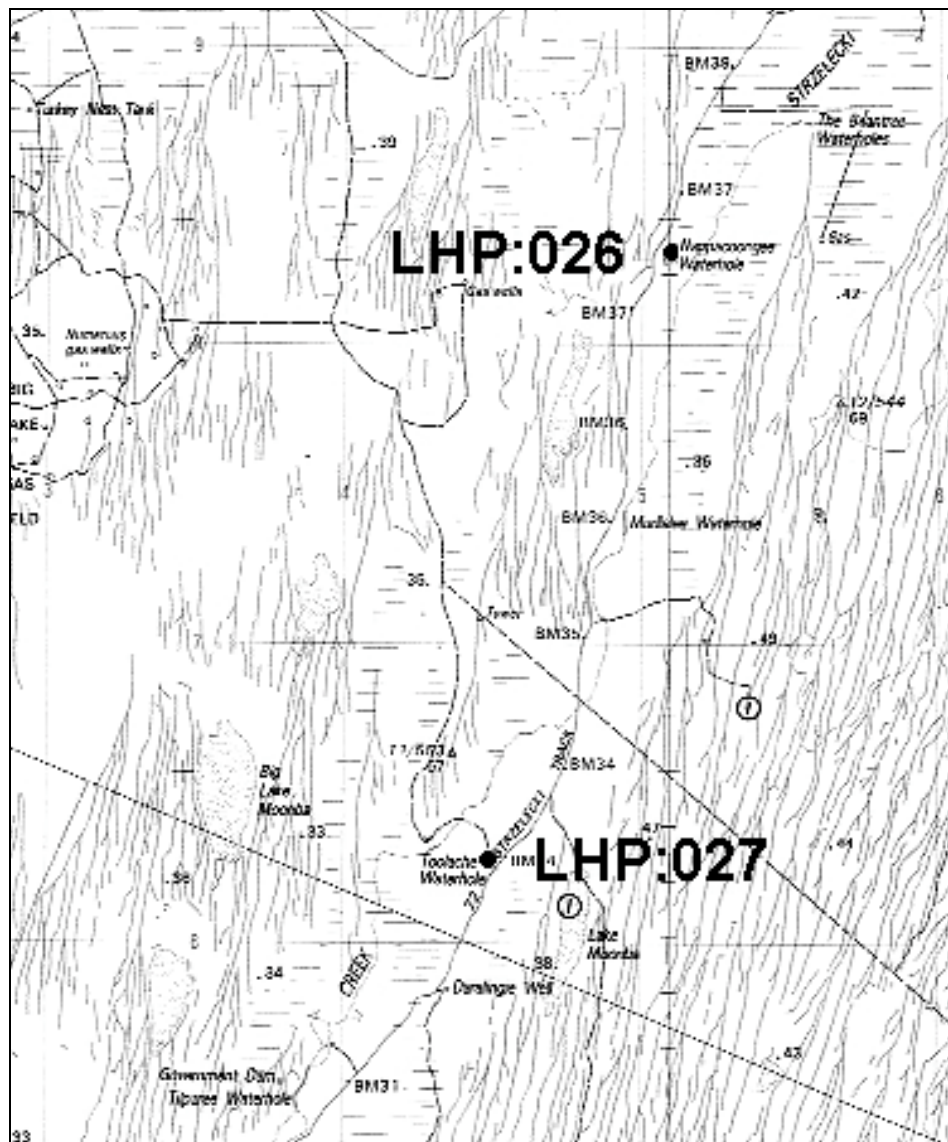
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3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

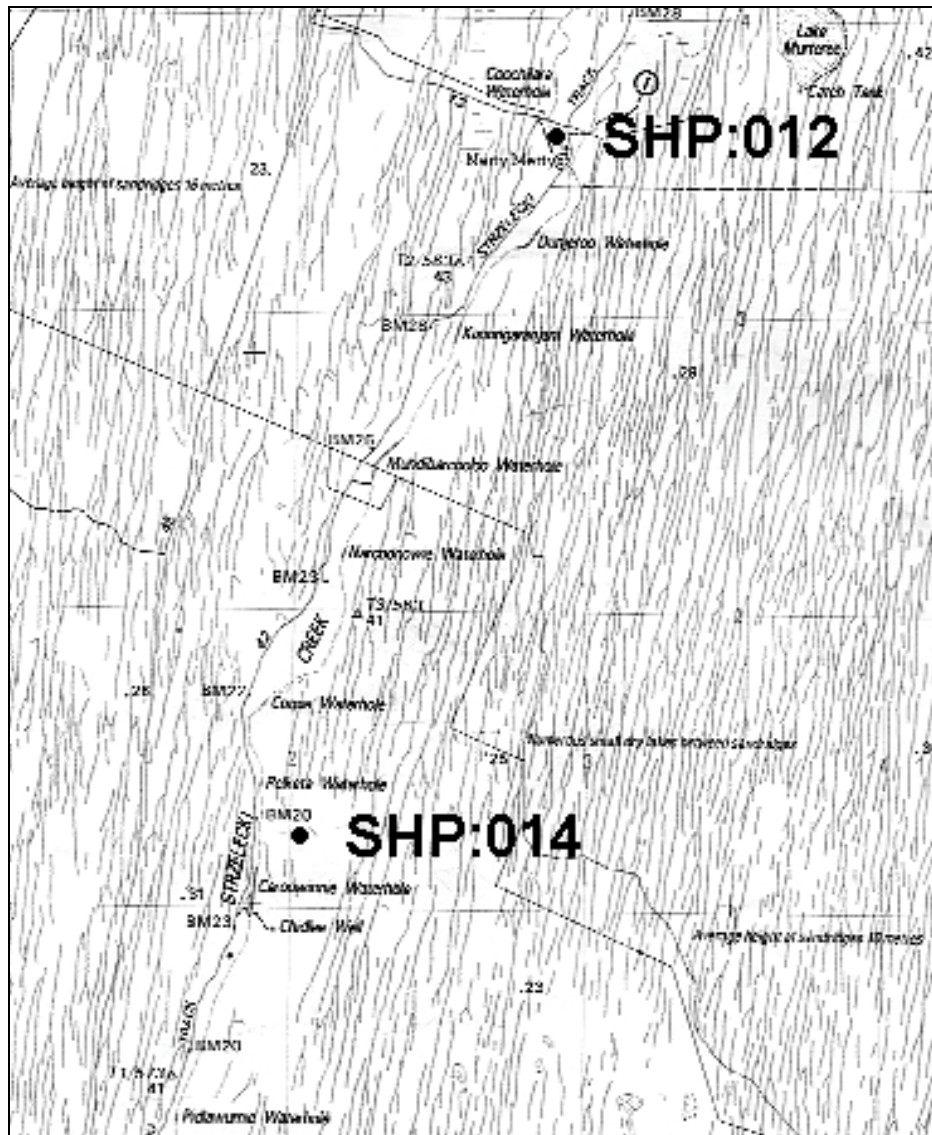
Source: Durham Downs SG 54-15 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

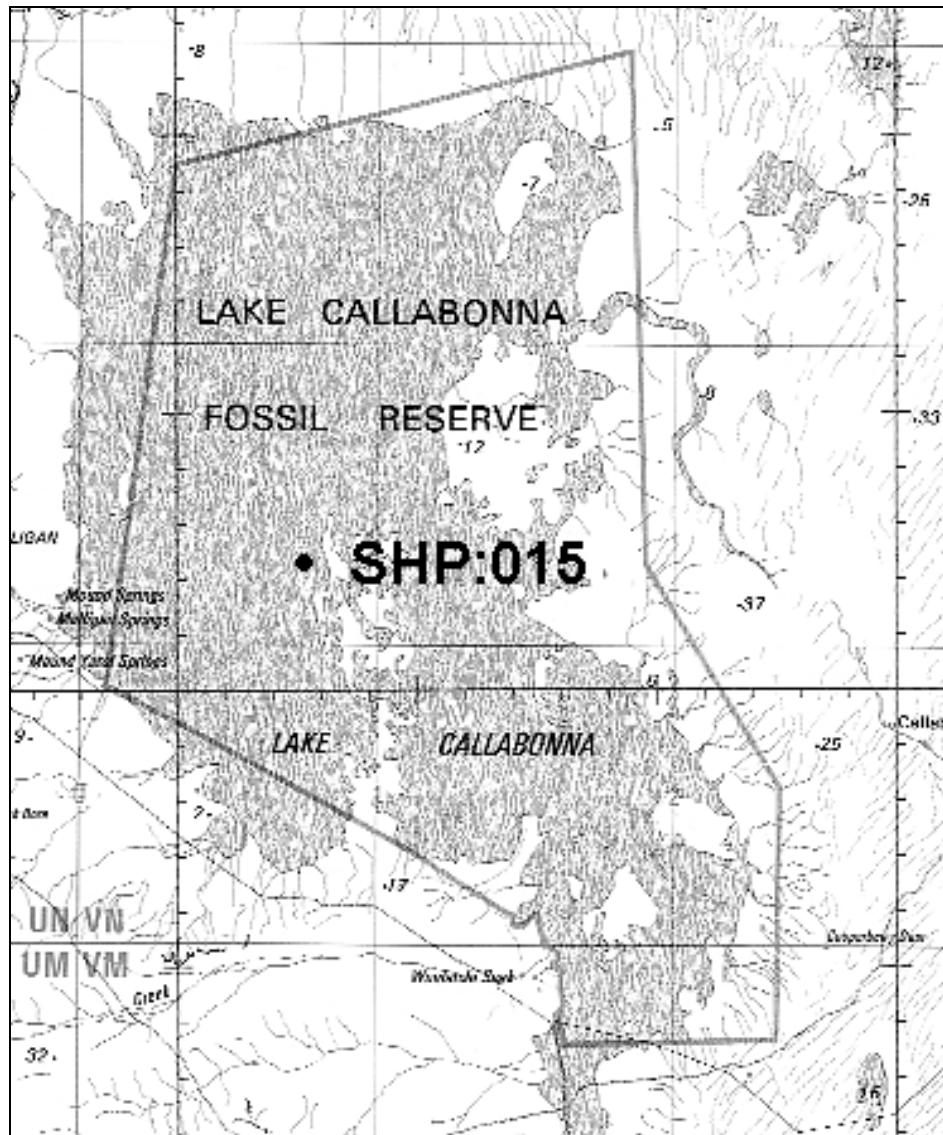
Source: Strzelecki SH 54-2 1:250,000 mapsheet

3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

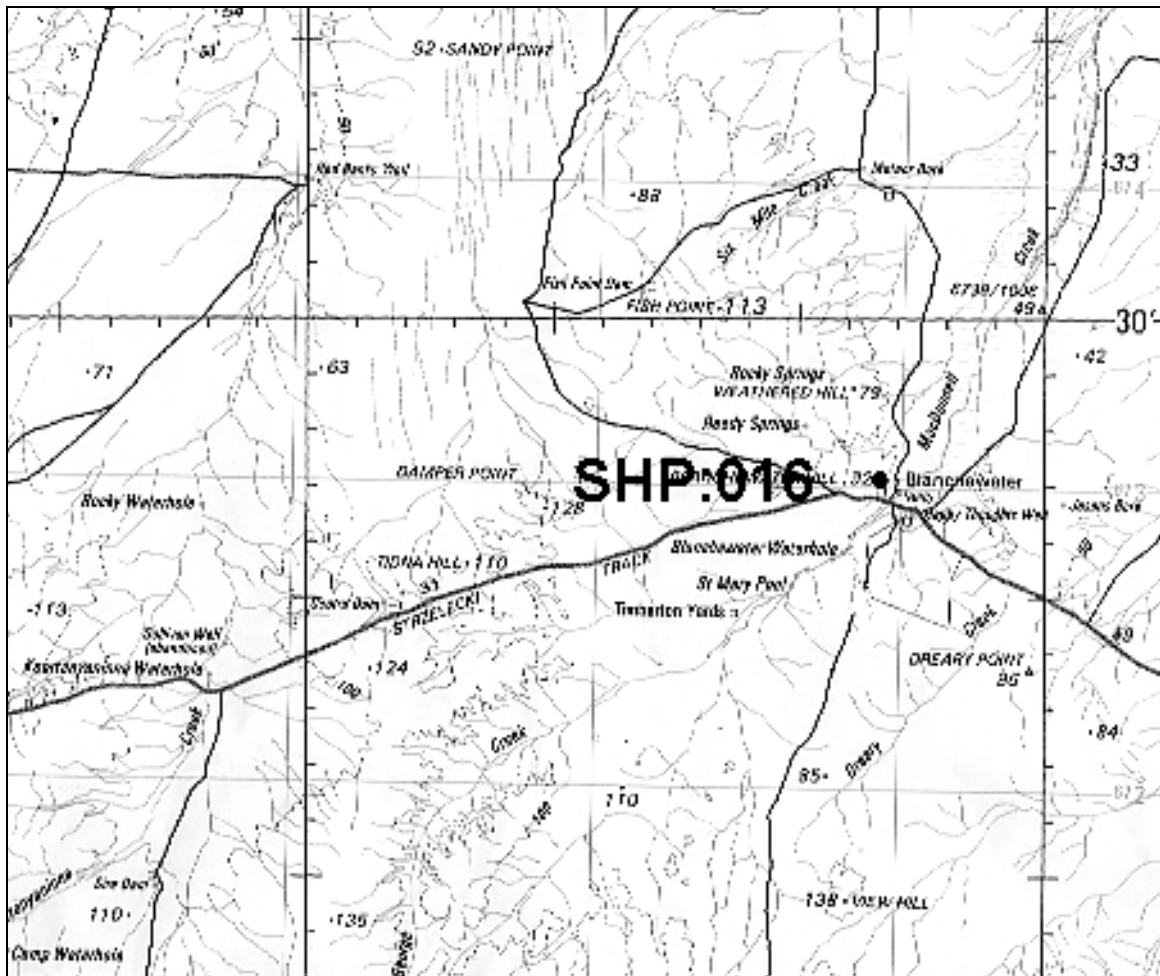
Source: Strzelecki SH 54-2 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

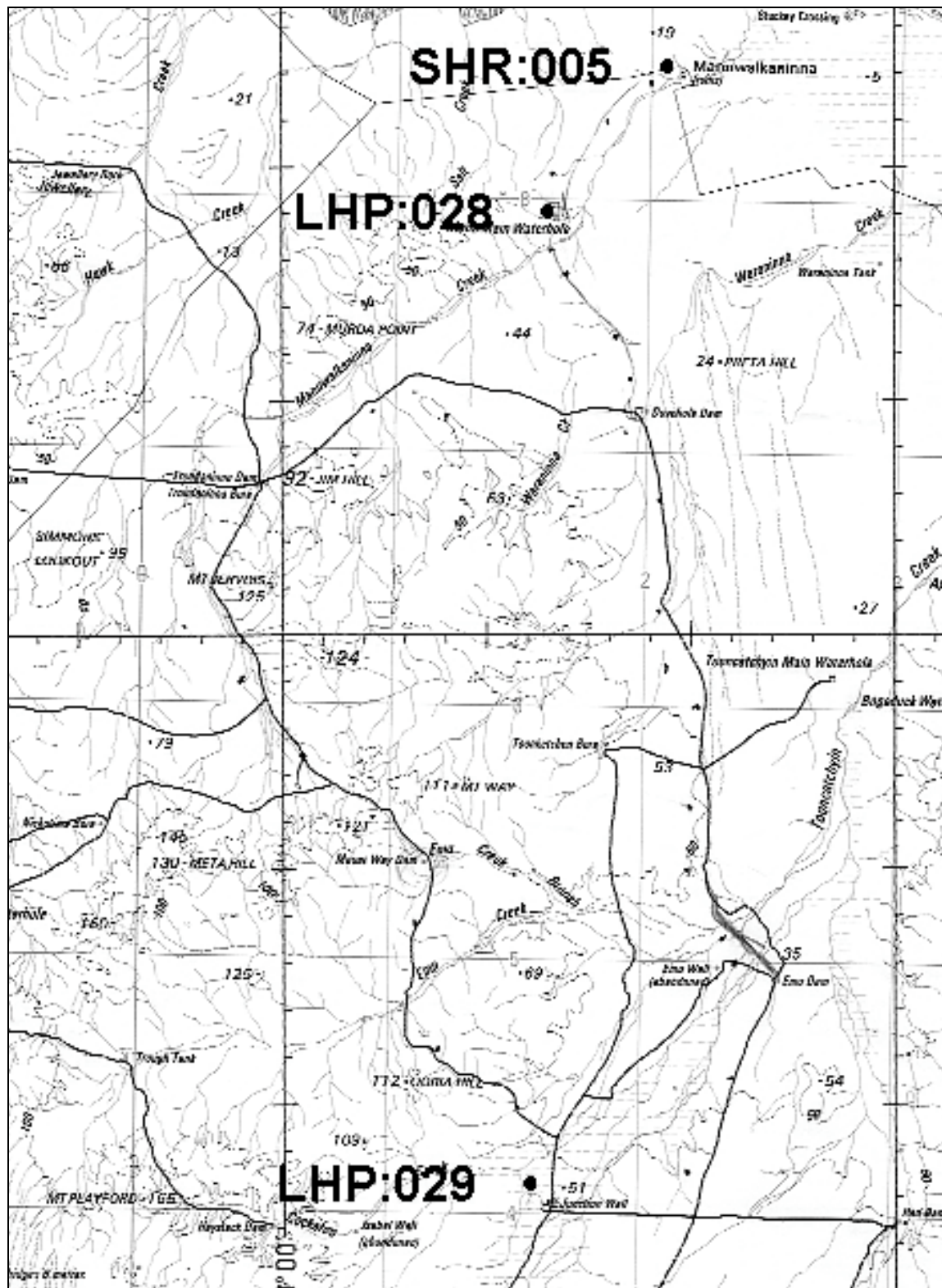
Source: Callabonna SH 54-6 1:250,000 mapsheet

3.0 Inventory Recommendations Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

Source: Marree SH 54-5 1:250,000 mapsheet



Location of Existing and Recommended Heritage Places

Source: Marree SH 54-5 1:250,000 mapsheet

4.0 METHODOLOGY FOR ASSESSING NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACES

Author: Peter Bell

4.1 Assessing National Significance

The brief for this project requires the survey report to:

- (a) make recommendations about potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area;
- (b) test appropriate methodologies for identifying and assessing nationally significant places.

Elsewhere the brief expands on this requirement:

Make recommendations for potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area

The final report of the heritage survey should include a list of potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area. The draft heritage assessment pro forma for documenting places of potential national significance should be used. The Consultant should test appropriate methodologies for identifying and assessing nationally significant places, using the draft national criteria and themes of 'pastoralism, beef growing and outback communication routes'. The final report of the heritage survey should report on the findings of this exercise.

In discussing methodologies for assessing national significance in the context of this report, it should be repeated that this is a survey of historic places. It does not assess or report on places with purely natural or Aboriginal values. Therefore the discussion of methodologies outlined here may not be applicable in those areas.

4.2 Background

The concept of places of national heritage significance is very recent, and there is no methodology in existence to assess the significance of such places. To the present, the process of assessing the heritage significance of historic places in Australia has evolved through four phases:

- **State Legislation: Places of State Significance**

From 1965 to 1995, all the Australian states and territories passed legislation designed to protect their built heritage. Every piece of this legislation created some form of register with a name like State Heritage Register, Queensland Heritage Register or Victorian Heritage Register, and with few exceptions created some form of criteria or assessment process. Since the 1970s, the concept of state heritage significance has become entrenched in the Australian conservation vocabulary and

techniques have been developed for its assessment. The round of revised legislation in the early 1990s generally includes detailed criteria for assessing heritage values.

- **Australian Heritage Commission Act: Register of the National Estate**

In 1975 the Commonwealth parliament passed the *Australian Heritage Commission Act*, which created the Register of the National Estate. The National Estate was deliberately designed to express a comprehensive and inclusive view of the nation's heritage and National Estate values apply to a very wide range of places. The guidelines for the Register also made it clear that places of value to local communities would qualify for inclusion. National Estate significance and the proposed National Heritage List significance are not the same thing.

- **Area Character Planning Provisions**

The related but separate concept of preserving historic character as an aspect of visual amenity was recognised in heritage management very early; in 1966 the National Trust of Victoria declared Maldon a Notable Town. In 1973 the Victorian *Town and Country Planning Act* was amended to create Urban Conservation Areas, and similar provisions have been adopted by most states and territories since. Provisions for conserving the character of areas exist at both State and local levels throughout most of Australia, usually having effect through planning legislation, although the assessment of character is usually based on uniformity of extant physical features, rather than historical values.

- **Local Heritage Registers**

Since the 1980s, local government authorities throughout much of Australia have also been given powers broadly parallel to those of the states, to create local heritage registers and manage them through the planning system. Unlike the older area character provisions, these local heritage registers recognise individual places as having significance in their own right, and usually have some form of criteria by which they are assessed. Thus for about twenty years there have existed techniques for the assessment of places of both State and local levels of significance. Many local heritage lists include or are based on places classified by the National Trust and places in the Register of the National Estate as well as places identified in local government heritage studies.

To say that techniques have existed for twenty years to assess heritage significance at State and local levels does not mean that there is one generally-accepted way of doing it. While most of the states and territories have deliberately developed broadly comparable legislation and criteria, based on the Register of the National Estate, there are significant differences both in the letter of the legislation, and in the ways it is interpreted and administered by different agencies.

Simply re-calibrating State and National Estate heritage significance, to the new national level of significance is not possible. No-one has ever clearly defined what State and local levels of significance really are, in terms that can meaningfully be transferred into other State jurisdictions. Perceptions of heritage are also evolving

and new heritage lists require new methodologies. It is necessary to begin at the beginning, working from the criteria and the categories of special significance to see how they can be applied to the assessment of Places of National Heritage Significance.

However, one indicator that a place may be of national significance is suggested by the formula repeated in many State and local criteria to the effect that a place is 'significant in the State's history' or 'important in the local area'. Clearly a place that is of significance only in the context of local, regional or State heritage is not of national significance. Instead the draft Criteria for National Heritage Values use the phrase 'significance to Australia'. Some tests of whether a place is significant to Australia as a whole are suggested later in this discussion.

4.3 Criteria

The draft Criteria for National Heritage Values (provided early in 2001) state that: 'A national heritage place must be of symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance to Australia according to at least one of the following criteria:

- 1.1 the place is of national importance in the course or pattern of history, cultures or the natural world;
- 1.2 the place has the potential to provide information that makes a contribution of national importance to the understanding of Australia's history, cultures or the natural world;
- 1.3 the place has aesthetic quality of national importance;
- 1.4 the place is recognised nationally for its particular association or special meaning for a community or cultural group;
- 1.5 the place is of national importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of Australia's cultural or natural places;
- 1.6 the place demonstrates uncommon aspects of history, cultures or the natural world important to Australia;
- 1.7 the place has strong associations with the life or works of a person or group of national importance;
- 1.8 the place demonstrates a creative or technical achievement of national importance.'

While these criteria provide the tests against which National Heritage Places must be measured, and the broad categories of significance, 'symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance', we must investigate these categories of significance and how the criteria relate to the categories.

4.4 Discussion on Defining National Heritage Significance

The draft Criteria for National Heritage Values state that: 'A national heritage place must be of symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance to Australia ...'. We might briefly explore the meanings of these words and the associations that surround them.

Symbolic

The *Macquarie Dictionary* (Revised Third Edition 2001) defines symbolic as:

1. (sometimes followed by of) serving as a symbol: *a symbolic figure*.
2. relating to or expressed by a symbol: *symbolic meaning*.
3. characterised by or involving the use of symbols: *symbolic language*.

To expand on these meanings, *Roget's Thesaurus* (Penguin edition 1953) adds such related words as: indicative, representative, typical, demonstrative and diagnostic.

A symbol represents something beyond itself; it is essentially a thing which stands for another thing. A symbol is more important if it stands for something very important, or for a wide range of other things. A symbol embodies meaning: in representing other things, it embodies their meanings within itself.

Some symbols are everyday or banal, simply meaning 'no parking' or 'fire extinguisher'. Others can be ambiguous, such as the Eureka flag - claimed by widely-divergent political causes within Australia - or extremely complex, such as the heraldic eagle, associated with the Roman legions, the Habsburg dynasty and the American republic, not to mention sporting teams, insurance companies, airlines or brands of deodorant. A heraldic eagle is clearly a far richer and more potent symbol than a 'no parking' emblem.

We could postulate a symbolic index: the ratio between the symbol and what it represents. A simple symbol with a rich range of meanings is very powerful and has a high symbolic index. Symbolic value is potentially very useful in assessing significance. We could say that the stronger the symbolism of a place, the greater its significance, and the more powerful and richer the symbol is, the greater the significance. Hence the symbolic index is directly related to the significance of the place.

This report suggests that a place which has great symbolic power, evoking a powerful meaning or a wide range of meanings, is of great significance. Its significance is also proportional to the number of people for whom it evokes those meanings. However, a large and complex place - e.g. Sydney Harbour - which evokes strong meanings is less powerful because of its complexity. A smaller and simpler place - e.g. the Dig Tree - which evokes strong meanings is more powerful; that is, its symbolic index is much greater and arguably its significance may accordingly be higher.

Exemplary

The *Macquarie Dictionary* (Revised Third Edition 2001) defines exemplary as:

1. worthy of imitation; commendable: *exemplary conduct*. 2. such as may serve as a warning: *an exemplary penalty*. 3. serving as a model or pattern. 4. serving as an illustration or specimen; illustrative; typical. 5. of, relating to, or consisting of exempla.

To expand on these meanings, *Roget's Thesaurus* (Penguin edition 1953) adds such related words as: good, meritorious, worthy, correct, creditable, laudable, praiseworthy and admirable.

Exemplary means serving as an example, but there are two shades of that meaning. There is a value-neutral or passive sense in which it simply means serving as a good example or specimen of its kind, which means it may be typical, or well-preserved, or demonstrate the characteristics of a type. The other, more active sense means something more; it expresses a value and proposes the place should act as a model for others to emulate or aspire to.

An exemplary place may serve as a good (and if the narrow meaning of unique is also applied, the best) example of a broader type, and it may also serve as a model by which other places are assessed. If it is a place of a type which is the result of a creative process, an exemplary place would be intended as a model for creators - sculptors, architects, engineers - to emulate.

This takes the assessment process into difficult territory, for this meaning is dependent on aesthetic and stylistic values which change over time. An exemplary building of the 1920s might not be valued highly today, and would certainly not be taken as a model by contemporary architects. Thus the quality of exemplariness must be assessed according to the standards of the time in which the place or thing was created. Evidence of opinion at the time the place was created would be of great value in making this assessment.

Exemplariness or exemplary value is useful in assessing significance. If a place has exemplary qualities, then it is of higher significance than a place which has not. (Obviously if a place has exemplary qualities as a good example of a broader type, it will be difficult to describe it as unique in the narrow sense: see the following note.)

Unique

The *Macquarie Dictionary* (Revised Third Edition 2001) defines unique as:

1. of which there is only one; sole. 2. having no like or equal; standing alone in comparison with others; unequalled. 3. remarkable, rare or unusual: *A well-planned bush picnic can be a unique experience for a city child Usage: Some writers insist that unique cannot mean 'remarkable', and that phrases like very unique are therefore nonsense. There is nevertheless ample evidence of its use in this way.*

This special note on usage makes it clear that the meaning of the word unique is at present undergoing change. From having once been absolute in meaning, it is now in use as a comparative expression, and at least some people speak of degrees of uniqueness.

To expand on these meanings, *Roget's Thesaurus* (Penguin edition 1953) also implies that there may be degrees of uniqueness in the three senses of **dissimilarity**, **originality**

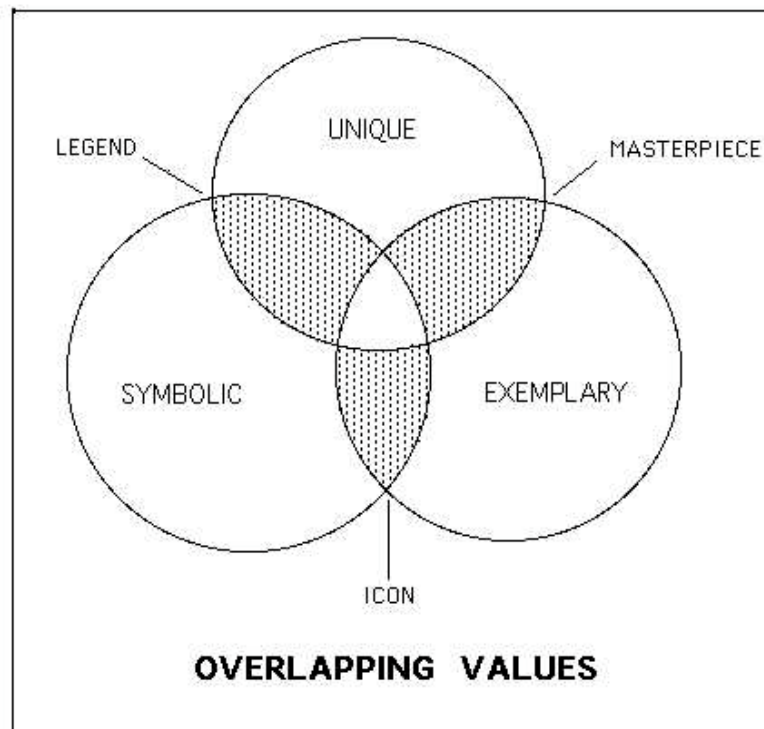
and **exceptionality**, adding such related words as: dissimilar, unlike, of a different kind, primary, underived, first-hand, exceptional, abnormal, unusual, uncommon, rare, singular, odd, extraordinary, wonderful, unprecedented and nonconforming. Only in the fourth sense of **unity** does it give the synonyms: one, sole, single, solitary, individual, apart and alone.

To adopt the pure meaning of unique - alone, solitary, unmatched, only one, unlike any other - would create a list of nationally significant places consisting of solitary examples, absolutely unlike each other. It is difficult to imagine how such a collection of isolated things would constitute a coherent picture of the national heritage. Instead, it would give greater flexibility to the assessment process if we applied one of the more relativistic shades of meaning to the word unique, and think in terms of uncommonness or rarity. Rarity is the tendency to approach uniqueness. Clearly to be rare, a place must have qualities that are exceptional, not commonplace. But to what degree?

Uniqueness cannot be considered in isolation from merit. A place cannot be significant solely for being unique; by itself, uniqueness implies nothing but solitariness, even freakishness. Sometimes claims for heritage significance are based on tenuous and convoluted appeals to uniqueness: 'the oldest two-storey stone building on the north side of the valley still performing its original function'. Uniqueness is not a measure of significance or quality, and in itself does not assist in assessing significance; it is of use only when it applies to some meritorious quality. All claims for uniqueness must be considered in conjunction with the criteria, as they provide the means of assessing the place's merit.

Overlapping Values

It may frequently be the case that a place satisfies more than one category of special significance: symbolic, exemplary and unique. A building of very great architectural merit such as the Sydney Opera House might both be of high exemplary value and approach uniqueness. The site of the Eureka Stockade might be assessed as both unique and of great symbolic value. The National War Memorial might be assessed as of great symbolic value as a monument to the fallen, and of exemplary value as a work of architecture. Where two or more values overlap, they will form characteristic patterns which will become recognisable in the assessment process. The following diagram suggests popular terms for some of the more common combinations, a place both exemplary and unique might be said to have the qualities of a masterpiece; a place both symbolic and unique might be said to have the qualities of a legend, and a place both exemplary and symbolic might be said to have the qualities of an icon.



Other Values

The draft Criteria for National Heritage Values state that: 'A national heritage place must be of symbolic, exemplary, unique **or other special significance** to Australia ...', making it clear that a national heritage place could have other values not considered here, and indeed might not demonstrate these three values at all. One other special value that immediately suggests itself is that of rarity, in the event that 'unique' is taken to have only its absolute meaning. This report will not speculate further on what 'other special' values might be envisaged by the draft criteria, but simply point out that not all potential national values are necessarily covered by the discussion above.

4.5 Relating Criteria to Significance

The draft Criteria for National Heritage Values state that: 'A national heritage place must be of symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance to Australia **according to** at least one of the ... criteria.' Hence the essential test is whether the place demonstrates one of the categories of special significance when assessed by means of one or more of the criteria. The categories of special significance indicate a threshold above which national significance may be reached.

This means that there are really two thresholds implied, for each criterion already contains within it a test of national significance (or importance). To take Criterion 1.8 as an example: 'the place demonstrates a creative or technical achievement of national importance.' We might test this by applying it to the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which at the time it opened in 1931 was a technical achievement of national importance, is unique among the world's major bridges in its arched structure and appearance, and has acquired

great symbolic value over the decades since. When tested by Criterion 1.8 it passes both the thresholds of national importance and two categories of special significance.

A direct comparison to test against it is Brisbane's Storey Bridge, designed by the same engineer (Dr J.J.C. Bradfield) and opened a few years later. This however, while a dramatically-sited structure, was only one among five (now ten) bridges spanning the Brisbane River, and never created the excitement of Sydney's bridge. Its cantilever-truss design is a relatively common one, visually like other bridges the world over. While regarded with affection in Brisbane, the Storey Bridge is neither unique nor of great symbolic value, and does not pass the threshold of national importance.

4.6 Assessing Places of National Heritage Significance

Having considered the criteria and the categories of special significance, we must also consider what sorts of places may be of National Heritage Significance; in other words, in what circumstances should we recognise that the heritage values of a place may be National rather than State (State also includes Territory) or local, so that we should begin to apply these tests? Clearly if a place is of National Heritage Significance, then it must be of heritage value to Australia as a whole, or at least it must possess values which override regional, state and territory boundaries. Indeed, one helpful way to begin thinking about places of National Heritage Significance might be to think of significant places that are not adequately recognised by existing registers.

Developing Thresholds

Reviewing the places of any degree of heritage value that have been identified in the course of this project, we propose that a place should be tested for National Heritage Significance if it is a place of symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance which has qualities which are not adequately recognised by state or territory heritage registers for one or more of the following reasons:

- **Its heritage values transcend state or territory boundaries by virtue of the fact that it physically extends into more than one state or territory;**

An example might be the Overland Telegraph Line, which extended across the continent from Adelaide to Darwin, nearly the full length of South Australia and the Northern Territory.

- **It is associated with events which have affected the history or destiny of more than one state or territory and is regarded as a legend or an icon;**

An example might be the infrastructure of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, which has had a very great impact on many aspects of life, especially electricity generation and irrigation, in New South Wales and Victoria.

- **It is associated with themes that are recognised as crucial to the broad development of Australian culture;**

An example might be James Cook's landing place at Kurnell, associated with events which led directly to the European occupation of Australia in 1788, profoundly affecting the life of every person who has lived in Australia since.

- **It is associated with events that have played a part in defining Australia's relationships with the rest of the world and is regarded as a legend;**

An example might be sites associated with Ross and Keith Smith's flight from England to Australia in 1919-20, which was the commencement of Australia's role in international aviation.

- **It has frequently been invoked as a national symbol or icon, and has come to be associated with the nation as a whole;**

An example might be the Sydney Opera House, visually distinctive, familiar to people throughout the world, and associated not just with Sydney or New South Wales, but with Australia as a whole.

- **It is associated with events that are so well-known that they may be regarded as universal elements of the Australian experience and are regarded as legends;**

An example might be the site of the Glenrowan Hotel, scene of the Kelly Gang's destruction in the denouement of their failed rebellion, an archetypal event in Australian folklore.

- **It has values that are of symbolic significance to more than one Australian culture.**

An example might be Uluru, of spiritual significance to indigenous people, but regarded with affection by all Australians, and internationally recognised as a characteristically Australian landform.

- **It is regarded as a masterpiece, being of the highest degree of Australian creative, innovative or technological achievement**

Examples might be the Canberra City Plan, the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge or the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

Some very different values are expressed by these examples. Indigenous people might not see James Cook's landing as an event that they wished to see recognised in this way, but regardless of whether one's attitude to the consequences of Cook's arrival is positive or negative, it was unquestionably an event of great importance to the lives of millions of people over the past two hundred years. Similarly, some would take a dim view of Glenrowan's inclusion, as it was the scene of violent criminal acts. Recognition of a place of National Heritage Significance does not necessarily mean that the events that occurred there are condoned or celebrated. It should be seen as a neutral statement that the place is remembered as the scene of significant events, or for some other reason has assumed a prominent position in the national consciousness.

Some of these examples are places which are described as having symbolic or iconic values. Such values are notoriously ephemeral, being created in part by short-lived media enthusiasm, and a certain seriousness of purpose is called for in assessing them. It would be wise to restrict the application of these tests to places which can be shown to have held their symbolic value for an extended period; at least a few decades. A register of places of National Heritage Significance is by definition restricted to **places**, that is things which are of substantial extent and fixed in a known location.

4.7 Towards Defining Places of National Heritage Significance

Some places, while unquestionably of historic value to the nation because of events which occurred there in the past, might now have no culturally significant fabric dating from those events in existence. Cook's landing place at Kurnell for example has no 1770 fabric, and indeed we do not know exactly where the event took place. The Smith brothers' landing places in 1919-20 were mostly empty paddocks; Australia's first international flight was by definition not going to find an airport terminal building awaiting it. However the places of these international arrivals - Cook's and the Smiths' - are all marked by later monuments. The most elaborate monument to the Smith brothers' flight is the building housing their Vickers Vimy aircraft at their destination, Adelaide, although it stands at the modern airport terminal, about 18km from the paddock at Dry Creek where they landed in March 1920 at the conclusion of their epic flight. Undoubtedly the aircraft is significant as a machine, but is the monument significant as a **place**?

There are many precedents for attributing significance to a monument to symbolise other places where events occurred. Few people would disagree that the Australian War Memorial is a place of National Heritage Significance as the principal monument to the nation's war dead. Yet no wartime events took place at that site, and only one symbolic soldier is buried there. The Memorial is widely accepted as the focus of national commemoration of wartime sacrifice, and thus arguably a Place of National Heritage Significance. However its cultural values as a monument are quite different from the values of a real battlefield or a war cemetery, which, while perhaps not so highly valued as national symbols, would be treated with far greater respect and reverence.

Other places might now by their very nature present difficulties in definition. To take the first example suggested above: the Overland Telegraph Line was built stretching 3,000km between Port Augusta and Darwin in 1870-72 as the local component of an international telegraph system which for the first time permitted rapid communication between Australia and London, and ultimately most of the world. It transcends state and territory boundaries, has affected the history of more than one state, and in its time re-defined Australia's relationship with the rest of the world. However, the fabric of that line today presents some problems. Some sections of it were re-aligned along easier routes within a few years. As termite damage became evident, most of the wooden poles on the line were replaced by cast iron poles within a few years. In the 1880s and 90s the sections of line from Darwin to Pine Creek and Port Augusta to Oodnadatta were re-aligned along the North Australian Railway and the Great Northern Railway respectively (two sections of South Australia's transcontinental railway which were destined never to meet), and in the process half of the original repeater stations were abandoned. In 1929 the Oodnadatta to

Alice Springs section was re-aligned along the new Central Australian Railway. In 1941 the Morse telegraph system was replaced by voice telephone along the same wires, and since the 1970s the wires in turn have been replaced by microwave towers.

The surviving fabric of the Overland Telegraph Line of 1872 now consists of six sturdy masonry repeater stations at Beltana, Strangways Springs and The Peake in South Australia and Alice Springs, Barrow Creek and Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory, about six wooden telegraph poles still standing in remote areas (of about 36,000 that were erected), and a thin scatter of pole stumps, ceramic insulators and other fragments along the line. Cast iron poles and replacement timber-framed repeater stations are dotted along a number of later routes roughly parallel to the original. What is the nationally significant fabric of the Overland Telegraph Line? Only the parts that can be dated to 1872? Only the parts on the original route? Or does the national significance extend to the new fabric along the railways? To the wartime voice line? If so, why not extend it to the present microwave towers?

4.8 Arguments for Determining National Heritage Significance

To pursue the Overland Telegraph Line example a little further, we might consider how it differs quantitatively in significance from other notable Australian inter-colonial telegraph lines, for example the link between Sydney and Melbourne in 1858, or Adelaide to Perth in 1877. Perhaps the most obvious comparison is with the line erected by the Queensland government from Brisbane to Kimberley (now Karumba) on the Gulf of Carpentaria in 1868-71 in direct competition with South Australia's Overland Telegraph. It was actually completed a year earlier, but with its greater undersea distance, failed to win the international contract. Are all of these lines also of national significance?

Other parallel examples can easily be invoked. A long distance railway such as the Trans-Australian built across the Nullarbor between 1912 and 1917 - later to form part of the Indian-Pacific - might be considered to be of national significance, as it transcends state boundaries, and has affected the history of more than one state. Instinctively, more people are likely to regard it as nationally significant than, say, the railway running up the east coast from Melbourne to Cairns, which has never been known by one name, let alone had one track gauge. But in what way is the Trans-Australian more nationally significant? The Melbourne to Cairns railway runs approximately the same distance, travels through the same number of states, was completed only seven years later and links opposite sides of the continent with equal effectiveness. It seems that a degree of popular recognition will inevitably be considered in determining the threshold of national significance.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is unquestionably an institution of national significance, and its physical heritage consists of the aerial facilities and radio bases established at Cloncurry, Kalgoorlie, Broken Hill, Alice Springs and Charleville between 1927 and 1947, and later in other places. Unlike a telegraph or railway line, these would constitute not a single linear 'place', but a number of widely-separated places. Another organisation which has performed decades of service to rural communities nation-wide is the Country Women's Association, founded in 1922, and now represented by hundreds of clubrooms in nearly every substantial rural community in Australia. These clubrooms are even more numerous and have affected the daily lives of far more people than the Flying Doctor

bases. Does that mean that they too might constitute a serial place of national significance?

However, arguments based on numbers and daily impact are very dangerous. To make a deliberately banal comparison, we might argue with equal force that the number of Hills hoists in Australian backyards is enormously greater again, and they play a part in the lives of millions of people daily. But most people will find them frivolous; places of national significance must contain an element of gravity or seriousness.

4.9 Themes

The brief requires this report to test the usefulness of the themes of 'pastoralism, beef growing and outback communication routes' in devising a methodology for assessing national significance. These correspond to five sub-themes of the Australian Historic Themes which have been used in this report:

- 3.5: Developing Primary Production
- 3.7: Establishing Communications
- 3.8: Moving Goods and People
- 3.8.6: Building and Maintaining Railways
- 3.7.1: Establishing Postal Services

These themes are of almost universal application, as from the 1860s to the 1950s, virtually every European and Afghan and a large proportion of indigenous people in the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks region were engaged in one of these activities, and almost every site in the region can be related to one of these themes. Even the German mission stations grazed sheep for a livelihood, and the AIM nursing homes were radio communication centres. Probably 90 or 100 of the historic sites investigated in the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks region can be classified under the themes of pastoralism, beef growing and Developing Primary Production. This appears to establish that those themes have been comprehensively represented in the survey process.

The use of themes does not appear to contribute to the process of assessing significance. The themes simply categorise a variety of historical events and types of places under headings. They may be of use in structuring historical enquiry, and serve as a prompt to ensure that no important types of places are left out of a survey. They do not establish that one place is more significant than another but they might identify whether a place is the only representation of a former major activity in a region. The themes are value-neutral; they can describe, but not evaluate. They provide a tool for heritage research.

The Australian Heritage Commission's publication *Australian Historic Themes* (2001, p.6), outlines the use of themes under the heading 'Assessing Significance' making it quite clear that the use of themes is limited to categorising and analysing information, and does not propose any ways in which they might be used to define levels of significance. The Australian Heritage Commission also classifies historic places in the Register of the National Estate according to the Australian Historic Themes thus providing a search mechanism for finding places that relate to a particular theme. One danger in the use of themes is that they can blinker the researcher to the much greater variety of economic

activities that existed in the past. While primary production in the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks region today concentrates exclusively on beef cattle, sixty years ago there was still sheep grazing, and a hundred years ago there were date plantations, camel and goat farms and vegetable market gardens. All of these vanished industries have been represented in the survey.

Accordingly, this survey concludes that while the practice of organising historical information into themes may be found helpful in structuring events and classifying types of places, it is not of use in assessing heritage significance at national or indeed any other level.

4.10 Examples of Potential Nationally Significant Places

In the course of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks heritage survey, the following places have been identified as potentially of National Heritage Significance:

4.10.1 Burke and Wills Sites on Cooper Creek

The place proposed is a two kilometre wide corridor centred on the main channel of Cooper Creek, extending for a distance of about 60km from 140° 30' E longitude in South Australia to 141° 05' E longitude in Queensland. The place takes in five sites related to events in the final months of the Burke and Wills expedition and its aftermath in 1861-62. These places are:

- The Dig Tree at the site of Fort Wills (Depot Camp 65).
- The place where Burke died.
- The place where Wills died.
- The place where King was found alive.
- The site of Howitt's Camp during his relief expedition.

In addition the place contains number of significant elements connected with themes not directly related to the Burke and Wills expedition:

- Callyamurra Waterhole.
- A number of Aboriginal rock engraving sites and grindstone quarries.
- The site of a massacre of Aborigines near Oontoo.
- The abandoned site of Old Innamincka homestead.
- Innamincka township.
- The Australian Inland Mission Nursing Home.
- The abandoned site of Oontoo township.
- Modern Innamincka Homestead.

The place transcends state boundaries, is associated with events which have affected the history and destiny of more than one state and territory, is associated with events that are universally known, and has significance to more than one culture.

There follows a brief assessment of the place in terms of the draft Criteria for National Heritage Values:

4.10.1.1 its importance in the course or pattern of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Burke and Wills expedition was a watershed event in defining the European history of outback Australia, particularly in South Australia and Queensland. While the expedition itself was a disastrous failure, it led to comprehensive and successful exploration of an enormous area of the outback, which identified the areas habitable by Europeans, informed the process of pastoral settlement, particularly in Queensland, created German missionary settlements in the north-east of South Australia, led to the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from the Cooper Creek region, and defined the present border between Queensland and the Northern Territory at 141° E longitude.

4.10.1.2 it has the potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Nappa Merrie-Innamincka 'choke' of Cooper Creek, with its stone engravings and quarries, is a district clearly of great importance in Aboriginal culture, and also includes at least ten sites of European cultural heritage significance, including Burke & Wills' Fort Grey depot, an abandoned homestead site and two abandoned townships. Many sites within the place have significant potential for archaeological investigation.

4.10.1.3 the place has aesthetic quality of national importance;

Callyamurra Waterhole, 15km in length and never known to dry up since European settlement, is a place of abundant birdlife and great natural beauty. The contrast of the permanent water resource with the arid breakaway hills which surround much of this section of Cooper Creek form a landscape of considerable natural aesthetic value to both indigenous and European cultures.

4.10.1.4 the place has strong associations with the life or works of a person or group of national importance;

The place has direct associations with Charles Sturt, Augustus Gregory, the members of the Burke and Wills expedition, Alfred Howitt, the Moravian missionaries, Robert Bostock, John Conrick, Harry Redford, John Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission, and Sidney Kidman and the Kidman Pastoral Company.

4.10.2 The Dog Fence

The Dog Fence is a dingo barrier fence extending about 5,400km from the Great Australian Bight to the Darling Downs. It effectively defines the boundary between the sheep and cattle grazing industries for much of its route. The place transcends state boundaries, and is associated with events which have affected the history and destiny of more than one state and territory.

There follows a brief assessment of the place in terms of the draft Criteria for National Heritage Values:

4.10.2.1 its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Dog Fence defines the approximate boundary between sheep and cattle grazing across much of Australia, and exemplifies a long process of dispossession of indigenous peoples, introduction of pest animals and environmental degradation, culminating in technological and administrative measures to manage the problem of dingo predation.

4.10.2.2 it possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Dog Fence is an uncommon response to an environmental problem; the use of large-scale fencing to keep predators out of sheep grazing land. The other obvious parallel in environmental management is Western Australia's rabbit-proof fence.

4.10.2.3 its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

The Dog Fence is an ingenious application of commonplace pastoral technology - the netting fence - to the national problem of dingo infestation through the daring solution of building a barrier fence on a national scale.

4.10.3 Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place

Strzelecki Creek provides a natural source of water extending across the arid Strzelecki Desert and linking Cooper Creek to the northern Flinders Ranges. From the 1850s its strategic route was used to move stock into and out of the Cooper Basin, and it was revived in modern times as the access road to the oil and gas fields. The place transcends state boundaries, and is associated with events which have affected the history and destiny of more than one state and territory.

There follows a brief assessment of the place in terms of the draft Criteria for National Heritage Values:

4.10.3.1 its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place has played an important part in shaping the movement of people and animals to and from the Cooper Basin, facilitated the European settlement of that region, and has linked it economically with South Australia rather than Queensland or New South Wales from the time of the first pastoralists in the 1870s to the fossil fuel industry today.

4.10.3.2 it has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;

The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place was a transport route and a series of habitation places clearly of great importance in Aboriginal culture, and also includes a number of sites of European cultural heritage significance, including wells, abandoned homestead sites, stockyards and burial places. Many sites within the place have significant potential for archaeological investigation.

4.10.3.3 its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:

- (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or**
- (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments**

The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place is extremely important for its associations with European exploration and pastoral settlement of the Australian interior. It clearly demonstrates the dependence of European settlers on the land, and the role of natural resources in shaping their settlement and transport patterns. There are very few examples in existence of an early transport route, crucial to the process of settlement in a particular region, which retained its precise course over decades, and can still be identified with precision and followed today. Strzelecki Creek is an outstanding representative of this category of places.

4.10.3.4 its special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.

Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place is of great cultural heritage value for its close association with the events surrounding the exploration and pastoral settlement of the north-east of South Australia, and in particular Charles Sturt and Augustus Gregory, explorers, Harry Redford, cattle thief, John Conrick, pastoralist, the Beltana Pastoral Company, and the era of oil and gas exploration commencing in 1959.

5.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORTS: NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACES

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry in a Register of Places of National Heritage Significance:

- Burke & Wills Sites on Cooper Creek NHP:001
- Dog Fence/Dingo Barrier fence NHP:002
- Strzelecki Creek NHP:003

BURKE AND WILLS NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACE**NHP:001****Identification**

Place Name	Burke and Wills National Heritage Place
Other Names	Innamincka-Cooper Creek State Heritage Area (part) Nappamerry Area (part)
Related places	
File No (s)	4/09/170/0001
Heritage Listing(s) -status	SA State Heritage Area (part) & RNE (part)

Location**Urban**

Street and street no	n/a
Title/Block/Section	n/a
Ownership	n/a
Suburb/Town	n/a
Postcode	n/a

Other

Nearest Town	Innamincka
Distance	town is within area
Direction	town is within area
LGA	Unincorporated (SA) & Bulloo Shire (Qld)
State	South Australia & Queensland
Map(s) nos & names	SG54-14 Innamincka & SG54-15 Durham Downs
Easting/Northing	E 0478300 N 6933500 (Burke's tree, near centre)

Research Documentation

Historical summary (including context)	The crucial events of the Victorian Exploring Expedition of 1860-61 took place along the channel of Cooper Creek, and in a distance of about 60km there are five sites associated with the events of that expedition. The expedition left Melbourne in August 1860 under the leadership of Robert O'Hara Burke, with the intention of crossing Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Scientific observation was its overt aim, but the expedition's covert goal was to gather information about grazing land and other resources in the unclaimed strip of territory between South Australia and the Gulf of Carpentaria, in the hope of pre-empting South Australia's and Queensland's claims to the north coast land. The strategy for the expedition was fatally flawed, for it involved taking a large well-equipped party but travelling quickly. To achieve quick results Burke
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twice had to split his party, leaving most of his resources behind.

Most of the party, their goods and animals were left under the command of William Wright at Menindee on the Darling River in October, while Burke and a smaller party travelled north to Cooper Creek, arriving in mid-November. There Burke split the expedition again, choosing a site for a depot on the bank of Bulloo Bulloo waterhole, and heading north with William Wills, John King and Charlie Gray on 16 December 1860. William Brahe was left in charge with instructions to wait three months and then return to the Darling. (The first of the five sites is the depot, its location still identifiable.)

Brahe's party spent the summer at the depot, building a defensive stockade of saplings called Fort Wills. Brahe waited four months, then deciding Burke's party must have gone to Queensland, packed up the supplies and returned south as ordered. Before leaving on 21 April 1861, Brahe buried a cache of food with a note, and blazed on a coolibah tree: 'DIG 40 FT W'.

Burke's party travelled nearly due north for eight weeks, and found a route which took them to the Gulf of Carpentaria on 10 February 1861. They then had to return to the Cooper in the height of summer, weak, and short of food supplies. Gray died near Coongie Lakes after a beating by Burke for stealing food and the others spent a day burying him. On the evening of 21 April the three survivors reached the Cooper and found the camp abandoned only a few hours before.

Burke and Wills both died further down the Cooper in the next two months, and only King was found alive by Alfred Howitt's relief expedition on 15 September 1861. Howitt buried Burke and Wills where they were found, only to be sent back from Victoria in 1862 to recover their remains for a state funeral in Melbourne. (The site of Burke's death and burial is known with certainty; it is marked by an inscribed tree and a cairn. The sites of Wills' death, King's rescue and Howitt's depot are all marked with cairns, but all three are disputed, and the locations of these monuments are all doubtful. However, in each case, the event undoubtedly occurred somewhere in the general vicinity of the monument.)

In 1873 John Conrick and Robert Bostock arrived from Victoria, attracted by the descriptions of the Cooper waterholes in the diaries of the explorers, and took up the surrounding land as Nappa Merrie and Innamincka cattle grazing leases, both of which still function today. By the 1890s the Dig Tree

and Burke's Tree had already acquired great symbolic significance. Miss F.E. de Mole, an amateur naturalist, visited the site in 1893 and left drawings of both trees. Five years later itinerant artist John Dick carved a portrait of Burke and the initials ROHB in relief on an adjacent tree.

The area has subsequently acquired other historic values of national significance, principally those relating to the Reverend John Flynn and the establishment of the Australian Inland Mission nursing home at Innamincka between 1929 and 1953.

All the Burke and Wills sites have long been recognised for the historic value, and are under some form of heritage management. In 1964 the land surrounding the Dig Tree in Queensland was excised from the Nappa Merrie pastoral lease and gazetted as a Memorial Reserve under the trusteeship of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. In 1986 a strip of the Cooper channel including all four South Australian Burke and Wills sites was declared a State Heritage Area. In 1988 the entire surrounding area was declared the Innamincka Regional Reserve under the management of National Parks and Wildlife SA.

The Burke and Wills expedition was a watershed event in defining the European history of outback Australia, particularly in South Australia and Queensland. While the expedition itself was a disastrous failure, it led to comprehensive and successful exploration of an enormous area of the outback, which identified the areas habitable by Europeans, informed the process of pastoral settlement, particularly in western Queensland, created German missionary settlements in the north-east of South Australia, led to the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from the Cooper Creek region, and defined the present border between Queensland and the Northern Territory at 138° E longitude. The events which occurred at the Burke and Wills sites on Cooper Creek are central to that historical process.

Physical Description

The place proposed is a four kilometre wide corridor centred on the main channel of Cooper Creek, extending for a distance of about 60km from 140° 30' E longitude in South Australia to 141° 10' E longitude in Queensland. The place takes in five sites related to events in the final months of the Burke and Wills expedition and its aftermath in 1860-62. These places are:

1. The Dig Tree and the site of Fort Wills.
2. The place where Burke died (Burke's Tree).
3. The place where Wills died.

	<p>4. The place where King was found alive. 5. The site of Howitt's Camp during his relief expedition.</p> <p>In addition the place contains a number of significant elements connected with themes not directly related to the Burke and Wills expedition:</p> <p>6. Callyamurra Waterhole. 7. Aboriginal rock engraving sites and quarries. 8. The site of a massacre of Aborigines near Oontoo. 9. The abandoned site of Old Innamincka homestead. 10. Innamincka township. 11. The Australian Inland Mission Nursing Home. 12. The abandoned site of Oontoo township. 13. Nappa Merrie Homestead. 14. Modern Innamincka Homestead.</p>
Condition and Integrity	<p>All five of the Burke and Wills sites are marked by cairns and signs, but only two have any identifiable historic fabric remaining: the Dig Tree and Burke's Tree. All sites have been degraded by natural change and neglect in the past, but all are now professionally managed as historic sites.</p>
National List: Research essay (footnoted)	<p>n/a</p>
Bibliographic references	<p>Alexander, C.L.. 'John McKinlay, Explorer, 1818-1872', <i>Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia (South Australian Branch)</i> 63, 1962, pp. 1-22</p> <p>Bergin, Tom, <i>In the Steps of Burke and Wills</i>, Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney, 1981</p> <p>Blencowe, Mark, Nineteenth Century Land Explorers: their general place and impact in Australian history - economic, social and literary - from 1829 to 1965, with major reference to South Australia, BA(Hons) thesis, University of Adelaide, 1967</p> <p>Cameron McNamara, Burke and Wills 'Dig' Tree Conservation Plan, report to Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Brisbane, 1987</p> <p>Clune, Frank, <i>Dig: a drama of Central Australia</i>, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1947</p> <p>Conrick, John, The Story of Pioneer John Conrick Told by Himself, typescript of articles published in the <i>News</i> between 25 July 1923 and 23 February 1924</p> <p>Colwell, Max, <i>The Journey of Burke and Wills</i>, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1971</p>

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Tolcher, Helen, *Innamincka: the town with two lives*,

	<p>Innamincka Progress Association, 1990</p> <p>Tolcher, Helen, <i>Conrick of Nappa Merrie: a pioneer on Cooper Creek</i>, the author, Adelaide, 1997</p> <p><i>The Victorian Exploring Expedition: Diary of Burke & Wills, Journal of Howitt and Narrative of King</i>, The Age, Melbourne, 1861</p> <p>White, John, <i>Burke and Wills: the stockade and the tree</i>, Footprint Press, Melbourne, 1992</p> <p>Wills, William, <i>A Successful Exploration Through the Interior of Australia from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria: from the Journals and Letters of William John Wills</i>, Richard Bentley, London, 1863</p> <p>Wylie, Ross and Lyndal Plant, Report on the Health of the Burke and Wills 'Dig' Tree, report to Minister for Environment and Heritage (Queensland), Brisbane, 1991</p>
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Significance

Summary Statement of Significance	The Burke and Wills National Heritage Place is directly of significance for the events that occurred there in the final months of the failed expedition, and indirectly for the impact that the expedition and its aftermath would have on pastoral settlement throughout central and north-eastern Australia.
National Theme(s)	3.3.4 Looking for Land with Agricultural Potential 3.16 Struggling with Remoteness, Hardship and Failure
Symbolic	The Burke and Wills National Heritage Place has very strong symbolic qualities, recognised as an epic event of the exploring era, with Victorian hubris and Burke's failings making the story very close to an Aristotelian tragedy. It has been recognised in many books and other writings, in at least three movies, in John Longstaff's romantic painting of 1907 showing the party arriving at the Dig Tree, William Strutt's painting of Burke's burial in 1911, and in Sidney Nolan, David Boyd and Albert Tucker's series of paintings between the 1940s and the 1960s, interpreting the event in variously surreal and expressionist images. (Bonyhady 2002)
Exemplary	The Burke and Wills National Heritage Place does not have exemplary qualities.
Unique	The Burke and Wills National Heritage Place is unique. There is no other place associated with the history of Australia exploration where such dramatic events took place, and it is

	<p>remarkable that it is possible to identify two of the exact places, and that physical evidence of the events of 140 years ago still survive. The other catastrophic failures of Australian land exploration - Kennedy's with the loss of ten lives, and Leichhardt's disappearance with seven others, both in 1848 - although in some ways comparable in their drama and poignancy, have left no such physical evidence.</p>
<p>Comparative analysis</p>	<p>The closest relevant comparisons to the Burke and Wills National Heritage Place might be the identifiable camp sites of other explorers such as Sturt, Mitchell, Leichhardt and Stuart. However, none of these were associated with such dramatic events, nor were occupied for as long (members of the Burke and Wills expedition were at Cooper Creek continuously for eleven months, from November 1860 to October 1861).</p>
<p>Factors affecting significance</p>	
<p>Contributing values (state and local significance)</p>	
<p>Related sites</p>	

Factors affecting condition and management

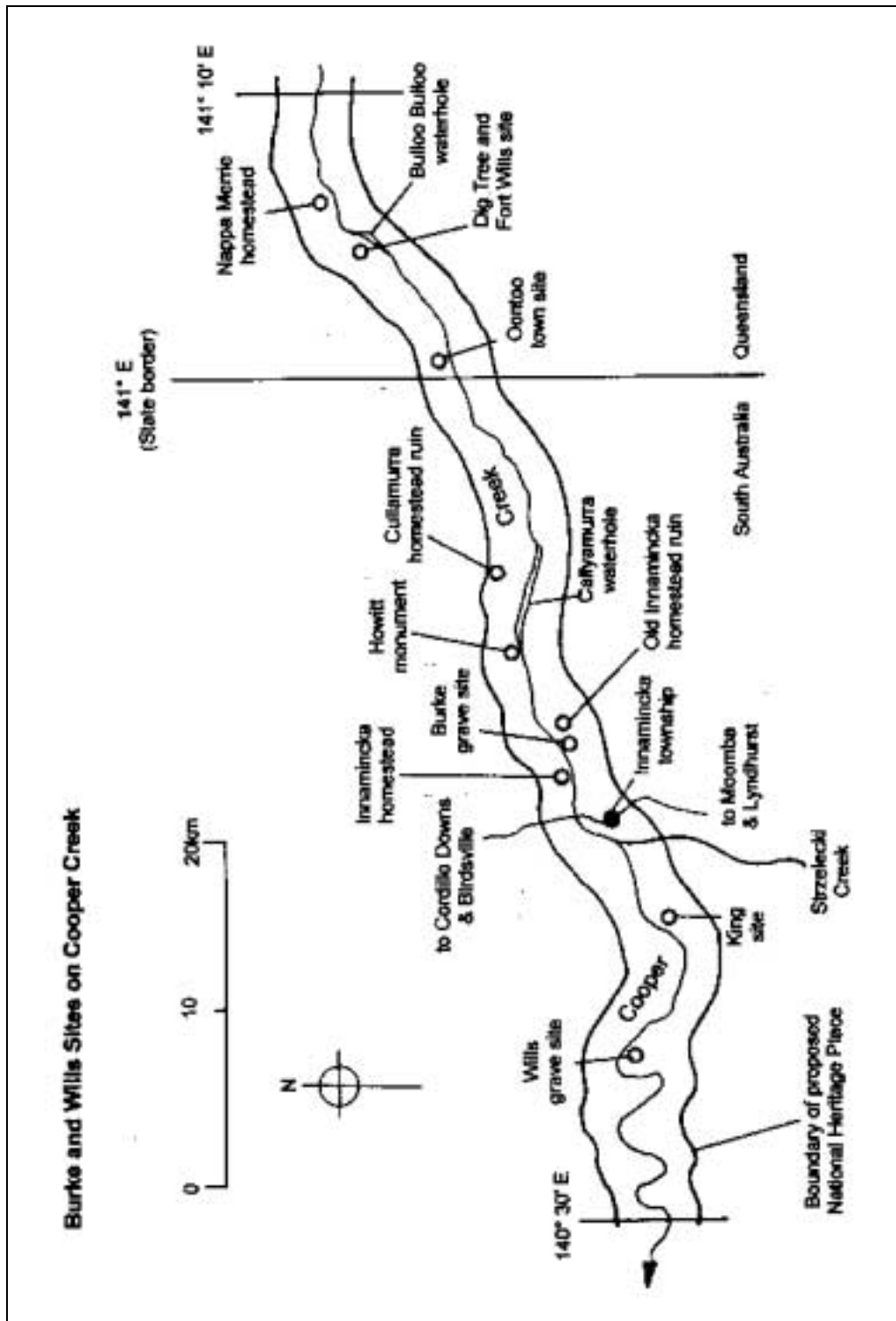
Conservation Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Protective measures and means of implementing them</i> ▪ <i>Level at which m'ment is exercised and who has responsibility</i> ▪ <i>Agreed existing management plans</i> ▪ <i>Sources of financing for management</i> ▪ <i>Visitor facilities</i> 	<p>All historic sites within the Burke and Wills National Heritage Place are being managed sensitively by heritage or environmental agencies.</p>
Covenant	
Factors affecting the Property: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Development pressures</i> ▪ <i>Environmental pressures</i> ▪ <i>Visitor/tourism pressures</i> ▪ <i>Inhabitants of property</i> ▪ <i>Buffer zone</i> ▪ <i>Other</i> 	<p>Tourism development is appropriate, as all historic sites within the Burke and Wills National Heritage Place are on public land, and there is tourist access to all of them.</p>
Recommendations	

Values Tables

Criterion	(1) A place that is a component of the natural or cultural environment of Australia is to be taken to be a place included in the National Heritage List if it is of national symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance or value to Australia for future generations as well as for the present community because of any of the following:
Subcriterion	(a) its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	The Burke and Wills expedition was a watershed event in

	defining the European history of outback Australia, particularly in South Australia and Queensland. While the expedition itself was a disastrous failure, it led to comprehensive and successful exploration of an enormous area of the outback, which identified the areas habitable by Europeans, informed the process of pastoral settlement, particularly in Queensland, created German missionary settlements in the north-east of South Australia, led to the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from the Cooper Creek region, and defined the present border between Queensland and the Northern Territory at 141° E longitude. The great symbolic value of the events is demonstrated by their frequency with which they have been depicted in visual arts and film.
Subcriterion	(b) it possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(c) it has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	The Nappa Merrie-Innamincka 'choke' of Cooper Creek, with its stone engravings and quarries, is a district clearly of great importance in Aboriginal culture, and also includes at least ten sites of European cultural heritage significance, including Burke & Wills' Fort Gray depot, an abandoned homestead site and two abandoned townships. Many sites within the place have significant potential for archaeological investigation.
Subcriterion	(d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;
Value Text	The Burke and Wills National Heritage Place is extremely important as an example of sites associated with European exploration of the Australian interior. It is remarkable firstly because it is possible to identify the exact places where events occurred, and that relatively ephemeral physical evidence such as marked trees still survives after 140 years. There is no other place associated with the history of Australia exploration where such dramatic events took place, and where physical evidence still survives.
Subcriterion	(e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic

	characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
Value Text	Callyamurra Waterhole, 15km in length and never known to dry up since European settlement, is a place of abundant birdlife and great natural beauty. The contrast of the permanent water resource with the arid breakaway hills which surround much of this section of Cooper Creek form a landscape of considerable natural aesthetic value.
Subcriterion	(f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(h) its special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.
Value Text	Besides the members of the Burke & Wills and Howitt expeditions, the place has direct associations with Charles Sturt, Augustus Gregory, the Moravian missionaries, Robert Bostock, John Conrick, Harry Redford, John Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission, and Sidney Kidman and the Kidman Pastoral Company.



DOG FENCE NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACE**NHP:002****Identification**

Place Name	Dog Fence (SA)
Other Names	Dingo Barrier Fence (Qld) Border Fence (NSW)
Related places	
File No (s)	
Heritage Listing(s) -status	

Location**Urban**

Street and street no	n/a
Title/Block/Section	n/a
Ownership	n/a
Suburb/Town	n/a
Postcode	n/a

Other

Nearest Town	n/a
Distance	n/a
Direction	n/a
LGA	
State	South Australia, New South Wales & Queensland
Map(s) nos & names	
Easting/Northing	n/a

Research Documentation

Historical summary (including context)	<p>The Dog Fence - its name in South Australia - or Dingo Barrier Fence as it is known in Queensland, and Border Fence in New South Wales, extends in an irregular course for about 5,400km across southern Australia from west of Fowlers Bay on the Great Australian Bight to near Jandowae on the Darling Downs. It is a continuous barrier of wooden posts and wire netting for all of that distance, often known as 'the longest fence in the world'.</p> <p>The origins of the Dog Fence lie in the problems that outback graziers began to encounter in the late nineteenth century when dingoes first became serious predators. While pastoralists began grazing the northern plains of South Australia about 1860, their first 30 years there were relatively</p>
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free of dingoes. There is much debate about the ecological role of dingoes in Australian history, but it is widely believed that there were few if any wild dingoes in Australia before European settlement. They were introduced into Australia by Aborigines as domestic and hunting dogs, and were not tolerated as competitors for food. It was only after dispossession and the collapse of traditional Aboriginal society that feral dingoes began to appear in the landscape in great numbers, and in the arid north, it was only after the arrival of rabbits as a plentiful new food source that dingoes flourished.

In the late 1880s rabbits appeared in the north, spreading outward from the Flinders Ranges. The arrival of the first rabbits in the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks region was precisely documented, for on 1 November 1886 the manager of Blanchewater wrote to Elders' head office in Adelaide: 'I am very sorry to report rabbits have made their appearance on the run.' (Cooper 1965, p. 42) They were well suited to the arid climate and spread rapidly throughout the region in the 1890s, dying down to a small population during drought and breeding up opportunistically after rain. They altered the landscape, greatly reducing all ground vegetation, destroying or thinning the tree cover and hastening the decline of the indigenous small marsupials. They competed directly with grazing animals for both feed and water, and modern estimates say they probably reduced the carrying capacity of the land to between about a third to a half of what it had been before 1890. (Gee 2000) The graziers tried fencing, shooting, trapping and poisoning, but nothing made any discernible inroads into the plague.

While graziers were still coming to terms with their first few seasons of rabbit infestation, they noticed the number of dingoes was also steadily proliferating from an occasional nuisance to an endemic predator with serious economic implications. The worst impact was on the wool industry, for while adult cattle could defend themselves and their young against dingoes, sheep were completely defenceless. This greatly reduced wool growing in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region, as many properties such as Etadunna and Killalpaninna abandoned sheep for cattle grazing. The Beltana Pastoral Company which owned Cordillo and Murnpeowie persisted in running sheep until well into the twentieth century, at great cost in doggers and shepherds, and introduced extensive wire fencing, a practice previously unknown in the region.

By the early decades of the twentieth century, Murnpeowie had a dingo-proof netting fence across its northern boundary.

Further west on the Oodnadatta Track, the Willowie Pastoral Company also fenced its Anna Creek lease. The graziers still running sheep formed local associations to co-operate in constructing and maintaining fences. As early as 1894 there was a *Vermin Districts Act* which co-ordinated these activities and paid a bounty on dingo scalps, but at first it was more concerned with feral camels, donkeys and goats. By the 1930s the Vermin Districts were principally focussed on the control of dingoes. Their activities were still based on local districts, but the local fences were beginning to join up. The Kidman Pastoral Company had converted much sheep land to cattle, and by the Second World War the last properties to persist with sheep in the far north, such as Dalhousie and Cordillo Downs, were all running cattle.

In 1946 the South Australian government took action to co-ordinate the fencing effort by creating a single barrier across the state, effectively fencing off sheep country from cattle country. The *Dog Fence Act* levied a rate on grazing properties inside the fence, made the fence the responsibility of the adjoining landholders, and provided funds to employ maintenance workers. Since 1947 the fence within South Australia has been continuously maintained, and in a series of improvements has been re-aligned and significantly upgraded to more effective specifications with dog-proof grids at road crossings and solar-powered electrified sections. (Yelland 2000)

Queensland had a similar tradition of local fences coalescing into a barrier separating sheep country in the south and east from cattle country in the north and west. In 1948 the government formalised the situation, creating the Dingo Barrier Fence running up east of the Channel Country from Thylungra to Windorah, then east to the Darling Downs. Landholders were provided with materials free of charge, and maintenance since has been financed by a levy on landholders inside the fence. In Queensland the fence is not regarded as the boundary between sheep and cattle country, and sheep grazing extends a long way north of the barrier. New South Wales experimented for a time with fencing the Milparinka and Wanaaring Pasture Protection Districts in the north-west, but now the state border is the boundary, with the Border Fence running from the South Australian Dog Fence straight up to Cameron Corner, then east to join the Queensland Dingo Barrier Fence at the Paroo River.

Physical Description

The Dog Fence is a fence extending about 5,400km from the Great Australian Bight across South Australia to a point east of Lake Frome, then along the New South Wales border to the

	<p>Paroo River, then north and east across Queensland to the Darling Downs. It generally consists of wooden posts over 2m high with steel wire netting the full height and buried a metre in the ground, but its specification varies according to local circumstances, some sections consisting of electrified strands.</p>
Condition and Integrity	<p>The entire length of the Dog Fence is in good condition, as it is actively in use as a barrier to dingo encroachment on sheep grazing areas, is patrolled weekly and maintained regularly. The fence has been altered on many occasions since it first took its present form in the 1940s, having generally stronger posts and higher netting, buried deeper, with electrified sections and improved road grids.</p>
National List: Research essay (footnoted)	n/a
Bibliographic references	<p>Bowen, Jill, <i>Kidman: the forgotten king</i>, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1987</p> <p>[Cooper, A.A.R.], <i>A History of the Beltana Pastoral Company, the company</i>, Adelaide, 1965</p> <p>Donovan, Peter, <i>In the Interest of the Country: a history of the Pastoral Board of South Australia</i>, Department of Environment & Natural Resources, 1995</p> <p>Gee, Philip, <i>A History of Pastoralism in the Lake Eyre South Drainage Basin</i>, Royal Geographical Society of South Australia, Adelaide, 2000</p> <p>Holden, Philip, <i>Along the Dingo Fence</i>, Hodder & Stoughton, Sydney, 1991</p> <p>Litchfield, Lois, <i>Marree and the Tracks Beyond in Black and White</i>, the author, Marree, 1983</p> <p>May, Barry, <i>The Great Dingo Fence and Other Australian Oddities</i>, St George Books, Perth, 1986</p> <p>Percival, Dinah & Candida Westney, <i>Fence People: yarns from the dingo fence</i>, Hutchinson Australia, Sydney, 1989</p> <p><i>Review of the Dog Fence Act 1946</i>, South Australian Government Green Paper, 2001</p> <p>Yelland, Leith, <i>Holding the Line: a history of the South Australian Dog Fence Board 1947-2000</i>, Primary Industries and Resources South Australia, Adelaide, 2000</p>

Significance

Summary Statement of Significance	The Dog Fence is of significance for the role it has played in shaping rural industry and settlement in eastern Australia, for the sheer scale of its enterprise, and for its creative application of technological solutions to a historical environmental problem.
National Theme(s)	3.11 Altering the Environment

Symbolic	The Dog Fence has no strong symbolic qualities, but it is associated with the folklore and traditions of a community with a characteristic isolated way of life; the 'fence people' whose job is patrolling and maintaining the fence in remote, arid surroundings. (Percival & Westney 1989; Holden 1991)
Exemplary	The Dog Fence certainly has exemplary qualities as a fine example of its kind, but as that kind is not widely replicated, comparative judgment is difficult.
Unique	The Dog Fence is unique. There are other fences in Australia designed to keep out animal pests - principally dingoes and rabbits - but there is no other fence which is (a) of this scale and (b) so effectively maintained as a barrier and device for environmental control as to influence economic activity over many thousands of square kilometres.

Comparative analysis	The closest relevant comparison to the Dog Fence is the chain of Rabbit-proof Fences in Western Australia. The Dog Fence is probably more significant at national level, as it affects the economies of three states, and effectively creates a boundary between the sheep and cattle industries across much of Australia.
Factors affecting significance	
Contributing values (state and local significance)	
Related sites	

Factors affecting condition and management

Conservation Management: ▪ <i>Protective</i>	The Dog Fence is being managed effectively for utilitarian reasons and does not present any conservation issues.
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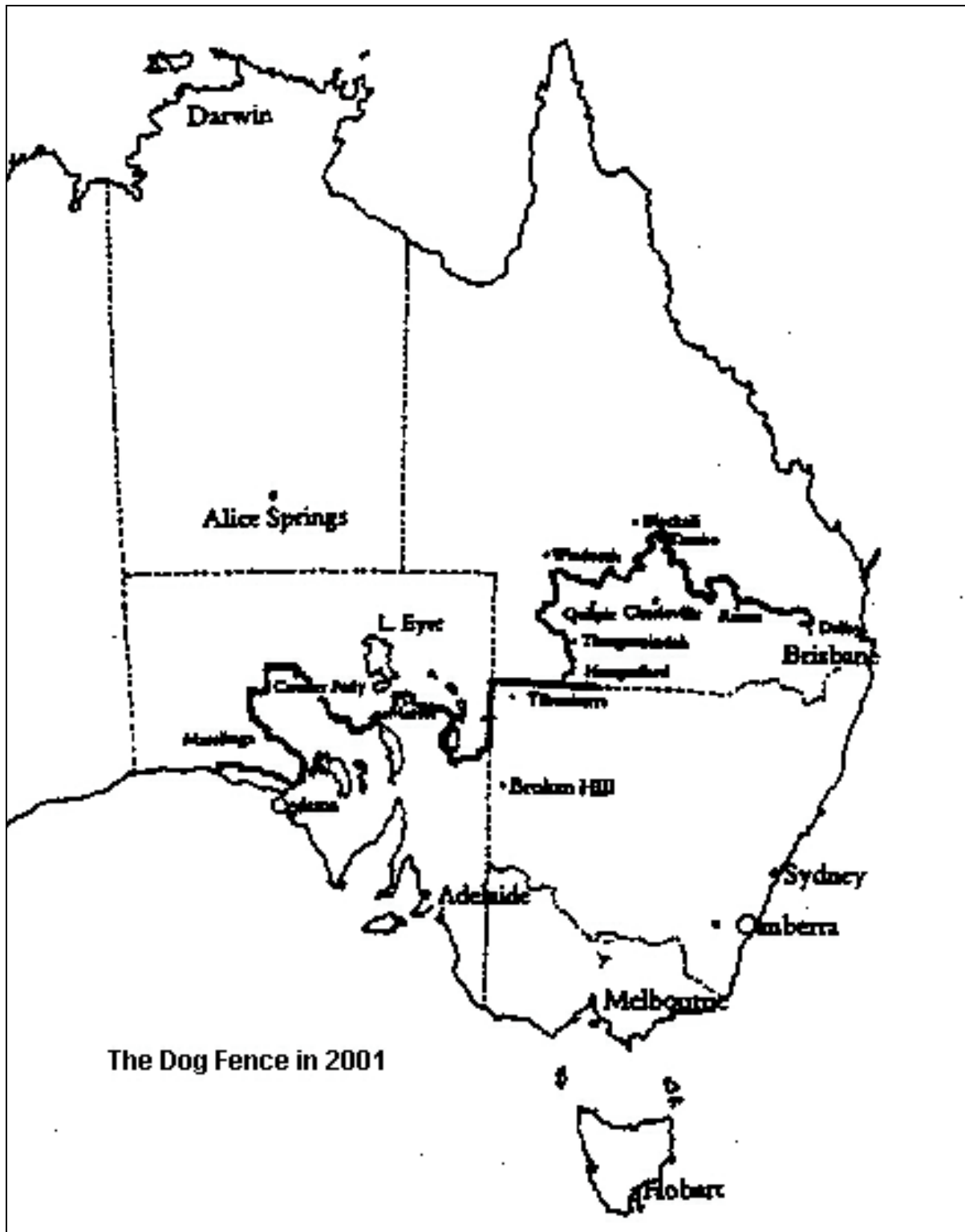
<p><i>measures and means of implementing them</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Level at which m'ment is exercised and who has responsibility</i> ▪ <i>Agreed existing management plans</i> ▪ <i>Sources of financing for management</i> ▪ <i>Visitor facilities</i> 	
Covenant	
<p><i>Factors affecting the Property:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Development pressures</i> ▪ <i>Environmental pressures</i> ▪ <i>Visitor/tourism pressures</i> ▪ <i>Inhabitants of property</i> ▪ <i>Buffer zone</i> ▪ <i>Other</i> 	<p>Tourism development is appropriate only at the points where the Dog Fence crosses public roads, as the public are not permitted to travel along the fence. There is a risk to the public because of the practice of laying 1080 baits (sodium fluoroacetate) in a buffer zone adjacent to the fence.</p>
Recommendations	

Values Tables

Criterion	(1) A place that is a component of the natural or cultural environment of Australia is to be taken to be a place included in the National Heritage List if it is of national symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance or value to Australia for future generations as well as for the present community because of any of the following:
Subcriterion	(a) its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	The Dog Fence defines the approximate boundary between sheep and cattle grazing across much of Australia, and exemplifies a long process of dispossession of indigenous peoples, introduction of pest animals and environmental

	degradation, culminating in technological and administrative measures to manage the problem of dingo predation. The isolated way of life of the 'fence people' has given rise to an outback folklore tradition.
Subcriterion	(b) it possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	The Dog Fence is an uncommon response to an environmental problem; the use of large-scale fencing to keep predators out of sheep grazing land. The other obvious parallel in environmental management is Western Australia's rabbit-proof fence.
Subcriterion	(c) it has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period:
Value Text	The Dog Fence is an ingenious application of commonplace pastoral technology - the netting fence - to the national problem of dingo infestation through the daring solution of building a barrier fence on a national scale.
Subcriterion	(g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(h) special association with the life or works of a person,

	or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.
Value Text	n/a



STRZELECKI CREEK NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACE**NHP:003****Identification**

Place Name	Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place
Other Names	n/a
Related places	n/a
File No (s)	n/a
Heritage Listing(s) -status	n/a

Location**Urban**

Street and street no	n/a
Title/Block/Section	n/a
Ownership	n/a
Suburb/Town	n/a
Postcode	n/a

Other

Nearest Town	Innamincka
Distance	100km (centre of area)
Direction	South
LGA	Unincorporated
State	South Australia
Map(s) nos & names	SG54-14 Innamincka, SG54-02 Strzelecki & SG54-06 Callabonna
Easting/Northing	E 0428800 N 8838800 (Merty Merty Well, near centre)

Research Documentation

Historical summary (including context)	Strzelecki Creek has a remarkable history as a transport route. Aboriginal traders followed the channel of the Strzelecki for thousands of years, and in the past 160 years European explorers, graziers, drovers, cattle duffers, mail trucks, nurses, oil and gas explorers and tourists have all continued to follow along the same path. In the process they have left a physical legacy of homesteads - some occupied and others in ruins - stockyards, bores, wells and lonely graves strung out along the creek, most of them within sight of its tree-lined channel. Clearly there have been powerful geographical imperatives at work shaping this landscape. Only in the past 40 years has the fossil fuel industry extended its infrastructure out into the desert for any significant distance either side of the creek.
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Strzelecki Creek is a channel running about 200km in a generally south-south-westerly direction between a point on Cooper Creek just west of Innamincka, and Lake Blanche. Physically, the watercourse is remarkable for two things. First, for most of its length it is a single steep-sided channel, and does not split into braided channels like most creeks and rivers of the region. It has a few small outflow lakes such as Lake Moonba, but these are insignificant compared to the great outflow systems of Cooper Creek or the Diamantina River. Strzelecki Creek begins to meander at its southern end near Lake Blanche, but maintains a single channel.

Second, its entire length is located on level ground; no contour lines cross its course across three 1:250,000 mapsheets (Innamincka, Strzelecki and Callabonna). This means that it is capable of flowing both ways. Its 'normal' flow is from north to south, as a tributary of Cooper Creek when it is in flood, taking some of the Cooper overflow south, very occasionally all the way to Lake Blanche. Lake Callabonna is also linked with Lake Blanche by the Moppa Collina overflow channel, so in extreme wet conditions the Strzelecki channel links the Cooper water with the combined lake system. However, when there is heavy rain in the northern Flinders Ranges and Lake Blanche fills, Strzelecki Creek can act as an overflow in the other direction, taking lake water north toward the Cooper system.

Both of these events are so rare as to be almost hypothetical. In practice, Strzelecki Creek is a dry watercourse nearly all of the time, punctuated by a string of waterholes. From north to south, some of the major waterholes are: Burlieburlie, Toorooie, Della, Nappacoongie, Mudlallie, Toolatchie, Cadrapowie, Coochilara, Carowinnie, Pidlawurnie, Gurra Gurra and Cherri Cherri. Because of its deeply-incised single channel, many of these waterholes are quite long-lived. Although they are not nearly as permanent as the Cooper waterholes of the Innamincka choke, some will last through several years of drought.

The string of waterholes makes the Strzelecki a very valuable resource, for its channel runs right through the heart of the Strzelecki Desert, a dunefield stretching for 100km either side of the creek, which is normally utterly devoid of surface water. In most of the landscape, the only trees grow right on the creek banks.

This explains why Strzelecki Creek is such an important transport route, permitting travel between the more benign environments of the Flinders Ranges and the Cooper Basin, across what would otherwise be an impassable arid region

separating them. According to Norman Tindale (1974), Strzelecki Creek crosses the traditional lands of the Jandruwanta and Pilitapa peoples, and must have been the principal source of their water and food supplies; early European visitors such as Sturt and Conrick saw large numbers of people camped near some of the Strzelecki waterholes. Assessing the values of Strzelecki Creek in Aboriginal culture is beyond the brief and the expertise of this project, but its later significance in European culture is quite remarkable.

The first European party to see Strzelecki Creek was that led by Charles Sturt on his northern expedition of 1844-45. On 18 August 1845 Sturt investigated a line of trees in the distance across an arid plain, 'and on arriving at the trees, found that they were growing in the broad bed of a creek, and overhanging a beautiful sheet of water, such as we had not seen for many a day.' (Sturt 1849, p. 231) A month later he named the creek after his colleague Sir Paul Edmond de Strzelecki, a Prussian nobleman of Polish descent who had explored parts of south-eastern Australia. Sturt also found and named Cooper Creek, and was puzzled that such large watercourses could exist in arid country with no visible mountains; it is strange that the explorer of the Murray River could so badly underestimate the distances that water travels in the Australian outback.

Sturt's northern expedition in search of grazing land was a complete failure. Seeing the country in two dry years, he returned to report that the north-east was a huge stony desert, reinforcing Edward Eyre's earlier account in 1840 that the land was unfit for grazing sheep or anything else. Eyre had also left another pessimistic legacy in claiming that an impassable horseshoe-shaped salt lake encircled the northern Flinders Ranges, and his report had caused Sturt to travel to the interior east of this imaginary obstacle, through western New South Wales. Ironically, Sturt had seen the most important natural assets of the region, the waterholes of Strzelecki and Cooper creeks, but given the condition of the land, he could not foresee how they would be useful to Europeans. Two years later, Edmund Kennedy followed the Barcoo River down from Queensland to Sturt's Cooper Creek, and returned to Sydney agreeing that the country was useless for settlement.

No Europeans made use of Strzelecki Creek for thirteen years after Sturt's visit. Then the New South Wales government sent Augustus Gregory into central Australia to find what had become of Ludwig Leichhardt's expedition to cross Australia, missing for ten years. Like all Europeans who had entered the

region before him, Gregory was turned back by waterless conditions, but he was a good navigator and had Kennedy's and Sturt's maps with him, so instead of turning back to the east coast he went south to investigate what they had reported. He reached South Australia by following Kennedy's Barcoo River until it became Sturt's Cooper Creek, then turning left and following Strzelecki Creek all the way to the Flinders Ranges.

On 26 June 1858 Gregory's party astonished the station hands of Blanchewater run, which was only two months old and the northernmost cattle station in the colony, by appearing from the north-east, out of what were believed to be trackless deserts and an impassable salt lake! While he was not the first to see or name Strzelecki Creek, it was Gregory who demonstrated its economic importance. His expedition had made sense of the fragmentary reports of three or four earlier explorers, demolished the myths of impassable lakes and deserts, and showed that it was possible to travel safely from the Pacific Ocean to the Southern Ocean through the interior of the continent, and that the best way to do it was along Strzelecki Creek.

Strzelecki Creek played no part in the Burke and Wills story, apparently because Burke failed to recognise it when his party attempted to walk to Blanchewater after their return to the abandoned depot. If he had done so, the story might have had a different ending.

It is perhaps a comment on the larrikin undercurrent in the Australian character that the first person to exploit the economic potential of Gregory's discovery was a cattle duffer, when Harry Redford used it to move stolen cattle from Queensland to South Australia in 1870. To this time, no pastoralists had used Gregory's route, and they were still wary of the region because of the uncertainty of water supply during the great drought of the 1860s. Redford put together a mob of 1,000 head of cattle belonging to the large Bowen Downs Station in central Queensland. Instead of taking the stolen stock by the easy but risky route to the east coast, he decided to disappear south into the Channel Country to escape detection, and walked the cattle down the Cooper and the Strzelecki watercourses to South Australia. He was skilful but also lucky, travelling in a good season over country that for years had been inhospitable. At Blanchewater Station he sold the stock under an assumed name, and travelled on to Adelaide to catch a steamer to Melbourne.

Unfortunately for Redford, the stolen stock included a

conspicuous pedigreed white bull, which had received so much publicity that it was recognised even in South Australia, and he was arrested on arrival in Victoria. Although stock theft was a criminal act, Harry Redford's epic feat of droving became an outback legend, so much so that an admiring jury found him not guilty at the conclusion of his subsequent trial for cattle stealing, to the outrage of the presiding judge. (Tolcher 1986, p. 46). Rolf Boldrewood's novel *Robbery Under Arms* is partly based on this incident, so the historical Harry Redford and the fictional Captain Starlight have become almost synonymous. Naturally, graziers were less impressed by his skills; the monument to the incident that stands in the main street of Aramac, near Bowen Downs, today is a statue not of Redford but of the white bull! However, Redford's clandestine journey confirmed to graziers that in a good season the route was feasible for droving stock from the Cooper to markets in South Australia.

When the Cooper Basin was taken up for grazing in the 1870s, Strzelecki Creek came into its own as a long-distance droving route. In November 1872, twenty-year-old John Conrick set out from Warrnambool in Victoria to take up land on Cooper Creek, accompanied by Robert Bostock and four others, droving 1,600 head of shorthorn cattle. (Conrick 1923-24, p. 2) They did not use the Strzelecki route on their outward journey to the region, but followed Burke's route to the Darling, and then followed the Bulloo River up to Eromanga in western Queensland, and crossed over to the Cooper. Nappa Merrie, Innamincka and Coongie runs nearby were initially stocked by this circuitous route.

Once Conrick was established on his land at Nappa Merrie, he realised there must be a more direct route to bring stock and supplies up from the south. He questioned local Aborigines about the Strzelecki channel, and on Boxing Day 1874 he set out from Innamincka for Port Augusta with a stockman, driving two drays with an Aboriginal guide leading. They moved from waterhole to waterhole down the Strzelecki in a series of wary but generally peaceful encounters with large parties of Aborigines. Living on ducks nearly all the way, they arrived at Blanchewater homestead on 6 January 1875, the third party from Queensland in 17 years to startle the station hands. (Conrick 1923-24, pp. 39-43) A few weeks later the party was back at Nappa Merrie with a load of supplies.

Conrick's journey established that Strzelecki Creek was feasible not only for travelling stock, but for supply wagons, and that it was easier to bring cattle and supplies to Cooper Creek from South Australia than from Queensland, New South

Wales or Victoria. From 1875 onward, the Cooper Basin was part of Adelaide's hinterland. Conrick's reminiscences did not understate the significance of his journey: 'Along this route hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle have since been travelled, and scores of thousands of bales of wool have been sent via Farina and other northern trucking stations to Port Augusta, Adelaide and the world's markets.' (Conrick 1923-24, p. 44)

The coming of the Great Northern Railway changed the significance of Strzelecki Creek. When the railway reached Farina in 1883, the lower Strzelecki was only two days travel from the terminus, and Conrick's route south down the line of waterholes became the standard supply route for the north-eastern runs. Teams of Afghan cameleers formed a new base at Farina, which like Marree became an important railhead interface between train and camel transport. Cordillo Downs in the far north-east beyond Innamincka was among the first stations to make use of the new transport route. Thomas Elder, Robert Barr Smith and Peter Waite bought the property in 1883 and stocked it with sheep, in the process carrying out improvements including a huge stone vaulted-roofed woolshed and outbuildings in 1885. Their wool scouring machinery was carried north on the backs of camels. On the return journey they carried wool bales, four per camel, down to the railhead at Farina.

This consortium of Elder, Barr Smith and Waite was to become the Beltana Pastoral Company, owners in later years of both Cordillo Downs and Murnpeowie, both of which absorbed their neighbours and became the dominant sheep properties north and south of the Cooper Basin. Their links with camel transport were not a new development, for it was Elder and his partner Stuckey who had realised the potential of camels for supplying outback pastoral industry, and had imported the first large camel teams for their Beltana station in 1866. During the Beltana Pastoral Company's heyday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Strzelecki Creek was the central axis and principal transport route of their north-eastern landholdings. It was probably during this period that people began to refer to the route as the Strzelecki Track.

The role of the Strzelecki Track in supporting Innamincka and the Cooper country continued well into the twentieth century. A fortnightly mail coach ran between Farina and Innamincka from 1878, with six horse change stations along the route near Mount Lyndhurst, Murnpeowie, Mount Hopeless, Carraweena, Tinga Tingana and Nappacoongie. After the 1890s, rabbit infestation devegetated the landscape and dunes of loose

sand encroached on the track, the most notorious the Cobbler dunefield, where the creek swung west away from the road south of Monte Collina. Horses could not cope, so camel teams were stationed there to pull the coaches through. Cordillo Downs continued to run sheep until 1942, and in some years the shearing teams rode bicycles there from Farina, posing for famous photographs outside the Innamincka Hotel; the only pub on a 500km outback bicycle ride! (Tolcher 1986, after p. 100)

Although it provided a transport corridor for graziers in the far north-east, Strzelecki Creek itself did not support many pastoral properties. While water supply along the creek channel was adequate, the difficulty was the quality of the feed. The surrounding dunefields could only support stock on an opportunistic basis after rain, and the distances between waterholes meant that for most of the year, cattle could not graze far from the creekline. Monte Collina, Carraweena and Tinga Tingana runs were taken up in the good seasons of the 1870s. They sank wells to water stock away from the creek, but all were abandoned again in the drought of the 1880s. The grazing industry along Strzelecki Creek was to remain ephemeral, coming and going depending on the seasons. Every homestead established there was abandoned at times. During extended droughts the track itself became impassable for supplies and stock, sometimes for years.

Today there is only one occupied homestead on Strzelecki Creek, Merty Merty near Coochilara waterhole. First subdivided out of blocks of Innamincka and Tinga Tingana, and the failed Strzelecki run in 1919, it has been owned by the Rieck family since 1965. North and south of it there are the abandoned ruins of older homesteads beside waterholes along the creek: Nappacoongie, Toolatchie, Tinga Tingana, Chidlee Well, Carraweena and finally Monte Collina where the creek turns west and heads in great meanders to Lake Frome, with the northernmost Flinders Ranges just visible on the horizon. Beside these homesteads are graves, most of them unmarked, but we can read the names of Harry Bird, a well-sinker killed in a cave-in at Nappacoongie in 1914, Little Jack who perished at Toolatchie in 1889, and A. Patterson, buried at Chidlee Well in 1917.

There was little government support for the Strzelecki Track. A campaign of sinking artesian bores between 1890 and 1916 kept open the stock route further west between Marree and Birdsville, creating the modern Birdsville Track. But along Strzelecki Creek there were only a few government wells - one took poor Harry Bird's life at Nappacoongie - and only one

artesian bore, sunk at Monte Collina in 1903. Sidney Kidman followed the government bores and extended his empire along the Birdsville Track, but showed little interest in the Strzelecki. His company bought Merty Merty in 1924 and grazed it intermittently, but he didn't trust the Strzelecki waterholes to get his cattle south. During droughts, Kidman's cattle from Innamincka were driven west to Mount Gason bore and down the Birdsville Track to Marree.

The twentieth century saw extended periods of drought and depression in the north-east. Drought and dingoes put an end to sheep grazing, and the Beltana Pastoral Company sold its interests. The Farina mail coach ceased to run in the 1920s, and the town of Innamincka slowly shrank away to nothing over the next thirty years. By 1933 droving down the creek had virtually ceased, and the government stopped maintaining the wells along the stock route. By the 1950s, all the homesteads along Strzelecki Creek were abandoned.

What brought life back to Strzelecki Creek was the oil and gas industry. By the 1950s, geological surveys had identified prospective gas-bearing formations in the Innamincka area. Test drilling was the next step, but the district was virtually abandoned and road access for heavy trucks was feasible only through Tibooburra in New South Wales. The Playford government was determined to build a road that would allow drill rigs from South Australia into the area. Laurie Steele, Mines Department engineer for the Far North, led a reconnaissance of the old route to the north-east in two Land Rovers in September 1958. Interviewed by Peter and June Donovan many years later, he described the state of the abandoned Strzelecki Track:

We stopped the first night at Murnpeowie Station and got all the information we could and the next day we set out at first light. Our first aiming point was the lake crossing between the lakes because we found out there had been the odd dingo trapper who used to go up the Strzelecki after dingoes and they said that maybe we could follow some of their tracks. The first part of the trip was quite okay. The station had tracks out as far as Blanchewater.

After we got past Blanchewater the tracks were pretty vague and we actually had to use a compass to get towards the lake crossing. We hit it pretty well straight away. Just before we got to the lake crossing, we could see the Cobbler Sandhills. they were really frightening. All you could see was the high sandhills in the distance. They didn't look at all good. So we got across at this lake

crossing alright.

Once we got into those Cobblers the going was dreadful. It was sandhills but they were sort of tusky spinifex-like tusks, and we had to ride our way around these tussocks. It was very, very slow going. One land rover got bogged and we had to pull it out. We were aiming by compass for the Monte Collina Bore. We had that location from the pastoral plan. We battled all day getting through these Cobbler sandhills, driving and taking rough notes. We were just getting an idea of what was involved in making a road, making a track through it. It wasn't very easy. The idea of making a road through there wasn't very appealing at all. But anyway we got to Monte Collina Bore and that was like an oasis. We could see it for quite some distance.. There was a pipe sticking up in the air like a pole and of course, there was water flowing on the ground. It was obvious that any road we'd have to build we'd have to make for that as a point where we could get water because water was obviously needed for putting a road in. The supply of water was going to be quite a problem.

After the Monte Collina Bore we made for the crossing over the Strzelecki on the old pastoral route. it was obvious that around the crossing things were going to be pretty difficult. the sandhills seemed to come right down to the Strzelecki and getting a passage through them was going to be very difficult.

We passed the old Carraweena ruins and found the old Tinga Tingana homestead that had simply been abandoned. I remember we even saw an old chamber pot under an old bedstead, and there was a grave of one of the owners or lessees of the place there.

It was quite an experience travelling along the flats adjacent to the Strzelecki soon after rain. All the waterholes were full, there were ducks on every waterhole, there were brumbies, there were dingoes, wild camels and a few cleanskin cattle. On the flats there were brolgas, many of them dancing.

The next decent water point we came to was the Merty Merty Well that had been used up till a few years before by the Innamincka Station people. The last fifty miles was dreadful going because we were going across the clay flats called crab hole country. There were holes up to about a foot in diameter and six or eight inches deep and

we lurched in and out of these. The whole area was pock marked with these holes. It was much more comfortable walking alongside the vehicles because they had to go very, very slow going through these things.

Eventually we got to Innamincka and were made very welcome by Jim Vickery who was the station manager there, where we stopped the night. (Donovan 1996, pp. 24-25)

Immediately, construction work began on a truck road from Murnpeowie to Innamincka. Under political pressure, the task was urgent, and was pushed on through the summer months. No survey was done; a Land Rover simply went ahead cross-country to pick out a route, and the construction teams followed its signals. Generally the new road paralleled the western side of Strzelecki Creek, staying close to it to avoid the dunefields. The road was opened to Innamincka in January 1959, and the first drill hole, Innamincka No. 1, was commenced in March. (Donovan 1996, pp. 26-29)

Large convoys of trucks began to use the road immediately it opened, and heavy traffic continued for the next ten years. From 1959, the new Strzelecki Track became the principal route to the oil and gas fields of the Cooper Basin, first at Innamincka, then Gidgealpa where the first gas was struck in 1963, and expanding to Moomba and Tirrawarra in the later 1960s. With commercial gas flow assured, in 1969 a gas processing plant was built at Moomba, 40km west of Strzelecki Creek, and an underground gas pipeline was laid to connect Moomba with Adelaide. (O'Neil 1998, p. 24) The pipeline ran parallel to the west of the road, crossing under it near Monte Collina bore and continuing south while the road swung west.

This energy infrastructure was to have a dramatic economic effect on South Australia, but it would also shape traffic patterns in the Strzelecki Creek region. The road built in 1958 had headed straight up Strzelecki Creek with Innamincka as its objective, and in the process its builders were essentially following Conrick's 1874 dray route past every waterhole. However, the Moomba processing plant and its service township were built in the desert to the west, and the new road to it diverged from Strzelecki Creek near Toolatchee waterhole. Relatively little traffic followed the creek north from there to Innamincka. From 1969 onward, the new Strzelecki Track began to part company from the old stock route.

Nature imposed even greater changes in 1974, when enormous floods from Queensland flowed down the Cooper,

and Strzelecki Creek filled both lakes Blanche and Callabonna. It was the greatest inundation since Europeans had arrived in the Cooper Basin, and the Strzelecki Track was blocked by water for six months. Major roadworks followed, and most of the hastily-built 1958 route was abandoned for a new alignment further from the creek. With greater funds available, and no political need for haste, the gasfield roads were completely rebuilt to modern specifications. The new road diverged from Strzelecki Creek nearly 100km south of Moomba and followed the pipeline north. Another new road connected Moomba to Innamincka. The new generation of roads, completed in 1979, no longer followed any of the Strzelecki channel, simply crossing it at one point. Since then, only tourists have followed the old road alignment along Strzelecki Creek, and after more than 20 years without maintenance, much of it is now difficult to follow. (Donovan 1996, pp. 41-52)

The re-opening of the north-east in the 1960s, and the extensive studies of flora and fauna that accompanied the geological investigations and the commencement of gas production, brought the first understanding of the environmental values of the Cooper Basin. Several areas were of particular interest: Lake Eyre, the largest salt lake in Australia, the relatively unaltered arid zones of the Simpson and Strzelecki deserts, and the Coongie Lakes and other wetlands of the Cooper outflow. The Simpson Desert Conservation Park was created in 1967, and Lake Eyre was declared a National Park in 1985.

However, the Strzelecki Desert and Cooper outflow lakes were areas that were highly prospective for oil and gas; indeed the Tirrawarra, Dullingari, Della, Kidman and Toolachee fields were already in production in those areas by the 1980s. In a compromise intended to conserve the environmental values of these areas while permitting commercial production to continue, the South Australian government created a new form of land tenure called regional reserves. The Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves were created in 1988. These are effectively National Parks with conservation management plans, administered by Park Rangers, but they also permit both oil and gas production and cattle grazing, within environmental guidelines. Nearly three-quarters of the length of Strzelecki Creek is within these reserves; Strzelecki Regional Reserve takes in roughly the southern half of the Strzelecki Creek channel, and Innamincka Regional Reserve roughly its northern quarter.

The newest industry on the Strzelecki Creek region is tourism,

	<p>which has been growing steadily since the 1970s. Almost all the traffic along the old Strzelecki Track today is generated by tourists, and concentrated in the winter months.</p>
Physical Description	<p>The Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area is a narrow corridor about 200km in length, but no more than 4km in width, extending along the channel of Strzelecki Creek from where it leaves Cooper Creek a short distance below Innamincka, running generally south-southwest to Lake Blanche. The area contains a chain of natural waterholes, as well as homestead ruins, stockyards, wells, windmills, a whim, an artesian bore, graves and the remains of the early road to the Cooper Basin oil and gas fields.</p>
Condition and Integrity	<p>With the exception of Merty Merty homestead, a 1960s house, all of the Strzelecki Creek sites are now abandoned and ruinous. All sites have been degraded by natural change and neglect in the past.</p>
National List: Research essay (footnoted)	n/a

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Significance

Summary Statement of Significance	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place is of heritage significance as the scene of important events in the European exploration and settlement of both South Australia and Queensland, as the principal transport route from the Cooper Basin to Adelaide from 1858 to 1974, and for its association with a number of notable people, organisations and events, including Charles Sturt, Augustus Gregory, Harry Redford, John Conrick, the Beltana Pastoral Company and the oil and gas explorers of the 1950s and 1960s.
National Theme(s)	3.3.2 Looking for Overland Stock Routes

	3.16 Struggling with Remoteness, Hardship and Failure 3.4.5 Tapping Natural Energy Sources
Symbolic	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place has some symbolic qualities, one of its episodes, the overland trek by cattle thief Harry Redford, being incorporated into Rolf Boldrewood's novel <i>Robbery Under Arms</i> and a subsequent film.
Exemplary	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place does not have exemplary qualities.
Unique	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place is not unique, as there are other long-distance stock routes such the Canning Stock Route, the Barkly Tableland Stock Route and the Birdsville Track which rely on a chain of water sources to allow stock movement through arid country. However, the number of such routes is very small.
Comparative analysis	The closest relevant comparisons to the Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place might be the Canning Stock Route of Western Australia, the Barkly Tableland Stock Route linking Queensland with the Northern Territory, and the Birdsville Track, linking South Australia with the Queensland Channel Country. Of all these, the Strzelecki Creek route is the least artificial, that is it relied for the most part on natural water sources, only supplemented to a minimal extent by artesian bores and wells.
Factors affecting significance	
Contributing values (state and local significance)	
Related sites	

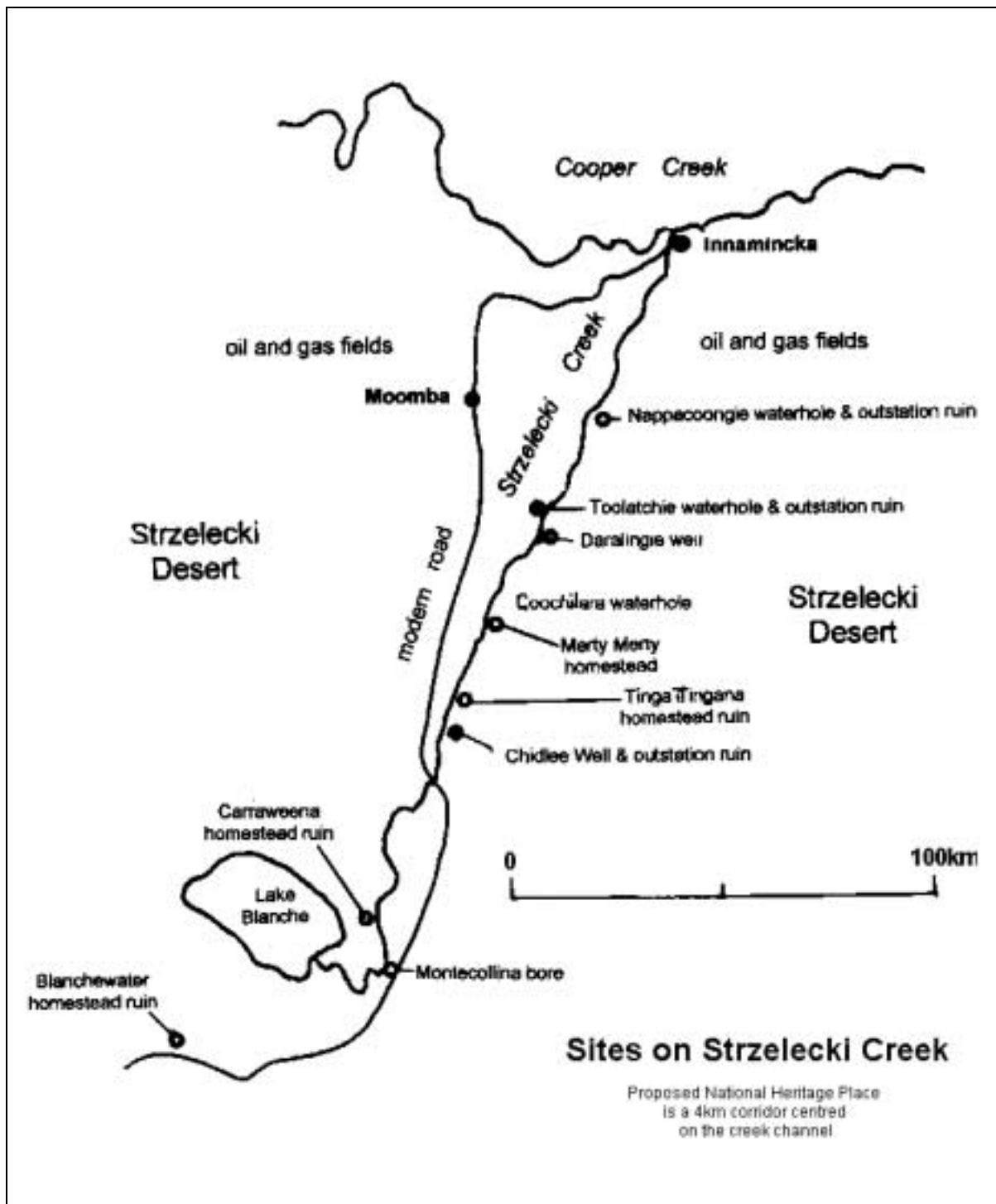
Factors affecting condition and management

<p>Conservation Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Protective measures and means of implementing them</i> ▪ <i>Level at which m'ment is exercised and who has responsibility</i> ▪ <i>Agreed existing management plans</i> ▪ <i>Sources of financing for management</i> ▪ <i>Visitor facilities</i> 	<p>Most historic sites within the Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place are within the Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves and are being managed sensitively by National Parks & Wildlife SA.</p>								
<p>Covenant</p>									
<p>Factors affecting the Property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Development pressures</i> ▪ <i>Environmental pressures</i> ▪ <i>Visitor/tourism pressures</i> ▪ <i>Inhabitants of property</i> ▪ <i>Buffer zone</i> ▪ <i>Other</i> 	<p>Strzelecki Creek crosses only four land parcels, from north to south:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Innamincka Regional Reserve</td> <td>administered by NPWSA, leased by Kidman Holdings Limited as Innamincka station</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gidgealpa Station</td> <td>leased by Doce Pty Ltd, subsidiary of Santos, site of gasfields and Moomba plant, not grazed</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Merty Merty Station</td> <td>leased by Mrs Pam Rieck, cattle grazing</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strzelecki Regional Reserve</td> <td>administered by NPWSA, not under pastoral lease</td> </tr> </table> <p>The lessees of Gidgealpa and Merty Merty do not encourage access to their land, and tourism on the old Strzelecki Track is principally concentrated in the two regional reserves.</p>	Innamincka Regional Reserve	administered by NPWSA, leased by Kidman Holdings Limited as Innamincka station	Gidgealpa Station	leased by Doce Pty Ltd, subsidiary of Santos, site of gasfields and Moomba plant, not grazed	Merty Merty Station	leased by Mrs Pam Rieck, cattle grazing	Strzelecki Regional Reserve	administered by NPWSA, not under pastoral lease
Innamincka Regional Reserve	administered by NPWSA, leased by Kidman Holdings Limited as Innamincka station								
Gidgealpa Station	leased by Doce Pty Ltd, subsidiary of Santos, site of gasfields and Moomba plant, not grazed								
Merty Merty Station	leased by Mrs Pam Rieck, cattle grazing								
Strzelecki Regional Reserve	administered by NPWSA, not under pastoral lease								
<p>Recommendations</p>									

Values Tables

Criterion	(1) A place that is a component of the natural or cultural environment of Australia is to be taken to be a place included in the National Heritage List if it is of national symbolic, exemplary, unique or other special significance or value to Australia for future generations as well as for the present community because of any of the following:
Subcriterion	(a) its importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place has played an important part in shaping the movement of people and animals to and from the Cooper Basin, facilitated the European settlement of that region, and has linked it economically with South Australia rather than Queensland or New South Wales from the time of the first pastoralists in the 1870s to the fossil fuel industry today.
Subcriterion	(b) it possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(c) it has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia's natural or cultural history;
Value Text	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place was a transport route and a series of habitation places clearly of great importance in Aboriginal culture, and also includes a number of sites of European cultural heritage significance, including wells, abandoned homestead sites, stockyards and burial places. Many sites within the place have significant potential for archaeological investigation.
Subcriterion	(d) its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of: (i) a class of Australia's natural or cultural places; or (ii) a class of Australia's natural or cultural environments;
Value Text	The Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place is extremely important for its associations with European exploration and pastoral settlement of the Australian interior. It clearly demonstrates the dependence of European settlers on the land, and the role of natural resources in shaping their settlement and transport patterns. There are very few

	examples in existence of an early transport route, crucial to the process of settlement in a particular region, which retained its precise course over decades, and can still be identified with precision and followed today. Strzelecki Creek is an outstanding representative of this category of places.
Subcriterion	(e) its importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(f) its importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period:
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(g) its strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;
Value Text	n/a
Subcriterion	(h) its special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in Australia's natural or cultural history.
Value Text	Strzelecki Creek National Heritage Place is of great cultural heritage value for its close association with the events surrounding the exploration and pastoral settlement of the north-east of South Australia, and in particular Charles Sturt and Augustus Gregory, explorers, Harry Redford, cattle thief, John Conrick, pastoralist, the Beltana Pastoral Company, and the era of oil and gas exploration commencing in 1959.



6.0 PLACES ALREADY ENTERED IN THE STATE HERITAGE REGISTER (SA)

The following 16 places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are already entered in the State Heritage Register:

- Marree Fettlers Cottages, Marree SHP:001
- Great Northern Hotel, Marree SHP:002
- Lake Harry Date Plantation Site, Birdsville Track SHP:003
- Lake Palankarina Fossil Reserve, off Birdsville Track SHP:004
- Lakes Kanunka, Pitikanta & Ngapakaldi Fossil Sites SHP:005
- Killalpaninna Mission Site, off Birdsville Track SHP:006
- Mulka Store Ruins, Birdsville Track SHP:007
- Cadelga Homestead Ruins, Birdsville-Innamincka Road SHP:008
- Homestead & Woolshed, Cordillo Downs Station SHP:009
- Gray's Grave, Lake Massacre, Coongie Lakes SHP:010
- Innamincka Regional Reserve Headquarters, Innamincka SHP:011
- Well and Iron Whim, Merty Merty Station, Strzelecki Track SHP:012
- Horse Capstan, Pump and Well, Old Mulga Bore, Strzelecki Track SHP:013
- Tinga Tingana Homestead Ruins, off Strzelecki Track SHP:014
- Lake Callabonna Fossil Reserve, off Strzelecki Track SHP:015
- Blanchewater Homestead Ruins, Strzelecki Track SHP:016

In 15 of these cases is recommended that the place remain on the Register. However, it is recommended that Gray's Grave at Lake Massacre be removed. Reports on these sixteen places follow.

MARREE FETTLERS COTTAGES

SHP:001

LOCATION: Marree. Flinders Ranges SA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CT 5455/782 Allotment piece 2 (others) Section 549 Out of Hundreds

OWNER: Minister for Transport
PO Box 8245 Station Arcade
Adelaide 5000

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 23 November 1989
Heritage SA File No.: 10838

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 1, negs 19-21



Marree Fettlers Cottages

MARREE FETTLERS COTTAGES

SHP:001

DESCRIPTION

These cottages are of a standard design which was used on the Great Northern Railway. They are significant because they date from 1884 when the railway was extended to Marree and are the only railway buildings in the town to do so. As such they are identified with the history of the town as an important railhead and supply centre for remote pastoral stations. The cottages are also linked with the history of the early transcontinental railway and the plans to promote settlement in the far north of South Australia and Northern Territory.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The fettlers' cottages are significant for their connection with the construction and operation of the Great Northern Railway, which opened up the northern grazing lands with cheaper transport

HISTORY

These cottages date from the extension of the railway from Quorn north to Herrgott Springs in 1884. The town was renamed Marree at that time, and with the sinking of the railway artesian bore the same year, became established as a permanent township and the main supply centre for the Oodnadatta, Birdsville and Strzelecki regions. The former role was taken over by Oodnadatta when the railway was extended there in 1891. The railway was taken over by Commonwealth Railways in 1926, extended to Alice Springs in 1929 and dieselised in 1954. The Port Augusta-Marree railway was converted to standard gauge in 1957 to serve the Leigh Creek coalfield, and for 23 years Marree became a break-of-gauge station, where goods were transferred to the narrow gauge Ghan line. The line closed in 1980 and the cottages have been disused since.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

These cottages are an integral part of Marree's railway precinct. They are mentioned briefly on one side of the Ghan trail sign on the Railway Station platform, but there is no indication on the sign as to where they are. The Fettlers Cottages have significance to Aboriginal communities in Marree as well as significance in relation to the town's railway history.

A major project to interpret the railway heritage of Marree is planned for the railway precinct. Consultation with the local community is taking part in relation to this project.

MARREE FETTLERS COTTAGES

SHP:001

Recommendations

- 1 Interpretation of the railway precinct include the Fettlers Cottages.
- 2 The Aboriginal community be consulted about incorporating information on the Cottages' Aboriginal significance in addition to their connection with railway history.
- 3 Interpretation of the railway precinct as a whole to include a map, the Fettlers Cottages, the Railway Station buildings, Rest Centre, the Great Northern Hotel and the shops that provided services to the railways.

Action responsibility

Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs

REFERENCES

Donovan & Associates, Railway Heritage of South Australia, 1992
Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Heritage SA Register file 10838

GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL

SHP:002

LOCATION: Railway Terrace South, Marree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CT 5174/388 Out of Hundreds
Lots 150-154 Part Lots 129-130

OWNER: P.J. and S.M. McGuire
Marree 5733

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 8 August 1996
Heritage SA File No.: 14764
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0199

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 1, neg 18



Great Northern Hotel

GREAT NORTHERN HOTEL

SHP:002

DESCRIPTION

A prominent two storey building in the main street, the hotel is a dominant element in Marree township dating from 1883 when Marree became the railhead for areas to the north.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Great Northern Hotel demonstrates the importance of the township of Marree as a major railhead and means of entry to the remote interior of South Australia. As the main centre for social contact within the town and as an important place of accommodation for travellers to the north, the building is both a rare survivor of the railway era and a stopping point for private, parliamentary and scientific travellers who passed through Marree.

HISTORY

The township of Marree was surveyed and proclaimed in October 1883 a few months before the Great Northern railway was opened for traffic on 7 February 1884. The hotel was built during this period, and is described by Lois Litchfield as follows:

In 1883 when the town was surveyed the hotel dimensions were recorded as being a substantial stone two storey building, eighty three feet by forty six feet in area, the bar room nineteen feet by twenty two feet, larger than the dining room of seventeen feet by sixteen feet. Upstairs were fourteen bedrooms and a bathroom, also an annexe with eight extra bedrooms, each having one or more air brick openings to draw off the heated air. There was a large billiard room and balcony. At the back of the hotel there were stone stables comprising eight stalls and a loose box and an underground tank of 20 000 gallons. (Litchfield 1983, p. 46)

The first licensee of the hotel was John Charles Luscombe Chapple, a well known northern identity who at one time was the lessee of the Standpipe Hotel at Port Augusta. During his time the rooms were described in 1884 as being 'large, lofty, and well furnished and the luxury of a bath can be indulged in, with a pleasant siesta on the balcony afterwards to enjoy the cool evening breeze when it blows'. Since then a number of licensees have managed the hotel, including the McMahon family who owned the hotel between 1947 and 1989. The hotel was and is regarded as the most palatial building in the town and was patronised by travellers who took the train to the regional centre/terminus at Marree during the town's heyday.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The hotel is included in the *Marree Visitor Information Booklet* and should be included in any historical trails developed in Marree.

Murals and photographs of Marree's history decorate the walls of the bar and dining room, giving lively local interpretations of aspects of Marree life. They suit the character of the town and the building.

Recommendations

The Great Northern Hotel should also be included as a key location in the interpretation of the railway precinct, linking to the railway station and to the other buildings forming the Railway Terrace streetscape.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission

REFERENCES:

- Advertiser, 13 November 1884; 2 December 1885
Donovan & Associates, *Railway Heritage of South Australia*, 1992
Kinhill Stearns, *Heritage of the Mound Springs*, 1986
Litchfield, Lois. *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Marree Aboriginal School, *Marree Visitor Information Booklet*, 2001
Austral Archaeology & Donovan & Associates, *Flinders Ranges Heritage Survey*, 1994

LAKE HARRY DATE PLANTATION SITE

SHP:003

LOCATION: Off Birdsville Track, via Marree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1323/9 Block 794 Out of Hundreds Pastoral Lease 2401

OWNER: Muloorina Leases Pty Ltd
75 Fullarton Road
Kent Town 5067

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 25 July 1985
Heritage SA File No.: 12760
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0144

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 1, negs 33-34



Lake Harry Date Plantation Site

LAKE HARRY DATE PLANTATION SITE

SHP:003

DESCRIPTION

The site, comprising ruins of a stone rubble building, is all that remains of the largest date plantation in South Australia on a flat arid expanse of land by Lake Harry. Planted on an experimental basis by the South Australian government in the late 1880s and early 1890s it was one of a number of date plantations near artesian bores established to water stock driven along the Birdsville Track. Until the 1980s a solitary date palm stood as a reminder of the 2,622 trees planted at Marree between 1896–97.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Lake Harry date plantation site is a reminder of the many attempts to establish viable industries cultivating exotic plants in the arid areas of Australia, influenced by the colonial culture of the British Empire. It was the largest of the date plantations established by the South Australian government on an experimental basis during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

HISTORY

The ruins by Lake Harry near the Birdsville Track are situated on a water conservation reserve that during the 1890s became the site of an experimental date plantation. The Lake Harry pastoral lease was first taken up in 1870 as part of the Mundowdna station. It was the largest of three main date plantations established at Lake Harry, Oodnadatta and Hergott. The date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) had been grown successfully by the French in the Sahara, and their example had parallels with the arid interior of South Australia. The *deglet noir* variety in particular seemed ideal as it thrived on poor soils, temperature extremes, a dry climate and artesian water.

In 1890, a series of artesian bores were sunk by the South Australian government along the Birdsville Track to water stock being overlanded to the railhead at Marree, and camels to haul the equipment were based at Lake Harry in 1910. Commissioner of Lands G.W. Cotton promoted the establishment of date plantations as a corollary of artesian bore sinking and by 1897 there were 2,622 palms at Lake Harry and 279 at Marree. A few were also grown at Oodnadatta and Coward Springs, but by 1915 only Marree and Lake Harry were significant enough to be mentioned in the Conservator of Forests annual report. Dates were sold in Marree and Adelaide, a total of 263 lbs and 900 lbs respectively (PP 24 of 1915 p 8). The plantation was irrigated by wide channels and hand pollinated by workers including Afghans.

LAKE HARRY DATE PLANTATION SITE

SHP:003

Although dates were produced, the plantation foundered during the First World War because of a combination of drought and labour shortages. It is one of many experimental ventures in the arid area encouraged by the South Australian government and is associated with the Afghan people who settled in the area as camel drovers and later date plantation tenderers. Many of the trees were railed south in 1915 and relocated along roadsides in the Riverland.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The ruins need to be stabilised, with safety warning signs.
- 2 An on-site interpretive sign is recommended, with photographs of the building as it was when standing, and the date plantation.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission; Heritage SA

REFERENCES

Howard Pearce, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978
Lois Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1984
SA Government Printer, *Cultivation of the Date Palm in the Interior of Australia by Artesian and other waters*, 1880
SAPP 127/1890, 155/1892, 105/1896/7, 21/1907, 24/1915
The Garden and Field, February 1881, p. 139, November 1890 p. 80;
May 1898, p. 274; March 1898.p, 219; February 1894, p. 243
Heritage SA Register file 12760

LAKE PALANKARINNA FOSSIL RESERVE

SHP:004

LOCATION: Approximately 90 km north of Marree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CR 5758/134 Section 362 Out of Hundreds
(Kopperamanna)

OWNER: Minister for Education & Childrens Services
GPO Box 778
Adelaide 5001

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 4 March 1993
Heritage SA File No.: 14392
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0011

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 2, neg 8



Lake Palankarinna Fossil Reserve

DESCRIPTION

Lake Palankarinna is one of many isolated saltpans within an area of sand ridges east of Lake Eyre. It is the site of a discovery of a diverse deposit of Tertiary Mammal fauna fossils in 1953 and was gazetted as a fossil reserve by the South Australian government in 1954. Fossils recorded in four major rock units range in antiquity from 14 million to 1 million years ago and include pelicans, flamingoes, crocodiles, fish, koalas and mammals.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Of great palaeontological interest, the range and genera of fossils discovered here are unique to Australia and of inestimable value in contributing to an understanding of the continent's natural heritage. All new genera were discovered in the bed of the salt pan and continue to be studied, dated and interpreted. Consequently, the place and other fossil deposits in the arid area around Lake Eyre are of international status in terms of scientific interest and study.

HISTORY

A 1953 expedition by a group of American Fulbright scholars led by Dr RA Stirton of the University of California discovered the fossils after a chance sighting of the saltpan, the search inspired by the book by explorer JW Gregory's book *The Dead Heart of Australia* (1906) in which he described the discoveries of fossilized bones at the turn of the century by the pioneer South Australian geologist, HYL Brown.

In 1957 Dr Brian Daly, Curator of Fossils and Minerals at the South Australian Museum, carried out a geological study of the area and mapped the major outcrops of rock along the many saltpans to the east of Lake Eyre from an aerial map, providing a guide to potential discoveries in the area for many years. He also identified four major geological episodes of deposition in the area. The four major rock units were named after geographic locales.

The oldest, a green dolomitic limestone was called the Etadunna Formation after a nearby station on the Birdsville Track. In 1961 Stirton, Tedford and Miller recorded fossil pelicans, flamingoes, ducks, crocodiles and lungfish and an ancestral koala thought to be of Middle Miocene Age (15 million years old) from this formation. Above this lies the Mampwordu Sand, named from a site at Lake Palankarinna. It contains the fossil bones and teeth of fish, turtles, crocodiles, birds and marsupials believed to be of the Pliocene Age (approximately 4 million years ago).

LAKE PALANKARINNA FOSSIL RESERVE**SHP:004**

Above the Mampurwordu Sand, the Tirari Formation comprising a red unfossiliferous sand was named after the Aboriginal tribe that inhabited the area east of Lake Eyre where these deposits outcrop widely. Above this, the Katipiri Sands are named after an outcrop at a waterhole of that name in the lower reaches of Cooper Creek and contain a rich assemblage of fish, reptile and marsupial bones, including the kangaroo and Diprotodon. The classification work initiated by Stirton established a geochronology for Australian mammal fossil faunas that has directed and contributed to the knowledge of Cainozoic land vertebrate life of Australia. Lake Palankarinna was gazetted as a fossil reserve in 1954 under the South Australian Crown Lands Act.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Lake Palankarinna has been a Fossil Reserve since 1954, under the jurisdiction of the South Australian Museum Board. The area is consequently protected, but regulations are hard to enforce because of the remoteness and isolation of the site. It is relatively undisturbed except for scientific collecting regularly conducted by the South Australian Museum under the direction of the Curator of Fossils.

Recommendations

Any interpretation would best be included in an interpretation centre distant from the fossil fields, such as that proposed for the Lake Eyre Basin in the *Outback South Australia Tourism Strategy 2001* (p.19). The South Australian Museum should play a central role in deciding whether any level of interpretation is appropriate and, if so, should be actively involved in such interpretation.

Directional signs are not recommended.
Conscious de-marketing is recommended.

Action responsibility

South Australian Museum, Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission

REFERENCES:

Stirton, R.A., *Late Tertiary Marsupials from South Australia*. Records of the South Australian Museum, Volume 11(3), 247-268, 1955
Tedford, R.H., *Kadimakara, Extinct Vertebrates of Australia*, Pioneer Design Studio 1985, pp. 39-56, 1985
Heritage SA Register file 14392

LAKES KANUNKA, PITIKANTA and NGAPAKALDI FOSSIL SITES

SHP:005

LOCATION: Off Birdsville Track via Marree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL1323/20 Allotment 104 Out Of Hundreds CR
5771/691 Block 422
Out of Hundreds Lake Pitikanta and part
Lake Ngapakaldi CR 5772/920 Out of Hundreds
Part Lake Ngapakaldi
PL 1681

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 11 December 1997
Heritage SA File No.: 14418
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0011

PHOTOGRAPH: Sites not visited

DESCRIPTION

The Tirari Basin in the eastern Lake Eyre Basin contains a series of dry salt lakes which constitute one of the rare but major areas where Tertiary vertebrate fossils have been discovered in Australia. The landscape of salt lakes and bluffs expose fossiliferous Tirari and Etadunna formations. These findings have led to a greater understanding of the geological and climatic characteristics of ancient Australia and are of international interest because of the nature and age of the fossils.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The areas of Lake Kanunka, Pitikanta, and Ngapakaldi yield rare, significant Tertiary vertebrate fossils that are of significant palaeontological interest. These are valued as important to the understanding of the evolution of Australia's environmental and natural heritage.

HISTORY

Following the discovery of the fossilised remains of long extinct animals at Lake Callabonna in the nineteenth century which resulted in a fossil reserve being declared in 1901, a series of scientific expeditions based from the South Australian Museum and involving the University of California searched successfully for similar remains in the area east of Lake Eyre.

Fossils discovered in these lakes range in age from the early Miocene Period (approximately 15 million years ago) into the Pleistocene (1 million years ago) and are considered to be of international significance because of their diversity and time range.

Of particular note is the Kutjamarpu Fauna of Middle Miocene Age (12 millions years old) found in the Wipajiri Formation. These include diprotodon, kangaroos, koalas, wombats, possums (including the weird animal *Ektopodon*), birds, turtles, fish and impressions of fossil leaves of which some forms resemble those occurring in Australian eucalypt forests today.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

At present the area is undisturbed except for scientific study supervised by the South Australian Museum. This situation should remain unchanged to protect the fossil remains from unsupervised interference.

Recommendation

Any interpretation would best be included in an interpretation centre distant from the fossil fields, such as that proposed for the Lake Eyre Basin in the *Outback South Australia Tourism Strategy 2001* (p.19). The South Australian Museum should play a central role in deciding whether any level of interpretation is appropriate and, if so, should be actively involved in such interpretation.

Conscious de-marketing is recommended.

Action responsibility

South Australian Museum, Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission

REFERENCES:

Heritage SA Register file 14418
Red Dune Consultancy, *Outback South Australia Tourism Strategy*, South Australian Tourism Commission, 2001

KILLALPANINNA MISSION SITE

SHP:006

LOCATION: Off Birdsville Track, via Marree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1340/29
PE 2437 Allotment 105 Out of Hundreds
(Kopperamanna)

OWNER: Harold Broad Pty Ltd
Old Canowie
Hallett 5419

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 8 November 1984
Heritage SA File No.: 12618
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0053

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 2, negs 9-13



Killalpaninna Mission Site

DESCRIPTION

The site on the edge of Lake Killalpaninna where Lutheran Missionaries established a mission between 1867 and 1919 of 21 mud brick buildings including a church with a 13m high bell tower, dormitories, school, store room, eating house, kitchen, bake house, smithy, carpenter's shop, harness and saddle shed and dwellings. Little evidence is left today in the arid landscape, except for graves, bits of rotted timber and disintegrated mud bricks that have melded into the ground.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

This is a significant site of first contact between Aboriginal people and missionaries from the late 1860s until the First World War. During this period it was developed as a mission associated with two Lutheran sects for the Aboriginal people during a complex period of privation, proselytizing, conflict and conciliation. Probably the Lutherans' most significant achievement was their effort to understand and translate the Dieri language in order to facilitate preaching to Aboriginal people. The work of Carl Strehlow and Johannes Flierl with Aboriginal culture is associated with the site and provides a valuable legacy in providing an early translation of the Dieri language.

HISTORY

Killalpaninna was established by the Lutheran Church in South Australia and the Hermannsburg Mission Society in Dieri country on an outflow lake of the Cooper floodplain, called Lake Killalpaninna. By January 1867 they had erected a stone store and some huts of bush materials. While some Dieri welcomed the missionaries, others were not happy at their intrusion, and after hostile demonstrations, the missionaries withdrew to Bucaltaninna in May 1867, and a month later withdrew from the district completely. The next year they returned to Killalpaninna for a few years, but in 1871 abandoned it a second time, disillusioned by poor feed and water, and lack of response from the Dieri.

Killalpaninna revived in 1878 under the auspices of the South Australian Immanuel Synod Mission. Following good rains Pastors Flierl and Vogelsang returned to Killalpaninna, where they established the Bethesda Mission, building a handsome mud brick church with a 13m tower. They also set the mission up on a commercial basis, registering the Killalpaninna pastoral lease. This second revival of Killalpaninna would be a remarkable success, and a major settlement in the region for the next twenty years.

KILLALPANINNA MISSION SITE

SHP:006

The pastoral lease was badly hit by the drought at the turn of the twentieth century, and while the mission's role as a rations station continued, the following years saw numbers dwindling and an aging Dieri community living an austere life, still dominated by strict Lutheran teachings. In 1917 the school was closed by the government, and the mission was abandoned by 1920.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Has potential for active interpretation as some degree of visitation can be expected from tourists along the Birdsville Track.

As a major cultural site, with both Indigenous and historic significance, Killalpaninna Mission is featured widely in tourism literature. *Lonely Planet* identifies it as one of the three highlights of the Birdsville Track. (O'Byrne 1998)

Existing management

There is no sign from the road at present, just a white metal cross about 2m high to indicate the turnoff.

Station lease holders permit access to the site, which is off the main road. The mission ruins are accessible only through a locked gate. Station managers issue a key for the padlock, charging \$5 access fee. A \$25 fee is charged for overnight camping. The station managers take the vehicle number and ask visitors to leave the site clean.

The mission site is fenced to allow foot access only at the mission site itself.

Management issues

The site is vulnerable. The tops of mud brick walls are clearly visible in the sand mounded over the site. Visitors walk over the walls of Vogelsang's house and the church. Materials are soft and the site is likely to be damaged by foot traffic. Artefacts are lying on the surface and theft is a serious concern.

Indigenous association with the area is mentioned in connection with the mission in tourism literature.

Recommendations

- 1 Consideration be given to a directional sign to the site from the road, indicating that access is available for a fee, and directing those interested to enquire at the Etadunna homestead. This will need to be discussed with State Aboriginal Affairs, leaseholders and Heritage SA.

2 Interpretive signs should be installed on the mission site:

At the entrance to the fenced compound, with a map of the site and vehicle turning loop.

Major interpretation signs should be installed at the end of the turning loop.

Themes to be covered :

- the importance of the lake and surrounding areas to the traditional owners,
- the establishment and life of the mission,
- the Dieri people and other Indigenous peoples who lived at the mission,
- Mission buildings, with pictures of Vogelsang's house and the church as they were.

3 Interpretation and presentation of this site should be conducted through consultation with the relevant Aboriginal communities in accordance with proper protocols.

Action responsibility

Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA

REFERENCES:

- Heritage SA Register File No. 12618
Pearce, Howard, Remote Sites Documentation Report, 1980
Proeve, E.H & H.F.W. *A Work of Love and Sacrifice*, 1953
O'Byrne, D. *et al*, *Outback Australia*, Lonely Planet, Footscray, 1998

MULKA STORE RUINS

SHP:007

LOCATION: Off Birdsville Track, via Marree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1323/20 Block 1174 Out of Hundreds

OWNER: Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 25 July 1985
Heritage SA File No.: 12758

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 3, negs 29-31



Mulka Store Ruins

MULKA STORE RUINS

SHP:007

DESCRIPTION

The ruins of Mulka Store are west of the Birdsville Track and south of Mulka Bore. Built of limestone rubble, the ruins reveal a complex arrangement of small rooms and two outbuildings situated on an arid plain with little vegetation. A grave with marble headstone and iron railing is located on a low hill near the ruins. The ruins are a notable and isolated landmark within the surrounding desert.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Mulka Store ruins are a scarce example of an adapted pastoral out-station/store which was a stopping place for travellers along the Birdsville Track from the 1920s until the 1950s when it was abandoned. It is also associated with Poddy Aiston, a retired policeman and amateur anthropologist, who ran the store and took a keen interest in Aboriginal culture.

HISTORY

Mulka Store was literally an oasis for travellers in a predominantly drought stricken landscape plagued by sand storms. The ruins were originally associated with early pastoralist Alexander Scobie, who came to the Channel country in 1879 and was joined by his wife Mary and four children in 1883. Two years later, after sinking wells about 20 miles apart and living in camps, the family settled at New Well, fifty miles south of Cowarie pastoral station. In 1915, Alexander and Mary retired, leaving their three sons in charge of Mulka station. In 1923 the Scobie's interests in Mulka were sold to Mr and Mrs Aiston. The Aistons established a second store there in 1924 to supply travellers along the Birdsville Track.

George 'Poddy' Aiston is an important figure in the region's history. In 1901, he joined the South Australian Police Force after returning from the Boer War and served at various remote locations before being posted to Mungerannie in 1912. He combined police duties with those of Aboriginal Welfare Officer and took a keen interest in the two local tribes, the Dieri and Wonkongura. When he resigned from the force in 1924 before buying Mulka Station, he had accumulated a valuable collection of artefacts which he housed in a large room in the store. After he died in 1943, his widow remained at Mulka Store until 1953 when she donated the collection to the South Australian Museum and moved south.

MULKA STORE RUINS

SHP:007

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing brown directional sign to the Mulka Store from the Birdsville Track incorrectly names them the Old Mulka ruins. The Mulka Store ruins are close to the Track and appear to have heavy visitation. There are signs of vehicles driving right up to the graves and the ruins, which are unstable.

Recommendations

- 1 A defined parking area with protective fencing be established at the lower end of the site, to prevent vehicles driving to the ruins and graves.
- 2 The ruins be stabilised both to conserve the structure and for public safety.
- 3 An interpretive sign be erected to cover the history of the store, its establishment and decline and connections with the Aiston and Scobie families.
- 4 A second interpretive sign be erected near the house ruins at rear of the store. This could refer to the graves of Edith Scobie and other burials on site.
- 5 Implementation of these recommendations will require consultation with the leaseholders..

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA

REFERENCES

Bonython, Eric, *Where the seasons come and go*, 1971
Heritage SA Register file 12758
Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the tracks beyond*, 1984
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978
Ratcliffe, Francis, *Flying Fox and Drifting Sand*, 1948

CADELGA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:008

LOCATION: Off Strzelecki Track
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated SA
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1601/59 Block 851 Out of Hundreds
Pastoral Lease 2524

OWNER: Brooklands Pastoral Company Pty Ltd
Cordillo Downs Station
via Leigh Creek 5731

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 25 July 1985
Heritage SA File No: 12757
RNE File No: 3/00/260/0149

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 5, negs 17-20



Cadelga Homestead Ruins

CADELGA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:008

DESCRIPTION

The site of a former station complex on an arid plain north-west of Cadelga (Uloonanera) Waterhole, about 10km south of the Queensland border. There are two main stone rubble buildings, formerly the homestead and separate kitchen building, with rubble remains of two stone sheds north and west of the main building. A meat safe made of timber, wire and thatching was evident in 1985. This is what remains of homestead, separate kitchen, shed, harness room, meathouse, garden and stock-yard shown on a pastoral plan of 1898.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Cadelga homestead ruins represent the extent to which pastoral land was taken up by settlers following the explorer McKinlay's glowing accounts of the country when he explored it in 1862. Located in the extreme north-east of South Australia near the Queensland border, Cadelga's subsequent history reflects the effect of drought and isolation experienced by pastoral settlers and is a significant landmark by the Strzelecki Track.

HISTORY

Cadelgo Downs, as the holding was originally called, was taken up in 1877 by Robert Frew of Cunnamulla, an arid stony expanse of 1840 square kilometres straddling the South Australia-Queensland border. In 1903, Cadelgo Downs was transferred to the Beltana Pastoral Company, which incorporated it with its southern neighbour, Cordillo Downs and then with Haddon Downs Station in 1905.

Badly hit by drought and depression, Cordillo was abandoned completely between 1931 and 1936, and in 1940 sheep grazing was discontinued and the property was stocked with cattle. Cadelga was no longer required as an outstation of Cordillo by the 1950s, and consequently fell into disrepair. Its remains are testament to changing methods of pastoral management.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues

The Cadelga Homestead Ruins appear to be a popular stopping point for travellers on the track between Birdsville and Innamincka. Vehicles are being driven into the ruins, and there is surface evidence that travellers are camping in the ruins themselves. The area around the ruins, as well as that in between the buildings, has been denuded and degraded by the large numbers of campers. The pastoral lease-holder reports concern over pollution of the water hole by campers.

CADELGA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:008

Recommendations**A Management**

- 1 The ruins be lightly fenced to prevent vehicles driving into the ruin site, but to allow pedestrian access. A wire fence, such as that used for stock fencing, with no barbs, could be used. A small gate or break in the fence should be installed to manage pedestrian access and exclude vehicles. This would also prevent damage to the fence by people climbing through it.
- 2 The ruins should be stabilised for safety.
- 3 Cadelga is a high priority for the installation of toilets and designation as a camp site, similar to those erected by the South Australian Tourism Commission at tourism pressure points on the Birdsville Track.
- 4 Detailed recording, including measured drawings, of the site is recommended.
- 5 The basic form and layout of the complex should be retained if at some future stage a potential use for the complex emerges through, eg changes in station management arrangements or provision of tourist / traveller facilities.

B Interpretation

- 6 On-site interpretation of the complex is recommended, with three interpretation boards to be prepared around themes incorporating the Indigenous, natural and historic significance of the site.

Location	Themes
Adjacent to the water course	The importance of the waterhole to Indigenous people and pastoralists
Creek side of the main homestead	Pastoral settlement at Cadelga, building of homestead, abandonment, and continuing pastoral occupation with more distant management.
Between the stone outbuildings and the timber shed,	Plan of homestead and outlying buildings to explain what they were and how the complex functioned.

The Cadelga management recommendations 1-3 need urgent implementation to avoid further damage to the ruins and degradation of its surrounds.

Interpretation recommendations are of high priority.

CADELGA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:008

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA

REFERENCES:

Bonython, Eric, *Where the Seasons Come and Go*, 1971
Heritage SA Register file 12757
Lands Department Arbitrator's Valuation Reports
Lands Titles Office, Pastoral Lease Records, PL 2737, 621, 949
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978
Ratcliffe, Francis, *Flying Fox and Drifting Sand*, 1948
SAPP 153 of 1864

HOMESTEAD AND WOOLSHED, CORDILLO DOWNS STATION

SHP:009

LOCATION: Off Cordillo Downs Road, via Innamincka
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1601/59 Block 851 Out of Hundreds (Cordillo)
PL 2524

OWNER: Brooklands Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
Cordillo Downs Station
via Leigh Creek 5731

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 24 July 1980
Heritage SA File No.: 14418
RNE File No: 3/00/260/0006

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 5, negs 26-35



Woolshed, Cordillo Downs Station

DESCRIPTION

Cordillo Downs Station is situated on the vast expanse of gibber plains of Sturt's Stony Desert north of Innamincka in the far north-eastern corner of South Australia. The station is a complex of buildings comprising the homestead, station kitchen, men's quarters, shearers' quarters, outhouses, horse and cattle yards. Most of the buildings have characteristic vaulted iron roofs similar to those at Murnpeowie. The monolithic woolshed, built in 1885 from materials transported by camel from the Farina railhead along the Strzelecki Track and the remains of the wool scouring machinery are testament to the huge number of sheep that were stocked on the land until the Depression years during the 1930s.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Cordillo Downs is notable because of the construction and design of its buildings, and provides evidence of the extent of sheep farming in the arid north eastern areas of South Australia prior to the introduction of cattle in the 1940s to the area. As a point of contact along the Strzelecki Track, the complex is also associated with past transport, communication and droving patterns.

HISTORY

The original lease of the Cordillo Downs area was taken out by stockholder Edgar Chapman of Adelaide in 1878, then transferred to Peter Waite in 1883. Waite immediately employed well sinkers and plans were prepared to construct the present complex of station homestead, kitchen, mens' quarters, smithy, stables, yards and mammoth woolshed. The woolshed, built of sandstone rubble in 1883 provided stands for 120 blade shearers and is buttressed in order to support the vaulted iron roof. Supplies and machinery for the station had to be transported 600km by camel up the Strzelecki Track. The high cost of transporting greasy wool prompted the installation of wool scouring machinery at the station in 1885, reducing the weight of the wool by up to 40%. The property was amalgamated with Cadelga in 1903 and Haddon Downs in 1905 to become one of the jewels in the Beltana Pastoral Company's crown. In 1926, 45,000 fleeces were shorn and scoured on the property, but drought and depression caused the station to close for five years from 1931. Dingoes proved an ongoing problem predator of sheep to the extent that in 1940 the property switched to running cattle. The woolshed roof and walls were repaired after severe storm damage in 1990.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues

Cordillo Downs Woolshed has the potential to be one of the iconic attractions of the outback, and the station property contains a number of sites heavily visited by travellers. Major issues facing the property arising from this tourism use are:

1 Condition of the Cordillo Downs Track.

This track links Innamincka and Birdsville. It is in poor condition, with steep sides and deep cut tyre grooves. Many complaints were reported about the state of this road. The consultants were told that this road does not conform to standard and that Transport SA want to downgrade it to a station access road, and encourage travellers to use the road further east which runs through Queensland. A new alignment was surveyed about 20 years ago. It is on gibber and would have a much firmer surface than the present track.

2 Camping Sites.

Cordillo Downs suffers from overuse by campers who do not understand the ethics of bush camping – waterholes are polluted and there is used toilet paper and faeces on the ground at several of the most used sites along the track. Campers chase up creek lines for timber – with the worst time being around the Birdsville races.

Cordillo Downs managers, Anthony and Janet Brook, are interested in having designated camping sites with toilet blocks on their property – at least one to the north and one to the south of the homestead. Proposals for designated camp sites are Cadelga (high priority), Providence Creek, Bulls Hole Creek and Marianna Waterhole. Priorities should be discussed with the leaseholder.

3 Cordillo Downs Woolshed

While the immense interest in the Woolshed is understandable, it has caused problems for the station managers and, potentially, for the integrity of the shed itself. Visitors were driving into and through the woolshed, and frequently coming to the house for information.

The pastoral managers have erected a post and wire fence around the woolshed to prevent tourists from driving through the shed. Access on foot is provided through a gate in the fence. Signs outside the wool shed ask people not to come to the house, but the managers reported that only about 50% take notice.

Janet Brook has researched and written information on a range of topics relating to the building itself, shearing at Cordillo and the social history of station life. She has printed out this information and posted it on one interior end wall in the shearing shed to provide information for visitors. More permanent interpretation is recommended.

4 Building Maintenance, Cordillo Downs Woolshed

The building needs maintenance work. It is now used for storage and the managers are considering putting in a central walkway with storage areas either side. They also plan to replace doors.

Recommendations

The Cordillo Downs road remain open as a public access road and be upgraded to a new alignment.

At least two official campsites with toilet blocks be designated along the Cordillo Downs Track. Installation and locations to be determined in consultation with the pastoral leaseholder.

A conservation plan and interpretation and visitor management plans be prepared for the Cordillo Downs Woolshed, in consultation with the pastoral leaseholder and station managers. Funding assistance for this is recommended.

Action responsibility

SA Pastoral Board, Transport SA, SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA, Australian Heritage Commission

REFERENCES:

- Cooper, R.A., *Beltana Pastoral Company*, 1965
Heritage SA Register file No. 14418
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978
Walker, Jenny (ed), *South Australia's Heritage*, 1986

GRAY'S TREE, LAKE MASSACRE

SHP:010

Place Name and Address: Gray's Tree
Lake Massacre
Innamincka Regional Reserve

Land Description: CL 1625/52, PL 2405
Innamincka Regional Reserve

Owner (1): Innamincka Pastoral Coy Pty Ltd
183 Archer Street
North Adelaide 5006

Owner (2): Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

BACKGROUND

The tree is a dead coolibah tree on the bed of a small, normally dry lake called Lake Massacre, part of the Coongie overflow system of the north-west channel of Cooper Creek. The tree was probably alive until prolonged flooding in the great inundation of 1974 killed all the trees on the lake bed. In 1984 the tree had an old mark visible on it, blazed with a steel axe, but there was nothing legible. The site was inaccessible because of local flooding, and so was not re-visited in the course of field work for this survey.

Statement of Heritage Value

The tree was placed on the Register on 25 July 1985 in the belief that it was the tree inscribed by John McKinlay in October 1861 marking the site where he found the body of Charles Gray of the Victorian Exploring Expedition, who had been buried by Burke, Wills and King on 17 April 1861. Subsequent research has established that this is almost certainly not the site of Gray's death and burial, for reasons which are set out on the following pages.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Gray's Tree at Lake Massacre be removed from the State Heritage Register. (This is not a case where entry on a Local Heritage Register is appropriate.)

REASONS FOR REMOVAL

At the time this site at Lake Massacre was placed on the Register in 1985, it seemed, despite some contradictory evidence, to be the 'most probable' candidate for the place where Charlie Gray died and was buried on 17 April 1861, in the closing days of the Victorian Exploring Expedition's return from the Gulf of Carpentaria. More recent research, particularly by David Corke of Melbourne, has established beyond doubt that this is not Gray's grave site at all, and the real site is uncertain.

The Background to Gray's Death

After establishing a depot at Menindie, eight members of the Victorian Exploring Expedition travelled north to Cooper Creek, arriving in mid-November. There Burke split the expedition for a second time, choosing a site for a depot on the bank of Bulloo Bulloo waterhole, and heading north with William Wills, John King and Charlie Gray on 16 December 1860. William Brahe was left in charge with instructions to wait three months and then return to the Darling.

Burke's party travelled north for eight weeks, and reached the Gulf of Carpentaria on 10 February 1861. They then returned to the Cooper in the height of summer, weak, and short of food supplies. Gray became very ill, and was caught stealing food. He received a 'severe thrashing' from Burke as punishment; the severity of the beating is open to question. Gray became progressively weaker after this incident, and died near Coongie Lakes on 17 April 1861. The others spent a day burying him. On the evening of 21 April the three survivors reached Cooper Creek and found the depot abandoned only a few hours before. They never left the Cooper; Burke and Wills both died in June, and King survived to be rescued in an emaciated state by Alfred Howitt's relief party from Melbourne the following September. The poignancy of Gray's death is that the time spent burying him delayed the others for a day, and their consequent failure to rendezvous with the depot party led directly to the deaths of Burke and Wills.

The Discovery of the Grave

Only a few weeks after Howitt discovered the disaster aftermath on the Cooper, John McKinlay's relief party from Adelaide was about fifty kilometres away to the north-west. Near a lake called Kadhi-baerri an Aboriginal informant called Bullingani led them to a place where he said a party of Europeans had been killed in a skirmish an unknown time before. On 21 October 1861, McKinlay found the remains of a European camp with a shallow grave nearby. He unearthed the skeleton of a European man which appeared already to have been exhumed and re-buried in another place. McKinlay inscribed 'MK Oct 21, 61' on a small tree near the grave, and in 1985 this was believed to be the tree placed on the Register, although the inscription was no longer legible. Nearby McKinlay found camel and horse dung and scattered items of European origin: a pint pot, an oil can and parts of a saddle, a nautical almanac and a shotgun cartridge. Local Aborigines talked of a battle in which Europeans had been killed, and McKinlay saw an Aboriginal man with multiple gunshot wounds.

What McKinlay found

In the grave, McKinlay and his second-in-charge Hodgkinson found the decomposed remains of a European wearing a flannel shirt. Gray at this time had been dead six months, but the remains they described seem to be those of someone dead much longer; the body was reduced almost entirely to a skeleton. From the hair colour and absence of a beard, Hodgkinson - the only person present who knew all the missing explorers - tentatively concluded the body was King's. The skull had two sword cuts. Beside this grave there was a second one, which contained more hair and a small bone, suggesting either the body had been moved or there was a second burial. Believing on the basis of this evidence that all of Burke's party had been killed by Aborigines, McKinlay called the scene Lake Massacre.

The identity of the person in the grave at Lake Massacre has been a puzzle ever since. It was certainly not King, because he was still alive at the time. McKinlay added to the puzzle by suggesting that it might have been 'one of Bleasley's party', which must have made sense at the time, but is now mystifying. Who were Bleasley's party? (Corke 1995, p. 48) It was suggested that McKinlay might have stumbled on a member of Leichhardt's party, missing since 1848, but the camp site, the human remains and the Aboriginal man's wounds were all much more recent than that. A newspaper correspondent said that two graziers called McDonald and Hack had camped at Lake Massacre for three weeks in 1859-60 and that the camp debris and animal dung were theirs. (Lockwood 1995, pp. 27-28) This would explain why there seemed to be too much rubbish for an overnight camp, and why the evidence seemed more than six months old, but McDonald and Hack never came forward to confirm this report, and it does not explain the body.

The assumption that it was Gray came about simply because Gray's was the only body missing at the conclusion of the relief expeditions, even though Hodgkinson had already ruled Gray out. King thought it must be Gray, but King was vague on all details, and it was not the grave he described, for he, Burke and Wills had laboured for a day in their weakened state to bury Gray decently, but the two graves McKinlay found were only a few inches deep. McKinlay said quite specifically that it was an Aboriginal burial, not a European one. In any case there seems to be good evidence that the grave site was not in fact on Burke's party's route.

What about the sword cuts? Immediately they raise the question of how severe Burke's 'thrashing' was. Unfortunately neither McKinlay nor Hodgkinson commented on whether they were old or new scars; a legacy of Gray's former career as a sailor, or the likely cause of his death. Certainly neither of them suggested the latter possibility. It was rumoured that King had told relief party members that Burke had beaten Gray extremely violently and caused his death, but once back in Melbourne he dismissed the incident as a few slaps. Everything King said publicly after his return to Melbourne tended to exonerate Burke. We will never know. Burke did not have a sword with him, but he had a shovel. The cause of Gray's death is one of the mysteries of the expedition, but the sword cuts are probably completely irrelevant, for the body McKinlay unearthed was not Charlie Gray.

GRAY'S TREE, LAKE MASSACRE

SHP:010

Then who was in the grave? The most likely explanation seems to be that there was another unknown party in the region shortly before Burke's, which had a violent clash with Aborigines and left at least one member dead. McKinlay was led to the site by Aborigines who knew of a European buried in the aftermath of a skirmish, and to this day that is all we really know about the grave. McKinlay had no good reason to connect the burial with Burke's party; he made that assumption simply because that was who he was searching for.

The Location of the Grave

The location of the marked tree on the Register is on the bed of Lake Massacre. However, a careful reading of both Wills' map and McKinlay's journal shows that (a) this lake was not on the explorers' route at all, and (b) the grave McKinlay found was not on the lake bed.

We must remember that when McKinlay found the burial he was not following Burke's route; he had no idea which way Burke had gone. He was simply taken to an isolated spot by an Aboriginal guide, and assumed that what he found there must have something to do with Burke. In recent years, David Corke has shown convincingly that in fact Burke's route was further to the west than this. He believes Gray died and was buried near Lake Amagooranie, about 8km south-west of Lake Massacre and closer to the Cooper. (Corke 1991 & 1995)

Looking at the evidence in more detail, the site on the Register does not correspond closely either to the description Wills gave of the place where they buried Gray, or the description McKinlay gave of the place where he found the grave. Wills' journal described the camp where Gray died as being beside a polygonum swamp, two-and-a-half miles from a lake. (Corke 1995, p. 54) The site on the Register is on the dry lake bed, with no polygonum in the vicinity.

McKinlay's grave site was also away from the lake proper. He wrote that from the lake, '... at once proceeded northward along the side of a large beautifully-timbered, grassed and clovered swamp (or creek about one-and-a-half miles across) ... and there found a grave rudely formed by the natives'. (McKinlay 1862, p. 5) So McKinlay's discovery was near a channel flowing northward out of Lake Massacre. That is not the place on the Register, nor is the description a good match for the place in Wills' journal. David Corke believes he has found the general vicinity of Gray's grave, by a polygonum swamp about two-and-a-half miles from Lake Amagooranie, close to Burke's party's return route, but no camp site, burial or inscribed tree can be found in the area today. (Corke 1995, p. 54) It seems that the place on the Register, the place where Gray was buried and the grave found by McKinlay are three different places.

GRAY'S TREE, LAKE MASSACRE

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This is a brief summary of a small amount of contemporary evidence, much of it fragmentary or contradictory, and inferences later drawn from it by others. The case is more complicated than this. For example, there were once two Lake Massacres a short distance apart; the second, south of McKinlay's, apparently named either by a surveyor's error, or to commemorate a violent incident during the early settlement of Coongie station in the 1870s or 1880s. (Hambidge 1942-43)

Second, a monument was erected at Lake Massacre to mark the site of Gray's grave in 1948. (Corke 1995, p. 47) That monument could not be located in 1984, but is not near the marked tree on the Register. Thus there seem to be no fewer than four possible candidates for the site of Gray's grave.

In the face of all the evidence, the blaze on the tree at Lake Massacre seems to mark neither the burial place of Charlie Gray in April 1861, nor the grave found by McKinlay six months later. It is of unknown origin, and should be removed from the Register.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This site is **not recommended** for tourism development for these reasons:

- it is of no cultural heritage value.
 - the site is inaccessible and difficult to find.
 - National Parks & Wildlife SA and the pastoral managers do not want unauthorised visits to this area.
-

REFERENCES:

Corke, David, letter to National Parks & Wildlife SA, 9 November 1991
Corke, David, 'Where Did They Bury Charlie Gray?', 1995
Hambidge, Clive, 'McKinlay's Lake Massacre', 1942-43
Heritage SA Register file 12754
Lockwood, Kim, *Big John*, 1995
McKinlay, John, 'Journal of Exploration', *SAPP* No. 12 of 1862
Morphet, G.C. *et. al*, 'Gray's Grave at Lake Massacre', 1938-39
Murgatroyd, Sarah, *The Dig Tree*, 2002

INNAMINCKA REGIONAL RESERVE HEADQUARTERS
(former Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home)

SHP:011

LOCATION: West Terrace, Innamincka
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CT 5747/254 Lots 45-47 Out Of Hundreds

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 21 February 1985
Heritage SA File No.: 12759

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 8, neg 11



Innamincka Regional Reserve Headquarters
(former Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home)

**INNAMINCKA REGIONAL RESERVE HEADQUARTERS
(former Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home)**

SHP:011

DESCRIPTION

Two storey reinforced concrete building with wide verandahs on the ground floor, pyramid roof and conspicuous roof ventilators. Stands in a fenced yard planted with native trees in the middle of the Innamincka township.

The site has undergone dramatic change since it was entered in the State Heritage Register as a result of a field survey in 1984. At the time it was a roofless ruin, but in 1994 it was reconstructed by National Parks and Wildlife SA as the administrative building for the Innamincka Regional Reserve. Rebuilt to the original plans, it is once more the focus of Innamincka, and a near-exact replica of the 1928 building.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

This is a highly significant building, a major landmark in the region and for many years one of its principal sources of medical and administrative services, closely associated with the work of John Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission in overcoming the hardships of isolation for those who lived in the Cooper Creek region.

HISTORY

The Presbyterian Church built the Innamincka Nursing Home as part of its chain of Australian Inland Mission nursing homes, initiated by the Reverend John Flynn in 1912. Sir Josiah Symon made a substantial donation toward its cost and requested that it be named after his mother. The home opened on 11 May 1928, and for over twenty years provided the only nursing facility in the enormous area between Marree, Tibooburra and Birdsville. Designed by architect Thomas Macadam of Adelaide, it was similar to the AIM home at Alice Springs, with thick concrete walls and wide screened verandahs.

By 1953, the Royal Flying Doctor Service was providing medical services throughout the outback and the Innamincka nursing home closed. The building was dismantled in 1954, and its timbers and iron were taken to Mount Leonard Station in Queensland to build stockmen's quarters, which were destroyed by fire in 1970. Innamincka was abandoned, and the concrete walls of the nursing home stood as a gaunt monument for 40 years. In 1994, the building was reconstructed by National Parks and Wildlife SA as the headquarters of the Innamincka Regional Reserve, and is now the focus of government administration and tourist interpretation in the district.

**INNAMINCKA REGIONAL RESERVE HEADQUARTERS
(former Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home)**

SHP:011

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Innamincka Regional Reserve Headquarters play an important role as an information and interpretation centre for visitors to the Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves. The existing interpretation within the Centre is made up of a number of interpretive panels dealing mainly with the history of the building itself. They are crowded into a space too small for them, making them difficult to read and effectively inaccessible to all but the most determined seeker of information.

National Parks and Wildlife SA have developed a brief to upgrade the interpretation in the centre to make it more generally informative about the park and more attractive to a wider range of visitors. National Parks and Wildlife SA want the interpretation to introduce visitors to what the Regional Reserve has to offer and encourage them to go out into it and see what is there. They plan to improve the historical information, include petroleum history, make it more attractive to children and install touch screens with the capacity to update the information from the local office.

The Headquarters would make the ideal starting point for a trail linking the sites of historic and natural interest in the old town of Innamincka. Refer to Section 14.11.6 of this report relating to the Innamincka Regional Reserve for recommendations on this trail. Other general issues relating to management of tourism and interpretation in the Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves are discussed in Sections 14.11.6-14.11.7 of this report relating to the two Reserves.

Recommendations

That the National Parks & Wildlife SA plan to upgrade interpretation be implemented.

That an Innamincka heritage trail be established.

Action responsibility

National Parks & Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission

REFERENCES:

Elizabeth Burchill, *Innamincka*, 1960
Department of Environment, *Elizabeth Symon Nursing Home Innamincka*, [1994?]
Helen Tolcher, *Drought or Deluge*, 1996, pp. 227-233
Heritage SA Register File No. 12759

WELL AND IRON WHIM, MERTY MERTY STATION

SHP:012

LOCATION: Off Strzelecki Track, via Innamincka
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: Block 1181 Out of Hundreds
CL 1326/50 PL 2422

OWNER: Pamela. Jean Rieck
Merty Merty Station
via Leigh Creek 5731

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 23 November 1989
Heritage SA File No.: 12753
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0159

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 7, negs 32-34



Iron Whim, Merty Merty Station

WELL AND IRON WHIM, MERTY MERTY STATION

SHP:012

DESCRIPTION

The well and whim is an atypical example of wells in the region, comprising a partly timbered well shaft 81 feet deep, with timber uprights and cross-beams supporting a circular iron whim with regularly spaced flanges on the outside circumference and iron trough. Water was raised by harnessing a camel or horse to the whim to turn it. Its construction is evidence of the blacksmithing skills of the time. It differs from the majority of wells in the region which were operated by a hand windlass. Since the whim was recorded in 1984 the cross-beams connecting the uprights have collapsed because of termite damage, and the iron whim has fallen off.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The iron water whim and well exemplify the importance of accessible water along the Strzelecki Track and demonstrate the technology of the times when built between 1875 and 1885. As a major stock route after the railhead of the Great Northern Railway reached Farina in 1882, the Strzelecki Track could only be used with wells such as this supplying water for stock.

HISTORY

From the 1870s the Strzelecki became an important stock route between the inland areas and the markets to the south. Sub-artesian bores were sunk to tap underground water and inspected periodically by Pastoral Lease Inspectors as lessees of the pastoral area were obliged under the covenants of the lease to keep wells in good repair and provide access to water for travelling mobs of stock along major stock routes, of which the Strzelecki Track along the Strzelecki Creek was one.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation

Non intrusive on-site interpretation would be appropriate, but access to the site will depend on control by the lessee.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1984
SA Lands Department, Lease records and valuation reports
Frank and Ted Rieck, interview, 1985
Heritage SA Register file 12753

HORSE CAPSTAN, PUMP & WELL, OLD MULGA BORE

SHP:013

LOCATION: Off Strzelecki Track via Lyndhurst
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL1326/50
Allotment 2026 Out of Hundreds
PL 2422

OWNER: Pamela Jean Rieck
Merty Merty Station
via Leigh Creek 5731

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 23 November 1989
Heritage SA File No.: 13976
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0159

PHOTOGRAPH: Site not visited

HORSE CAPSTAN, PUMP & WELL, OLD MULGA BORE

SHP:013

DESCRIPTION

The horse capstan, pump and well are situated in a remote location south-east of Merty Merty Homestead. The well is conspicuous in the harsh and nearly-waterless landscape of the Strzelecki Desert. Human-made elements include the well, hand windlass, cast iron and galvanised iron troughs, a horse capstan, pump, pipes, cast iron tank, post and wire fencing, a turkey nest dam, yards, a concrete base for a petrol or diesel engine, and the remains of a brush shelter containing two beds.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The well site demonstrates one of the ways precious water was provided in the remote areas of South Australia. A private, rather than government well, Old Mulga Bore is a rare relic of the technology used to push grazing industry into arid areas.

HISTORY

Old Mulga Bore was first mentioned on a Land Titles Office Pastoral Plan about 1914, and was referred to as Mulga Bore at the time. As a private rather than government bore, it has not been well documented.

Probably the timbered well and hand windlass were the earliest constructions on the site, followed by the horse capstan and pump when Montague Robert (Jack) Oakes was the lessee from 1916 of runs including Tinga Tingana east and land adjoining the Queensland border until he transferred the lease in 1929 to a number of lessees who included Sir Sydney Kidman. The petrol engine probably occurred after 1929 when the leasehold was managed by the Innamincka Pastoral Company, as petrol was becoming more available at the time and would have made operation of the pump easier.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Horse Capstan, Pump & Well and Old Mulga Bore are not recommended for potential interpretation or presentation as a tourism attraction because of their location remote from a public access road.

REFERENCES:

Heritage SA Register file 13976
Lands Titles Office: Pastoral Plan Sheets Nos 11 1909-14, 1914-32
Pastoral Lease Book 1407, Department of Lands
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986, pp 92, 238, 249

TINGA TINGANA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:014

LOCATION: Off Strzelecki Track
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1356/29 Block 1205 Out of Hundreds
(Strzelecki) PE 2452

OWNER: Kenneth David & Raylene Patricia Ogilvy
Lindon Station
via Tibooburra NSW 2880

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 25 July 1985
Heritage SA File No.: 12756
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0158

PHOTOGRAPH: Site not visited

TINGA TINGANA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:014

DESCRIPTION

The site of a former station homestead on a rise on the eastern side of the creek-bed by the original Strzelecki Track in open grassland and scattered shrubs. It is located about 127km south-south-west of Innamincka near Pelketa Water Hole. Little remained of the homestead complex in 1984 except for rubble masonry ruins and some timber posts of a homestead. Shortly after the site was entered in the State Heritage Register, the homestead ruins were severely damaged by earthmoving machinery.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Testament to the fragility of the arid pastoral areas, this site represents pastoral expansion into the north-east of South Australia and the fact that a number of stations along the Strzelecki Track derived some livelihood through providing staging points for mail and travelers. It also reflects the impact of government laws regarding stocking from 1860s onwards, overstocking and the rabbit plague on an untried environment.

HISTORY

Tinga Tingana pastoral leasehold was taken up in 1875 by William Burkitt, who held a number of pastoral leases in the far north eastern district of South Australia. This was typical of the first wave of sheep farmers who sought to gain a living from huge tracts of marginal land during the 1870s and 80s. The station briefly became notorious after Logic's murder of overseer Mulhall there in 1878. The homestead became an important staging point for travellers, camel trains and drovers along the Strzelecki Track until the 1920s.

A series of droughts, normal weather for the region, led to Burkitt not renewing his leases in 1889 when they expired. The original leases were split, with part leased to the Bristow brothers. After fruitless efforts to lease out the remaining land by the government, the Warren family of Anna Creek station took out a miscellaneous lease at a rental of 10/- per square mile in 1891. John Warren abandoned the lease in 1895 because of drought. Government caretakers were installed during the closing years of the nineteenth century to oversee the drift of sand and plague proportions of rabbits. Part of Tinga Tingana was incorporated into Merty Merty in 1919, and the government declined to renew the lease after 1937. Since 1988 the homestead site has been within the Strzelecki Regional Reserve. Tinga Tingana is said to have been named by Aborigines in imitation of the sound of horses' bridles.

TINGA TINGANA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:014

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of its fragile state and its location off the current Strzelecki Track, there is limited scope for interpretation. There is potential for one sign on site to identify the ruins as remains of pastoral endeavour, and the Strzelecki Track mail runs from the 1870s to the 1920s. Directional signs from the main track should not be installed, to avoid increasing casual traffic which may include vandals.

REFERENCES

- Burnett, A., *Wilful Murder in the Outback*, 1974
Heritage SA Register file 12756
Lands Dept: Arbitrator's Valuation Reports
Lewis, John, 'Our Early Pastoral Possessions', 1915-1917
Land Titles Office, History Books, Volume 28, folio 28

LAKE CALLABONNA FOSSIL RESERVE

SHP:015

LOCATION: Off Strzelecki Track, via Lyndhurst
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: Callabonna Fossil Reserve
CT 5337/263 Lot 2052 Section 1002 Hundred
Callabonna/Frome

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 13 Feb 1997
Heritage SA File No.: 14268
RNE File No: 3/00/260/0012

PHOTOGRAPH: Site not visited

LAKE CALLABONNA FOSSIL RESERVE

SHP:015

DESCRIPTION

Lake Callabonna is a great, flat salt-encrusted clay-pan depressed a little lower than the surrounding country, with the exception of a discontinuous aggregation of dune of fine drift sand not exceeding a little over nine metres in height. The clay-pan, covering an approximate area of 448 square kilometers lies approximately 192km due east of Marree and 180km east north-east of Lyndhurst. The bed of the claypan contains the fossilized skeletons of long-extinct indigenous animals and birds that are believed to have perished there more than 40,000 years ago.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Lake Callabonna is an extremely valuable fossil deposit of international significance, yielding an understanding of Australia's unique extinct megafauna.

HISTORY

The existence of bones in the bed of Lake Callabonna was first made known to the pastoral lessee, Mr FB Ragless of Callabonna Station by an Aboriginal employee in 1892. As a result of these discoveries, the South Australian Museum sent an expedition to the area under the leadership of H Hurst and later under the Director of the Museum, E C Stirling, and Assistant Director A H C Zietz in 1893. Described as 'a veritable necropolis of gigantic dead marsupials and birds' by Stirling, the remains in the area include intact skeletons, trackways, hide and hair of the rhinoceros sized marsupial Diprotodon, the giant emu like bird *Phascolonus gigal*, the giant wombat and birds preserved within the laminated clays of the lake. The remains indicate that the animals died literally in their hundreds, sinking into the clay in an effort to reach food or water at remaining pools of water as the country became drier. Since the first discoveries, vertebrate palaeontologists in association with the South Australian Museum have conducted on-going research on the site, declared a fossil reserve in 1901 and set aside by the South Australian government for scientific research.

Radiocarbon dating of associated wood indicates an age in excess of 40,000 years, perhaps 70,000 years before the present. Although it remains extremely remote and inaccessible, the place may be vulnerable to damage by thieves because of the difficulty of policing access.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

About 12km from the Strzelecki track near Mount Hopeless Station, the reserve although isolated is vulnerable to plundering by organized thieves. At present it is essentially undisturbed.

LAKE CALLABONNA FOSSIL RESERVE

SHP:015

Increasing tourist use of the nearby Strzelecki Track may present problems. No additional visitation to this site is desirable. No directional signs should be erected, and no on-site interpretation is recommended.

Conscious de-marketing is recommended.

REFERENCES

- Geological Monument File FN19 Geological Society of Australia Inc
South Australian Government Gazette 5 December 1901
Brown H Y L (1894) *Report on the discovery of fossil bones near Callabonna Station*,
Report of the Government Geologist 1894, pp. 7-8
Stirling, E, C., 'The Physical Features of Lake Callabonna', *Memoirs of the Royal Society
of South Australia*, 1900, Vol. 1 Part II, pp. i-xv

BLANCHEWATER HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:016

LOCATION: Off Strzelecki Track, via Lyndhurst
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Unincorporated
LAND DESCRIPTION: CL 1598/37
PE 2519 Block 1092 Out of Hundreds

OWNER: Broschul Pty Ltd
Suite 2 /4-8 Angas Street
Adelaide 5000

REGISTER STATUS: Registered 3 November 1988
Heritage SA File No.: 13762
RNE File No.: 3/00/260/0136

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 8, neg 6



Blanchewater Homestead Ruins

BLANCHEWATER HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:016

DESCRIPTION

A site of substantial stone ruins of a homestead complex about 132km north-east of Lyndhurst beside the Strzelecki Track. The ruins are a dominant element in the landscape and are situated on the western bank of the McDonnell River on the southern side of the Strzelecki Track. There are partial remains of stone buildings, a stockyard and a number of rubbish deposits around buildings. The place is readily accessible from the Strzelecki Track and provides a landmark for travellers along the track.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

Blanchewater Homestead Ruins are significant because the complex was the first pastoral settlement to be established in the region following discovery of permanent water by the explorer Babbage in 1856. It was a key point of supplies and support for explorers and drovers at the southern end of the Strzelecki Track from the mid-nineteenth century onward. It is one of the most significant ruined homesteads associated with the expansion of European settlement into the arid north of South Australia.

HISTORY

Following the discovery of permanent water at Blanchewater by Babbage in 1856, the run was established by pastoralist John Baker two years later. It became an isolated destination for explorers such as Gregory and travellers like the cattle thief Redford trekking through the arid north-east, and was the starting point of McKinlay's expedition in search of the missing Burke and Wills expedition in 1862. Blanchewater's manager Henry Dean also played an ugly part in the violent dispossession of traditional owners in the 1860s. After Baker's death in 1872 the lease transferred to Thomas Elder. During the period under Elder's Beltana Pastoral Company, Blanchewater was renowned for horse breeding and was used as the company's head station in the far north. Murnpeowie and Blanchewater were consolidated by the Beltana Pastoral Company in 1890. Murnpeowie homestead became the head station, with Blanchewater serving as an out-station for boundary riders and stock musterers. In February 1940 a flood ruined the house and it was never used again.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The site presents an ideal opportunity for the development of visitor facilities including information signs to do with the history of Blanchewater, but camping at nearby Saint Marys Pool would not be encouraged by the lessee.

BLANCHEWATER HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHP:016

A significant cause of damage to the ruinous buildings is the location of the place immediately beside the road and subsequently high visitation and impacts. There is also damage from cattle, but the lessee has recently fenced the site to control both stock and vehicle movement.. Further deterioration from natural causes can be expected.

REFERENCES:

Cockburn, Rodney, *Pastoral Pioneers of South Australia*, Vol.1, 1925
Newland, B.C., 'Blanchewater', 1960-61
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978

7.0 PLACES ALREADY ENTERED IN THE QUEENSLAND HERITAGE REGISTER

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are already entered in the Queensland Heritage Register:

- Birdsville Hotel, Adelaide Street, Birdsville QHP:001
- Birdsville AIM Nursing Home (former Royal Hotel), Birdsville QHP:002
- Birdsville Court House, Birdsville QHP:003

BIRDSVILLE HOTEL

QHP:001

LOCATION: Adelaide Street, Birdsville 4482
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Diamantina Shire
LAND DESCRIPTION: Lots 205-207 RB17, Parish of Muddawarry

OWNER: Birdsville Enterprises Pty Ltd
11 Victoria Street
Henley Beach 5022

REGISTER STATUS:
Heritage Register File No.: 600461 – Entered 21 October 1992
RNE File No.: 009175

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 3, negs 25-30



Birdsville Hotel

BIRDSVILLE HOTEL

QHP:001

DESCRIPTION

A prominent stone building on the major intersection of the main street, the hotel is a dominant element in Birdsville township, a broad spreading building with wide verandahs extending along Adelaide and Burt streets. Despite the hotel's convincing colonial character, only the stone walls of the bar and part of the dining room date from 1883, having survived storm damage and fire. Everything else has been reconstructed in modern times, and the building was doubled in length north-east along Adelaide Street in about 1990. Modern accommodation units have been built at the rear, extending to Graham Street.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Birdsville Hotel is the essential heart of the Birdsville community, one of the oldest buildings of the township, and after nearly 120 years is the only hotel still trading of the three that operated in the town's heyday. It dominates the town centre, and contributes significantly to its historic character. The hotel is the iconic outback destination at the end of the Birdsville Track for thousands of tourists and race-goers annually.

HISTORY

The Birdsville Hotel was one of the first substantial buildings at the Diamantina Crossing (later surveyed as Birdsville), and was probably built in 1883 for William Blair. The twentieth century saw Birdsville declining through long periods of drought and poverty, but the hotel survived severe storm damage and a fire in 1964. In the 1970s the hotel was bought by Rex Ellis, who made it a base for Simpson Desert tourism. Since that time, Birdsville has become a major tourism destination, and the hotel has been extensively reconstructed and extended to meet new demands.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Henry, Mona, *From City to the Sandhills of Birdsville*, 1994
McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977
Norris, Merle, *Queensland Hotels and Publicans Index*, 1996
Queensland Heritage Register File 600461

ROYAL HOTEL (former AIM Nursing Home)

QHP:002

LOCATION: Adelaide Street, Birdsville 4482
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Diamantina Shire
LAND DESCRIPTION: Lots 405-406 RB17, Parish of Muddawarry

OWNER: Estate of Dorothy Gaffney (deceased)
Adelaide Street, Birdsville 4482

REGISTER STATUS:
Heritage Register File No.: 600459 – Entered 21 October 1992
RNE File No.: 009176

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 3, negs 20-24



Royal Hotel

ROYAL HOTEL (former AIM Nursing Home)

QHP:002

DESCRIPTION

A building with an L-shaped plan extending along Adelaide and Frew streets, built of stone rubble in partly ruinous condition. The building appears to have been built in stages, with two early buildings joined up by a later addition. In recent years, major reconstruction has been commenced, then halted, leaving the building partly demolished, stripped of joinery and unroofed. A rear room has collapsed, and rubble piles are stockpiled at the rear awaiting further work.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Royal Hotel has had a rich and complex history as a hotel and a nursing home. A prominent building in the main street, it is one of the oldest buildings of the township, and one of the three stone buildings that survive from early Birdsville.

HISTORY

The Royal Hotel was one of the first substantial buildings at the Diamantina Crossing (later surveyed as Birdsville), and was probably built in 1883 for Alfred Tucker. The twentieth century saw Birdsville declining through long periods of drought and poverty, and the hotel closed about 1922. It then had a second life, leased by the Australian Inland Mission and used as the Birdsville Nursing Home from 1923 to 1937. The building played a part in pioneering outback radio services, but the AIM moved to a purpose-built nursing home in 1937. The hotel was then leased as a private residence for many years, but was abandoned by the 1970s.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Bilton, John, *The Royal Flying Doctor Service*, 1961
Former Royal Hotel ..., Stabilisation Report, 1994
Francis, Grace, *Birdsville Nursing Home*, 1957
Norris, Merle, *Queensland Hotels and Publicans Index*, 1996
Queensland Heritage Register File 600459
Richard Allom Architects, *Old Royal Hotel ...*, c.1980

BIRDSVILLE COURT HOUSE

QHP:003

LOCATION: MacDonald Street, Birdsville 4482
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Diamantina Shire
LAND DESCRIPTION: Police Reserve R5
Lot 8 plan RB17, Parish of Muddawarry

OWNER: Queensland Police Service
200 Roma Street
Brisbane 4000

REGISTER STATUS:
Heritage Register File No.: 600460 – Entered 21 October 1992
RNE File No.: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH: Film 4, negs 17-19; film 5, negs 13-16



Birdsville Court House

BIRDSVILLE COURT HOUSE

QHP:003

DESCRIPTION

The court house is T-shaped in plan, incorporating a court room and offices, with a residence attached at one side. It is a standard Queensland 1880s court house plan, except that such buildings were normally built in timber. The Birdsville Court House is well built in dressed sandstone with a corrugated iron roof. The stonework has been painted white in recent decades. At the rear of the court house are a concrete brick lockup, corrugated iron tracker's hut and generator and fuel sheds.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE

The Birdsville Court House expresses Birdsville's early role as the police and customs centre overseeing the Channel Country and border crossings. A prominent building in the town, it is among the oldest administrative buildings in western Queensland, and one of the three stone buildings that survive from early Birdsville.

HISTORY

In 1883 a temporary border customs post and police station were established at the Diamantina Crossing, two years before the town of Birdsville was surveyed. The Birdsville Court House was built as a handsome sandstone building in 1888-1890 by contractor Henry Walton for £840. For the following ten years the town was a thriving administrative and commercial centre, but the turn of the twentieth century saw the end of the customs role and severe drought, and Birdsville entered a long period of decline. The Birdsville police and court house complex has suffered badly in storms which over the years have demolished the trackers' quarters, cell block and police station. A new cell block was built in 1959 and a new police station and residence in 1981. The court house is now only used as quarters for visiting police for a few days during the annual Birdsville Races, and then for the magistrate's court hearing which follows.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Johnston, Ross, *The Long Blue Line*, 1992
Queensland Heritage Register File 600460

8.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORTS: STATE HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry in the South Australian State Heritage Register:

- Marree Mosque Site SHR:001
- Marree Afghan quarter SHR:002
- Kopperamanna Mission Site SHR:003
- Koonchera Waterhole SHR:004
- Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins SHR:005

The following place within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area has previously been recommended for removal from the South Australian State Heritage Register:

- Gray's Grave, Lake Massacre, Innamincka Regional Reserve SHP:010

This report appears in Section 6 - Places Already Entered in the State Heritage Register. (See report SHP:010, page 227)

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001**

Place Name and Address: North of Marree
off Birdsville Track

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

The Marree Mosque site is located about a kilometre north of the township, near what was once the road to Birdsville. The site consists of the remains of a mud and wooden building, now reduced to an expanse of dried mud about twelve metres square, with post stumps showing the extent of the building's floor plan. There are some barrel staves, hoop iron and other archaeological material in the vicinity. There is a camel yard about 50m north-west of the building floor.

Statement of Heritage Value:

The Marree Mosque site is of heritage value as the remains of a building integral to the cultural practices of the Afghan community, which once formed an important social and economic component of the population of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region. Archaeological investigation of the site may provide information on the Afghan community's way of life.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*):

- (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.
 - (b) It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.
 - (c) It may yield archaeological information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.
 - (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
 - (f) It has strong cultural and spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.
-

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Marree Mosque site be provisionally entered in the State Heritage Register, and that it be declared a place of archaeological significance.

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001**

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**(a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

An Afghan community was established at Marree soon after it became the railhead of the Great Northern Railway in 1883, to provide camel transport to the north-east, and this interface between steam and camel transport was to provide much of Marree's economic activity for the next forty years. The cameleers were mostly from Baluchistan in what is today southern Pakistan, but was at the time the Khanate of Afghanistan. (Stevens 1989, pp. 1-3) The one marked Afghan grave in the Marree cemetery is of Wahub from Kandahar.

The cameleers established a thriving carrying business, carrying out supplies and bringing back wool bales between Marree and the northern pastoral properties as far as Cordillo Downs. When in Marree, they lived separately from the rest of the community, the majority living a simple, austere life as devout Muslims, although there were also Hindus and Parsees among them. They had a reputation for being skilful, reliable and hard-working, and being mostly Muslim they had a further advantage over many European teamsters in not touching alcohol. Daily prayers were an important part of their life.

Despite these virtues, the Afghan cameleers were ostracised by the rigidly race-conscious Anglo-Australian mainstream society. In Marree they were segregated into a separate community called the Ghantown, and treated as socially inferior. A visitor from Adelaide gave a brief description of Marree in 1916:

Hergott [sic] is known as a camel township. There is an Afghan population representing about half the people residing there. As usual, the foreign element cluster together, and the railway line separates the white from the dark-skinned residents. The wives of the Afghans are white women, and there is quite a number of half-caste children. There is a mosque, where religious ceremonies are regularly observed. (Cole 1917, p. 25)

In fact, there were three mosques at Marree. One, probably the oldest, was right beside Herrgott Springs, about three kilometres from the town. The mosque was open to the weather with waist-high mud walls, and poles supporting a roof of rushes. 'This type of crude "mud and bough" mosque was a traditional form built in some parts of rural Afghanistan, its open walls allowing a breeze to cool the men at prayer during the hot, dry months.' (Stevens 1989, p. 174 and see photographs pp. 172-73 & 177; Mortlock photographs B15341 and B47503)

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001**

A second mosque was built near the town, close to Bejah Dervish's house. This was initially similar in design to the mosque at the springs, and was supplied with water by a pipe from the town's artesian bore. In the early twentieth century it was either replaced by a new building or simply re-walled with corrugated iron. (Stevens 1989 p. 175 and see photograph p. 229) When George Farwell visited Marree in the late 1940s, he described a visit to this mosque as a guest of Bejah Dervish:

Then Bejah Dervish invited us into the mosque. Its plain corrugated iron roof did not seem promising, but on closer view there was a pleasant atmosphere in its pise walls and shadowy verandah. In front of it was a large pit, reinforced with timber, where the ritual ablutions were once made. There were two or three straggly date palms nearby, and a wooden bench upon which we sat to remove our shoes. Inside it was dark till Bejah opened one of the silver-painted lattice windows. A shaft of sunlight lit up cool blue walls and green mats on the floor. There was a beautiful little prayer mat with the design of a mosque worked on it. On the walls hung four coloured prints, depicting holy scenes - including one of the spires of Mecca. Upon a low stool in an alcove facing east was the Koran, carefully wrapped in coloured silk, and beside it an ordinary household kerosene lamp. From the ceiling were suspended two more elaborate lamps, one of china; upon another wall was a bunch of emu feathers. (Farwell 1949, pp. 68-69)

Nothing remains of either of these mosques today. The one with surviving remains is the third, about a kilometre north of the town and described as the private mosque of Abdul Kadir, beside a date plantation he planted in the 1880s. This too was watered by a pipe from the town bore. Kadir was a prominent carrier, and his cameleers lived in huts near the mosque. It is uncertain whether any of the extant photographs show this mosque, but its surviving remains show that it too was of the 'mud and bough' type, and probably nearly identical to the other two early mosques. It would have fallen into disuse after Kadir's death in the early twentieth century, and all the date palms are long vanished. Christine Stevens described the site in its present ruinous state twenty years ago. (Stevens 1989, pp. 298-300)

Afghans continued to arrive in Australia in the decades until 1901, when the new Commonwealth *Immigration Restriction Act* abruptly shut them out. From 1926 the mail was carried by truck, and motor vehicles were beginning to displace camel transport. During the early twentieth century the Afghan community at Marree gradually declined in numbers, with many returning to Afghanistan or Pakistan and others taking up hawking and shopkeeping around Marree and Port Augusta or travelling south to Adelaide. A few of the veteran camel drivers, such as Bejah Dervish and Syed Goolamdeen, remained as elders of the community. Journalist George Farwell described the decline of their way of life in the late 1940s:

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001**

In reality, Marree is two towns - a western and an eastern town, divided by the railway line. East of the railway the inhabitants are predominantly Eastern; they are Mohammedans, with the exception of a few Aborigines and half-castes who also live there. Their tin shacks and cottages are not so well appointed as those on the other side of the line, but there is a fine sense of community, a picturesqueness in the turbans and baggy trousers of the older Afghans, a grace in speech or gesture that is alien to the laconic Australian opposite. (Farwell 1949, p. 66)

Syed Goolamdeen was interviewed as a sad old man, the last practising Muslim in Marree, about fifteen years later:

I was very happy to be in Australia when a young man, working with camels and being with my own countrymen and men of my own faith. But now I am an old man and a cripple, and there are none of my own people left in Marree. I would now rather be back with my people. In my country old people are looked after much better than here. (Litchfield 1983, p. 72)

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

Mosques and other sites connected with the Afghan community are poorly represented on the State Heritage Register, given the importance of their contribution to South Australian history. Only the mosque at Little Gilbert Street in the City of Adelaide is on the Register at present. The Marree Mosque site is particularly rare and endangered because of its ephemeral materials of mud and wood, now exposed to the weather. There were only ever about four other primitive mosques in South Australia, two at Marree and Herrgott Springs nearby, Beltana and Oodnadatta, and this is the only one where recognisable remains exist today. (There are modern replica mosques in the township of Marree and at Beltana, neither of which is on the site of an early mosque: the one in Marree - probably closely resembling this building - was built as a tourist attraction; the corrugated iron one at Beltana was built as a set for the film *Serenades*.)

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

A reasonably well-documented building, occupied for about forty years by an Afghan community living a distinctive lifestyle, the Marree Mosque site could potentially be of great value for archaeological investigation. Besides the light it might shed on religious practices, the surroundings of the building site clearly show evidence of camel management and water supply practices.

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001**

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

Mosques were an important religious and social focus for the predominantly Muslim Afghan cameleers. The only extant historic mosque in South Australia today is the urban one in Little Gilbert Street in the City of Adelaide, and while there were once primitive mosques at Herrgott Springs, Beltana, Oodnadatta and perhaps other outback places, this is the only place where recognisable remains of a historic mosque exist today. It is thus the best representative in existence of this class of building.

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

The Afghan community of Marree still exists as descendants of the Afghan cameleers in Marree and elsewhere, and the Afghan quarter of the township and the mosque still hold strong cultural and spiritual associations for them.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This site is not recommended for tourism interpretation as its components of earth and wood are fragile, and it is of little visual interest to visitors. The replica mosque in Marree itself would serve as a more appropriate focus for interpretation of the theme. See recommendations for the township of Marree as a whole.

REFERENCES

- Cole, William, *In Central Australia*, 1917
Farwell, George, *Traveller's Tracks*, 1949
Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Mortlock Library photographs B15341 and B47503
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978, pp. 37-41
Stevens, Christine, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns*, 1989, pp. 175-179, 229, 302-303

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001****SITE RECORD:**

FORMER NAME:	Abdul Kadir's Mosque	
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Remains of a small earth and wood building, with scattered artefacts and a camel yard nearby	
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1880s?	
REGISTER STATUS:	Description:	n/a
	Date:	
CURRENT USE:	Description:	Grazing land 1920s-present
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description:	Mosque
	Dates:	1880s-1920s
ARCHITECT:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
BUILDER:	Name:	Abdul Kadir
	Dates:	
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group:	Religion
	Category:	Mosque
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description:	Unincorporated
LOCATION:	Unit No.:	n/a
	Street No.:	n/a
	Street Name:	n/a
	Town/Suburb:	Marree
	Post Code:	5733
	Region No.:	13
	Region:	Far North & Far West
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type:	CL
	Volume:	1287
	Folio:	9
	Lot No.:	H833100/B1115
	Section:	n/a
	Hundred:	Out of Hundreds

MARREE MOSQUE SITE**SHR:001**

SITE RECORD (Cont.):**AMG REFERENCE:**

Zone: 54
Easting: 0215800
Northing: 6717900
Map Sheet: Marree
Map Scale: 1:250,000

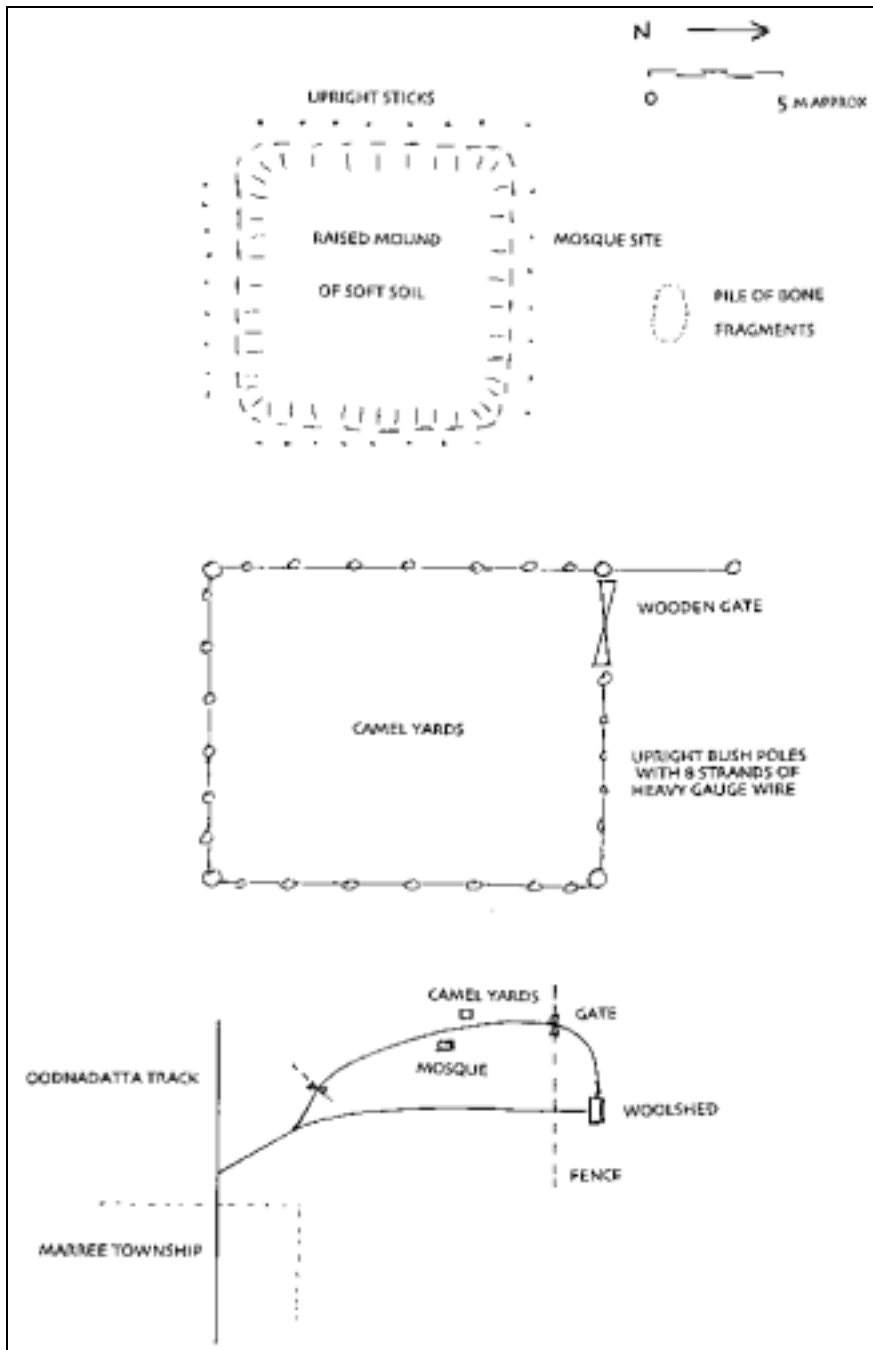
OWNER:

Name: Noel John Fraser &
Daniel Noel Fraser
Address: PO Box 72
Town/Suburb: Wilmington
Post Code: 5485

PHOTOGRAPH:

Film No.: 1
Neg. No.: 24-27

Site Plan



Plan of Marree Mosque Site

MARREE MOSQUE SITE

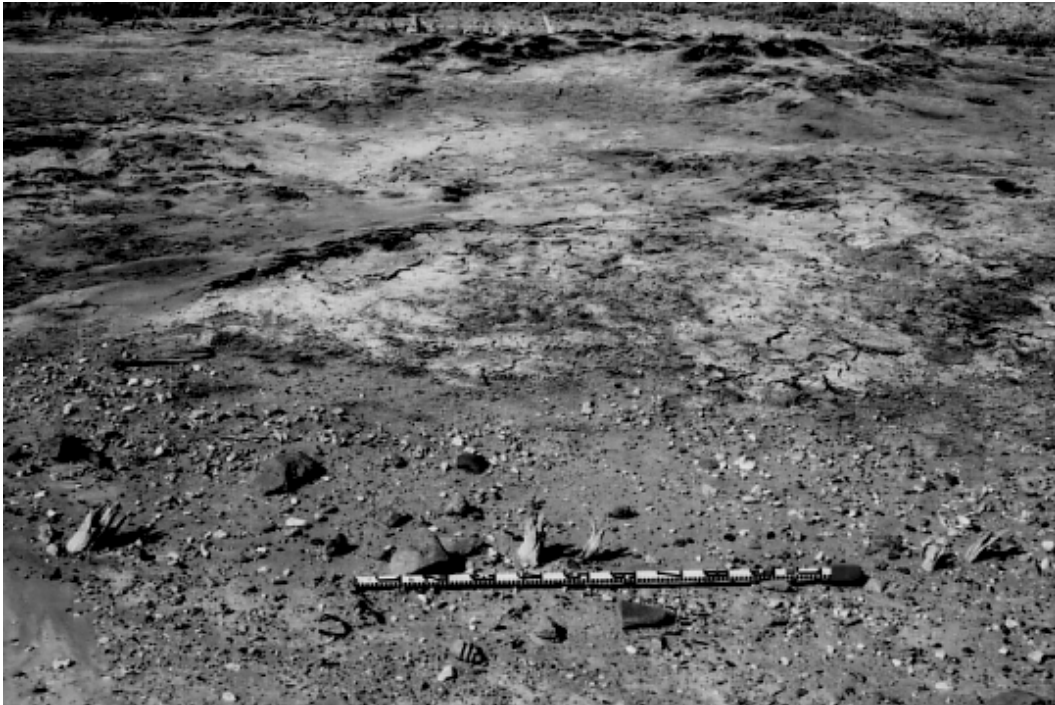
SHR:001



These two views, dated 1884 (top) and 1897 apparently show the Marree and Herrgott Springs Mosques (Mortlock Library)

MARREE MOSQUE SITE

SHR:001



Marree Mosque Site: earth floor and wooden post stumps



Marree Mosque Site: camel yards

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER**SHR:002**

Place Name and Address: Township of Marree,
east of Railway Terrace

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

The Marree Afghan Quarter once constituted roughly the eastern half of the township, east of the Great Northern Railway and what was once the road to Birdsville. The site today has about seven remaining houses, together with a mission hall, and outbuildings, fences, sites of ruined houses and date palms and other trees. The area recommended to be entered in the Register consists of 30 allotments with 12 owners.

Statement of Heritage Value:

The Marree Afghan Quarter is of heritage value as the most substantial surviving physical evidence of the early South Australian Afghan community, which once formed an important social and economic component of the population of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region. Archaeological investigation of the settlement site may provide information on the Afghan community's way of life.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*):

- (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.
 - (b) It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.
 - (c) It may yield archaeological information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.
 - (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
 - (f) It has strong cultural and spiritual associations for the community or a group within it.
-

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Marree Afghan Quarter be provisionally entered in the State Heritage Register, and that it be declared a place of archaeological significance.

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**(a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

Marree has been South Australia's gateway to the northern interior since the 1880s. The mound springs outflow at Herrgott Springs nearby was named by Stuart in 1859, and the Overland Telegraph line was poled through the area in 1870. When the railway was extended north from Quorn to Herrgott Springs, South Australian Railways intended to use the mound springs to water their locomotives, but by the time the railway was approaching Herrgott Springs, artesian water had been struck at Tarkaninna nearby. A bore was sunk two miles south of the springs in 1883, and the resulting water supply determined the terminus of the railway.

The township surveyed at the railhead was officially called Marree, although local usage retained the older name, mis-spelling it Hergott. Marree was briefly the railway terminus for the entire north, but within a few months the Great Northern Railway was extended west toward Strangways Springs and ultimately Oodnadatta. No railway was ever built to the north-east, so for the forty years from 1883 Marree was the railhead for the Birdsville and Strzelecki tracks region.

Immediately an Afghan community was established at Marree to provide camel transport to the north-east, and this interface between steam and camel transport was to provide much of Marree's economic activity for the next two generations. The large-scale use of camels and their drivers in Australia had been initiated in 1866 by Thomas Elder and the Beltana Pastoral Company. The cameleers were mostly from Baluchistan in what is today southern Pakistan, but was at the time the Khanate of Afghanistan. (Stevens 1989, pp. 1-3) The only marked Afghan grave in the Marree cemetery is of Wahub from Kandahar.

Most of Elder's cameleers moved on to establish their own carrying businesses, based first at Marree and later Oodnadatta as the railway was extended north. They lived separately from the rest of the community, the majority being devout Muslims, although there were also Hindus and Parsees among them. The cameleers had a reputation as skilful, reliable and hard-working, and being mostly Muslim they had a further advantage over many European teamsters in not touching alcohol.

Despite these virtues, the Afghan cameleers were ostracised by the rigidly race-conscious Anglo-Australian mainstream society. More Afghan cameleers continued to arrive in Australia until 1901, when the new Commonwealth *Immigration Restriction Act* abruptly shut them out. They were segregated into separate communities called Ghantowns in the railhead townships, and treated as alien, untrustworthy and socially inferior. The Afghan Quarter in Marree was east of the railway line; the European

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER**SHR:002**

community lived to the west. Few Afghan women came to Australia, so if the men married, it was usually outside their ethnic group. In outback townships such as Marree and Oodnadatta the Afghan men mixed with the Aboriginal and Chinese communities rather than the Europeans.

A visitor from Adelaide gave a brief description of Marree in 1916:

Hergott [sic] is known as a camel township. There is an Afghan population representing about half the people residing there. As usual, the foreign element cluster together, and the railway line separates the white from the dark-skinned residents. The wives of the Afghans are white women, and there is quite a number of half-caste children. There is a mosque, where religious ceremonies are regularly observed. (Cole 1917, p. 25)

From 1926 the mail was carried by truck, and motor vehicles were beginning to displace camel transport. During the early twentieth century the Afghans gradually declined in numbers at Marree, with many returning to Afghanistan or Pakistan and others taking up hawking and shopkeeping around Marree and Port Augusta or travelling south to Adelaide. Journalist George Farwell described the Marree Ghantown in the late 1940s:

In reality, Marree is two towns - a western and an eastern town, divided by the railway line. This distinction between west and east is not simply a question of geography, for to walk 'across the line' - using a local phrase - means entering a different world. East of the railway the inhabitants are predominantly Eastern; they are Mohammedans, with the exception of a few Aborigines and half-castes who also live there. Their tin shacks and cottages are not so well appointed as those on the other side of the line, but there is a fine sense of community, a picturesqueness in the turbans and baggy trousers of the older Afghans, a grace in speech or gesture that is alien to the laconic Australian opposite. (Farwell 1949, p. 66)

Farwell also recognised that he was describing a fading community:

There used to be a large Afghan population in Marree. Today many have drifted away, or diluted their racial characteristics by inter-marriage with whites. Most of those who remain are old-timers, eking out an inactive life or living on pensions. There is no vision left to them now, only the descending scale of reminiscence - bygone exploration and achievement. Paradoxically, the only camels consistently worked today are owned by white men. (Farwell 1949, p. 61)

Some of the aging Afghan cameleers retired in Marree, but more moved south to Adelaide. By the Second World War, a small community of elderly Afghans was

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER**SHR:002**

concentrated around the mosque in Little Gilbert Street, but numerous descendants have remained in Marree to the present day. After decades of decline, the principal business of Marree today is servicing the expanding outback tourism industry, and there is renewed interest in the surviving buildings of the Afghan Quarter.

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

Settlements connected with the Afghan community are not represented on the State Heritage Register, which is an oversight given the importance of their contribution to South Australian history. The Marree Afghan community is the only one with significant fabric surviving.

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

A reasonably well-documented community, occupied for over a hundred years by an Afghan community living a distinctive lifestyle, the Marree Afghan Quarter could potentially be of great value for archaeological investigation.

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

While there were once Afghan communities at other outback places such as Herrgott Springs, Beltana, Oodnadatta and a dispersed community in the City of Adelaide, this is the only place where significant fabric of an Afghan settlement exists today. It is thus the best representative in existence of this class of settlement.

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

The Afghan community of Marree still exists as descendants of the Afghan cameleers in Marree and elsewhere, and the Afghan quarter of the township still holds strong cultural and spiritual associations for them.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Marree as a whole.

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER

SHR:002

REFERENCES:

Cole, William, *In Central Australia*, 1917

Farwell, George, *Traveller's Tracks*, 1949

Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983

Stevens, Christine, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns*, 1989, pp. 175-179, 229, 302-303

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER

SHR:002

SITE RECORD:

FORMER NAME: Marree Ghantown

DESCRIPTION OF PLACE: Approximately seven houses and a mission hall, with associated outbuildings, tree plantings and fences

DATE OF COMPLETION: n/a

REGISTER STATUS: **Description:** n/a
Date:

CURRENT USE: **Description:** House(s)
c.1884-present

PREVIOUS USE(S): **Description:** n/a
Dates:

ARCHITECT: **Name:** n/a
Dates:

BUILDER: **Name:** n/a
Dates:

SUBJECT INDEXING: **Group:** Residential
Category: House(s)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: **Description:** Unincorporated

LOCATION: **Unit No.:**
Street No.:
Street Name:
Town/Suburb: Marree
Post Code: 5733
Region No.: 13
Region: Far North & Far West

LAND DESCRIPTION: **Title Type:** CT
Volume: see attached list
Folio: see attached list
Lot No.: see attached list
Section: n/a
Hundred: Out of Hundreds

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER**SHR:002**

SITE RECORD (Cont.):**AMG REFERENCE:**

Zone: 54
Easting: 0216300
Northing: 6716400
Map Sheet: Marree
Map Scale: 1:250,000

OWNER:

Name: see attached list
Address: see attached list
Town/Suburb: see attached list
Post Code: see attached list

PHOTOGRAPH:

Film No.: n/a
Neg. No.: n/a

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER**SHR:002****Owners of allotments in Marree Afghan Quarter** (see Site Plan 1 following)

Allotment on Plan	Land Description	CT	Owner
A	T833101/A169	5605/828	United Aborigines Mission 5 Court Street Box Hill 3128
B	T833101/A170	5605/828	as above
C	T833101/A171	5568/950	as above
D	T833101/A223	5605/828	as above
E	T833101/A224	5600/616	as above
F	T833101/A222	5600/616	as above
G	T833101/A221	5600/616	as above
H	T833101/A220	5811/24	Dur Mahomed Dadleh Marree 5733
I	T833101/A218	5811/24	as above
J	T833101/A219	5811/24	as above
K	T833101/A176	5662/890	Aysha Zada Railway Terrace North Marree 5733
L	T833101/A177	5662/890	as above
M	T833101/A178	5720/62	Karen Anne Moosha 59 Seaview Road Port Augusta 5700
N	T833101/A179	5717/226	Jennifer Faye Warren High Street Marree 5733

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER

SHR:002

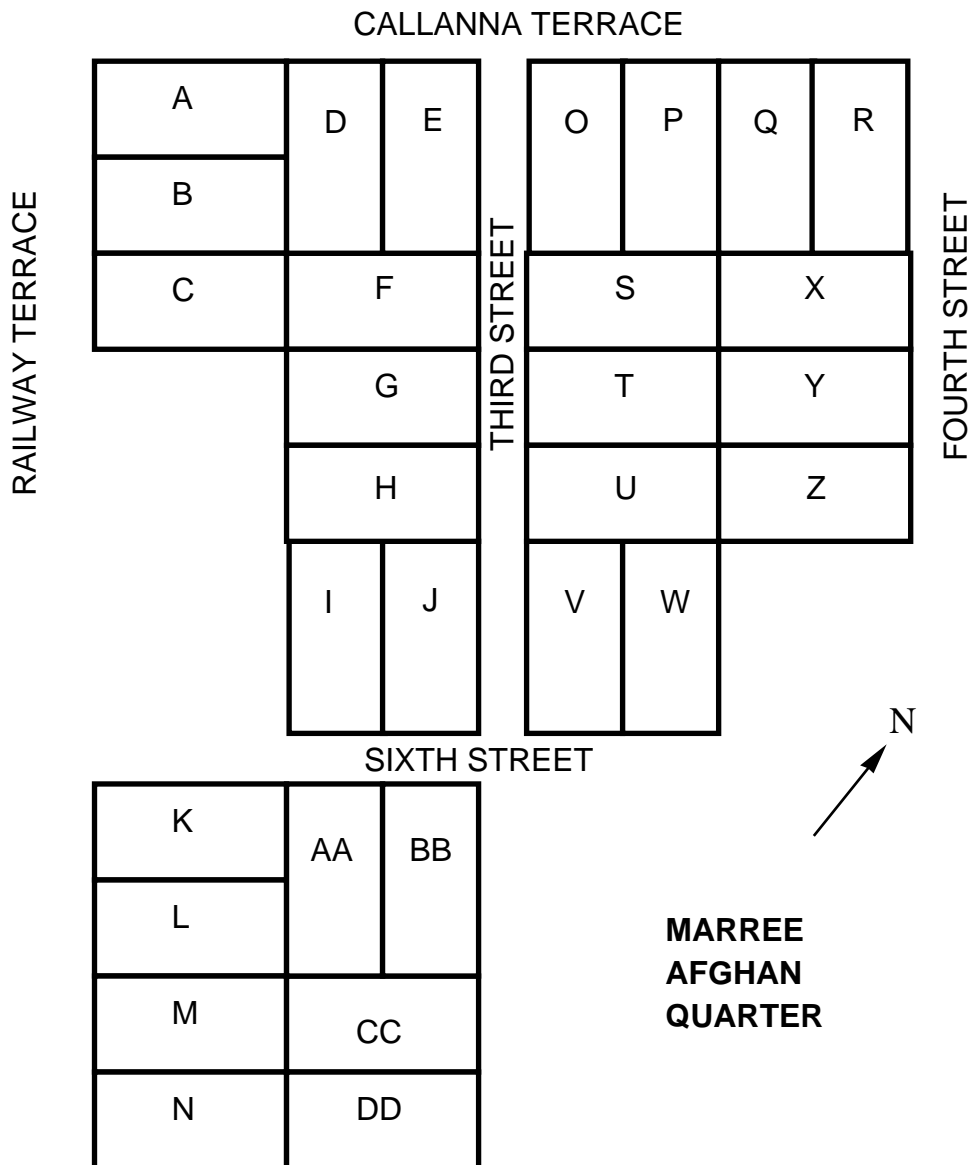
Allotment on Plan	Land Description	CT	Owner
O	T833101/A225	5814/469	Guzzy Baloosh Callanna Terrace Marree 5733
P	T833101/A226	5814/469	as above
Q	T833101/A279	5824/252	Aysha Zada Railway Terrace North Marree 5733
R	T833101/A280	5824/252	as above
S	T833101/A227	5814/469	Guzzy Baloosh Callanna Terrace Marree 5733
T	T833101/A228	5814/469	as above
U	T833101/A229	5597/198	Reginald & Rose Williams 27 Park Terrace Quorn 5433
V	T833101/A230	5843/243	Moosha Marree 5733
W	T833101/A231	5590/93	Lal Mahomet Moosha & Abdul Ahmed Moosha 25 Fuller Street Walkerville 5081
X	T833101/A278	5811/509	Reginald & Rose Williams 27 Park Terrace Quorn 5433
Y	T833101/A277	5811/509	as above
Z	T833101/A277	5811/509	as above
AA	T833101/A216	5814/929	Karen Burk 20 Kurrajong Place Leigh Creek 5731

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER

SHR:002

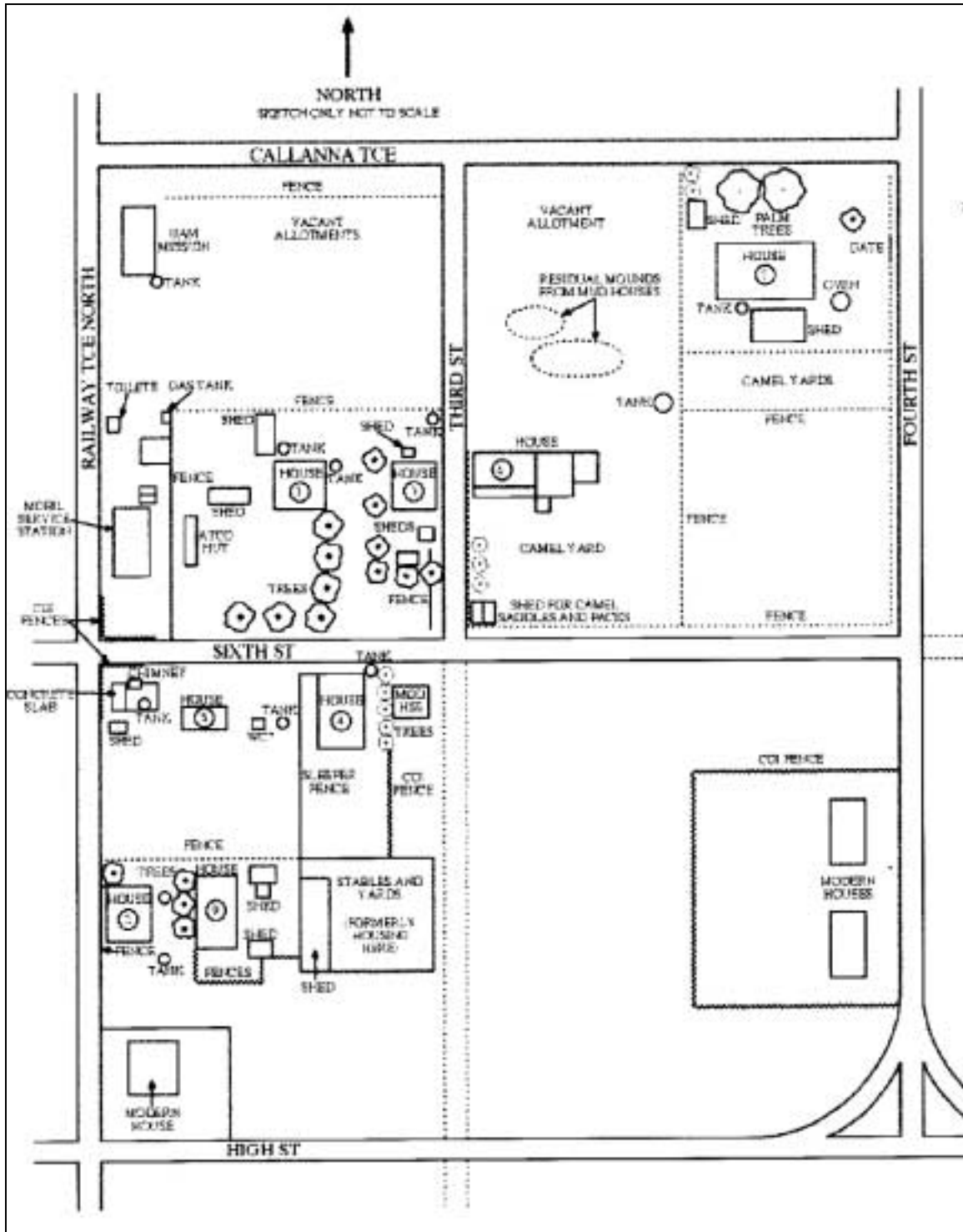
Allotment on Plan	Land Description	CT	Owner
BB	T833101/A217	5662/79	Craig Daren Dadleh & Ronald George Dadleh etc Marree 5733
CC	T833101/A215	5809/931	Jennifer Faye Warren High Street Marree 5733
DD	T833101/A214	5570/454	Minister for Environment GPO Box 1047 Adelaide 5001

Site Plan 1



Allotment Plan of Marree Afghan Quarter

Site Plan 2



Building Plan of Marree Afghan Quarter

MARREE AFGHAN QUARTER

SHR:002



North end of Marree Afghan Quarter, looking west from Fourth Street



South end of Marree Afghan Quarter, looking north-east from Railway Terrace

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE**SHR:003**

Place Name and Address: Kopperamanna Mission Site, Etadunna Station,
off Birdsville Track

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

The Kopperamanna Mission Site was described in detail by Howard Pearce in 1980. It has since undergone significant deterioration of timber elements and erosion of bare earth surfaces. On the shore of Lake Kopperamanna, the site has two large earth areas which are the ruins of mud brick buildings, bush timber uprights and other frame elements of four wooden buildings, two of which have the remains of sawn timber doorways, and one of which was a blacksmith's forge. There are fragments of other buildings, including stone mounds which are probably remains of fireplaces.

Statement of Heritage Value:

Kopperamanna Mission Site is of heritage value as the remains of a settlement with a complex role in the relationship between Aborigines and white settlers in the Cooper region. It was at times an Aboriginal meeting and trading place, a Moravian mission, a police station, a Lutheran mission, a sheep station and an Aboriginal ration station. There is no other place associated with so many aspects of race relations, both peaceful and authoritarian, on the State Heritage Register.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*):

- (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.
 - (b) It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.
 - (c) It may yield archaeological information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.
 - (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
 - (g) It has a special association with the work of an organisation of historical importance, the Moravian and Lutheran missions of the nineteenth century.
-

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Kopperamanna Mission Site be provisionally entered in the State Heritage Register, and that it be declared a place of archaeological significance.

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITESHR:003

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**(a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

In early 1867, two missions were established in the Cooper Creek area by the Moravian Brethren sect and the Lutheran Hermannsburg Mission Society. In 1862 the Moravian Brethren, impressed by the accounts of sympathetic treatment the Burke and Wills party had received from Aborigines, negotiated with the South Australian government for land to establish a mission in the area. There was a long delay, partly because of drought in the north, but they were eventually granted the Cullamurra Mission Block on Cooper Creek. A missionary party of four pastors from Germany were sent to Melbourne in 1866, where the Brethren Mission Society directed them to Cullamurra. The object of the Moravian mission was:

... to bring the blessings of the Gospel to the still numerous tribes of the newly-discovered Burke-Land and Albert-Land, before the white settlers arrive with their diseases and brandy. (*Der Australische Christenbote* 1862, quoted in Pearce 1980, p. 97)

On reaching Blanchewater, the Moravians learnt that there was a Lutheran missionary party with pastors from Hanover and South Australia a few weeks behind them with similar intentions. The situation had also changed because of racial violence which had broken out on Blanchewater, and the police and local Protector of Aborigines advised them not to go as far north as Cullamurra, where there was as yet no European presence. The Moravians were persuaded to go to Lake Hope instead, where there was a police camp. When the Lutheran missionaries arrived, the two missionary teams amicably established themselves 16km apart in Dieri land on two outflow lakes of the Cooper floodplain, called Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna. (Proeve 1953) The Moravians had made arrangements to distribute government rations to the Aborigines and in early February 1867 established a ration depot on the south east shore of Lake Kopperamanna on a little knoll overlooking the lake, several hundred metres south of where the Cooper-Kopperamanna channel enters. Kopperamanna was an old trade centre for the Lake Eyre clans where they met periodically to confer and barter in an extensive system of inter-tribal communication. Alfred Howitt explained the meaning of the place:

... the name Kopperamanna is a mutilation of the true name Kappara-mara, from Kappara meaning 'hand', and Mara meaning, 'root'. But Marae also means "hair" of the head, which is connected with the head as the fingers are with the hand. The meaning of the name really is, that as the fingers all come together in the "root" of the hand, so do the native tribes come together at Kopperamanna to confer together, and especially to exchange their respective articles of barter. Kopperamanna is, therefore, one of the trade centres for the tribes allied to the Dieri. (Howitt 1908, pp. 714-715)

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE**SHR:003**

The Lutherans also established the Hermannsburg Mission on Lake Killalpaninna in January 1867 and erected a stone store and some huts of bush materials. While some Dieri welcomed the missionaries, others were not happy at their intrusion, and a large group from surrounding clans gathered in the district in February-March 1867. According to informants, they were intent on a large-scale rebellion to clear the Europeans from their territory. After a few hostile demonstrations, the police moved their camp to Kopperamanna, but in May 1867 both missions withdrew to Bucaltaninna, south-east of Killalpaninna. Kopperamanna ceased to be a mission for a time, although settlements remained at Killalpaninna and Bucaltaninna for a few more years, but the Hermannsburg Mission Society re-directed its main efforts to a new site in central Australia.

Killalpaninna revived in 1878 under the auspices of the South Australian Immanuel Synod Mission. Following good rains Pastors Flierl and Vogelsang returned to Lake Killalpaninna, where they established the Bethesda Mission, building a handsome mud brick church with a 13m tower. They also set the mission up on a commercial basis, registering the Killalpaninna pastoral lease. Violent conflict in the district was over, and many Dieri were happy to live in close proximity to the mission station. This second revival of Killalpaninna would be a remarkable success, and a major settlement in the region for the next twenty years. Kopperamanna remained in use as an outstation, and Pastor Vogelsang moved his family into a new mud brick house there in 1895. The property was increased in value when the government sank the Kopperamanna bore in 1897 on the Birdsville-Marree stock route, and it became a horse change station on the mail route.

The drought at the turn of the twentieth century hit the mission badly and the pastoral activity began to sink into unprofitability and inefficiency. Kopperamanna's role as a rations station continued, and the following years saw a dwindling number of missionary families and an aging Dieri community living an austere life together, still dominated by strict and conservative Lutheran teachings. Kopperamanna was abandoned by the missionaries in 1916. Bethesda Mission was effectively closed by 1920 when Lance Powell took over the Killalpaninna pastoral lease, only to abandon it in the drought of 1929. (Pearce 1980)

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

Missions and other sites of contact between European and Aboriginal people are poorly represented on the State Heritage Register, given the importance of this aspect of South Australian history. Only Moorundie, Raukkan (Point McLeay), Poonindie, Killalpaninna and Point Pearce are entered in the register at present. Kopperamanna is of special interest because of its complex role as the site of two mission settlements, a police camp and sheep station.

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE**SHR:003**

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

A well-documented settlement, occupied for about forty years by a mixed Aboriginal and European community living a range of lifestyles from European/industrial to near-traditional, Kopperamanna could potentially be of great value for archaeological investigation.

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

Aboriginal-European contact is an important theme in the history of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region, occurring at every homestead, township and mission, but is difficult to represent on the Register. Kopperamanna is an excellent representative of this theme, a settlement created for precisely the purpose of fostering a positive relationship between the two cultures, and existing as a community for forty years.

(g) It has a special association with an event of historical importance.

Kopperamanna Mission Site is of great cultural heritage value for its close association with the events surrounding the Moravian and Lutheran missions to the Dieri people, early police presence in the region, and the early sheep grazing industry from the 1860s to 1916.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Kopperamanna Mission Site is off the public access road (the Birdsville Track) and is accessible only via a station track whose condition is highly variable and on which inexperienced travellers are likely to be bogged. The Etadunna managers do not want visitors using this track or camping at the waterhole. The site is also extremely fragile, with bare earth building remains which are vulnerable to foot traffic and wooden structures which are in very poor condition (and attractive sources of firewood). There are Aboriginal camp sites in the vicinity.

This site is **not recommended** for tourism development for these reasons:

- Its cultural sensitivity as an Aboriginal settlement site.
 - Its physical vulnerability, with potential destruction of the archaeological record.
 - the pastoral leaseholders do not want unauthorised visits to this site.
-

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE

SHR:003

REFERENCES:

- Bonython, Eric, *Where the Seasons Come and Go*, 1985
Pearce, Howard, Remote Sites Documentation Report, 1980
Proeve, E.& H., *A Work of Love and Sacrifice*, 1953
Schmiechen, Joc, *The Hermannsburg Mission Society in Australia*, 1971

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE**SHR:003****SITE RECORD:**

FORMER NAME:	Kappara-mana	
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Remains of a small settlement beside a large semi-permanent Cooper outflow	
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1880	
REGISTER STATUS:	Description:	n/a
	Date:	
CURRENT USE:	Description:	Grazing land 1945-present
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description:	Mission
	Dates:	1867-1916
ARCHITECT:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
BUILDER:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group:	Religion
	Category:	Mission
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description:	Unincorporated
LOCATION:	Unit No.:	
	Street No.:	
	Street Name:	
	Town/Suburb:	Marree
	Post Code:	5733
	Region No.:	13
	Region:	Far North & Far West
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type:	CL
	Volume:	1340
	Folio:	29
	Lot No.:	D35806/A105
	Section:	
	Hundred:	Out of Hundreds

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE**SHR:003**

SITE RECORD (Cont.):**AMG REFERENCE:**

Zone: 54
Easting: 0351200
Northing: 7046900
Map Sheet: Kopperamanna
Map Scale: 1:250,000

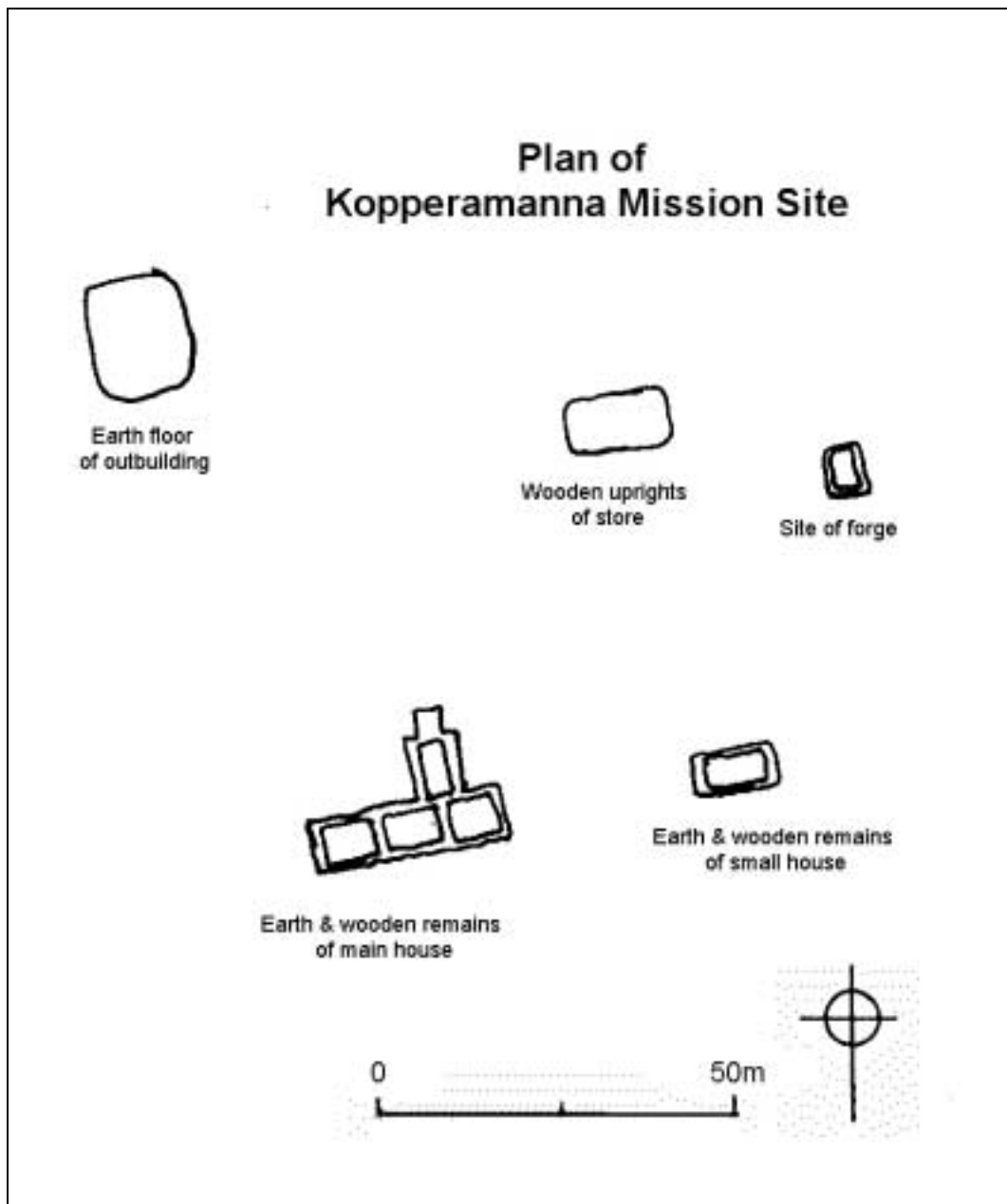
OWNER:

Name: Harold Broad Pty Ltd
Address: Old Canowie
Town/Suburb: Hallett
Post Code: 5419

PHOTOGRAPH:

Film No.: 2
Neg. No.: 15-21

Site Plan



Plan of Kopperamanna Mission Site

KOPPERAMANNA MISSION SITE

SHR:003



Kopperamanna Mission Site: wooden uprights



Kopperamanna Mission Site: remains of earth building

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE**SHR:004**

Place Name and Address: Koonchera Waterhole, off Birdsville Track

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

There is no fabric of European cultural heritage value at this site. It is a natural site consisting of a semi-permanent waterhole at the northern end of a very long straight sand dune, the Koonchera Dune. It is a place of mythological significance in Aboriginal culture, and there are stone arrangements in the vicinity.

Statement of Heritage Value:

Koonchera Waterhole is of heritage value as the site of a violent historic event: a massacre of Aborigines by white settlers. It should be treated with the same respect as a war cemetery. There is no other place associated with the legacy of violent race relations entered in the State Heritage Register. Archaeological investigation of the site may provide information on pastoralists' relationships and interactions with Aboriginal people.

The Koonchera Dune Area is on the Register of the Natural Estate for its natural values as a birdlife habitat. It is also the place of the last sighting (in 1935) of the Desert Rat Kangaroo (*Caloprymnus campestris*).

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*):

- (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history, in being the scene of a major and relatively well-documented incident of racial violence during early pastoral settlement.
 - (c) It may yield archaeological information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.
 - (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
 - (g) It has a special association with an event of historical importance, the Koonchera massacre of the late nineteenth century
-

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Koonchera Waterhole be provisionally entered in the State Heritage Register, and that it be designated a place of archaeological significance.

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE**SHR:004**

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**(a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

Koonchera Waterhole is on the Clifton Hills run, first taken up in 1876. David Corke believes it to be Burke and Wills' Camp LXXIII, a waterhole Wills described as a 'beautiful oasis' where they spent Christmas Day 1860. (Corke 1995) It is a semi-permanent waterhole on the southern edge of Goyder's Lagoon, the great flat where the Diamantina River spreads out in flood times before flowing on as the Warburton River. The waterhole is at the end of the Koonchera Dune, a distinctive landmark 20km long, surrounded on all sides by gibber plain. 'Semi-permanent' means that in most years it holds water all year round, but not in conditions of extreme drought. Drovers taking cattle south for Sidney Kidman were caught at the Koonchera Waterhole by the onset of the great drought of 1914, and could only watch helplessly as the water dried up completely, and 1,200 stock died. (Farwell 1960, p. 159)

Koonchera Waterhole is historically significant as the site of a massacre of Aborigines by white settlers. The Birdsville-Strzelecki region was notorious for violent race relations during the early decades of pastoral settlement, and other massacres were carried out by parties of both police and settlers at several places in South Australia and Queensland. For obvious reasons, these events were poorly-documented at the time; their participants did not wish to be identified as having committed murder, even if their behaviour was silently condoned by some other pastoralists.

The Koonchera incident is one of the better-known of these events, recorded from oral accounts only in the past sixty years. As far as the facts can be pieced together from conflicting accounts, it took place in the 1880s or 1890s - Hercus suggests about 1885 - and 200 Aboriginal people are said to have been killed; one account says perhaps as many as 500. The killings took place in a surprise raid on the Aborigines camped along the southern shore of the waterhole. The victims were members of the Yandruwandha, Yawarrawarrka, Karangura and Ngamini peoples who were gathered together in large numbers for the Mindiri ceremony. The event seems to have been in retaliation for a stock-spearing incident, and the perpetrators were apparently South Australian police troopers from Andrewilla Police Station on the Queensland border. (McLean 1986)

The first published account of the Koonchera massacre was collected by journalist George Farwell in his travels along the Birdsville Track in the late 1940s. When it was published in 1950, most white Australians were still either unaware, or denying, that such incidents had occurred in our history. Farwell's account is inaccurate in detail, and uses language that may be considered offensive today as both salacious and racist, but it presented many modern South Australians with their first knowledge of events such as this, and is worth relating in full:

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE**SHR:004**

Beneath the big white Coonchere sandhill, near the Diamantina Plain, another terrible scene was enacted. A large party of "salt-water blacks" had come down for a corroboree, making friendly advances to a white man living at Nappamanna Station, now part of Clifton Hills. But his interest in one of their lubras antagonised two blacks, one of whom wanted her for his wife. One morning, when they had supposedly left for a day's hunting, they entered his tent, clubbing him to death on her breast with boomerangs. They took the woman away, and killed her later.

No remorse was expressed over the seduction, but lynch law was set up. The policeman at Andrewilla, a more clement man this time, sent his trackers to cut out the culprits from the innocent before the white men rode up. He lacked the resources to do more. But they came too quick. Fleeing men, women and children were mustered like scrub cattle, shot down as they ran for cover. Many blacks rushed into the nearby waterhole, swam out amid the rushes with firesticks in their hair. But not one escaped. This is said to have been the biggest massacre known, for several hundred people had come in from the Kallikoopah. (Farwell 1950, p. 160)

The story was recorded again by linguist Luise Hercus from Aboriginal informant Mick McLean in 1971. She published a translation of McLean's story which begins: "The police from Andrewilla killed them all, hundreds of men, hundreds of women and many children, all because of a bullock, just a small one, a mere calf, at Koonchera." (McLean 1986, p. 187) The story goes on to describe in detail how one man - ironically a former police tracker - escaped the massacre by smearing himself with his grandmother's blood and lying among the dead until the police moved out of sight, then swimming away across the waterhole.

There are some obvious discrepancies between Farwell's account and McLean's. Farwell attributes the cause to reprisal for a murder done to punish sexual misconduct, and identifies the perpetrators as pastoralists, not police, although in the preceding sentence he described another atrocity committed by the Andrewilla police themselves. Pamela Watson, drawing on Farwell's account, has suggested that there may have been two separate massacres at Koonchera (Watson 1998, p. 100), but it seems more likely that Farwell had become confused about some of the details. There can be little doubt that the two stories describe the same massacre in the same location, and both agree that the victims were numbered in the hundreds.

(c) It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.

The remote location of the site and the nature of the events which occurred there give the site high archaeological potential. Archaeological investigation is likely to

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE**SHR:004**

- (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.**

There were a number of violent incidents of this general kind in the European settlement of South Australia, and at least five are known to have happened in this region of the North-east alone. The Koonchera massacre is one that is reasonably well recorded from oral evidence, and the place and nature of the event are known, at least in broad outline. For these reasons, Koonchera Waterhole serves as an outstanding representative for places of this type.

- (g) It has a special association with an event of historical importance.**

Koonchera Waterhole is of great cultural heritage value for its close association with the events surrounding the massacre of Aboriginal people at the Mindiri ceremony at some unknown date, probably in the 1880s.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Koonchera Waterhole is about 20km from the public road and accessible only via a station track whose condition is highly variable and on which inexperienced travellers are likely to be bogged. The Clifton Hill managers do not want visitors using this track or camping at the waterhole.

This site is **not recommended** for tourism development because of its cultural sensitivity as an Aboriginal massacre site, its physical vulnerability, and because the pastoral leaseholders do not want unauthorised visits to this site.

REFERENCES:

Farwell, George, *Land of Mirage*, 1950
Hercus, Luise, "Tales of Nadu-Dagali", 1977
Hercus, Luise, "Glimpses of the Karangura ", 1991
McLean, Mick, "The End of the Mindiri People", 1986
Watson, Pamela, *Frontier Lands and Pioneer Legends*, 1998
Information from Dr Luise Hercus

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE**SHR:004****SITE RECORD:**

FORMER NAME:	also Coonchere, Koonchira	
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Large semi-permanent fresh waterhole at northern end of the Koonchera Dune	
DATE OF COMPLETION:	n/a	
REGISTER STATUS:	Description:	n/a
	Date:	
CURRENT USE:	Description:	Grazing land
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description:	n/a
	Dates:	
ARCHITECT:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
BUILDER:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group:	
	Category:	Massacre Site
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description:	Unincorporated
LOCATION:	Unit No.:	
	Street No.:	
	Street Name:	
	Town/Suburb:	Marree
	Post Code:	5733
	Region No.:	13
	Region:	Far North & Far West
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type:	CL
	Volume:	1597
	Folio:	90
	Lot No.:	H30800 Block 1178
	Section:	
	Hundred:	Out of Hundreds

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE**SHR:004**

SITE RECORD (Cont.):**AMG REFERENCE:**

Zone: 54
Easting: 0351200
Northing: 7046900
Map Sheet: Cordillo
Map Scale: 1:250,000

OWNER:

Name: Kartoo Pty Ltd
Address: 48 Hawkers Road
Town/Suburb: Medindie
Post Code: 5081

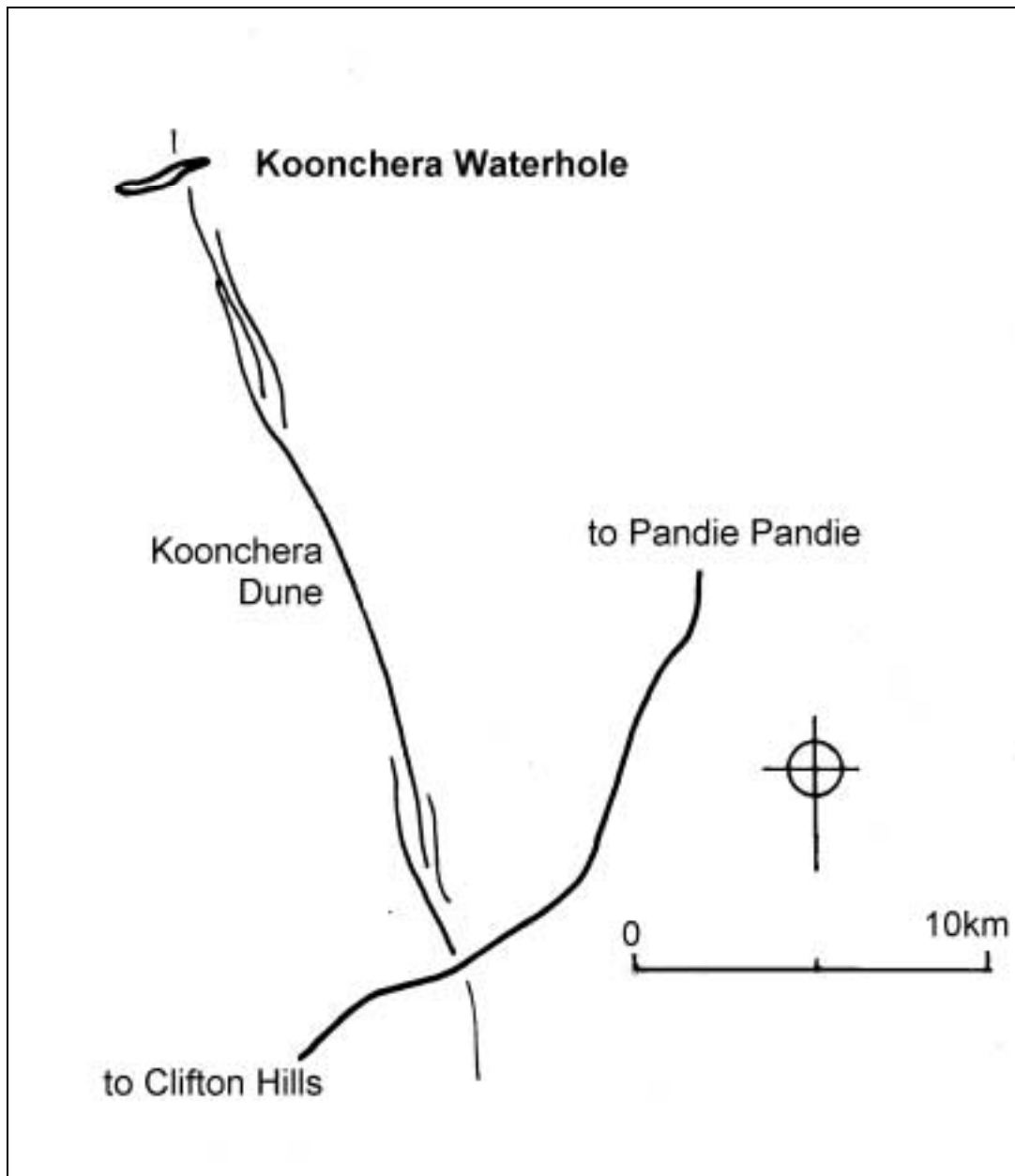
PHOTOGRAPH:

Film No.: 3
Neg. No.: 9-10

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE

SHR:004

Site Plan



Plan of Koonchera Waterhole

KOONCHERA WATERHOLE

SHR:004



Koonchera Waterhole



Koonchera Waterhole and end of Dune

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS**SHR:005**

Place Name and Address: Manuwalkaninna Homestead ruins, Murnpeowie Station

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

The Manuwalkaninna Homestead site was described in detail by Howard Pearce in 1980. It has not undergone significant change since, although there has been some deterioration of timber elements and collapse of stonework. On a high bluff overlooking Manuwalkaninna Creek, the site has the ruins of six stone buildings, four of them of substantial size which appear to be the house, kitchen, store and blacksmith's forge, and two small living huts nearer the creek. The verandahs of the main house and the meathouse by the kitchen have timber posts draped with netting which would have supported a thatched roof. There are horseyards nearby. The larger buildings are well built by a competent mason, and the quoins of the smithy are of a distinctive coralline limestone which has been etched by weathering.

Statement of Heritage Value:

Manuwalkaninna Homestead ruins are of heritage value as the site of a very early pastoral run, dating from the earliest years of settlement in the region by Thomas Elder and his partners, later associated with the German mission settlements, and then intermittently occupied until as late as the 1940s.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*):

- (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history, in being the scene of an early pastoral run, later associated with missionary settlement and Aboriginal participation in the pastoral industry.
 - (c) It may yield archaeological information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.
 - (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
-

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Manuwalkaninna Homestead Site be provisionally entered in the State Heritage Register, and that it be declared a place of archaeological significance.

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS**SHR:005**

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**(a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.**

Manuwalkaninna Homestead was associated with the very earliest period of European settlement in the north-east, not far from Lake Hope which was selected by Samuel Stuckey in 1859 and taken up and stocked by Stuckey and Thomas Elder in 1862. Manuwalkaninna run was taken up by that name by Elder in 1861, but may not have been stocked until about 1866, as the Great Drought was easing. Bedford Hack was appointed manager. There seems to have been a loose understanding that nearby sheep runs such as Killalpaninna would share Manuwalkaninna's water and grazing land. The Milners grazed sheep in the vicinity in the 1860s as they waited for the drought to ease on their nine-year trek north to Darwin.

The date of construction of the homestead is not known, but it was described in a Pastoral Lease Inspector's report of 1889 as a rubble masonry house with a stone flagged floor and a thatched roof. By 1890 Manuwalkaninna, along with Blanchewater, had been incorporated into Murnpeowie station, where a new homestead complex was built, and it would have been only a northern outstation from that time. In 1898 the consolidated Murnpeowie run was taken over by the Beltana Pastoral Company.

By the 1920s Manuwalkaninna Homestead and the Manu Main camp about 10km south-west were both occupied by Aboriginal workers as outstations of Murnpeowie, principally to maintain the dingo fence along the northern boundary, but also housing some elderly people in retirement. The site was probably abandoned in the late 1940s.

(c) It may yield information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.

The remote location of the site and its long period of occupation give the site high archaeological potential. Archaeological investigation is likely to produce detailed information about the use of the site, the lives and material culture of the inhabitants and the relationship between Aborigines and European settlers. Such information may contribute to an understanding of this early and little-known phase of South Australian history.

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

There were a large number of pastoral homesteads established in the north-east, many of them ephemeral in nature, leaving little evidence today. Manuwalkaninna Homestead was unusual in being occupied very early and being substantially built. It was occupied until about fifty years ago, but has been abandoned and little altered since, except by natural

decay. For these reasons, Manuwalkaninna Homestead site is remarkably well-preserved and serves as an outstanding representative for places of this type.

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS**SHR:005**

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Manuwalkaninna Homestead ruins are more than 60km from the public access road (the Strzelecki Track) and are accessible only via a station track whose condition is highly variable and on which inexperienced travellers are likely to be bogged. The Murnpeowie managers do not want visitors using this track or camping at the waterhole.

This site is **not recommended** for tourism development for these reasons:

- Its potential cultural sensitivity for Aboriginal people.
 - Its physical vulnerability, with likely destruction of the archaeological record.
 - the pastoral leaseholders do not want unauthorised visits to this site.
-

REFERENCES:

Pearce, Howard, Remote Sites Documentation Report, 1980
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS**SHR:005****SITE RECORD:**

FORMER NAME:	n/a
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Ruins of six masonry buildings and other structures on a bluff overlooking the creek
DATE OF COMPLETION:	n/a
REGISTER STATUS:	Description: n/a Date:
CURRENT USE:	Description: Grazing land
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description: Homestead Complex Dates:
ARCHITECT:	Name: n/a Dates:
BUILDER:	Name: n/a Dates:
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group: Farming and Grazing Category: Homestead Complex
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description: Unincorporated
LOCATION:	Unit No.: Street No.: Street Name: Town/Suburb: Marree Post Code: 5733 Region No.: 13 Region Name: Far North & Far West
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type: CL Volume: no current title Folio: no current title Lot No.: D42203/A24 Section: Hundred: Out of Hundreds

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS**SHR:005**

SITE RECORD (Cont.):**AMG REFERENCE:**

Zone: 54
Easting: 0321500
Northing: 6784900
Map Sheet: Marree
Map Scale: 1:250,000

OWNER:

Name: Broschul Pty Ltd
Address:
Town/Suburb: Birdsville
Post Code: 4482

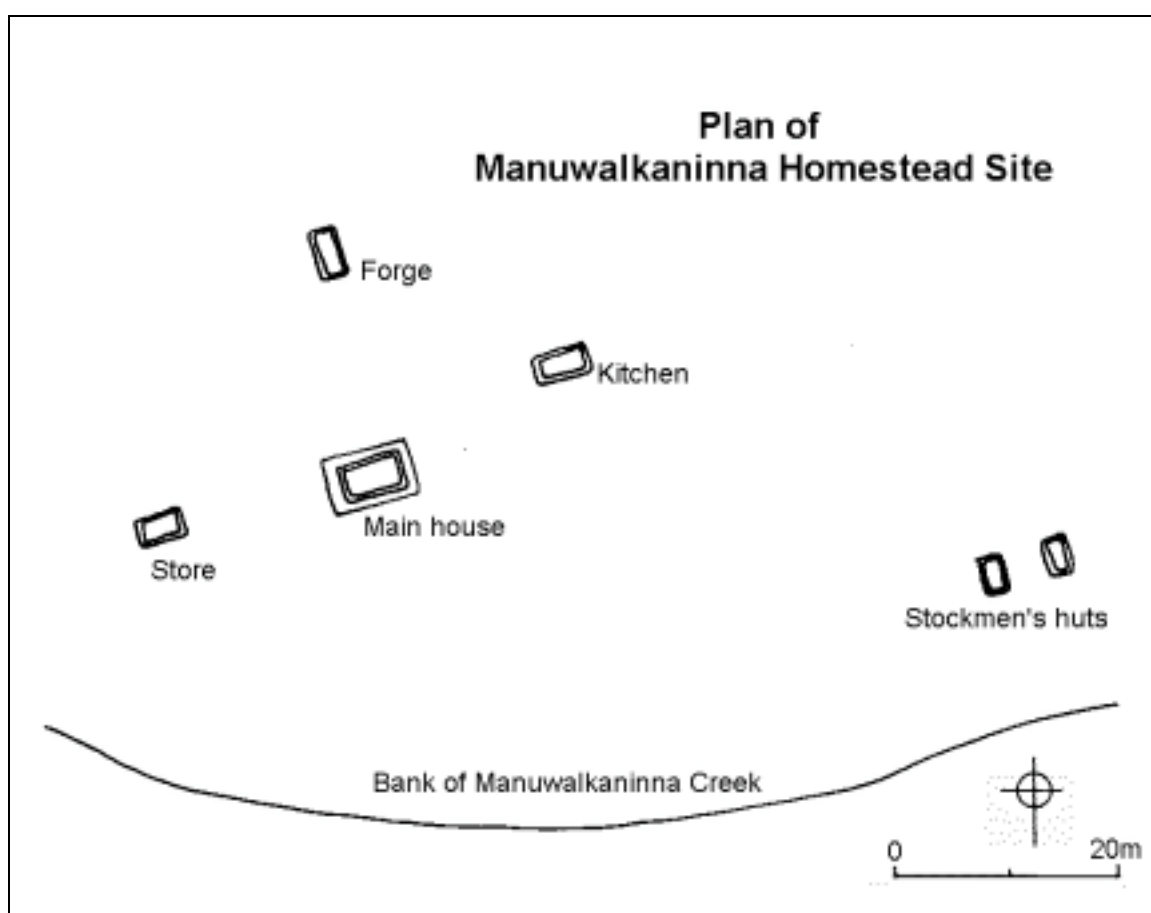
PHOTOGRAPH:

Film No.: 8
Neg. No.: 13-20

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHR:005

Site Plan



Plan of Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins

MANUWALKANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS

SHR:005



Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins: main house



Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins: blacksmith forge

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE**QHR:001**

Place Name and Address: Dig Tree and Fort Wills Site, Nappa Merrie Station
via Thargomindah 4492

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

The site is within a fenced enclosure about 60 x 70m in extent, and consists of two marked coolibah trees, two stone cairns, interpretation signs and a modern hut. On the Dig Tree itself, the camp number B LXV dating from December 1860 can still be read, but two other inscriptions are illegible. The second tree has a portrait of Burke carved in 1898.

Statement of Heritage Value:

The Dig Tree and Fort Wills Site is of heritage value as the scene of tragic historic events between December 1860 and September 1861: the establishment of a base for the first south-north crossing of Australia, and the subsequent abandonment of the Burke and Wills party, leading to the deaths of the two leaders. There is no other place more intimately associated with the legendary events surrounding the European exploration of inland Australia. The site still retains physical evidence of the events of 1860-61 in the form of tree markings. Archaeological investigation of the site may provide information on the support party's four months stay in the area and their interactions with Aboriginal people. The surrounding Nappamerry Area is on the Register of the Natural Estate for its natural, indigenous and historic values.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 23 (1) of the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992-95*):

- (a) It is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history, in being the scene of a series of dramatic and well-documented incidents during early exploration.
 - (c) It has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Queensland's history.
 - (d) It is important in demonstrating the characteristics of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
 - (g) It has a special association with the life or work of a particular person or group of importance in Queensland's history, as the scene of the abandonment and failure of the Burke and Wills expedition.
-

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Dig Tree and Fort Wills Site be provisionally entered in the Queensland Heritage Register.

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE**QHR:001**

ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**(a) It is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history.**

The Victorian Exploring Expedition left Melbourne in August 1860 under the leadership of Robert O'Hara Burke, with the intention of crossing Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The background and motives behind this expedition are discussed at greater length in section 2: Overview History. The strategy for the expedition - partly imposed by the Royal Society of Victoria and partly improvised by the impetuous Burke - was fundamentally flawed, for it involved taking a large well-equipped party and travelling quickly. To achieve quick results Burke split his party - leaving most of his resources behind in the process - not once, but twice.

Most of the party, their goods and animals were left under the command of William Wright at Menindee on the Darling River in October, with instructions to follow in the following weeks. Burke and a smaller party travelled north to the country Sturt had explored on the Cooper, arriving in mid-November. They were unsuccessful in finding a route for a large party further north, so Burke split the expedition again, choosing a site for a depot - Camp 65 - on the bank of Bulloo Bulloo waterhole. He left William Brahe in charge of the depot with three other men, and taking six camels and a horse, headed north with William Wills, John King and Charley Gray on 16 December 1860. There was confusion about Burke's objective, for he told Brahe that if the party ran short of food, he might head east toward central Queensland. Brahe's instructions were to wait three months and then return to the Darling.

Brahe's party spent the summer at the depot. Wright never arrived from the Darling with the supply train. The Aborigines were friendly, but inclined to steal anything left lying around, so the explorers built a defensive stockade of saplings about 6m square in plan to protect the expedition's supplies, and called it Fort Wills. Brahe waited four months, long after Burke's food supplies should have been exhausted and his own men were ill with scurvy, then decided Burke's party must have gone to Queensland. He packed up the supplies and returned to Menindee as ordered. Before leaving the depot, Brahe buried a cache of food with a note, and blazed on a coolibah tree: 'DIG 40 FT W'. Someone also blazed on a branch nearby the dates of the party's stay there: 'DEC 6 1860 - APR 21 1861'. They left on the morning of Sunday 21 April 1861.

(There is debate about exactly what Brahe inscribed on the tree; 'DIG UNDER 40 FT W' is what John Conrick said could still be read on the tree when he took up the land in 1873, but the Melbourne Royal Commission evidence recorded the inscription as 'DIG 3 FT NW'. Other variations on these wordings have been recorded in published sources, and it is likely that Howitt later added to Brahe's inscription. The inscription is no longer legible, although the blaze can still be seen.)

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE**QHR:001**

Burke's party travelled nearly due north for eight weeks, and with amazing luck - for their bush skills were negligible - found intermittent water supplies which took them all the way to the north-flowing Flinders River. They were stopped by impassable mangroves before they saw the Gulf of Carpentaria, but on 10 February 1861 they reached tidal salt water and knew they had achieved the expedition's purpose. Now they had to get back to the Cooper in the height of summer. They were all weak, and had already eaten more than two-thirds of their food supplies.

The return was a nightmare struggle back along the same path, sick, exhausted and starving, with their animals dying one by one. Gray, caught stealing food, was beaten by Burke. On 17 April he died near Coongie Lakes and the others spent a day burying him. On the evening of 21 April the three survivors stumbled into Camp 65 and found it abandoned. They dug up Brahe's note and realised to their horror that he had left only a few hours before - the campfire ashes were still warm.

This is not the end of the extraordinary Dig Tree story. Burke's party left the following day, planning to make for Blanchewater station, which Burke called Mount Hopeless. Burke buried another note in the hole, but smoothed the earth over it and left no clear sign that they had been there. Brahe returned to check Camp 65 on 8 May, but saw no sign of Burke's party, and did not dig up Burke's note. He left for a second time, leaving no evidence of his visit.

Turned back from their trek south by desert, Burke's party returned to the Cooper. On 30 May Wills went back to Camp 65, and digging up Burke's undisturbed note, concluded no-one had been there since 22 April. He added a second note and left some of his diaries in the hole, again smoothing the earth. In a little over five weeks since Brahe left, the camp had been visited three times and on two occasions people had buried notes, but no-one had thought to add to the inscription on the tree or leave any other sign of their presence!

Burke and Wills both died further down the Cooper in the next two months, and only King was found alive by Alfred Howitt's relief expedition on 15 September 1861. Howitt thoroughly investigated the Dig Tree site and found Wills' diaries and both notes. He buried Burke and Wills where they were found, only to be sent back from Victoria in 1862 to recover their remains for a State funeral in Melbourne.

Probably the next Europeans to visit the site were Harry Redford's party in 1870, droving stolen cattle down the Cooper from Queensland. In 1873 John Conrick arrived from Victoria, attracted by the descriptions of the Cooper waterholes in the diaries of the explorers, and took up the surrounding land as Nappa Merrie station. He built his homestead on the bank of the Cooper two miles upstream from the Dig Tree. When Conrick first saw the site, Brahe's stockade was still standing and the inscriptions on the tree were plainly legible. Conrick understood the historical significance of the site, and his family treated it with respect until they sold the lease in 1960.

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE**QHR:001**

By the 1890s the Dig Tree had already acquired great symbolic significance. Miss FE de Mole, an amateur naturalist, visited the site in 1893 and left drawings of the tree and partly-ruined stockade, which provide some enigmatic evidence of the wording of the still-visible inscriptions. Five years later John Dick, variously described as a local stockman and an itinerant artist, carved a portrait of Burke and the initials ROHB in relief on an adjacent tree. Several photographs taken in the early twentieth century show the slow collapse of the stockade; Elizabeth Burchill saw its last standing posts in the 1930s, and they were probably washed away in the great Cooper floods of 1949-50. In 1964 the land surrounding the Dig Tree was excised from the Nappa Merrie pastoral lease and gazetted as a Memorial Reserve under the trusteeship of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. The reserve was re-gazetted in 1987. The stone cairns were erected by the Conrick family in 1937 and the Royal Historical Society of Queensland in about 1990.

The Burke and Wills expedition was a watershed event in defining the European history of outback Australia, particularly in South Australia and Queensland. While the expedition itself was a disastrous failure, it led to comprehensive and successful exploration of an enormous area of the outback, which identified the areas habitable by Europeans, informed the process of pastoral settlement, particularly in western Queensland, created German missionary settlements in the north-east of South Australia, led to the violent dispossession of Aboriginal people from the Cooper Creek region, and defined the present border between Queensland and the Northern Territory at 138° E longitude. The Dig Tree site is central to that historical process.

(c) It has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Queensland's history.

The Dig Tree site was occupied for four months from December 1860 to April 1861 by William Brahe's party, and then intermittently visited by other parties in the next two years. Brahe's party had a generally cordial but uneasy relationship with Aboriginal people. Parts of the Fort Wills stockade stood until the mid-twentieth century. The site clearly has potential for archaeological investigation, although erosion of the banks of Cooper Creek has intruded into the stockade site in recent decades.

(d) It is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places.

The process of European exploration of the Australian continent, although intensively carried on by many people from the 1820s to the 1870s, has left relatively little physical evidence. The ephemeral nature of their activity left little more than a few doubtful campsites and marked trees - some of them spurious - as their heritage today. The Dig Tree site is quite exceptional as an unequivocally authentic site, still containing physical evidence of events in 1860-61, and representing one of the most dramatic and tragic episodes in the entire history of European exploration in Australia.

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITEQHR:001

- (g) It has a special association with the life or work of a particular person or group of importance in Queensland's history, as the scene of the abandonment and failure of the Burke and Wills expedition.**

The Dig Tree site is one of the places most intimately associated with the expedition of Burke and Wills, as the site of their depot for the outward push in 1860 and their hapless return in 1861, Brahe's patient and miserable four-months wait, and Howitt's two expeditions of 1861 and 1862.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the National Parks Services of South Australia and Queensland discuss with the Royal Queensland Historical Society the best way of improving interpretation and management of this site to link it with the South Australian sites managed by National Parks and Wildlife SA. Management by NPWSA should be considered as an option.

REFERENCES:

- Burchill, Elizabeth, *Innamincka*, 1960. p. 91
Cameron McNamara, Burke and Wills 'Dig' Tree, 1987
Clune, Frank, *Dig*, 1947
Murgatroyd, Sarah, *The Dig Tree*, 2001
Queensland Government Gazette 24 January 1987
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986
Tolcher, Helen, *Conrick of Nappa Merrie*, 1997
Wylie, Ross & Lyndal Plant, Report on the Health ... 'Dig' Tree, 1991

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE**QHR:001****SITE RECORD:**

FORMER NAME:	Depot Tree; Bulloo Bulloo Waterhole	
DESCRIPTION OF PLACE:	Marked trees and monuments in a fenced enclosure beside a large waterhole in Cooper Creek	
DATE OF COMPLETION:	1861	
REGISTER STATUS:	Description:	nominated
	Date:	
CURRENT USE:	Description:	Explorer's Marked Tree
PREVIOUS USE(S):	Description:	grazing land
	Dates:	
ARCHITECT:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
BUILDER:	Name:	n/a
	Dates:	
SUBJECT INDEXING:	Group:	Exploration & Survey
	Category:	Explorer's Marked Tree
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA:	Description:	Bulloo Shire
LOCATION:	Unit No.:	n/a
	Street No.:	n/a
	Street Name:	n/a
	Town/:	Thargomindah
	Post Code:	4492
	Region No.:	n/a
	Region:	n/a
LAND DESCRIPTION:	Title Type:	Reserve R7
	Volume:	n/a
	Folio:	n/a
	Lot No.:	Lot 1 on Plan CPR4
	Section:	n/a
	Parish:	Oontoo

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE

QHR:001**SITE RECORD (Cont.):****AMG REFERENCE:**

Zone: 54
Easting: 0507300
Northing: 6944300
Map Sheet: Durham Downs
Map Scale: 1:250,000

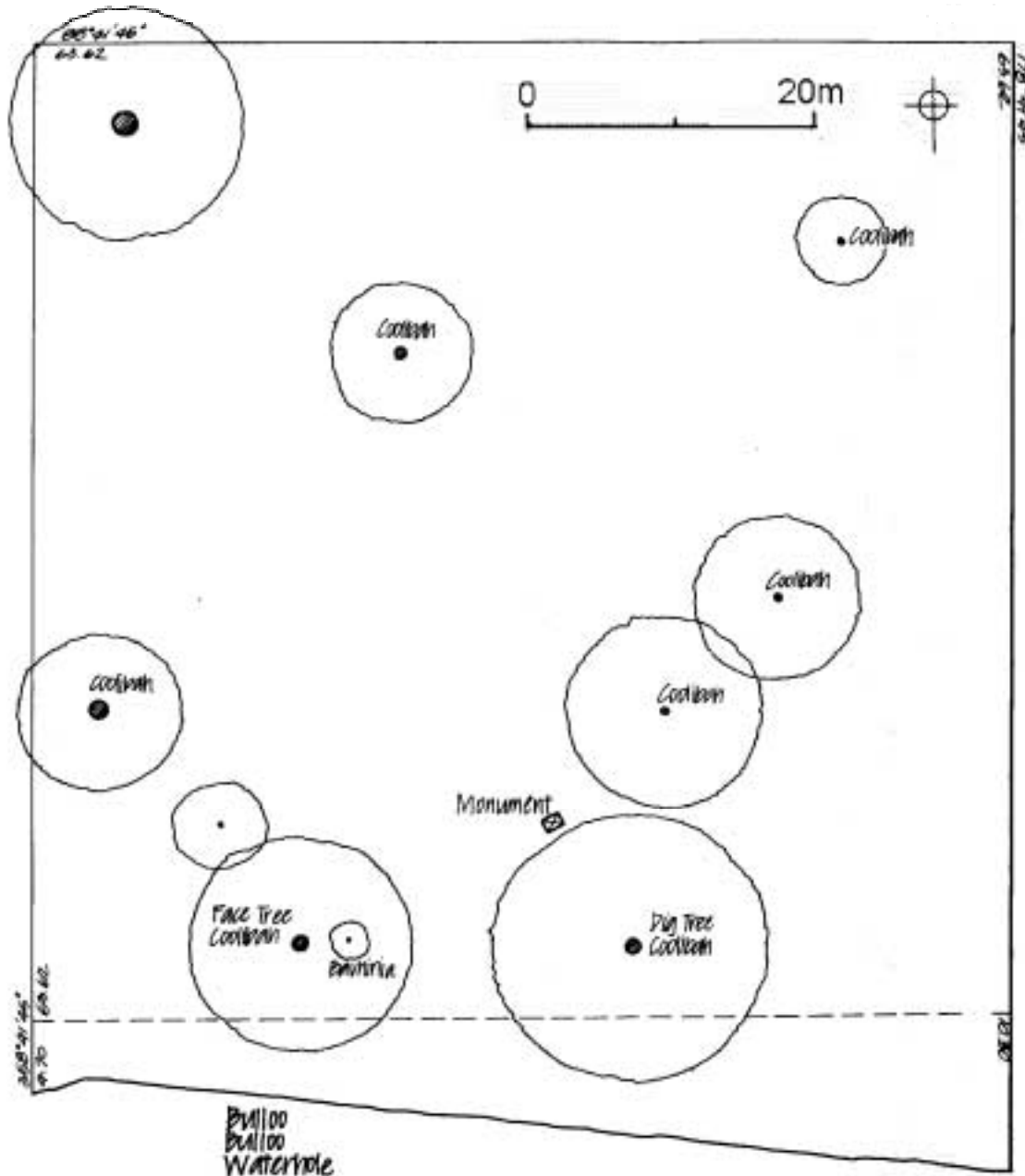
OWNER:

Name: Royal Historical Society of
Queensland
Address: PO Box 12057
Town: Brisbane Elizabeth Street
Post Code: 4002

PHOTOGRAPH:

Film No.: 6
Neg. No.: 23-30

Site Plan



Plan of Dig Tree Reserve

(Source: Cameron McNamara 1987, fig.1)

DIG TREE AND FORT WILLS SITE

QHR:001



Dig Tree and Fort Wills Site



Portrait of Burke on 'Face Tree'

**10.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORTS: STATE HERITAGE
AREAS (SA)**

The following place within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area is recommended for declaration as a State Heritage Area:

- Strzelecki Creek

SHA:001

STRZELECKI CREEK STATE HERITAGE AREA**SHA:001**

Place Name and Address: Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area, located on Strzelecki and Innamincka Regional Reserves, and Gidgealpa and Merty Merty stations

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE VALUE**Description:**

The Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area is a narrow corridor about 200km in length, but no more than 2km in width, extending along the channel of Strzelecki Creek from where it leaves Cooper Creek a short distance below Innamincka, running generally south-southwest to Lake Blanche. The area contains a chain of natural waterholes, as well as homestead ruins, stockyards, wells, windmills, a whim, an artesian bore, graves and the remains of the early road to the Cooper Basin oil and gas fields.

Statement of Heritage Value:

Strzelecki Creek is of heritage value as the scene of important events in the European exploration and settlement of both South Australia and Queensland, as the principal transport route from the Cooper Basin to Adelaide from 1858 to 1974, and for its association with a number of notable people, organisations and events, including Charles Sturt, Augustus Gregory, Harry Redford, John Conrick, the Beltana Pastoral Company and the oil and gas explorers of the 1950s and 1960s.

Relevant Criteria (Under Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*):

- (a) It demonstrates important aspects of the evolution or pattern of the State's history.
 - (b) It has rare, uncommon or endangered qualities that are of cultural significance.
 - (b) It may yield archaeological information that will contribute to an understanding of the State's history.
 - (d) It is an outstanding representative of a particular class of places of cultural significance.
 - (g) It has a special association with the life or work of a person or organisation or an event of historical importance.
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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Strzelecki Creek be declared a State Heritage Area, and that it be declared a place of archaeological significance.

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ASSESSMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE**Introduction:**

Strzelecki Creek has a remarkable history as a transport route. Aboriginal traders followed the channel of the Strzelecki for thousands of years, and in the past 160 years European explorers, graziers, drovers, cattle duffers, mail trucks, nurses, oil and gas explorers and tourists have all continued to follow along the same path. In the process they have left a physical legacy of homesteads - some occupied and others in ruins - stockyards, bores, wells and lonely graves strung out along the creek, most of them within sight of its tree-lined channel. Clearly there have been powerful geographical imperatives at work shaping this landscape. Only in the past 40 years has the fossil fuel industry extended its infrastructure out into the desert for any significant distance either side of the creek.

Strzelecki Creek is a channel running about 200km in a generally south-south-westerly direction between a point on Cooper Creek just west of Innamincka, and Lake Blanche. Physically, the watercourse is remarkable for two things. First, for most of its length it is a single steep-sided channel, and does not split into braided channels like most creeks and rivers of the region. It has a few small outflow lakes such as Lake Moonba, but these are insignificant compared to the great outflow systems of Cooper Creek or the Diamantina River. Strzelecki Creek begins to meander at its southern end near Lake Blanche, but maintains a single channel.

Second, its entire length is located on level ground; no contour lines cross its course across three 1:250,000 mapsheets (Innamincka, Strzelecki and Callabonna). This means that it is capable of flowing both ways. Its 'normal' flow is from north to south, as a tributary of Cooper Creek when it is in flood, taking some of the Cooper overflow south, very occasionally all the way to Lake Blanche. Lake Callabonna is also linked with Lake Blanche by the Moppa Collina overflow channel, so in extreme wet conditions the Strzelecki channel links the Cooper water with the combined lake system. However, when there is heavy rain in the northern Flinders Ranges and Lake Blanche fills, Strzelecki Creek can act as an overflow in the other direction, taking lake water north toward the Cooper system.

Both of these events are so rare as to be almost hypothetical. In practice, Strzelecki Creek is a dry watercourse nearly all of the time, punctuated by a string of waterholes. From north to south, some of the major waterholes are: Burlieburlye, Tooroopee, Della, Nappacoongie, Mudlallie, Toolatchie, Cadrapowie, Coochilara, Caroowinnie, Pidlawurnie, Gurra Gurra and Cherri Cherri. Because of its deeply-incised single channel, many of these waterholes are quite long-lived. Although they are not nearly as permanent as the Cooper waterholes of the Innamincka choke, some will last through several years of drought.

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The string of waterholes makes the Strzelecki a very valuable resource, for its channel runs right through the heart of the Strzelecki Desert, a dunefield stretching for 100km either side of the creek, which is normally utterly devoid of surface water. In most of the landscape, the only trees grow right on the creek banks.

This explains why Strzelecki Creek is such an important transport route, permitting travel between the more benign environments of the Flinders Ranges and the Cooper Basin, across what would otherwise be an impassable arid region separating them. According to Norman Tindale (1974), Strzelecki Creek crosses the traditional lands of the Jandruwanta and Pilitapa peoples, and must have been the principal source of their water and food supplies; early European visitors such as Sturt and Conrick saw large numbers of people camped near some of the Strzelecki waterholes. Assessing the values of Strzelecki Creek in Aboriginal culture is beyond the brief and the expertise of this project, but its later significance in European culture is quite remarkable.

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

The first European party to see Strzelecki Creek was that led by Charles Sturt on his northern expedition of 1844-45. On 18 August 1845 Sturt investigated a line of trees in the distance across an arid plain, 'and on arriving at the trees, found that they were growing in the broad bed of a creek, and overhanging a beautiful sheet of water, such as we had not seen for many a day.' (Sturt 1849, p. 231) A month later he named the creek after his colleague Sir Paul Edmond de Strzelecki, a Prussian nobleman of Polish descent who had explored parts of south-eastern Australia. Sturt also found and named Cooper Creek, and was puzzled that such large watercourses could exist in arid country with no visible mountains; it is strange that the explorer of the Murray River could so badly underestimate the distances that water travels in the Australian outback.

Sturt's northern expedition in search of grazing land was a complete failure. Seeing the country in two dry years, he returned to report that the north-east was a huge stony desert, reinforcing Edward Eyre's earlier account in 1840 that the land was unfit for grazing sheep or anything else. Eyre had also left another pessimistic legacy in claiming that an impassable horseshoe-shaped salt lake encircled the northern Flinders Ranges, and his report had caused Sturt to travel to the interior east of this imaginary obstacle, through western New South Wales. Ironically, Sturt had seen the most important natural assets of the region, the waterholes of Strzelecki and Cooper creeks, but given the condition of the land, he could not foresee how they would be useful to Europeans. Two years later, Edmund Kennedy followed the Barcoo River down from Queensland to Sturt's Cooper Creek, and returned to Sydney agreeing that the country was useless for settlement.

No Europeans made use of Strzelecki Creek for thirteen years after Sturt's visit. Then the New South Wales government sent Augustus Gregory into central Australia to

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find what had become of Ludwig Leichhardt's expedition to cross Australia, missing for ten years. Like all Europeans who had entered the region before him, Gregory was turned back by waterless conditions, but he was a good navigator and had Kennedy's and Sturt's maps with him, so instead of turning back to the east coast he went south to investigate what they had reported. He reached South Australia by following Kennedy's Barcoo River until it became Sturt's Cooper Creek, then turning left and following Strzelecki Creek all the way to the Flinders Ranges.

On 26 June 1858 Gregory's party astonished the station hands of Blanchewater run, which was only two months old and the northernmost cattle station in the colony, by appearing from the north-east, out of what were believed to be trackless deserts and an impassable salt lake! While he was not the first to see or name Strzelecki Creek, it was Gregory who demonstrated its economic importance. His expedition had made sense of the fragmentary reports of three or four earlier explorers, demolished the myths of impassable lakes and deserts, and showed that it was possible to travel safely from the Pacific Ocean to the Southern Ocean through the interior of the continent, and that the best way to do it was along Strzelecki Creek.

It is perhaps a comment on the larrikin undercurrent in the Australian character that the first person to exploit the economic potential of Gregory's discovery was a cattle duffer, when Harry Redford used it to move stolen cattle from Queensland to South Australia in 1870. To this time, no pastoralists had used Gregory's route, and they were still wary of the region because of the uncertainty of water supply during the great drought of the 1860s. Redford put together a mob of 1,000 head of cattle belonging to the large Bowen Downs Station in central Queensland. Instead of taking the stolen stock by the easy but risky route to the east coast, he decided to disappear south into the Channel Country to escape detection, and walked the cattle down the Cooper and the Strzelecki watercourses to South Australia. He was skilful but also lucky, travelling in a good season over country that for years had been inhospitable. At Blanchewater Station he sold the stock under an assumed name, and travelled on to Adelaide to catch a steamer to Melbourne.

Unfortunately for Redford, the stolen stock included a conspicuous pedigreed white bull, which had received so much publicity that it was recognised even in South Australia, and he was arrested on arrival in Victoria. Although stock theft was a criminal act, Harry Redford's epic feat of droving became an outback legend, so much so that an admiring jury found him not guilty at the conclusion of his subsequent trial for cattle stealing, to the outrage of the presiding judge. (Tolcher 1986, p. 46). Rolf Boldrewood's novel *Robbery Under Arms* is partly based on this incident, so the historical Harry Redford and the fictional Captain Starlight have become almost synonymous. Naturally, graziers were less impressed by Redford's skills; but his clandestine journey confirmed that in a good season the route was feasible for droving stock from the Cooper to markets in South Australia.

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When the Cooper Basin was taken up for grazing in the 1870s, Strzelecki Creek came into its own as a long-distance droving route. In November 1872, twenty-year-old John Conrick set out from Warrnambool in Victoria to take up land on Cooper Creek, accompanied by Robert Bostock and four others, droving 1,600 head of shorthorn cattle. (Conrick 1923-24, p. 2) They did not use the Strzelecki route on their outward journey to the region, but followed Burke's route to the Darling, and then followed the Bulloo River up to Eromanga in western Queensland, and crossed over to the Cooper. Nappa Merrie, Innamincka and Coongie runs nearby were initially stocked by this circuitous route.

Once Conrick was established on his land at Nappa Merrie, he realised there must be a more direct route to bring stock and supplies up from the south. He questioned local Aborigines about the Strzelecki channel, and on Boxing Day 1874 he set out from Innamincka for Port Augusta with a stockman, driving two drays with an Aboriginal guide leading. They moved from waterhole to waterhole down the Strzelecki in a series of wary but generally peaceful encounters with large parties of Aborigines. Living on ducks nearly all the way, they arrived at Blanchewater homestead on 6 January 1875, the third party from Queensland in 17 years to startle the station hands. (Conrick 1923-24, pp. 39-43) A few weeks later the party was back at Nappa Merrie with a load of supplies.

Conrick's journey established that Strzelecki Creek was feasible not only for travelling stock, but for supply wagons, and that it was easier to bring cattle and supplies to Cooper Creek from South Australia than from Queensland, New South Wales or Victoria. From 1875 onward, the Cooper Basin was part of Adelaide's hinterland. Conrick's reminiscences did not understate the significance of his journey: 'Along this route hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle have since been travelled, and scores of thousands of bales of wool have been sent via Farina and other northern trucking stations to Port Augusta, Adelaide and the world's markets.' (Conrick 1923-24, p. 44)

The coming of the Great Northern Railway changed the significance of Strzelecki Creek. When the railway reached Farina in 1883, the lower Strzelecki was only two days travel from the terminus, and Conrick's route south down the line of waterholes became the standard supply route for the north-eastern runs. Teams of Afghan cameleers formed a new base at Farina, which like Marree became an important railhead interface between train and camel transport. Cordillo Downs in the far north-east beyond Innamincka was among the first stations to make use of the new transport route. Thomas Elder, Robert Barr Smith and Peter Waite bought the property in 1883 and stocked it with sheep, in the process carrying out improvements including a huge stone vaulted-roofed woolshed and outbuildings in 1885. Their wool scouring machinery was carried north on the backs of camels. On the return journey they carried wool bales, four per camel, down to the railhead at Farina. This consortium of Elder, Barr Smith and Waite would later become the Beltana Pastoral Company.

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Their links with camel transport were not a new development, for it was Elder and his partner Stuckey who had realised the potential of camels for supplying outback pastoral industry, and had imported the first large camel teams for their Beltana station in 1866. During the Beltana Pastoral Company's heyday in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Strzelecki Creek was the central axis and principal transport route of their north-eastern landholdings. It was probably during this period that people began to refer to the route as the Strzelecki Track.

The role of the Strzelecki Track in supporting Innamincka and the Cooper country continued well into the twentieth century. A fortnightly mail coach ran between Farina and Innamincka from 1878, with six horse change stations along the route near Mount Lyndhurst, Murnpeowie, Mount Hopeless, Carraweena, Tinga Tingana and Nappacoongie. After the 1890s, rabbit infestation devegetated the landscape and dunes of loose sand encroached on the track, the most notorious the Cobbler dunefield, where the creek swung west away from the road south of Monte Collina. Horses could not cope, so camel teams were stationed there to pull the coaches through. Cordillo Downs continued to run sheep until 1942, and in some years the shearing teams rode bicycles there from Farina, posing for famous photographs outside the Innamincka Hotel; the only pub on a 500km outback bicycle ride! (Tolcher 1986, after p. 100)

Although it provided a transport corridor for graziers in the far north-east, Strzelecki Creek itself did not support many pastoral properties. While water supply along the creek channel was adequate, the difficulty was the quality of the feed. The surroundings dunefields could only support stock on an opportunistic basis after rain, and the distances between waterholes meant that for most of the year, cattle could not graze far from the creekline. Monte Collina, Carraweena and Tinga Tingana runs sank wells to water stock away from the creek, but all were abandoned again in the drought of the 1880s. The grazing industry along Strzelecki Creek was to remain ephemeral, coming and going depending on the seasons. Every homestead established there was abandoned at times. During extended droughts the track itself became impassable for supplies and stock, sometimes for years.

Today there is only one occupied homestead on Strzelecki Creek, Merty Merty near Coochilara waterhole. First subdivided out of blocks of Innamincka and Tinga Tingana, and the failed Strzelecki run in 1919, it has been owned by the Rieck family since 1965. North and south of it there are the abandoned ruins of older homesteads beside waterholes along the creek: Nappacoongie, Toolatchie, Tinga Tingana, Chidlee Well, Carraweena and finally Monte Collina where the creek turns west and heads in great meanders to Lake Frome, with the northernmost Flinders Ranges just visible on the horizon. Beside these homesteads are graves, most of them unmarked, but we can read the names of Harry Bird, a well-sinker killed in a cave-in at Nappacoongie in 1914, Little Jack who perished at Toolatchie in 1889, and A. Patterson, buried at Chidlee Well in 1917.

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There was little government support for the Strzelecki Track. A campaign of sinking artesian bores between 1890 and 1916 kept open the stock route further west between Marree and Birdsville, creating the modern Birdsville Track. But along Strzelecki Creek there were only a few government wells - one took poor Harry Bird's life at Nappacoongie - and only one artesian bore, sunk at Monte Collina in 1903. Sidney Kidman followed the government bores and extended his empire along the Birdsville Track, but showed little interest in the Strzelecki. His company bought Merty Merty in 1924 and grazed it intermittently, but he didn't trust the Strzelecki waterholes to get his cattle south. During droughts, Kidman's cattle from Innamincka were driven west to Mount Gason bore and down the Birdsville Track to Marree.

The twentieth century saw extended periods of drought and depression in the north-east. Drought and dingoes put an end to sheep grazing, and the Beltana Pastoral Company sold its interests. The Farina mail coach ceased to run in the 1920s, and the town of Innamincka slowly shrank away to nothing over the next thirty years. By 1933 driving down the creek had virtually ceased, and the government stopped maintaining the wells along the stock route. By the 1950s, all the homesteads along Strzelecki Creek were abandoned.

What brought life back to Strzelecki Creek was the oil and gas industry. By the 1950s, geological surveys had identified prospective gas-bearing formations in the Innamincka area. Test drilling was the next step, but the district was virtually abandoned and road access for heavy trucks was feasible only through Tibooburra in New South Wales. The Playford government was determined to build a road that would allow drill rigs from South Australia into the area. Laurie Steele, Mines Department engineer for the Far North, led a reconnaissance of the old route to the north-east in two Land Rovers in September 1858. Interviewed by Peter and June Donovan many years later, he described the state of the abandoned Strzelecki Track:

We stopped the first night at Murnpeowie Station and got all the information we could and the next day we set out at first light The station had tracks out as far as Blanchewater.

After we got past Blanchewater the tracks were pretty vague and we actually had to use a compass to get towards the lake crossing. We hit it pretty well straight away. Just before we got to the lake crossing, we could see the Cobbler Sandhills. they were really frightening. All you could see was the high sandhills in the distance. They didn't look at all good. So we got across at this lake crossing alright.

Once we got into those Cobblers the going was dreadful. It was sandhills but they were sort of tusky spinifex-like tusks, and we had to ride our way around these tussocks. It was very, very slow going. One land rover got bogged and we had to

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pull it out. We were aiming by compass for the Monte Collina Bore. We had that location from the pastoral plan. We battled all day getting through these Cobbler sandhills, driving and taking rough notes. We were just getting an idea of what was involved in making a road, making a track through it. It wasn't very easy. The idea of making a road through there wasn't very appealing at all. But anyway we got to Monte Collina Bore and that was like an oasis. We could see it for quite some distance.. There was a pipe sticking up in the air like a pole and of course, there was water flowing on the ground. It was obvious that any road we'd have to build we'd have to make for that as a point where we could get water because water was obviously needed for putting a road in. The supply of water was going to be quite a problem.

After the Monte Collina Bore we made for the crossing over the Strzelecki on the old pastoral route. That wasn't difficult and from there we pushed on up the Strzelecki. It was obvious that around the crossing things were going to be pretty difficult. the sandhills seemed to come right down to the Strzelecki and getting a passage through them was going to be very difficult. It was quite an experience travelling along the flats adjacent to the Strzelecki soon after rain. All the waterholes were full, there were ducks on every waterhole, there were brumbies, there were dingoes, wild camels and a few cleanskin cattle. On the flats there were brolgas, many of them dancing.

The next decent water point we came to was the Merty Merty Well that had been used up till a few years before by the Innamincka Station people. The last fifty miles was dreadful going because we were going across the clay flats called crab hole country. There were holes up to about a foot in diameter and six or eight inches deep and we lurched in and out of these. The whole area was pock marked with these holes. It was much more comfortable walking alongside the vehicles because they had to go very, very slow going through these things.

Eventually we got to Innamincka and were made very welcome by Jim Vickery who was the station manager there, where we stopped the night. (Donovan 1996, pp. 24-25)

Immediately, construction work began on a truck road from Murnpeowie to Innamincka. Under political pressure, the task was urgent, and was pushed on through the summer months. No survey was done; a Land Rover simply went ahead cross-country to pick out a route, and the construction teams followed its signals. Generally the new road paralleled the western side of Strzelecki Creek, staying close to it to avoid the dunefields. The road was opened to Innamincka in January 1959, and the first drill hole, Innamincka No. 1, was commenced in March. (Donovan 1996, pp. 26-29)

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Large convoys of trucks began to use the road immediately it opened, and heavy traffic continued for the next ten years. From 1959, the new Strzelecki Track became the principal route to the oil and gas fields of the Cooper Basin, first at Innamincka, then Gidgealpa where the first gas was struck in 1963, and expanding to Moomba and Tirrawarra in the later 1960s. With commercial gas flow assured, in 1969 a gas processing plant was built at Moomba, 40km west of Strzelecki Creek, and an underground gas pipeline was laid to connect Moomba with Adelaide. (O'Neil 1998, p. 24) The pipeline ran parallel to the west of the road, crossing under it near Monte Collina bore and continuing south while the road swung west.

The road built in 1958 had headed straight up Strzelecki Creek with Innamincka as its objective, and in the process its builders were essentially following Conrick's 1874 dray route past every waterhole. However, the Moomba processing plant and its service township were built in the desert to the west, and the new road to it diverged from Strzelecki Creek near Toolatchee waterhole. Relatively little traffic followed the creek north from there to Innamincka. From 1969 onward, the new Strzelecki Track began to part company from the old stock route.

Nature imposed even greater changes in 1974, when enormous floods from Queensland flowed down the Cooper, and Strzelecki Creek filled both lakes Blanche and Callabonna. It was the greatest inundation since Europeans had arrived in the Cooper Basin, and the Strzelecki Track was blocked by water for six months. Major roadworks followed, and most of the hastily-built 1958 route was abandoned for a new alignment further from the creek. With greater funds available, and no political need for haste, the gasfield roads were completely rebuilt to modern specifications. The new road diverged from Strzelecki Creek nearly 100km south of Moomba and followed the pipeline north. Another new road connected Moomba to Innamincka. The new generation of roads, completed in 1979, no longer followed any of the Strzelecki channel, simply crossing it at one point. Since then, only tourists have followed the old road alignment along Strzelecki Creek, and after more than 20 years without maintenance, much of it is now difficult to follow. (Donovan 1996, pp. 41-52)

The re-opening of the north-east in the 1960s, and the extensive studies of flora and fauna that accompanied the geological investigations and the commencement of gas production, brought the first understanding of the environmental values of the Cooper Basin. Several areas were of particular interest: Lake Eyre, the largest salt lake in Australia, the relatively unaltered arid zones of the Simpson and Strzelecki deserts, and the Coongie Lakes and other wetlands of the Cooper outflow. The Simpson Desert Conservation Park was created in 1967, and Lake Eyre was declared a National Park in 1985.

However, the Strzelecki Desert and Cooper outflow lakes were areas that were highly prospective for oil and gas; indeed the Tirrawarra, Dullingari, Della, Kidman and Toolachee fields were already in production in those areas by the 1980s. In a

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compromise intended to conserve the environmental values of these areas while permitting commercial production to continue, the South Australian government created a new form of land tenure called regional reserves. The Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves were created in 1988. These are effectively National Parks with conservation management plans, administered by Park Rangers, but they also permit both oil and gas production and cattle grazing, within environmental guidelines. Nearly three-quarters of the length of Strzelecki Creek is within these reserves; Strzelecki Regional Reserve takes in roughly the southern half of the Strzelecki Creek channel, and Innamincka Regional Reserve roughly its northern quarter.

The newest industry on the Strzelecki Creek region is tourism, which has been growing steadily since the 1970s. Almost all the traffic along the old Strzelecki Track today is generated by tourists, and concentrated in the winter months. The land tenure on Strzelecki Creek is very simple; the entire creek crosses only four land parcels, from north to south: (a) Innamincka Regional Reserve, administered by NPWSA and leased by Kidman Holdings Limited as Innamincka station, (b) Gidgealpa Station, leased by Doce Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Santos, (c) Merty Merty Station, leased by Mrs Pam Rieck for cattle grazing, and (d) Strzelecki Regional Reserve, administered by NPWSA, not at present under pastoral lease.

The lessees of Gidgealpa and Merty Merty do not encourage access to their land, and tourism on the old Strzelecki Track is principally concentrated in the two regional reserves.

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

Transport routes are poorly represented on the State Heritage Register and in State Heritage Areas, principally because of their ephemeral nature. Most of them changed course during their history for many reasons, often leaving little evidence of their former path. Because of the geographical determinants at work, the stock route and supply road along Strzelecki Creek did not change fundamentally between 1858 when it was first used by Gregory, and the 1930s when the traditional route fell into disuse. This is a very rare attribute which contributes to its cultural heritage value.

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

Strzelecki Creek, used as a transport route and a focus for intermittent cattle grazing for about sixty years and then largely abandoned until recent decades, has a number of homestead ruins and watering points which have the potential to yield archaeological information on the process of occupation and use of the region.

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The effects on traditional Aboriginal society of European settlement are poorly documented. Early accounts suggest that Aboriginal encampments at the Strzelecki waterholes were seemingly abundant, but probably ecologically very fragile. After teamsters and drovers commenced regularly using the Strzelecki Track from the 1870s, these encampments are not mentioned again in the documentary record. Archaeological investigation may shed light on this process of dispossession.

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

There are very few examples in existence of an early transport route, crucial to the process of settlement in a particular region, which retained its precise course over decades, and can still be identified with precision and followed today. Strzelecki Creek is an outstanding representative of this category of places.

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

Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area is of great cultural heritage value for its close association with the events surrounding the exploration and pastoral settlement of the north-east of South Australia, and in particular Charles Sturt and Augustus Gregory, explorers, Harry Redford, cattle thief, John Conrick, pastoralist, the Beltana Pastoral Company, and the era of oil and gas exploration commencing in 1959.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following tourism management recommendations are made for sites within the Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area.

Strzelecki Crossing

This is a strong site, ideally suited for a camping area and an interpretation node for the Strzelecki Track. People are stopping here now, and its development as a camping site will relieve pressure on other more vulnerable sites. Nothing marks the crossing at present. Toilets to be installed by NPWSA.

Themes:

Strzelecki Creek, its flow, plant and wildlife
Pastoral life and history
Harry Redford

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SHA:001**The Cobbler**

The Cobbler dunefield was created by sheep overgrazing and rabbit infestation. It features vividly in the mythology of the Strzelecki Track, with writers such as Elizabeth Burchill graphically describing the horrors of the journey through the shifting dunes in the 1930s. In 2002, the area is transformed, and it is difficult to imagine the scenes described by Burchill and others.

The Monte Collina bore roadside stop at the southern edge of the Reserve is a possible site for interpretation, as there is already an information bay and camping area there. It is managed jointly by NPWSA and Transport SA. There is a group of information boards already here, erected by the Marree Soil Conservation Board, SANTOS and DEH. They contain information and images of the landforms and recommended travellers' precautions. These boards are the same as the ones at Innamincka and Mungerannie.

This is an ideal place to interpret the history of the Strzelecki Track, the Cobbler, the and its associated pool, which flows over into a wetland and has plentiful birdlife. Its location is especially good for traffic coming up from the south, but would still be effective for southbound travellers. There is an existing sign from the road to the bore and information area. This area is heavily used – it was reported that a group of 200 had been camped there two nights before the heritage survey party arrived. NPWSA plan to put in a toilet – we strongly recommend this happen sooner rather than later.

Dog Fence

Should have an interpretation sign, so that there is one on each track – Birdsville and Strzelecki.

Moppa Collina Channel

There is an existing parking bay and lookout with a view south to the Flinders Ranges.

Recommendations

Interpretation sign on the parking bay.

Themes:

Landscape (Aboriginal and scientific)
Water course
Flinders Ranges

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Action responsibility

Location and content of the interpretive signage recommended for The Cobbler should be determined by NPWSA.

SA Tourism Commission be involved in discussions on potential interpretation of Monte Collina and regularisation of the area as a camping site with toilets provided.

Marree Soil Conservation Board and other interested parties be consulted.

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STRZELECKI CREEK STATE HERITAGE AREA

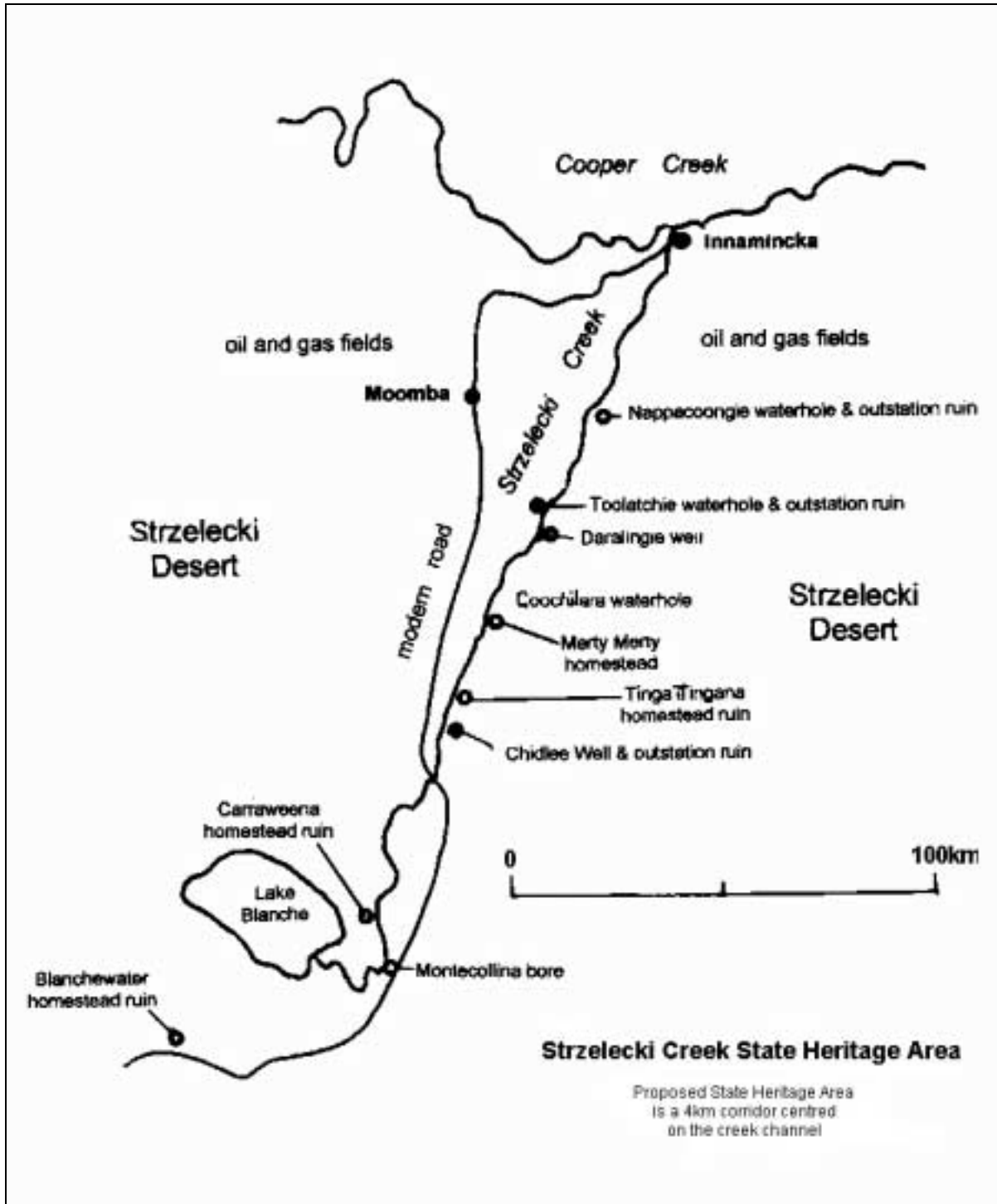
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STRZELECKI CREEK STATE HERITAGE AREA

SHA:001

Site Plan



Plan of Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area

STRZELECKI CREEK STATE HERITAGE AREA

SHA:001



Merty Merty Whim, Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area



Toolatchie Yards, Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area

11.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORTS: LOCAL HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry in the Out of Hundreds Development Plan as places of local heritage value:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| • Railway Station | Marree | LHP:001 |
| • School | Marree | LHP:002 |
| • Hospital | Marree | LHP:003 |
| • Cemetery | Marree | LHP:004 |
| • Aboriginal Cemetery | Marree | LHP:005 |
| • Herrgott Springs | Marree | LHP:006 |
| • Dulkaninna Trig Point | Dulkaninna Station | LHP:007 |
| • Canny Trig Point (Milner's Pile) | Etadunna Station | LHP:008 |
| • Etadunna Woolshed Ruins | Etadunna Station | LHP:009 |
| • Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins | Etadunna Station | LHP:010 |
| • Apatoongannie Homestead Ruins | Mulka Station | LHP:011 |
| • Old Mulka Homestead Ruins | Mulka Station | LHP:012 |
| • Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins | Mulka Station | LHP:013 |
| • Mirra Mitta Bore | Cowarie Station | LHP:014 |
| • Mount Gason Bore | Cowarie Station | LHP:015 |
| • Page Family Grave | Clifton Hills Station | LHP:016 |
| • Old Pandie Pandie Homestead | Pandie Pandie Station | LHP:017 |
| • Miranda Homestead Ruins | Pandie Pandie Station | LHP:018 |
| • Bull Hole Bore and Pump Ruins | Cordillo Downs Station | LHP:019 |
| • Providence Dam Sheep Yards | Cordillo Downs Station | LHP:020 |

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| • Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins | Cordillo Downs Station | LHP:021 |
| • Coongie Homestead Ruins | Innamincka RR | LHP:022 |
| • Kudriemitchie Outstation | Innamincka RR | LHP:023 |
| • Gidgealpa No. 2 Well | Gidgealpa Station | LHP:024 |
| • Innamincka No. 1 Well | Innamincka RR | LHP:025 |
| • Nappacoongie Homestead Ruins | Gidgealpa Station | LHP:026 |
| • Toolatchie Homestead Ruins | Gidgealpa Station | LHP:027 |
| • Manu Main Homestead Ruins | Murnpeowie Station | LHP:028 |
| • Junction Well Hut | Murnpeowie Station | LHP:029 |

RAILWAY STATION**LHP:001**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Marree Railway Station, Railway Terrace, Marree**Land Description:** Part Sec 459 Out Of Hundreds (Marree)**Certificate of Title:** CR 5455/782

OWNER: Minister for Transport
GPO Box 8245
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: Fettleers Cottages **SHR File No.:** 10838
Registered 23 Nov 1998**Other Assessments:** Flinders Ranges Heritage Survey 1995

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 1, negs 14-17

Marree Railway Station

RAILWAY STATIONLHP:001

DESCRIPTION:

The railway station complex consists of the long break-of-gauge platform, the concrete block station building (the third on the site), toilets, waiting and parcel sheds, water tanks & tankstands, maintenance sheds and four diesel locomotives. Many other elements including overhead locomotive watering tank, Kennicott water softener, loading gantries, crews quarters, coal bins and goods shed have been removed.

HISTORY:

The Great Northern Railway was extended from Farina to Herrgott Springs in 1883, and the name of the terminus was changed to Marree when the line opened in January 1884. The town grew up around the station, dependent on the water supply from first the station bore, then the town bore. Marree became the railhead for the Birdsville Track and the north-east, and an Afghan community became established in the town to take goods north by camel. In 1957 a standard gauge line was laid to Marree, and it became a break-of-gauge station, trans-shipping goods to the narrow gauge line to Alice Springs. The railway closed in 1980.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree Railway Station is of heritage value as the town's most important economic institution dating from the its earliest years, and the reason for the town's existence.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) Marree Railway Station displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) Marree Railway Station has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Marree as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, pp. 10-19
Marree Visitor Booklet, 2001

SCHOOL**LHP:002**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Marree School, First Street, Marree**Land Description:** T833101/A5**Certificate of Title:** CR 5761/164

OWNER: Minister for Infrastructure
178 North Terrace
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 1, neg 22

Marree School

SCHOOL**LHP:002**

DESCRIPTION:

The building is parallel to the street, timber-framed and clad in corrugated iron. It has a hipped corrugated iron roof with ventilating gablets in the ends, an iron roof vent and two brick chimneys. There are overhanging eaves shading the windows. The building has been refurbished in recent years and is in good condition.

HISTORY:

At the urging of the Wesleyan church, a government school was opened in rented premises in Marree in 1884 at the height of railway construction activity. It closed in 1887 after the construction camp had moved on, but re-opened in 1889 and has operated continuously ever since. The present building was built in 1907, a standard model government school for outback towns, generally similar to the one at Oodnadatta. More modern buildings have been added to the school complex in recent decades.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree School is of heritage value as an important social institution dating from the community's earliest years, and one of the older buildings of the town.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) Marree School displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) Marree School has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
 - (f) Marree School is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Marree as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, pp. 22-26
Marree Visitor Booklet, 2001

HOSPITAL**LHP:003**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Marree Hospital, First Street, Marree**Land Description:** T833101/A301**Certificate of Title:** CR 5771/771

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 1, neg 23

Marree Hospital

HOSPITAL

LHP:003

DESCRIPTION:

The Marree Hospital building is parallel to the street, timber-framed and clad in corrugated iron with large windows. It has a steeply-pitched hipped corrugated iron roof with ventilating gablets in the ends, and a broad encircling verandah. The building has been refurbished in recent years and is in good condition.

HISTORY:

From 1912 a visiting District Nurse held consultations in a room at the Great Northern Hotel. After an epidemic of enteric fever early in 1916, when the hotel refused to admit the patients, the Marree community raised £400 for a Cottage Hospital and Nursing Home, which opened in August. The Hospital has functioned continuously since, run by the District and Bush Nursing Society from 1938, and on the Royal Flying Doctor Service circuit since 1952. Visiting medical and dental clinics operate from Port Augusta.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree Hospital is of heritage value as an important community institution dating from the early decades, which has provided service to the town ever since.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) Marree Hospital displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) Marree Hospital has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Marree as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, pp. 27-31
Marree Visitor Booklet, 2001

CEMETERY

LHP:004**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Marree Cemetery, south-west of Marree township**Land Description:** H833100/S482**Certificate of Title:** CR 5759/713

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 1, neg 28-32

Marree Cemetery

CEMETERYLHP:004

DESCRIPTION:

The Marree Cemetery is a fenced plot on open ground a few hundred metres south-west of the township. The burials are divided into three groups within the fenced enclosure: European, Afghan and Aboriginal. Some burials are simply marked by mounds. There is only one Afghan burial with an inscribed grave monument - Wahub from Kandahar - but other burials in the same area are marked with two wooden posts.

HISTORY:

The date of commencement of burials at the cemetery is not known, but must have been soon after the establishment of Marree, because among the burials are five railway employees killed in an accident in April 1886. The cemetery is still in use. The integration of the three communities into one fenced cemetery reserve is unusual in Australian country towns.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree Cemetery is of heritage value as an important community institution dating from the early years of the township, which clearly expresses the three communities which made up the settlement.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) Marree Cemetery displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (b) Marree Cemetery represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area
 - (c) Marree Cemetery has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Marree as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Marree Visitor Booklet, 2001

ABORIGINAL CEMETERY**LHP:005**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Marree Aboriginal Cemetery, beside Birdsville Track, south-east of Marree township

Land Description: H833100/S718

Certificate of Title: CR 5759/713

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: n/a

SHR File No.: n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: n/a



Marree Aboriginal Cemetery

ABORIGINAL CEMETERYLHP:005

DESCRIPTION:

The Marree Aboriginal Cemetery is an unfenced plot in open country beside the beginning of the Birdsville Track, a few hundred metres south-east of the township. There are no formal monuments, but some grave sites have been marked with posts or other simple markers. Roadside signs have intruded into part of the cemetery in recent years.

HISTORY:

The date of commencement of burials at the cemetery is not known, but must have been within the historic period, i.e. after the establishment of the Marree township, because there was no water supply to enable people to live in the area until the railway bore was sunk in 1883. The nearest natural water supply is at Herrgott Springs, about 3km to the north. The cemetery remained in use until Aboriginal burials commenced in the fenced town cemetery reserve within living memory.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree Aboriginal Cemetery is of heritage value as an important community institution dating from the early decades of the township. It expresses the former division of the community along racial lines.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (b) Marree Aboriginal Cemetery represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area.
 - (c) Marree Aboriginal Cemetery has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a culturally sensitive place. Care should be taken in siting signs and other roadside infrastructure, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983

HERRGOTT SPRINGS

LHP:006**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Herrgott Springs, 3km north of Marree township**Land Description:** F42102/A10**Certificate of Title:** CR 5821/569

OWNER: Minister for Environment and Conservation
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: n/a**Herrgott Springs**

HERRGOTT SPRINGS**LHP:006**

DESCRIPTION:

The springs are an open pool with a ruined windmill, a modern pump and water tank alongside. The site is now fenced off from stock, but decades of cattle trampling in the past have destroyed all trace of the early Afghan settlement and plantation.

HISTORY:

John McDouall Stuart's second expedition camped at the springs on 11 April 1859, and Stuart named them after his botanist Joseph Herrgott. Their strategic location influenced the route of the Overland Telegraph in 1870 and the Great Northern Railway, although the railway terminated not at the springs, but at the Marree artesian bore two miles south. The general locality was popularly known (and mis-spelled) as Hergott, until German placenames disappeared from the map of South Australia during the First World War. The springs were the site of an Afghan cameleers' settlement, a date plantation and a mosque from 1884 until early in the twentieth century.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Herrgott Springs are of heritage value as an historic water source whose location shaped northern exploration, the Overland Telegraph, the Great Northern Railway and the Birdsville Track.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) The Herrgott Springs site displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) The Herrgott Springs site has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The springs are fragile and have been fenced off from stock. Tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Heritage of the Mound Springs, 1986

11.0 Local Heritage Places (SA) Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

Stevens, *Tin Mosques and Ghantowns*, 1989

DULKANINNA TRIG POINT

LHP:007**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Trig Point, Dulkaninna Station, off Birdsville Track**Land Description:** D35801/A106**Certificate of Title:** CL 1135/1

OWNER: George & Daryl Bell
Dulkaninna
via Port Augusta 5700

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, neg 2

Dulkaninna Trig Point

DULKANINNA TRIG POINT**LHP:007**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of a tall pile of dry-laid dark stones about 2.5m in height, standing on a slight rise. It is a conspicuous landmark, visible for several kilometres on the flat plain.

HISTORY:

Government Surveyor Samuel Parry spent much of the years 1857 and 1858 surveying the northern Flinders Ranges for pastoral occupation, and extended the survey north beyond the line of the Mound Springs, into country never before seen by Europeans. Cairns of this kind were built to serve as artificial land marks in featureless country, so that compass bearings could be taken to them from different directions as part of the triangulation process essential to accurate land surveys. The Trig Point is more than thirty years older than Dulkaninna homestead, which is visible about 3km to the north.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Dulkaninna Trig Point is of heritage value as a relic of the early land survey process in an era when surveyors relied on laborious manual methods.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (e) It is associated with a notable local personality or event.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The cairn is featured on the Westprint map of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks (Deckert 2000). It is close to road and is surrounded by vehicle tracks, indicating an existing high level of visitation. A small interpretation sign could be erected near the cairn explaining its significance.

REFERENCES:

Deckert, *Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks*, 2000
Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, p. 2
Mincham, *Story of the Flinders Ranges*, 1964

CANNY TRIG POINT (MILNER'S PILE)

LHP:008**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Milner's Pile, Etadunna Station, off Birdsville Track**Land Description:** D35806/A105**Certificate of Title:** CL 1340/29

OWNER: Harold Broad Pty Ltd
Old Canowie
Hallett 5419

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, negs 5-7

Milner's Pile (Canny Trig Point)

CANNY TRIG POINT (MILNER'S PILE)**LHP:008**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of a pile of dry-laid dark stones about 3m in height, standing on a small hill. It is a conspicuous landmark, visible for several kilometres on the flat plain.

HISTORY:

Government Surveyor Samuel Parry spent much of the years 1857 and 1858 surveying the northern Flinders Ranges, and extended the survey north beyond the line of the Mound Springs, into country never before seen by Europeans. Cairns of this kind were built to serve as artificial land marks in featureless country, so that compass bearings could be taken to them from different directions as part of the triangulation process essential to accurate land surveys. The reasons why it is known as Canny Trig Point are unknown. In recent years it has become known as Milner's Pile in recognition of Ralph Milner, although he only came to the district about five years after it was built.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Milner Pile is of heritage value as a relic of the early land survey process in an era when surveyors relied on laborious manual methods.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) Milner Pile displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (e) Milner Pile is associated with a notable local personality or event.
 - (f) Milner Pile is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The cairn is featured on the Westprint map of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks (Deckert 2000). It is about 1.5km from the road and is in a fenced paddock, so cannot readily be reached either by vehicle or on foot. No interpretation is required.

REFERENCES:

Deckert, *Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks*, 2000
Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, p. 2
Mincham, *Story of the Flinders Ranges*, 1964

ETADUNNA WOOLSHED RUINS**LHP:009**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Woolshed Ruin, Etadunna Station, Birdsville Track**Land Description:** D35806/A105**Certificate of Title:** CL 1340/29

OWNER: Harold Broad Pty Ltd
Old Canowie
Hallett 5419

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, negs 25-28**Etadunna Woolshed Ruin**

ETADUNNA WOOLSHED RUINS**LHP:009**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of the ruins of Etadunna Woolshed , located immediately beside the Birdsville Track near the turnoff to Killalpaninna. The stone foundations of three rectangular buildings are discernible; the largest was the woolshed, which still has metal parts of a wool press lying in its interior. Two smaller buildings nearby were probably the shearers' quarters and a kitchen. The site is not conspicuous.

HISTORY:

Etadunna was taken up as a number of small blocks in the 1870s, and this woolshed, probably built in the 1880s, shored sheep from Killalpaninna and Kopperamanna as well as Etadunna. The woolshed was probably disused from early in the twentieth century, when as a combined result of rabbit and dingo infestation and the 1899-1902 drought, wool-growing in the district was virtually abandoned. The building stood intact until the 1930s, when its roof timbers and iron were taken to build a house at Mona Vale Station. The walls were demolished when Etadunna was re-occupied in 1947, and the stone was incorporated into the modern homestead. (Pearce 1980)

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Etadunna Woolshed Ruin is of heritage value as a monument to the now-vanished early wool industry of the region, and a reminder of the successive generations of occupation which many of the homesteads have seen.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Low key interpretation of the site is possible but not a high priority.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, p. 112
Pearce, Remote Sites Documentation Report, 1980

BUCALTANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS

LHP:010**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins, Etadunna Station**Land Description:** D35806/A105**Certificate of Title:** CL 1340/29

OWNER: Harold Broad Pty Ltd
Old Canowie
Hallett 5419

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, neg 24

Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins

BUCALTANINNA HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:010**

DESCRIPTION:

Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins stand on the west side of an overflow channel of Lake Bucaltaninna, about 30km south-east of Etadunna homestead. The site consists of the stone ruins of a store room and cellar, and a few standing poles of other buildings.

HISTORY:

Bucaltaninna was first occupied by Europeans in about 1863 when Ralph and John Milner grazed stock there. In 1867 the Lutherans of Killalpaninna and Moravians of Kopperamanna abandoned their recently-established missions in the face of Dieri hostility and retired to Milner's homestead at Bucaltaninna for a time. Later a Mission Block was granted, and in 1875 the Lutherans returned to establish a mission school. The stone store and other buildings date from this period. With poor feed and unreliable water, Bucaltaninna was never a success, and in 1879 the Lutherans returned to Killalpaninna and established the Bethesda mission. Bucaltaninna was occupied as an outstation until about 1916.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as an example of the early German missions and their grazing outstations.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a remote and fragile site far from public roads, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Pearce, Howard, Remote Sites Documentation Report, 1980

APATOONGANNIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:011**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Apatoongannie Homestead Ruins,
Mulka Station, off Birdsville Track

Land Description: D35807/A104

Certificate of Title: CL 1323/20

OWNER: Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, negs 33-35



Apatoongannie Homestead ruins

APATOONGANNIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:011**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of a substantial stone building ruin with two nearby wells, one about 15m deep. The building still has walls standing to over 2m in height in places. It has a six-roomed plan with a central fireplace, and has clearly been built in two stages, as though a three-roomed domestic house was later converted to a six-roomed eating and accommodation house.

HISTORY:

A clear account of the history of Apatoongannie is difficult to come by, but it appears to have been taken up by Alexander Scobie in conjunction with the Mulka run immediately to the north, probably in the 1880s. Indeed a pastoral lease plan from c.1888 shows the block as 'Mulka or Apatoonganie'. The property was later owned by the Neaylon family in the early twentieth century, and probably abandoned in the drought of the late 1920s. The evidence of the ruins is puzzling, for there is no record that there was an accommodation house here, and it would have been in competition with the Mulka store, little more than 10km away to the north. In the cemetery at Killalpaninna is a cast iron grave marker inscribed with the name of four-year-old Clarence Neaylon who died at the homestead and was taken to the mission for burial.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Apatoongannie Homestead ruin is of heritage value as a reminder that the outback once supported a much greater population than it does today.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:**Management issues**

The two well shafts on the site are a potential hazard. The mud mortar is soft and it is likely that more sections of the walls may fall.

APATOONGANNIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:011**

Recommendations

- 1 Stabilise the ruins, and take steps to discourage climbing on them.
- 2 Safety grates be installed to cover the wells, working with advice from Primary Industries and Resources SA.
- 3 Site interpretation, identifying the structures and speculating on their function.
- 4 Directional sign from roadside be installed only after the site has been stabilised and safety measures implemented.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Primary Industries and Resources SA, Transport SA

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Pastoral Board Lease records
Pearce, Howard, *Remote Sites*, 1980

OLD MULKA HOMESTEAD RUINS

LHP:012**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Old Mulka Ruins, Mulka station, off Birdsville Track**Land Description:** D35807/A104**Certificate of Title:** CL 1323/20

OWNER:Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, neg 32

Old Mulka Homestead Ruins

OLD MULKA HOMESTEAD RUINSLHP:012

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of the ruins of two stone buildings near a collapsed well and water tank. Much building stone has been removed and the site has been heavily disturbed.

HISTORY:

There are three places called Mulka: this one, which is the oldest; the later store at the New Well about 5km to the south (SHP:007); and the modern homestead near the government bore of 1906, between the two older sites. The property was taken up by Alexander Scobie in the early 1880s, and this house built. Alexander's three sons remained in the area for years, as Eric Bonython recorded: 'The three Scobies were all in a row on the Birdsville Track, Alec at Ooroowilannie, Jim at Mulka and Dave at New Well.' (Bonython 1985, p. 64) In 1924 the Scobies sold Mulka to the Aistons, who shifted the Mulka homestead south to the New Well, where they set up a popular roadside store and eating house. The Old Well site remained in use as an outstation, but was abandoned in the drought of the late 1920s..

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Old Mulka Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as a reminder of the population and facilities for travellers that were once found in the outback, and the loss of diverse outback ways of life.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

These fragile ruins are on a station track, not a public access road. They are not suitable for tourism development.

REFERENCES:

Bonython, Eric, *Where the Seasons Come and Go*, 1985
Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978

OOROOWILLANNIE HOMESTEAD RUINS

LHP:013**LOCATION:**

Place Name and Address: Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins, Mulka Station,
off Birdsville Track

Land Description: D35807/A104

Certificate of Title: CL 1323/20

OWNER: Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, neg 36



Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins

OOROOWILLANNIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:013**

DESCRIPTION:

The Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins now consist of little more than three rubble mounds, with a station road passing through the site. One of the three buildings appears to have been built partly of white gypsum, with two mud brick rooms. Stone has been removed from the site for use elsewhere.

HISTORY:

A clear account of the history of Ooroowillannie is difficult to come by, but it appears to have been taken up by Alexander Scobie in conjunction with the Mulka run immediately to the south, probably in the 1880s. Traces of coal had been found in wells and bores in the Clayton and Mulka districts, and the opening of the Great Northern Railway in 1884 created a market for it, so in 1888 the area around Kuntha Hill was taken up as the Ooroowillannie Coal Claim. Several trial shafts were put down in the next few years, but nothing of commercial value was ever found. Alexander's three sons remained in the area after his death in 1919, as Eric Bonython recorded in the 1920s: 'The three Scobies were all in a row on the Birdsville Track, Alec at Ooroowilannie, Jim at Mulka and Dave at New Well.' (Bonython 1985, p. 64) Ooroowillannie remained in the hands of the Scobie family after Mulka was sold to the Aistons, and in the late 1940s George Farwell visited Alex Scobie there, 'a famous maker of whips'. (Farwell 1949, p. 80) The homestead was probably abandoned soon afterward.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Ooroowillannie Homestead ruin is of heritage value as a reminder that the outback once supported a much larger population than it does now.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) The Ooroowillannie Homestead ruins display historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Transport SA directional sign to the ruins is mis-spelled Ooranillanie.

OOROOWILLANNIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:013**

Recommendations

- 1 Interpretive sign with pictures (John Hammond at Mungerannie Hotel is a potential source for these).

Themes:

Hardship and drought. Even the experienced defeated.

Stony desert and terrain.

Government dam. Watering spot for cattle, drovers.

- 2 Replace the existing incorrect directional sign with one spelled correctly.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Transport SA

REFERENCES:

- Bonython, Eric, *Where the Seasons Come and Go*, 1985
Farwell, George, *Traveller's Tracks*, 1949
Kwitko, George, *Coal Exploration Drilling*, 1986
Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Pastoral Board Lease records
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978

MIRRA MITTA BORE**LHP:014**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Mirra Mitta Bore, Cowarie Station, Birdsville Track**Land Description:** D38061/A2037**Certificate of Title:** CL 1311/41

OWNER: Sharon Oldfield
Cowarie Station
via Marree 5733

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 2, neg 36A**Mirra Mitta Bore**

MIRRA MITTA BORE**LHP:014**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of a flowing bore, with a horizontal pipe from the borehead directing hot water into a pond about 5m in diameter, from where it flows away along a boredrain. There is warning sign by the bore outlet, now faded, corroded and illegible.

HISTORY:

The Mirra Mitta bore was sunk as part of the South Australian government's program of artesian bore-sinking to supply the Birdsville-Marree stockroute. It first flowed in 1903. The bore is over 1,000m deep, one of the deepest in the north-east. The line of bores defined the route of the modern Birdsville Track, and later played an important part in the marketing strategies of Sidney Kidman. The government employed a caretaker at these isolated bores, and for a time in the 1930s Josiah Dunn tended a flourishing vegetable garden at Mirra Mitta, watered from the bore.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Mirra Mitta bore is of heritage value as a reminder of the importance of the watering points along the Birdsville-Marree stockroute, and for its associations with the government bore-sinking program and stockowners such as Sidney Kidman.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The bore and its small associated wetland are a popular stopping place immediately on the roadside of the Birdsville Track. The heat of the water issuing from the bore pipe is a potential safety hazard, especially as the existing warning sign is illegible. In addition to the heritage values of Mirra Mitta Bore, it is of historical interest that Josiah Dunn coaxed a thriving vegetable patch here in the 1930s and that these hot bores were tended in the 1950s by a man wearing a special protective rubber suit.

MIRRA MITTA BORE**LHP:014**

Recommendations

An interpretive sign is recommended for the site, to convey the following:

- 1 This is hot artesian water – why it's hot and the need for care.
- 2 How the bores were managed - 1930s protective gear.
- 3 The veggie patch.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Primary Industries and Resources SA, SA Pastoral Board

REFERENCES:

Bonython, Eric, *Where the Seasons Come and Go*, 1985
Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Pastoral Board records

MOUNT GASON BORE

LHP:015**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Mount Gason Bore, off Birdsville Track, Cowarie Station**Land Description:** D38061/A2037**Certificate of Title:** CL 1311/41

OWNER: Sharon Oldfield
Cowarie Station
via Marree 5733

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 3, negs 2-8

11.0 Local Heritage Places (SA) Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey
Grave near Mount Gason Bore

MOUNT GASON BORELHP:015

DESCRIPTION:

Mount Gason Bore stand on the boundary between Cowarie and Clifton Hills stations. The government bore consists of a flowing bore, with a pipe from the borehead directing hot water into a pond, from where it flows away along a boredrain. The homestead ruins nearby consist of fragmentary remains of a stone house and outbuilding. Near them is the marble headstone of Joseph Clarke who died in 1919.

HISTORY:

At the junction of Cowarie, Clifton Hills and Kanowana stations, Mount Gason had no separate identity until 1903 when the Mount Gason bore was sunk as part of the South Australian government's program of artesian bore-sinking to supply the Birdsville-Marree stockroute. The line of bores defined the route of the modern Birdsville Track, and later played an important part in the marketing strategies of Sidney Kidman. Mount Gason became a stopping place for travellers and for a time in the early twentieth century the Mount Gason pastoral lease was also watered from the bore, but appears to have been abandoned in the drought of the 1920s.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Mount Gason Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as an example of the role of government artesian bores in shaping grazing industry in the north-east.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This site is off the road and of little visual interest, the bore is potentially hazardous, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978

PAGE FAMILY GRAVE**LHP:016**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Page Family Grave, Clifton Hills, off Birdsville Track**Land Description:** H30800 Block 1178**Certificate of Title:** CL 1579/90

OWNER: Kartoo Pty Ltd
48 Hawkers Road
Medindie 5081

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 3, negs 11-13

Page Family Grave

PAGE FAMILY GRAVELHP:016

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of a coolibah tree beside Coocherapoonie Waterhole, near which is a grave ringed with stones and marked with a simple aluminium cross on a steel post, inscribed: "The Pages Perished Dec 1963".

HISTORY:

On 21 December 1963 the Page family set out from Marree in a heat wave to drive to Birdsville, but apparently lost the track. On 28 December their abandoned car was found, with a note that said they had run out of petrol and were walking south. On New Years Day 1964 a light aircraft pilot spotted the family lying dead under a small tree by the dry Coocherapoonie waterhole. The five family members were buried together by the coolibah tree. The Page family made several fundamental mistakes; setting out in a heavily loaded car on uncertain roads in hot weather, not carrying enough fuel or water, and not telling anyone where they were going or when to expect them. Finally, they left their car and set off to walk in conditions that meant certain death.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Page Family Grave is of heritage value as a memorial to the victims of a local tragedy, and a reminder that the dangers of outback travel are not to be taken lightly.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Page Family Grave is located well off the public access road and pastoral leaseholders do not wish to encourage visitation to this site. Tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Courier-Mail 1-4 January 1964
Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, p. 144

OLD PANDIE PANDIE HOMESTEAD

LHP:017**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Old Pandie Pandie Homestead, Pandie Pandie Station**Land Description:** H830800/B1193**Certificate of Title:** CL 1350/18

OWNER: George Morton
Pandie Pandie Station
via Marree 5733

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 3, negs 14-19

Old Pandie Pandie Homestead Ruins

OLD PANDIE PANDIE HOMESTEAD**LHP:017**

DESCRIPTION:

Old Pandie Pandie Homestead ruins stand beside modern Pandie Pandie homestead on the eastern bank of the Diamantina River. They consist of fragmentary remains of an earth-walled house, consisting principally of one end wall incorporating the fireplace. Pearce's photographs from the 1970s show this as a roofed house, its walls largely intact although in poor condition.

HISTORY:

Pandie Pandie run, in a strategic position on the Diamantina River, was taken up by Robert Frew in 1876, but later transferred to Thomas Pain and a succession of other owners, including the Beltana Pastoral Company and Sidney Kidman. It is one of the few properties in the north-east which has never been abandoned. The original homestead probably dates from the 1880s. In 1940 the property was leased by Celcus Morton of Roseberth, and the old house was replaced by a new timber house soon afterward. Pandie Pandie Station has been in the hands of the Morton family ever since.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Old Pandie Pandie Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as an example of a homestead building associated with early grazing industry in the north-east.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (d) It displays construction techniques of significance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a fragile site in an occupied homestead complex, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

- Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, p. 146
Pearce, Howard, *Homesteads of the Stony Desert*, 1978, pp. 74-77
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986
-

MIRANDA HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:018**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Miranda Homestead Ruins, Pandie Pandie Station**Land Description:** H830800/B1139**Certificate of Title:** CL 1350/18

OWNER: George Morton
Pandie Pandie Station
via Marree 5733

State Heritage Status: - n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 3, negs 31-36A; film 4, negs 1-4

Miranda Homestead Ruins

MIRANDA HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:018**

DESCRIPTION:

Miranda Homestead Ruins stand beside a modern windmill and tank on the Toondooloo or Thunpulu waterhole on Kuckerapulka Creek, about 50km east of Pandie Pandie homestead. They consist of a stone store which has been converted to sleeping quarters, and ruins of stables, a smithy, cattle and horse yards and the mechanism of a horse works. Some of these elements conform to an early plan of improvements. There is no sign of the house, which must have been of timber.

HISTORY:

The early history of Miranda run is poorly documented, but leases were taken up in the area between 1896 and 1910, and an undated plan of improvements shows a homestead with outbuildings and a garden. There are lease records of a succession of owners from 1930 onward, and for part of the time Miranda was managed jointly with Appamanna or Minnie Downs to the south. In 1945 the property was leased by Celcus Morton of Roseberth, and since the 1950s it has been incorporated into the Mortons' Pandie Pandie station.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Miranda Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as an example of the small isolated homesteads associated with early grazing in the north-east.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (b) It represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a remote and fragile site far from public roads, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983, p. 146
Pastoral Lease Inspectors' Plans

11.0 Local Heritage Places (SA) Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

BULL HOLE BORE AND PUMP RUINS**LHP:019**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Bull Hole Bore, Birdsville-Cordillo Road,
Cordillo Downs Station

Land Description: H830800/B851

Certificate of Title: CL 1601/59

OWNER: Brooklands Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
Cordillo Downs
via Leigh Creek 5731

State Heritage Status: - n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 5, negs 24-25



Bull Hole Bore and Pump

BULL HOLE BORE AND PUMP RUINSLHP:019

DESCRIPTION:

The site is near the Bull Hole waterhole and consists of a single cylinder horizontal oil engine on a concrete base, with a standing bore pipe, remains of a timber hut, a ship's tank, scattered corrugated iron and some windmill parts nearby. There is no pump, water tank or trough, all of which would once have been at the site.

HISTORY:

The date of the Bull Hole Bore and Pump is not known, but it is similar to other bores on the Cordillo Downs lease, and was presumably built about the same time. Its technology dates from the early twentieth century, and it very likely dates from about 1906, when the Beltana Pastoral Company was building dams and putting down bores to intensify stocking on the property.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Bull Hole Bore and Pump is of heritage value as a reminder of past stock watering technology.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Camping at the nearby Bull Hole Waterhole is fouling the water and the nearby area. An interpretive sign could point out the importance of underground water in this region and why bores were put in. Close to the eastern side of the road, near the creek, a sign is needed to say *This is a stock watering point, please don't camp here.*

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Transport SA

REFERENCES:

Cooper, *Beltana Pastoral Company*, 1965

PROVIDENCE DAM SHEEP YARDS

LHP:020

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Providence Dam Sheep Yards, Cordillo Downs Station

Land Description: H830800/B851

Certificate of Title: CL 1601/59

OWNER: Brooklands Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
Cordillo Downs
via Leigh Creek 5731

State Heritage Status: n/a

SHR File No.: n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 5, neg 36A



Providence Dam Sheep Yards

PROVIDENCE DAM SHEEP YARDS**LHP:020**

DESCRIPTION:

Providence Dam Sheep Yards stand by a tank on Providence Creek, about 30km north-east of Cordillo Downs homestead. They consist of the ruins of wood and wire drafting yards, with a building consisting of taller posts supporting netting for a shade shelter.

HISTORY:

Providence Dam Sheep Yards are on land that was taken up by William and John Howie as Haddon Downs run in 1880 and stocked with sheep. It was a progressively-managed property, and by 1890 was well-watered and extensively fenced. This site was a sheep yard at a watering point on the creek. The run was subsequently bought by the Beltana Pastoral Company and in 1905 became part of Cordillo Downs. The date of construction of the yards is not known, but was almost certainly before 1931 when Cordillo Downs Station was abandoned because of drought, and subsequently converted to cattle grazing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Providence Dam Sheep Yards are of heritage value as a relatively well-preserved example of the sheepyards that were an essential part of early sheep grazing in the north-east.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (b) It represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a remote and fragile site far from public roads, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Cooper, A., *History of the Beltana Pastoral Company*, 1965
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

HADDON DOWNS HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:021**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins, Cordillo Downs Station

Land Description: H830800/B851

Certificate of Title: CL 1601/59

OWNER: Brooklands Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
Cordillo Downs Station
via Leigh Creek 5731

State Heritage Status: n/a

SHR File No.: n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 6, negs 1-7



Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins

HADDON DOWNS HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:021**

DESCRIPTION:

Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins stand on a low bluff overlooking a tributary of Haddon Creek, about 45km north-east of Cordillo Downs homestead. They consist of the ruins of a stone house which had sawn softwood joinery, a store, stables, smithy and sheep and horse yards. A fenced enclosure surrounds the marble gravestone of William Howie who died in 1887.

HISTORY:

Haddon Downs run was taken up by William and John Howie in 1880 and stocked with sheep. It was one of the few properties in the north-east which straddled the border into Queensland. The Howies managed the property progressively, providing watering points and wire fencing. After William Howie's death the run was bought by the Beltana Pastoral Company and in 1905 was incorporated into Cordillo Downs. Haddon Downs became an outstation of the larger property, but was probably little used after 1942 when Cordillo Downs was converted to cattle grazing.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as an example of the homesteads associated with early sheep grazing in the north-east.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (b) It represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a remote and fragile site far from public roads, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Cooper, A., *History of the Beltana Pastoral Company*, 1965
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

COONGIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:022**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Coongie Homestead Ruins, Innamincka Regional Reserve

Land Description: H831600/B757

Certificate of Title: CL 1625/52

OWNER:

- (1) Innamincka Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
PO Box 346
North Adelaide 5006
- (2) National Parks & Wildlife SA
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 7, negs 21-22



11.0 Local Heritage Places (SA) Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey
Coongie Homestead ruins

COONGIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:022**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of the remains of two homestead buildings about 200m west of the shore of Lake Coongie. The earlier timber house is simply a scatter of rusted nails and other metal fasteners, characteristic of a timber house destroyed by fire. The later earth house built alongside is now an expanse of dried mud. The modern interpretation centre is about 200m north of the house sites.

HISTORY:

In 1875 during the first rush of pastoralists to the Cooper, wealthy Victorian graziers Hector and Norman Wilson took up the Land of Promise run beside the Coongie Lakes on Burke and Wills' route of fourteen years earlier. The name was a bit much, and the run soon became known as Coongie. Unusually for the north-east, a contractor, James Gemmell, was sent to build a timber house for the manager. Under manager WJ Wylie in the 1880s, Coongie had a record of violent conflict with Aborigines. The property remained in the Wilson family until 1902 when it was transferred to Sidney Kidman, who merged it into his Innamincka Station in 1908. From that time Coongie was simply an outstation of Innamincka. At some time in the Kidman era the old homestead burnt down, and was replaced with a mud-walled cottage. The property became Innamincka Regional Reserve in 1988, and the Coongie Lakes area is now managed as a birdlife sanctuary. An interpretation centre has been built near the homestead.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Coongie Homestead ruins are of heritage value as a memorial to the optimism of the earliest period of pastoral settlement, followed by the austere pragmatism of the Kidman era.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The site is vulnerable to damage from casual visitors wandering over it with no understanding of what is there. The existing interpretation boards, erected by *Australian Geographic* are about 200m distant from the homestead, and have aged to the point where they need replacement. Their primary focus is on the natural environment of the Coongie Lakes.

COONGIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:022**

Recommendations

- 1 A small sign is needed to identify the site and inform visitors of appropriate behaviours, such as not collecting surface artefacts.
- 2 Replacing and updating the existing interpretive signs be negotiated with *Australian Geographic*.

Action responsibility

National Parks & Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission.

REFERENCES:

Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986
Tolcher, Helen, *Conrick of Nappa Merrie*, 1996

KUDRIEMITCHIE OUTSTATION

LHP:023**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Kudriemitchie Outstation, Innamincka Regional Reserve**Land Description:** H831600/B757**Certificate of Title:** CL 1625/52

OWNER:

(1) Innamincka Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
PO Box 346
North Adelaide 5006

(2) National Parks & Wildlife SA
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 7, negs 18-20

Stockyards, Kudriemitchie Outstation

KUDRIEMITCHIE OUTSTATION**LHP:023**

DESCRIPTION:

The site is by the Kudriemitchie waterhole, and consists of a timber cattle yard, a windmill and tank, and a 1950s prefabricated hut. The meathouse has ingeniously been incorporated into the tankstand.

HISTORY:

Kudriemitchie was never an independent pastoral property, but was probably established in the 1870s as an outstation of Hector and Norman Wilson's Land of Promise run, later known as Coongie. In 1902 the property was transferred to Sidney Kidman, who merged it into his Innamincka station in 1908. From that time Coongie and Kudriemitchie were both outstations of Innamincka. Everything visible at the site today dates from the Kidman era. The accommodation hut was relocated from the Innamincka Number 1 Well, the first exploratory petroleum well drilled in the Cooper Basin in 1958. The property became Innamincka Regional Reserve in 1988, and an interpretation sign has been erected at the outstation.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Kudriemitchie Outstation is of heritage value as a representative of the grazing practices of the Kidman era.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

A drop toilet has been installed here and the site is used as a camping area.

Recommendations

- 1 The content of the existing sign is misleading. This sign should be replaced and content revised.
- 2 There is potential for an additional sign on the stockyards.
- 3 Decisions on signage upgrade should be made by National Parks and Wildlife SA in consultation with Innamincka Pastoral Company.

KUDRIEMITCHIE OUTSTATION

LHP:023

Action responsibility

National Parks & Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission

REFERENCES:

Interpretation sign on site

Litchfield, Lois, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983

Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

GIDGEALPA NO. 2 WELL**LHP:024**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Gidgealpa No. 2 Well, Gidgealpa Station**Land Description:** D35579/A2025**Certificate of Title:** CL 1333/38

OWNER:Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 7, negs 30-31**Gidgealpa No. 2 Well**

GIDGEALPA NO. 2 WELL**LHP:024**

DESCRIPTION:

Gidgealpa No. 2 Well stands on gibber plain in the Gidgealpa Gasfield about 20km north-west of Moomba township. The site consists of an operating gas well, fitted with valve gear and a lifting hoist.

HISTORY:

The 1950s saw extensive oil and gas prospecting in the north-east deserts of South Australia, culminating in hopeful indications from the Innamincka No. 1 Well drilled in the Innamincka Dome in March-November 1959. In the early 1960s, exploration expanded into the Gidgealpa area. Following disappointing results from Gidgealpa No. 1 Well, there was disagreement between Delhi-Santos and Mines Department geologists about the most likely prospective areas. Drilled on government instructions, Gidgealpa No. 2 Well struck South Australia's first commercial gas flow on New Years Eve 1963.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Gidgealpa No. 2 Well is of heritage value as the first producing gas well of the Cooper Basin.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of the local residents.
 - (e) It is associated with a notable local personality or event.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This site is in a secured area which is part of a producing gasfield, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

O'Neil, Bernard, 'History of Petroleum Exploration', 1996
Wopfner, H., 'Subsurface Geology', 1990

INNAMINCKA NO. 1 WELL**LHP:025**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Innamincka No. 1 Well, Innamincka Regional Reserve**Land Description:** H831600/B757**Certificate of Title:** CL 1625/52

OWNER:

- (1) Innamincka Pastoral Co Pty Ltd
PO Box 346
North Adelaide 5006
 - (2) National Parks & Wildlife SA
GPO Box 1047
Adelaide 5001
-

State Heritage Status:

n/a

SHR File No.: n/a**Other Assessments:**n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.:

Film 7, neg 16



Sign on Innamincka No. 1 Well

INNAMINCKA NO. 1 WELL**LHP:025**

DESCRIPTION:

Innamincka No. 1 Well stands on gibber plain about 30km north-east of Innamincka township. There is nothing on the site except a sign consisting of a post bearing a steel plate with the welded inscription: 'Innamincka # 1 Spud 28-5-59'.

HISTORY:

The South Australian oil and gas industry began with extensive geological mapping of the north-east deserts during the 1950s. A broad anticline known as the Innamincka Dome was identified as the most promising site for test drilling, and the Delta Drilling Company commenced Innamincka No. 1 Well in March 1959. This first well reached 3852m depth by the following November when it was abandoned. While it found nothing of commercial value, traces of hydrocarbon gas encouraged further drilling, which bore fruit at Gidgealpa four years later.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Innamincka No. 1 Well is of heritage value for its role in pioneering the oil and gas industry of the Cooper Basin.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of the local residents.
 - (e) It is associated with a notable local personality or event.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a remote site of little visual interest, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

O'Neil, Bernard, 'History of Petroleum Exploration', 1996
Wopfner, H., 'Subsurface Geology', 1990

NAPPACOONGIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:026**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Nappacoongie Homestead Ruins, Gidgealpa Station, off Strzelecki Track

Land Description: D35579/A2025

Certificate of Title: CL 1333/38

OWNER: Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 7, negs 23-28



Harry Bird's Grave, Nappacoongie Homestead

NAPPACOONGIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:026**

DESCRIPTION:

The site is beside Nappacoongie waterhole, and consists of a modern outstation, including a c.1960s prefabricated hut, a collapsed windmill and a most elegant outback dunny built out of welded 44 gallon drums. Nearby is a collapsed well with a grave marked with a wrought iron fence and a welded steel plate, inscribed: 'RIP / HERE LIES HARRY BIRD / KILLED WHEN THIS WELL COLLAPSED / 1914'.

HISTORY:

Nappacoongie was an outstation of the Innamincka run, taken up in 1874. It was located at the Nappacoongie Waterhole on Strzelecki Creek, and was a watering point on the Strzelecki stockroute. In 1914 contractor Harry Bird died while working in a bucket down the 30m deep government well. He was replacing timbering when the walls suddenly collapsed and buried him irretrievably. His remains were left in the collapsed well, and a monument was erected over it. The buildings on the site date from oil and gas exploration activity in recent decades.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Nappacoongie Homestead site is of heritage value as a reminder that the region was once much more populated than it is now, and as another memorial to the lives lost in the course of daily life in the region.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) Harry Bird's grave is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The existing markers for Harry Bird's have distinctive character, fitting to the site where he met his death. Additional signage for his grave is not recommended. A sign identifying the outstation is possible, but not a high priority.

REFERENCES:

Nicol, Stuart, *Outback South Australia*, 2002
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986, p. 188

TOOLATCHIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:027**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Toolatchie Homestead Ruins, Gidgealpa Station,
off Strzelecki Track

Land Description: D35579/A2025

Certificate of Title: CL 1333/38

OWNER: Doce Pty Ltd
Level 29 91 King William Street
Adelaide 5000

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Films 7, negs 36-36A & 8, negs 1-3



Stockyards, Toolatchie Homestead

TOOLATCHIE HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:027**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of extensive timber sheep and cattle yards on the west side of Toolatchie waterhole, now half-buried in sand drift. Near the yards is a small fenced graveyard with three marked graves. One has a broken marble headstone, inscribed: "Little Jack / Henry Walter Smith / Perished Feby 24th 1889".

HISTORY:

Toolatchie was an outstation of the Innamincka run, taken up in 1874. It was located at the Toolatchie Waterhole on Strzelecki Creek, and for a time was a horse change station on the Farina-Innamincka coach run. In February 1889 the stockman in charge at Toolatchie, Henry Smith, known as 'Little Jack', perished in 47° heat after losing his way while inspecting feed on the run.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Toolatchie Outstation is of heritage value as a reminder that the region was once much more populated than it is now, and as another memorial to the lives lost in the course of daily life in the region.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

No directional or interpretive signage is recommended for this site, which is off the main track and could easily be damaged by high visitation.

REFERENCES:

Nicol, Stuart, *Outback South Australia*, 2002
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

MANU MAIN HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:028**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Manu Main Homestead Ruins, Murnpeowie Station**Land Description:** D42203/A24**Certificate of Title:** No current title

OWNER: Broschul Pty Ltd
Birdsville 4482

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 8, negs 7-12

Manu Main Homestead Ruins

MANU MAIN HOMESTEAD RUINS**LHP:028**

DESCRIPTION:

Manu Main Homestead Ruins stand by a waterhole on Manuwalkaninna Creek, about 55km north of Murnpeowie homestead. They consist of the ruins of a semi-dugout cottage, store rooms and stock yards, spread over an area of about a hectare.

HISTORY:

Manu Main is on land that was taken up by Thomas Elder as Manuwalkaninna run in 1861 and stocked by 1868. This site was an outstation at a watering point on the creek. The run was subsequently absorbed into Blanchewater and in 1890 became part of Murnpeowie. By the early twentieth century Manu Main became a base for Aboriginal stockmen maintaining the dingo fence along Murnpeowie's northern boundary. It is also known as Gottlieb's Camp, after Gottlieb Merrick who lived here from the mid-1930s. The site was abandoned about 1948 after Gottlieb's death, by which time professional fencers were patrolling the dingo fence.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Manu Main Homestead Ruins are of heritage value as a relatively well-preserved example of the outstations that were an essential part of early grazing practice.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (b) It represents customs or ways of life that are characteristic of the local area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a remote and fragile site far from public roads, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Pearce, Howard, Remote Sites Documentation Report, 1980
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

JUNCTION WELL HUT

LHP:029**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Murnpeowie Station, off Strzelecki Track**Land Description:** D42203/A24**Certificate of Title:** No Current title

OWNER: Broschul Pty Ltd
Birdsville 4482

State Heritage Status: n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 8, negs 21-23

Junction Well Hut

JUNCTION WELL HUT**LHP:029**

DESCRIPTION:

The site consists of a single stone hut, standing near a bore with stone troughs. The building is rectangular in plan and austere in appearance, with symmetrical doorways front and rear and only two windows. The hut is built in the same dark stone and by the same builder as Murnpeowie homestead, with corbels and a vaulted iron roof. It is a conspicuous landmark on the flat plain.

HISTORY:

The history of Junction Well Hut is not documented in detail, but from its style and materials, it was clearly built at the same time as the Murnpeowie homestead complex. In 1890 Peter Waite consolidated the old Blanchewater run, including the earlier Mount Hopeless and Lake Hope, into Murnpeowie. He built a new homestead and woolshed complex, employing an unknown builder at a cost of over £7,000, in a distinctive style with vaulted roofs, using a dark local stone. (The same builder must have built the Cordillo Downs complex for Waite about five years before.) Junction Well Hut, 15km north of the homestead, was built at the same time as an outstation beside a stock watering point.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Junction Well Hut is of heritage value as a relic of early stock management, in an era when employees were permanently based at outstations around the property.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Junction Well Hut is located well off the public access road and the leaseholders do not wish to encourage visitation to this site. Tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Austral Archaeology *et al*, Heritage of the Flinders Ranges, 1995

12.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORTS: LOCAL HERITAGE PLACES (QLD)

The following places within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area are recommended for entry as local heritage places in the Diamantina and Bulloo shires' planning schemes:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| • Birdsville Hospital | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):001 |
| • Birdsville Cemetery | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):002 |
| • Birdsville Aboriginal Cemetery | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):003 |
| • Birdsville Hydro Power Station | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):004 |
| • Birdsville Chinese Gardens Site | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):005 |
| • Birdsville Burke & Wills tree | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):006 |
| • Diamantina Crossing | Diamantina Shire | LHP(Q):007 |
| • Nappa Merrie Homestead | Bulloo Shire | LHP(Q):008 |
| • Oontoo Hotel Ruins | Bulloo Shire | LHP(Q):009 |
| • Oontoo Customs House Site | Bulloo Shire | LHP(Q):010 |

BIRDSVILLE HOSPITAL**LHP(Q):001**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Birdsville Hospital, Adelaide Street, Birdsville**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: n/a

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 4, negs 20-21, 32

Birdsville Hospital

BIRDSVILLE HOSPITALLHP(Q):001

DESCRIPTION:

The Birdsville Hospital (its popular name - really the Birdsville Clinic) is a long low building parallel to the street, timber-framed and clad in corrugated iron. It has a low-pitched gabled corrugated iron roof with broad enclosed verandahs. At the rear of the allotment near Florence Street is the former Aboriginal Ward, a reminder that outback health services were segregated until within living memory.

HISTORY:

This is Birdsville's third nursing facility. The first was the Australian Inland Mission Nursing Home which opened in the former Royal Hotel (QHR:002) in September 1923, one of a chain established through the outback by the Presbyterian Church. It was replaced in 1937 by a purpose-built hospital on the present site, but the new building burnt down in 1951. It was in turn replaced by the present building, which opened in August 1953.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Birdsville Hospital is of heritage value as an important community institution, which has historical links to John Flynn and the Australian Inland Mission.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Bilton, John, *The Royal Flying Doctor Service*, 1961
Francis, Grace, *Birdsville Nursing Home*, 1957
Henry, Mona, *From City to the Sandhills of Birdsville*, 1994
McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977

BIRDSVILLE CEMETERY**LHP(Q):002**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Birdsville Cemetery, Birdsville**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Diamantina Shire Council

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 4, negs 14-16

Birdsville Cemetery

BIRDSVILLE CEMETERYLHP(Q):002

DESCRIPTION:

The Birdsville Cemetery is a fenced cemetery reserve on the side of a dune about a kilometre west of the town. There are about fifty marked graves, mostly along the north-east side of the reserve.

HISTORY:

The date of commencement of burials at the cemetery is not known, but must have been soon after the establishment of Birdsville. The first death in the police records was Edward Blair in 1886. (In some accounts he is described as licensee of the Birdsville Hotel, but that was William Blair who died in 1898.) Among the marked graves in the cemetery is that of Robert Frew, lessee of Pandie Pandie station, and one of the pioneers of the town. The cemetery is still in use.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree Cemetery is of heritage value as an important community institution dating from the early years of the township, which provides a historical record of the process of early settlement.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

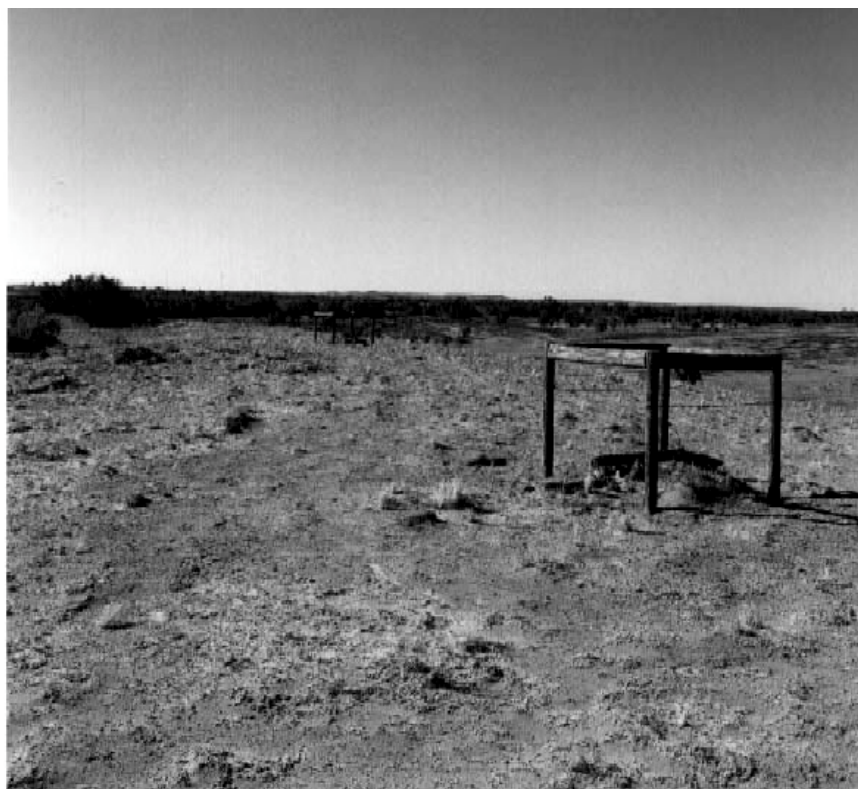
McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977

BIRDSDVILLE ABORIGINAL CEMETERY**LHP(Q):003**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Birdsville Aboriginal Cemetery, Birdsville**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Diamantina Shire Council

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: n/a

Birdsville Aboriginal Cemetery

BIRDSVILLE ABORIGINAL CEMETERYLHP(Q):003

DESCRIPTION:

The Birdsville Aboriginal Cemetery is a unfenced area of the Town Common over the Diamantina River from the town. There are a few graves marked by earth and stone mounds, and some have recently been fenced with timber.

HISTORY:

This was a traditional cemetery which remained in use for Aboriginal burials until recent decades. Aboriginal burials are now conducted in the formal Cemetery Reserve.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Marree Aboriginal Cemetery is of heritage value as an important community institution dating from before the establishment of the township, which also provides a historical record of the divisions which characterised the early settlement.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

This is a culturally sensitive place and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977
Information from Don and Lyn Rowlands

BIRDSVILLE HYDRO POWER STATION

LHP(Q):004

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Birdsville Power Station, Graham Street, Birdsville

Land Description: n/a

Certificate of Title: n/a

OWNER: Diamantina Shire Council

State Heritage Status: - n/a

SHR File No.: n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 4, negs 25-30



Birdsville Hydro Power Station

BIRDSVILLE HYDRO POWER STATIONLHP(Q):004

DESCRIPTION:

The Birdsville Hydro Power Station is a small corrugated iron shed which houses a small turbine and generator.

HISTORY:

In 1961 an artesian bore was sunk in Birdsville to augment the water supply from the Diamantina River, and proved to have sufficient pressure to power a small turbine. The shire council installed an Armfield turbine running at 1000 rpm to power a Crompton Parkinson generator producing 8kw, sufficient for electric lighting in the town. The plant was operating by April 1965 and functioned until December 1978, when it was replaced by a diesel generator built by the Capricornia Regional Electricity Board. The diesel generator has in turn been superseded by a 150kw geothermal power station which draws energy from the bore's near-boiling water.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Birdsville Hydro Power Station is of heritage value as an important technological initiative by the Diamantina Shire Council, in the long tradition of improving community living conditions in the outback.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
 - (d) It displays design characteristics or construction techniques of significance to the local area
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977
Information sign on site

BIRDSVILLE CHINESE GARDENS SITE**LHP(Q):005**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Birdsville Chinese Gardens, Birdsville**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Diamantina Shire Council

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 4, neg 34

Birdsville Chinese Gardens Site

BIRDSVILLE CHINESE GARDENS SITELHP(Q):005

DESCRIPTION:

All that can be seen of the Birdsville Chinese Garden now is an area of about a hectare which has been cleared of stones on the bank of the Diamantina River near the end of MacDonald Street. The removed stones have been formed into low walls around the cleared plot. A well in the river bed beside the garden was covered by water at the time of fieldwork for this survey.

HISTORY:

Documentation of Chinese market gardens is usually sparse, although outback communities frequently relied on them for fresh vegetables. There is a mention in the doctor's wife's journal of 'a Chinaman's garden' existing in Birdsville in 1893. (Ferber 1964) Eight Chinese were listed in the population of Birdsville in 1895. This garden is said to have remained in use until the 1950s.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Birdsville Chinese Garden is of heritage value as an important but poorly-documented economic institution dating from early in the township's history, and also provides a historical record of the ethnic divisions which characterised the early community.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

Ferber, Helen, Buggy Ride to Birdsville, 1964
McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977
Pugh's Almanac 1895
Information from Don and Lyn Rowlands

BIRDSVILLE BURKE & WILLS TREE**LHP(Q):006**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Birdsville Burke and Wills Tree, Birdsville**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Diamantina Shire Council**State Heritage Status: -** n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 4, negs 22-23

Birdsville Burke and Wills Tree

BIRDSVILLE BURKE & WILLS TREELHP(Q):006

DESCRIPTION:

The Birdsville Burke and Wills Tree is a small coolibah near the bank of the Diamantina River on the Town Common east of the township. It has a blaze with a roughly-cut inscription which reads something like 'B-W - ?? 1860'.

HISTORY:

The first Europeans to see the Diamantina River were Burke, Wills, King and Gray, who followed it on their way north in January 1860, and probably camped somewhere in the vicinity of Birdsville. However, this tree appears to have been blazed much later, and it does not closely resemble other marked trees from that expedition, which are neatly inscribed with a chisel. They were also marked with a simple B, not a BW. (In 1860 it was very much Burke's expedition; the term Burke and Wills only came into popular use later.) And the genuine trees did not give the year, but the camp number in Roman numerals; the Dig Tree at Nappa Merrie - Camp 65 - is marked just: 'B LXV'.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Birdsville's Burke and Wills Tree, although almost certainly not authentic, is recognised in local folklore as a link with the Burke and Wills expedition of 1860-61.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (e) It is associated with a notable local personality or event
 - (f) It is a notable landmark in the area
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977

DIAMANTINA CROSSING

LHP(Q):007**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Diamantina Crossing, Birdsville**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Diamantina Shire Council

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 4, neg 24

Diamantina Crossing

DIAMANTINA CROSSINGLHP(Q):007

DESCRIPTION:

The Diamantina Crossing is a stone causeway across the bed of the Diamantina River, on the route of the old road south from Birdsville township. It was surfaced with concrete in the 1960s. The crossing is still trafficable, but no longer on a major road.

HISTORY:

The significance and grazing potential of the Diamantina River were recognised by John McKinlay in 1861. When grazing settlement began in the Channel Country, the strategic significance of the crossing became apparent, as it was the only place in hundreds of kilometres where the river narrowed down to two channels and was relatively easy to cross in wet conditions. By 1879 there was a store near the crossing, which within a few years grew into the town of Birdsville. The crossing defined the route from the Queensland Channel Country to the South Australian markets, which would have implications in shaping the Birdsville Track and Sidney Kidman's landholdings for a century to come. The old crossing place remained in use until superseded by the bridge on the Birdsville Developmental Road in the 1970s.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

The Diamantina Crossing is the geographical reason why the township of Birdsville was established, and played a part in its economic role for many decades.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

See recommendations for the township of Birdsville as a whole.

REFERENCES:

McGinn, Frances, *Birdsville*, 1977

NAPPA MERRIE HOMESTEAD

LHP(Q):008**LOCATION:****Place Name and Address:** Nappa Merrie Homestead, via Thargomindah**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Stanbroke Pastoral Company
GPO Box 155
Brisbane 4001

State Heritage Status: - n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 7, negs 9-14

Nappa Merrie Homestead

NAPPA MERRIE HOMESTEAD**LHP(Q):008**

DESCRIPTION:

Nappa Merrie Homestead is a large stone house of about eight rooms with enclosed verandahs, sited on a high sand hill overlooking a permanent waterhole in a reach of Cooper Creek. The floor plan of what was probably the early homestead can still be made out, but it has been greatly extended and modernised. Likewise, the complex of surrounding buildings dates almost entirely from recent decades.

HISTORY:

Nappa Merrie run was taken up by John Conrick of Victoria and stocked with cattle in 1873. The land he chose straddled the channel of Cooper Creek, taking in Burke and Wills' Depot 65 and the Dig Tree, with its western boundary on the South Australian border. The stone house dates from some years after Conrick's arrival. Conrick had selected well, for Nappa Merrie went on to be one of the most successful properties of the region, later expanding to take in a number of surrounding blocks including St Anns, Chastleton and Lake Pure. It remained in the Conrick family until 1954.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Nappa Merrie Homestead is significant as the first run taken up on Cooper Creek in south-western Queensland, and for its long association with John Conrick and his descendants.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (e) It is associated with a notable local personality or event.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The pastoral leaseholders do not encourage public access to the homestead, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986
Tolcher, Helen, *Conrick of Nappa Merrie*, 1997

OONTOO HOTEL RUINS**LHP(Q):009**

LOCATION:**Place Name and Address:** Oontoo Hotel Ruins, Nappa Merrie Station,
via Thargomindah**Land Description:** n/a**Certificate of Title:** n/a

OWNER: Stanbroke Pastoral Company
GPO Box 155
Brisbane 4001

State Heritage Status: - n/a**SHR File No.:** n/a**Other Assessments:** n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 7, negs 5-8**Oontoo Hotel Ruins**

OONTOO HOTEL RUINS**LHP(Q):009**

DESCRIPTION:

On the Oontoo Hotel site are the ruins of a large well-built seven-roomed stone hotel about 20m x 12m in plan parallel to the old road along Cooper Creek, with ruins of a smaller stone kitchen, yards, and a scatter of glass and ceramic fragments in the vicinity. The surrounding Oontoo town site is a large clearing with the ruins of three stone cottage fireplaces.

HISTORY:

The Town of Oontoo on the South Australian border was surveyed in 1886, and the Queensland government built a Customs House there early in 1887. In February 1888 William Nankervis was granted a licence for the Oontoo Hotel, which he sold the following year to Thomas Costello. Either Nankervis or more likely Costello invested in building a large stone hotel with stables and stockyards. There was a brief period of artificial prosperity from government border fencing contractors, but a decade of drought and depression followed, and the Oontoo Hotel fell on quiet times. Costello sold the hotel in 1900, but it lost its licence within a year, and may have burned down soon afterward. The Customs House closed in 1903, and Oontoo was deserted.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Oontoo Hotel Ruins are significant as evidence of the businesses that once flourished in now-abandoned settlements in colonial Queensland.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The pastoral leaseholders do not encourage public access to the ruins, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

Queensland Government Gazette 1888-1901
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

OONTOO CUSTOMS HOUSE SITE**LHP(Q):010**

LOCATION:

Place Name and Address: Oontoo Customs House Site, Nappa Merrie Station,
via Thargomindah

Land Description: n/a

Certificate of Title: n/a

OWNER: Stanbroke Pastoral Company
GPO Box 155
Brisbane 4001

State Heritage Status: - n/a **SHR File No.:** n/a

Other Assessments: n/a

PHOTOGRAPH NOS.: Film 6, negs 32-33



Oontoo Customs House Site

OONTOO CUSTOMS HOUSE SITE**LHP(Q):010**

DESCRIPTION:

Nothing remains on the Oontoo Customs House Site except a concrete floor about 6m square, traces of a mud building, and a scatter of glass and ceramic fragments and metal building fasteners.

HISTORY:

The Township of Oontoo on the South Australian border was surveyed in 1886, and the Queensland government built a modest earth-walled Customs House there early in 1887 to levy charges on stock and goods travelling across the colonial border. It was not the most prestigious post in the Queensland Public Service, and in 1897 a visiting police officer described the building as: 'a four room cottage ... mud roof iron walls the walls are in a dangerous state and may fall at any time'. (QSA A41618) All border customs posts closed in 1903 after Federation, and the township of Oontoo was abandoned soon after.

STATEMENT OF HERITAGE VALUE:

Oontoo Customs House Site is significant as evidence of the operation of border customs in colonial Australia, and the early administration of south-western Queensland.

RELEVANT CRITERIA:

- (a) It displays historical themes that are of importance to the local area.
 - (c) It has played an important part in the lives of local residents.
-

TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The pastoral leaseholders do not encourage public access to the site, and tourism development is **not recommended**.

REFERENCES:

QSA file A41618: Oontoo Police Station 1886-1899
Tolcher, Helen, *Drought or Deluge*, 1986

13.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT REPORTS: HISTORIC CONSERVATION ZONES (SA)

In determining Historic (Conservation) Zones, the brief specifies that such zones should 'possess a distinctive historic, architectural or other character which it is desirable to protect and enhance through the Development Plan, while not necessarily exhibiting the exceptional merit required of a State Heritage Area.'

Designation of a Historic (Conservation) Zone usually relies on the integrity of the built form and its interaction with spaces, buildings, topography, plantings and street pattern. The combination of these elements constitutes the historic character of the zone.

The main purpose of designating Historic (Conservation) Zones is to ensure that their character is not lost through uncontrolled demolition or alteration of buildings or other contributing elements without review by the relevant planning authority.

No Historic (Conservation) Zones were identified in the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks region.

13.0 Historic Conservaton Zones Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

14.0 TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Author: Lyn Leader-Elliott

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The main nodes of tourism activity in the study area are around Innamincka and Birdsville, with Marree, at the junction of the Birdsville and Oodnadatta Tracks, being a staging point for travellers on both these tracks. Birdsville itself is in Queensland, while most of the Birdsville track and all of the heritage places with tourism potential along the track are within South Australia. All heritage places on pastoral leasehold and recommended in this report as having potential for tourism development lie within South Australia.

14.1.1 Outback Heritage and Tourism Product

The attractions of the Outback are derived from its varied arid landscapes, natural environmental systems and its cultural heritage – Indigenous, European and Afghan. The Outback is rich with historical associations, stories of courage and endurance; triumph and loss. Its natural and cultural heritage are the magnets that draw most people into the region. The tourism strategies in this report are designed to ensure that this heritage can be preserved as a continuing resource, while making it accessible to visitors. The nature of this core tourism product in the region is such that it cannot be readily commodified. Most travellers to the Outback are on individual journeys of discovery, travelling independently. This report therefore does not recommend packaging or significant tourism developments. Rather, we recommend:

- the provision of low impact infrastructure and interpretation, with support for existing community initiatives in interpretation
- protection of historical sites and natural environments vulnerable to the impacts of tourism, and
- development of integrated tourism management strategies for the region

This approach will achieve the twin objectives essential for sustainable tourism in the region – protection of places of heritage significance and maintenance of core tourism attractions. The project brief was designed to focus on identification of European and other historic heritage places. Places of significance to Aboriginal people are generally not included in this report for this reason. The report recommends that separate consultations be held with Aboriginal people in the region to discuss possible inclusion of places of cultural significance to them in plans for tourism developments.

14.1.2 Tourism Demand

The Outback of South Australia is being heavily promoted as one of the State's leading attractions, with the South Australian Tourism Commission positioning this State as being the gateway to the Outback.

Demand for access to remote areas is increasing, with travellers in four wheel drive (4WD) vehicles being the main users, either as free and independent travellers, or as

organised tour groups. These users have proved unwilling to stay on existing public access roads, and frequently venture off the main tracks to explore – many without seeking the permission of the pastoral leaseholder. There is steady pressure for new places to be made accessible by opening up new routes, and to discover new places of interest. Conflict has developed between 4WD travellers wishing to open up more access to parts of the Outback and the pastoral leaseholders and others managing the lands.

14.1.3 Land Use

Most of the land covered by this survey area is South Australia Crown land which is leased for three main uses – grazing, mining and national parks. Most leases are for pastoral use, where lease holders have the right to graze stock. Any change of land use, or of the type of stock grazed on a pastoral lease, must have the approval of the South Australian Pastoral Board. In the absence of local government in outback South Australia, the Pastoral Board carries many planning and infrastructure functions which would elsewhere be the responsibility of a local authority. Its most important tourism-related functions flow from its responsibility for public access roads throughout the region and the requirements under the Pastoral Land Management and Conservation Act (1989, S 43) that people wishing to travel by vehicle over pastoral lease land must notify and seek permission from the lessee to do so. (Walkers need only notify the lessee).

The SA Pastoral Board and the South Australian Tourism Commission are working together on the issue of public access roads in the Outback Region of South Australia. A report on this issue was received by these agencies in April 2002. Public access to pastoral lands will also be canvassed generally in the report of the Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism Strategy, and the issue must be an integral consideration in any tourism strategy for the region. In view of the growing pressures on sensitive lands and sites exerted by uncontrolled 4WD visitors, it has been decided in the present report that sensitive or remote sites away from public access routes will not be recommended for tourism development. If further access routes are opened in the study area, or management of vulnerable sites can be improved, recommendations on these sites may need to be reviewed.

14.2 STRATEGIC APPROACH

14.2.1 Principles

Taking into account the pressures described above, and the principles set out in *Successful Tourism at Heritage Places* (Australian Heritage Commission 2001), a broad strategic approach was developed by the consultants and adopted by the Project Steering Committee. Decisions and recommendations on the tourism development potential of individual sites have been made in accordance with this strategic approach, which is based on the following principles:

- tourism is a significant industry in the outback and attracts the support of State and local governments;
- tourists want to enjoy the experience of remote travel, with the sense of discovery and adventure that accompany it;

- sustainable tourism in this fragile environment requires careful strategic management;
- specific measures will be required for individual sites to protect them against damage;
- the tourist experience will be enhanced if tourists have the opportunity to understand the meaning of the places they see;
- landholders' rights to control access onto their properties should be respected;
- Aboriginal associations with place and Aboriginal culture should be presented and interpreted wherever possible in this region, provided that this is acceptable to relevant Aboriginal communities;
- any presentation or interpretation of Aboriginal associations with place should be determined in collaboration with the Aboriginal communities concerned;
- decisions on presentation and interpretation of sites on pastoral land should be made in consultation with leaseholders;
- existing community initiatives to present and interpret historical and other places of interest should be encouraged and reinforced
- communities should be involved in interpretive programs wherever possible.

14.2.2 Criteria for Assessing Tourism Potential

These principles were incorporated in framing recommendations on the suitability of places for tourism development. Places identified as having tourism potential met the following criteria:

- potential for heritage interpretation;
- proximity to main tourist routes;
- accessible by public access roads;
- tourism access to the place was acceptable to the leaseholder or land owner;
- sufficiently robust to take foot traffic or vehicle traffic with a modest approach to site management requirements.

Sites that were fragile, remote and potential targets for vandalism have not been recommended as suitable for tourism development. Neither have those where places were off public access routes and land holders were unwilling for them to be designated as having tourism potential.

In a number of cases, specific management suggestions have been made to minimise the risk of further damage to sites and/or improve safety at the site.

In the townships of Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka, consultations indicated that a broad approach was preferable to one focused on individual sites of official heritage significance. General reports have therefore been prepared for Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka.

Opportunities for interpretation and infrastructure (such as toilets) have been identified at several sites which are not recommended for heritage listing, but which are natural places to interpret landscape or historical interest (the Mungerannie Gap and Naterrannie Sandhills are examples). Separate reports have also been prepared with recommendations for these places.

14.3 TOURISM IN THE SURVEY AREA

No tourism data are available for tourist activity specifically in the region encompassed by the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. The following generalisations have been made from material available for the Flinders and Outback tourism region of South Australia, the Marree Soil Conservation Board district and field observations.

The SA Tourism Commission regards the region as having “strong appeal in a broad range of international markets with its rugged, open spaces and ancient landscape. Unspoilt nature is the major attraction of the region, as well as adventure 4wheel driving, heritage and aboriginal culture.” (SA Tourism Commission 2002).

14.3.1 Profile of Visitors to the Region

Domestic visitors to the Outback spent over 1.1 million visitor nights in 2000/2001. In the calendar year 2000/2001 there were 264,000 domestic overnight visitors to the Outback region – 149,000 from interstate, and 115,000 from South Australia. 54,000 international visitors visited the region in the year ending June 2000.

South Australian visitors stayed 578,000 nights, interstate visitors stayed 547,000 nights and international visitors stayed 94,000 nights.

Tourism in the regions covered by the survey area is generated mainly by independent travellers, with some coach and 4 wheel drive safari group tours. The main mode of transport is 4 wheel drive vehicles. The regional tourism strategy (SA Tourism Commission, 1997) indicates that the main activities undertaken by tourists in the Flinders and Outback region, in order of participation, are:

- scenic drives and sight seeing
- photography
- flora and fauna
- visiting historical sites
- bushwalking
- bird watching
- 4WD touring
- experiencing aboriginal culture
- gem collecting

The strategy identifies the main target markets for the region as:

- 4WD enthusiasts
- special interest groups
- coach and 4WD tours
- caravan, camping and bush camping enthusiasts
- international visitors
- back to nature/escape the stress

The following visitor types were identified in a product review and marketing workshop for the Flinders Ranges and Outback Tourism Development Strategy:

- *South Australian locals*: Families, under 25s, school groups, retirees, guiding friends and relatives;
- *Interstate*: Eastern states retirees, 4WD owners (DINKS, family, cashed up, clubs), special interest groups (schools, clubs etc), and bushwalkers. (The latter are more likely to be interested in the Flinders than the outback).
- *Overseas*: *Backpackers* (travelling through), upscale free independent travellers (North American, Northern European, Asian/Japanese developing), expedition and older Northern European (coach tours).

The *Flinders Ranges/Outback Tourism Profile* (SATC 2002) remarks that there is great potential for the rapidly expanding nature based tourism market. It notes that “the area is rich in natural assets as well as Aboriginal traditions and culture which go back thousands of years”. Popular travellers guides such as Lonely Planet’s *Outback Australia* (O’Byrne 1998), the Automobile Association’s *Outback South Australia and Central Australia* (Nicol 1994) and the Westprint map series all feature extensive historical information relating to the post-settlement period. South Australia is beginning to address cultural heritage promotion through its heritage tourism strategies, and Queensland has invested significantly (over \$100 million) in promoting the cultural heritage of its Outback areas through the Heritage Trails Network.

The Marree Soil Conservation Board District Plan notes that the majority of tourists coming into their District are travelling as small groups in 4WD vehicles. “For many, the 4WD is used for its size and a feeling of security, rather than its all-terrain capabilities. The more adventurous cross the Simpson Desert, for which 4WD capabilities are necessary”. (Marree SCB 1997:54). Organised tour groups also visit the district. Commercial tour groups travel mostly by coach and are limited to the better quality access roads. Smaller 4WD or 6WD coaches are appearing, and 4WD convoy and ‘tag-along’ tours are becoming increasingly popular.

14.3.2 Motivations and Expectations of Visitors to the Region

No detailed information is available on the motivations and expectations of travellers to the outback. Given the range of interests and market segments which have been identified in the existing strategy documents, it is reasonable to assume that different people are seeking different sorts of experience and that they will travel in different ways. Those seeking adventurous 4WD experiences, for instance, are most likely to be the ones

pushing for more access on to pastoral lands and away from existing tracks. As road surfaces improve on the main routes to Birdsville and Innamincka, there is likely to be growth in market segments who want to see the Outback, enjoy camping and the outdoors but don't want the full rigours of desert adventure.

It would be valuable to have reliable information on visitor expectations, what attracts them about the Outback and the extent to which their experience in the region matches their expectations and interests.

Perceptions within the region are that tourism is growing rapidly and that this is leading to increasing numbers of people visiting the outback who do not understand outback codes of behaviour such as asking permission to enter pastoral land, camp hygiene and safe driving in the desert.

Recommendation 14.3.2

That research be conducted to identify expectations of visitors to the Outback regions, what attracts them and the extent to which their experience in the region matches their interests and expectations.

Action responsibility: Cooperative research involving NSW, Queensland, SA and the Northern Territory.

14.4 TOURISM ISSUES

14.4.1 Access

Pastoralism and mining are the two most significant industries in the region, with tourism growing rapidly. Most land is held as pastoral leasehold, with substantial tracts set aside as regional reserves managed by National Parks and Wildlife SA. Settlement is sparse because of the arid nature of the country.

Many tourists arrive in the outback with the expectation that they can go anywhere and do anything they choose. These expectations, and the behaviour that flows from them, are raising a number of issues that require management. The Outback Access Sub-Committee of the Marree Branch of the SA Farmers Federation (2001) writes:

The mobility of modern tourists and their expectation of unrestrained activity, enable them to quickly get into situations where they pose a threat to their own livelihood and to the safe and efficient operation of local property based enterprises.

Pastoralists are increasingly seeking to control access to their lands. Pastoralists' attitudes to tourism vary, but none is happy to have tourists travelling freely across their holdings. Mining companies discourage access to their land. Recommendations for access to particular places mentioned in this report have been made in consultation with landholders. Where landholders are opposed to access to places that are not on existing public access roads, tourism development of the site has not been recommended. A Pastoral Board study of Public Access Routes in the South Australian Outback region has

recently been completed. Its recommendations will be incorporated into discussion and decision making on opening new public access roads.

Most of the issues relating to tourism in the region relate to vehicle access to pastoral leaseholds, poor camping behaviour and hygiene, disruption of stock management practices (camping at waterholes, leaving gates open) and timber gathering for camp fires. From the visitor profile, it is apparent that these concerns apply primarily to Australians travelling in their own country.

Recommendation 14.4.1

Public access issues beyond the scope of this study but which require consideration in the broader Lake Eyre Basin heritage tourism strategy context include:

- the potential for pastoralists to charge for access to their lands by tour companies, and to make exclusive arrangements with one or more companies;
- the possibility of applying a levy on 4 Wheel Drive owners, similar to that applying in Victoria but adapted to South Australian conditions
- opening new public access routes in the region
- protection and safety of heritage places accessible to visitors and vulnerable to damage by them.

Action responsibility

Organisations to be involved in policy making and implementation are the Pastoral Board, Tourism Commissions, Transport authorities, National Parks services and Heritage agencies.

The Lake Eyre Basin heritage tourism strategy to consider these issues in relation to its brief.

14.4.2 4WD Users and Campers

4WD Clubs are viewed in the region as being well organised and constantly on the lookout for new points of interest and new places to visit. Many use GPS in planning their routes and seeking out new places. The Internet has opened new channels of communication for outback travellers and is used to exchange stories and news about tracks to take and new sites visited, with GPS locations. Small groups travelling by 4WD tend to camp along access tracks in a dispersed manner, with few people at any given site. Their destinations are usually recognised areas such as Coongie, Innamincka, Coopers Creek, Lake Eyre and Muloorina' (MSCB 1997:54). Problems arise when there is a specific focus encouraging concentrated camping, when cumulative use causes land degradation, loss of vegetation (used as firewood) and sanitation problems. The MSCB notes that organised tour groups tend to have a very high impact on relatively small areas used as overnight campsites, but are often more amenable to direction and tend to 'show more concern for good local relations' than is generally the case with the small independent groups.

Issues of Concern to Pastoralists

People travelling to remote places on their properties behave in ways that impair stock management, damage roads and create hazards. Specific concerns raised were:

- gates are left open so that stock wander, sometimes across station boundaries;
- camping near water, stockyards and gates can interfere with stock movements and impede pastoral management activities such as mustering;
- fouling of water supply and surrounding area through lack of proper bush hygiene
- some travellers ignore Road Closed signs, or advice from locals that roads are closed;
- using tracks when wet causes serious damage by drivers who go through despite advice to the contrary;
- the time spent rescuing people whose vehicles become bogged or break down
- the liability of pastoralists for people who travel through their land off public access roads.

The police and National Park managers are affected by a number of these issues, such as damage to tracks in the wet and rescues of stranded motorists. The National Parks managers are also concerned about environmental damage caused by campers.

Cattle Grids

Installation of cattle grids could help stock management where tracks pass through fence lines along routes that people want to travel. For instance, the owner of Merty Merty has closed the lower part of the Old Strzelecki Track, but has indicated that cattle grids would make the problem easier for her to manage. Estimated costs are about \$4,000 to \$6,000 for a grid on a station track, around \$20,000 for a double grid on a road. The South Australian Tourism Commission's review of outback infrastructure (Katnich 2000) specifically recommends that a grid be installed to replace the existing gate at the boundary of Clifton Hills Stations and the Innamincka Regional Reserve.

Firewood Gathering

Wood gathering for camp fires is an issue throughout the region and is of major concern in the Regional Reserves. The search for timber at heavily used camp sites has led to denudation of areas where camping is popular. Cordillo Downs reported that campers travel a long way up creek lines looking for timber, especially around the period of the Birdsville Races. Some campers carry chain saws and will cut timber from standing trees if they cannot find wood on the ground.

National Parks and Wildlife SA regard destruction by wood collectors as the major management issue in the Reserve. Chain saws are banned within the Reserves, but with only one permanent staff member (supported by one other in peak tourism season), the Service has limited capacity to ensure that the ban is observed. The Reserve manager reports that groundcover is lost near the main camping areas and there is no wildlife close to Coopers Creek. National Parks and Wildlife SA estimate that 50,000 tonnes of wood

are burnt each year. The problem is exacerbated because Queensland and NSW both ban fires in their outback national parks, so that when campers reach SA and fires are not prohibited, they have really big fires. Introducing a rule of gas fires only would alleviate the problem.

Tourism promotional imagery is featuring campfires as part of the outback experience. Discussion with tourism agencies is needed to seek a resolution of the inconsistency.

Toilets

Places used regularly as camps are fouled by poor camp hygiene. In response to local concern, the South Australian Tourism Commission has designated several camping areas on the Birdsville Track and installed small blocks of public units at them with the agreement of the pastoral lessees.

Additional toilets are also need on the tracks from Birdsville to Innamincka and from Innamincka to Lyndhurst. Several sites have been recommended as locations for toilet blocks on this route. Discussions with lessees and National Parks and Wildlife SA will be necessary to agree on location and maintenance issues.

Recommendation 14.4.2

- 1 A combined approach to managing and monitoring tourism behaviour and use in the region be developed to ensure the sustainability of the natural and cultural resources which form the raw material of tourism resources in the region. This will require cooperation between States, with input from the Australian Heritage Commission and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources. In addition to national parks, pastoral management, tourism and transport agencies, water management, soil conservation and other land management agencies should be invited to contribute.
- 2 Consideration be given to adapting the Tourism Optimisation Management Model (developed for Kangaroo Island) to the areas surrounding the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks.
- 3 The Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism Strategy consider similar measures for the basin as a whole.

Action responsibility

Australian Heritage Commission, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, SA Tourism Commission, Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism Strategy.

14.4.3 Seasonality

Tourism throughout the region is highly seasonal, with most travellers visiting it during the cooler months of the year. Peaks in tourism activity happen during special events such as the Birdsville Races and when Lake Eyre fills following heavy rains. These events impose strains on areas with little infrastructure, as additional campers search for timber and water, and relieve themselves by roadsides and campsites without taking appropriate hygiene measures. The South Australian Tourism Commission responded to concerns

expressed from the region in the last big Lake Eyre fill by installing three sets of toilets at designated campsites on the Birdsville Track and has since commissioned a survey of infrastructure in the Outback region of South Australia. (Katnich 2000)

The apparent success of the Cattle Drive from Birdsville to Marree has led to suggestions that it be held regularly, possibly at two year intervals. The impacts of this event need to be monitored and strategies put in place to manage those potential impacts.

Recommendation 14.4.3

- 1 Identify the nature, distribution and effects of seasonal pressures associated with special events, both natural and created.
- 2 Formulate strategies to manage the impacts of these seasonal pressures, giving priority to the areas most affected.

14.5 PUBLIC EDUCATION

There is a great need for public education to encourage more appropriate behaviour by travellers in the outback. This should include the following:

- Convey the message that land in the Outback is not absolutely open to all comers, but is occupied.
- Information on pastoral activity, and the importance of respect for leaseholders rights and 'good manners'. This is rarely included in codes for outback travel, where the focus is usually on safety and supplies.
- Codes of behaviour in Aboriginal lands and protocols for dealing with Aboriginal communities.
- The need to be properly prepared to go into the outback – know how to drive a 4WD, get out of a bog, fix a tyre and take enough supplies. Station people 'don't want to sell fuel, fix tyres or rescue people'.
- Basic safety codes and procedures.

The Desert Parks Pass has a lot of good information, but is thought to be too big for most people and its distribution is limited to those who buy the pass. A short, two page guide to good behaviour in the outback and in pastoral country should be prepared for wide distribution - clear, easy to read and with pictures. Such a brochure was prepared in South Australia in the early 1990s by the Tourism Commission and the Department of Environment. Other potential models exist.

The primary market in the region is independent self-drive travellers, with a small but reputedly growing group market. Strategies need to be developed to reach both independent travellers and those travelling in groups. Existing organisations concerned with education, such as Tread Lightly, should be brought into a national education program, as should 4WD clubs, motoring organisations and tour companies specialising in Outback Travel. Materials to brief coach drivers and tour managers on cultural and natural environment management could be prepared and distributed together with background notes on places of heritage interest.

The public education role is so important that it warrants the creation of a full time education officer position to work with the tourism industry and the travelling public, linked to an organisation such as the Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Committee which covers a large area of the Outback and includes three States and the Northern Territory.

Recommendation 14.5

- 1 A public education campaign be initiated, aimed at both independent travellers and the tourism industry. It should include;
 - The message that land in the Outback is not absolutely open to all comers, but is occupied.
 - Information on pastoral activity, and the importance of respect for leaseholders rights and 'good manners'.
 - Codes of behaviour in Aboriginal lands and protocols for dealing with Aboriginal communities.
 - The need to be properly prepared to go into the outback – know how to drive a 4WD, get out of a bog, fix a tyre and take enough supplies.
 - Camping codes, including waste disposal and wood collection.
 - Basic safety codes and procedures for outback travel.
- 2 A short, 2 page guide to good behaviour in the outback and in pastoral country be prepared for wide distribution - clear, easy to read and with pictures.
- 3 Develop strategies to reach the target audience for such a campaign.
- 4 Involve existing organisations concerned with education (such as Tread Lightly), 4WD clubs, motoring organisations and tour companies specialising in Outback Travel.
- 5 Create a full time education officer position to work with the tourism industry and the travelling public, linked to an organisation such as the Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Committee.
- 6 Prepare and distribute materials to brief tour managers and coach drivers on places of heritage interest, including ways of ensuring good cultural and natural environment management practice.

Action responsibility

Commonwealth Government:

- Environment Australia, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

State Government:

- State agencies concerned with tourism, environmental management, and administration of pastoral lands.
- Lake Eyre Basin Coordination Committee.

14.6 SITE MANAGEMENT

Historic and archaeological sites are featured in all the guidebooks on the Tracks as attractions along the main routes, and most appear to have fairly heavy visitation. National Parks and Wildlife SA manager of Innamincka Regional Reserve, for instance, estimates that over 90% of the 30,000 annual visitors to the Reserve see Burke's grave.

Many historic sites in the region are fragile. They are remote and usually unsupervised. Buildings are often abandoned and in poor physical condition; many buildings are in ruins. Their situation is made more vulnerable by the behaviour of some people who drive right up to sites and buildings and sometimes parking or camping in the middle of a complex. In some places, sightseeing rather than exploring appears to be the primary interest of the tourist, as they drive from marked place to marked place, driving in and out again, not leaving their vehicles.

This is causing damage to some sensitive sites in the Innamincka Reserve and to other sites such as Cadelga Homestead, where people were observed parking in the middle of the homestead ruins. Until the managers of Cordillo Downs put up protective fencing around the Woolshed, some people were driving right into and through it.

Wherever appropriate, specific recommendations have been made for site protection and conservation works on individual site reports. Typical measures include stabilising structures, erecting protective fences that allow pedestrian but not vehicle access, and creating identifiable parking areas. It is reasonable to regard these sorts of works as having a tourism product development function as well as a conservation function: they will help retain the amenity and attractiveness of the sites by reducing degradation stemming from uncontrolled access, and they will also increase the safety of sites where there are ruins, well shafts or mine shafts.

Recommendation 14.6

That site protection and conservation works be undertaken at heritage sites which are also tourist attractions, as a means of preserving both the heritage asset and tourism attraction it constitutes.

Action responsibility

Tourism and Heritage agencies at State and National level.

14.7 INTERPRETATION AND SIGNAGE

The meaning of heritage places and other sites of special interest will only be understood by visitors if the places are interpreted. Typical modes of interpretation include guided tours, printed material, on site signs, displays and interpretation centres. Interpretation is most effective when it is directly connected with the place to which it refers – to a specific site, or to a broad view or landscape vista.

In recent years there has been a move to creating themed trails, which apply their theme to places which can be far apart. Three such themed trails have identified locations and

erected their trail-specific signage within this region – the Old Ghan Trail, the Adnyamathanha Trail and the Kidman Trail. Each trail has developed its own design guidelines, and each presents information in a different way.

This report recommends that the core themes of any new interpretation undertaken at sites along the Tracks be linked to the history of the Tracks themselves - so that the tracks in effect become the themes. Additional 'themed' trails are not recommended. Moves towards common standards for design and presentation of information are to be encouraged. Pressures to badge particular trails may need to be dealt with. Design devices to unite the multiplicity of signs could be considered, such as using individual logos or different colour schemes within an overall design format

Existing interpretive signage in the region is limited. The Marree Soil Conservation Board has erected interpretive boards at Marree, Mungerannie and Monte Collina, dealing with issues of land formation and land management. The South Australian Tourism Commission has several large signs, with a single full colour image promoting an aspect of the South Australian Outback experience. Siting of these signs is contentious (for instance the Coongie Lakes sign is about 300 km from the Coongie turnoff near Innamincka, and the sign at the base of the Birdsville Track at Marree was originally placed in an Aboriginal cemetery).

This report recommends that a number of interpretive signs be established at places of particular interest along the main tourist routes. Interpretive nodes are recommended for Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka, with Mungerannie Hotel providing a smaller interpretive node (see individual location reports). In each case, local people have begun some interpretive activity, ranging from murals on historic themes, to town trail booklets, historic photograph displays, the Arabunna Cultural Centre and the Innamincka Regional Reserve interpretation centre.

These local initiatives should be encouraged and reinforced. Specific recommendations have been made in relation to particular places, such as:

- building on a booklet developed by the Marree Aboriginal School to produce a historic Marree trail guide.
- Supporting the Arabunna Cultural Centre.
- Assist the Mungerannie Hotel to provide interpretive labels for their historic photograph collection
- Support the Diamantina Shire's initiatives to develop a brochure/map on places of historical interest in the shire area, which includes Birdsville
- Support implementation of the National Parks and Wildlife SA management and interpretation plans for sites with high visitation in Innamincka Regional Reserve and Strzelecki.

Site specific signs are proposed for accessible heritage sites that can withstand visitation, and for other sites of particular visual interest, such as the landscape view from Mungerannie Gap, the Naterrannie Sandhills, and the Cobbler at Monte Collina. These signs should be simple, preferably using a common design, and sufficiently robust to withstand the region's climatic extremes. This will meet the information needs of the

majority of travellers, while not intruding into the more remote areas sought after by the more adventurous explorers and those who seek isolation and wilderness.

Oral history will be a rich resource of stories on outback life. A number of suggestions were made about people who could provide information about the past in the region. Suggestions were also made about some of the uses to which oral history recordings could be put. One suggestion was to ultimately to develop a system connected to car computers and linked to GPS, so that travellers could key into stories about the areas they are travelling through. A simpler alternative would be to produce audio tapes. The South Australian Tourism Commission is examining ways of using oral history material in interpretation activities in several places on the Birdsville Track

Recommendation 14.7

- 1 Themes for interpretation of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks should be the Tracks themselves, not artificial constructs imposed upon them. \
- 2 Interpretation should tell the stories of people who have lived along the Tracks, the physical and cultural landscapes and the shaping of the environment.
- 3 Where possible and appropriate, interpretation should include information on Aboriginal associations with place. Decisions on inclusion of information connected with the Aboriginal cultural meaning of places should be made in consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned.
- 4 Existing community interpretation activities be encouraged and strengthened where appropriate, and interpretive signs be developed and planned in consultation with local people.
- 5 Interpretation be concentrated at identified points of interest on existing major routes and locations, to meet the interests of the majority of the market. Interpretive signage should not be erected in more remote areas off the main routes to avoid intrusion on the wilderness adventure experience.
- 6 Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka are the most suitable places for interpretive nodes, with Mungerannie Hotel and Monte Collina offering opportunities to expand on interpretive activities already in place. Marree community needs a skilled professional to work with them on interpretation of the railway precinct and other historical interpretation of the town.
- 7 Interpretive signs should be unobtrusive, simple and be connected to the place and what visitors can see. Signs needs to be robust to cope with climatic extremes. Consistency of design standards is to be encouraged, and where possible visual links should be made to connect separate theme trails (such as the Kidman Trail) to interpretation along the Tracks.
- 8 Local story telling should be encouraged.
- 9 A quality guidebook be produced for the Birdsville, Strzelecki and Oodnadatta Tracks, using the expertise of someone such as John Deckert, who produces the Westprint outback map series.

- 10 Consideration be given to ways of providing to remote markets information on the history and heritage of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, and of major places of interest connected with them.
- 11 Consider ways in which oral histories can be included in interpretation for the region.

Action Responsibility

Commonwealth Government:

- Australian Heritage Commission.

State Government:

- Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, SA
Tourism Commission, National Parks and Wildlife
Service SA

Local Government:

- Shire of Diamantina.

14.8 ABORIGINAL ISSUES

Interpretation and presentation of Aboriginal history and culture is a major issue throughout the survey region. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia has advised that the sites for which they have records in the region are too sensitive to be regarded as tourism assets or to be included in tourism trails. The consultants consider that potential remains to represent aspects of Aboriginal culture and history without encouraging visitation to the sites of concern to the Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, such as burial sites or restricted access sites associated with Aboriginal Dreamings.

As this survey is focusing on European heritage, attention has been paid to significant contact sites such as missions (Killalpaninna, Bucaltaninna, Kopperamanna), historical cemeteries (as at Marree and Birdsville) and massacre sites such as Koonchera. The consultants gained the impression that there was reluctance among some pastoralists to acknowledge Aboriginal heritage in the region, possibly because of implications for land title claims. Consultation with Indigenous communities was beyond the scope of this study, and is essential for any serious consideration of what aspects (if any) of Indigenous history, culture and landscape values might be represented and interpreted, and ways in which any such interpretation might be carried out. As a general principle, the consultants would recommend that contemporary and recent Aboriginal experience should be included where appropriate as well as the more remote past and Dreaming stories; and life in the townships and settlements would be covered as well as pastoral life on the stations.

Aspects of Aboriginal heritage are presented at the Arabunna Cultural Centre in Marree and in the National Parks interpretation centre in Innamincka. The Arabunna Cultural Centre appears to be under-resourced. It has a small collection of objects, photographs and other materials, some of which appear to be very valuable. Objects are not secured or

covered and are vulnerable to theft and damage. If the Centre wishes to build its business as a tourism enterprise, it will need to improve displays and presentation.

Protocols for consultation with Aboriginal communities will need to be observed in any discussion of presentation and interpretation of Aboriginal culture and places.

Recommendation 14.8

- 1 The Aboriginal story be told for places already in the public eye and wherever appropriate.
- 2 Interpretive signage on landscapes, such as at Mungerannie Gap, Moppa Collina, and Strzelecki Crossing, should include their Aboriginal meaning and story if this is acceptable to the relevant communities and observes correct protocols.
- 3 Aboriginal places suitable for interpretation be identified along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs is willing to undertake some research and consultation.
- 4 Contemporary and recent Aboriginal experience be included in interpretation and story telling where appropriate as well as the more remote past and Dreaming stories. This could cover life in the townships and settlements as well as pastoral life on the stations.
- 5 Future heritage surveys with a tourism component should ensure that Aboriginal history in the post-contact period is included in the brief, and that budget is allocated for necessary research and consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned.
- 6 Consult with the Arabunna Cultural Centre on the potential to upgrade its displays and provide a more protected environment for artefacts and photographs.
- 7 Aboriginal communities be consulted to identify aspects of Aboriginal history, culture and landscape values that might be represented and interpreted, and ways in which any such interpretation might be carried out.

Action responsibility

Commonwealth Government:

- Australian Heritage Commission

State Government:

- Heritage SA, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, SA Tourism Commission, National Parks and Wildlife SA

Local Government:

- Shire of Diamantina

14.9 INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATION

Improved communication between key government agencies would strengthen the management and presentation of heritage places within the region. Examples of matters where improved communication is highly desirable are:

- National Parks and Wildlife SA report that tourism promote two waterholes on the Strzelecki Creek in the Strzelecki reserve to which the NPWSA doesn't allow access.
- Tourism marketing imagery portrays camp fires as an essential part of the outback tourism experience. Timber gathering for fires is highly destructive and is seen as the major management problem in the Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves by their National Parks manager.
- Different policies are reported to apply to collection of firewood in the desert parks in different states.

Recommendation 14.9

1. A working group be established between key government agencies to identify issues of mutual interest and opportunities for joint strategic approaches to tourism management and development in the outback regions.
2. National Parks organisations in South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory establish a working group to identify means of adopting a consistent approach to visitor management in the outback parks in all states and allocation of resources for managing tourism in them. Specific strategies are required to deal with issues such as collection of fire wood, provision of toilets, common codes of acceptable behaviour in the outback parks, pricing policies for park entry and camping' and mechanisms for collecting fees.

14.10 BIRDSVILLE/STRZELECKI LOOP TRAIL VIA CORDILLO DOWNS

The combined Birdsville/Strzelecki tracks are an outstanding outback experience. Cordillo Downs station has several outstanding heritage places immediately adjacent to the Cordillo track which connects Innamincka and Birdsville through South Australia. In addition to the nationally significant Cordillo Downs shearing shed, there are the Cadelga homestead ruins and several sites attached to bores – popular camping sites as well as places of historic interest. Cordillo's potential to be one of the iconic attractions of the outback is threatened by plans to downgrade the Cordillo track and encourage traffic to use the road further east running through Queensland via Nappa Merrie and the Innamincka to Birdsville Development Road. The condition of the Cordillo track is poor, with steep sides and deep cut tyre grooves. It was reported locally that this road does not conform to standard and that some years ago a new alignment was surveyed on gibber and would have a much firmer surface than the present track. If this track were maintained to a sufficient standard, it would make a wonderful loop trail connecting the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks.

Recommendation 14.10

14.0 Tourism Management

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

- 1 The Cordillo Track be recognised as forming a key part of a loop trail from Innamincka to Birdsville via Cordillo Downs.
- 2 The Cordillo Track be maintained to at least a level which would permit easy rather than rugged access.
- 3 The realignment and upgrading of this track be considered.

Action Responsibility

SA Pastoral Board, Transport SA, SA Tourism Commission.

14.11 TOURISM RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO NON-HERITAGE PLACES

This section makes recommendations for whole towns and places for which no recommendation on heritage significance is made in this report. Tourism management recommendations for individual places which are of heritage value are included in the reports on those places, and are repeated in the following sections 14.13 to 14.15

14.11.1 Marree

Marree has considerable potential for heritage tourism, with a broad enough base to include all aspects of the town and its history, not confined to places formally identified as having heritage value. It is historically rich, with much of the built fabric in place from its time as a thriving rail centre.

Existing interpretation

Some aspects of Marree's heritage are presented in a town guide, the Arabunna Cultural Centre and several information signs.

The Upper Primary School Children have prepared a booklet on Marree today – the *Marree Visitors Guide*. It includes many places important in the community, but omits many places of historical interest.

One of the Ghan Trail interpretive signs is placed on the railway platform. This sign has information on one side about The Ghan train, with a photograph of the (of the old station), and information on its other side about Marree and the train. The heritage-listed Fettle Cottages are mentioned briefly, but there is no indication of where they are in relation to the station and platforms.

The Marree Soil Conservation Board has a shelter with three information boards with text on one side. This is drawn from the Soil Conservation Board's publication *More than Meets the Eye*. These boards are repeated at Mungerannie and Monte Collina.

There is a simple, hand made sign adjacent to the replica mosque and relating to it.

The Arabunna Cultural Centre has displays of Aboriginal cultural material. They are presented in such a way that much of the material is at risk from environmental damage, or even theft.

Recommendations for Interpretation

14.11.1.1 Additional Interpretation

Additional interpretation be developed for Marree, working with the community to strengthen existing initiatives and build community ownership.

14.11.1.2 Community Officer

A person with expertise in interpretation and in working with communities be appointed to work with the different groups in Marree to produce interpretive signs, printed material and other interpretive material in ways that are acceptable to the townspeople and which also meet good interpretation standards in terms of content and design.

14.11.1.3 Historical Trail

A historical trail be developed, suitable for walking or driving, be developed, incorporating the visitors guide already produced by the School, and undertaken in cooperation with the school.

Consideration be given to putting in park benches for people to sit on at several strategic locations on the trail route.

14.11.1.4 Booklet

The Marree Visitors Guide, produced by the school, should form the foundation for a more broadly based town trail booklet, including more places and more historical information, ensuring that all places of National, State or local heritage value are incorporated. Ownership should remain with the school. As the primary agency, the school can link with other organisations as appropriate. Funding (for instance from the SA Tourism Commission) would enable the booklet cover to be designed, the map redrawn, assist scanning of additional photographs and printing costs. The new booklet should open with a general introduction to Marree – its Aboriginal heritage, why the town is here, Herrgott Springs, the Afghan community, the railway, movement of people up from Farina, the town in its heyday, closure of the railways and life now. This would provide a context for the specific information about individual buildings and places. Stories from both past and present could be included to give a clearer picture of life and the people in the town.

14.11.1.5 Signage

On site interpretation is needed in several locations in and near the town. The town is so rich in places of historical interest that it is more appropriate to put in *precinct signs* rather than signs for individual buildings. They should be simple enamel signs, with images (photographs or drawings) and diagrams accompanied by text relating to the precinct.

Precincts Recommended for Interpretation are:

14.11.1.5.1 Railway Station

There is potential for a small interpretive display in the old Railway station. The South Australian Tourism Commission is working on this display with the Marree community.

The local community have a number of plans for the railway precinct, including the restoration of the locomotives standing on the lines at the station. Additional rolling stock could be added to the yards. Further consultation should be held with the local community, and support provided for the interpretation and presentation of the town's railway history.

Given that there are already two types of signs in or close to the station (The Ghan and the Soil Conservation Board signs), any new signs need to be designed so that they are compatible with each type to avoid the visual distraction that would accompany multiple shapes, sizes and design styles.

One sign of similar design to the Ghan signs if possible, should be erected near the platform to explain the railway precinct as a whole. It should include a map, fettlers cottages, railway station buildings – rest centre, etc, the Great Northern Hotel and the shops that provided services to the railways - and should be located at a point from which all of these main features can be seen. This will enable visitors who do not wish to go into an interpretation centre to understand what they are seeing around them.

The rear of the Soil Conservation Board shelter could be used for further interpretation of Marree as a railway town, without adding to the visual mass of signage in this central precinct. A second shelter module would need to be installed, backing on to the existing shelter. The Information Bay needs a concrete surround and pathway to keep the mud under control when it rains.

Recommendations

14.11.1.5.1.1

Install a second shelter for interpretation boards of the same design as the Soil Conservation Board shelter, and backing on to it. These boards would examine the links between the railway and the town of Marree – the businesses and jobs that grew around it.

14.11.1.5.1.2

Seek funding for concrete surround and pathway around the Soil Conservation Board information shelter with the new sections mentioned above to keep the mud under control when it rains.

Management issue: an issue at the station is that children climb on the old engines. If the engines are to be conserved, protective action should be taken to prevent climbing on the engines of particular significance. It might be possible to install another engine which is of less significance and which could be climbed on and 'driven' by children,

14.11.1.5.2 Afghan Quarter

Many of the original Afghan homes still exist in the Afghan quarter on the other side of the main road, away from the rest of the town. This historically significant part of Marree should be interpreted. The level of interpretation of this quarter, the

placement of interpretive panels and the material to be included on them will need to be discussed and agreed with descendants of the Afghan community.

14.11.1.5.3 Public Buildings Precinct

The Hospital, Police Station and School are all in the school book. These sites, and the E&WS building which is behind the hospital, could all be presented on a precinct sign.

14.11.1.5.4 Residential street

There is potential for a precinct sign in Sixth Street, to include Tom Kruse's house and other old Marree houses.

14.11.1.6 Mosque

The early Marree Mosque site is out of town, between Herrgott Springs and the current site of town. There is a replica of this mosque close to the railway station. If it is acceptable to the community, we recommend that a new interpretive sign on the replica mosque replace the existing one. There should be no sign at the original mosque site itself. This should not be publicly identified as it is isolated, on private property and vulnerable to damage. Potential new signage near the replica mosque will need to be discussed with the community.

14.11.1.7 Marree Cemetery

The Marree Cemetery needs better directional signage from the town. It is suggested that directional signs to the Cemetery be erected from the town centre and the main road at the cemetery turn off to replace the existing sign, which is too low.

The cemetery has three sections – Afghan, Aboriginal and European. Within the Afghan cemetery, three Hindus buried there are separate from the Muslim graves.

Some discreet interpretation at the Cemetery is recommended, to identify the different sections within it.

14.11.1.8 Herrgott Springs

Plans have been made for the old road out to Herrgott Springs to be re-opened, but there have been delays in the necessary work being undertaken. This report recommends that the re-fencing and grading required take place as soon as possible, and that a directional sign from the main road to Herrgott Springs be installed.

This report recommends an interpretive sign be erected at the entrance to the enclosure around the spring to cover its origins, its importance to Aboriginal people, its role in the settlement of Marree and its use as a water supply for cameleers and cattle. (Reference could also be made to the diprotodon bones dug out by George Bell when he was cleaning out the well some years ago, now in the SA Museum).

Interpretation of this site will need to be discussed and developed with all communities who have an interest in it: Aboriginal people, Afghan descendants and pastoralists.

14.0 Tourism Management

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

Action responsibility

The above recommendations will need the active involvement of a number of organisations and the Marree community to ensure a cohesive approach is adopted. These include:

- Marree Progress Association, Marree School, Marree Soil Conservation Board, Arabunna Cultural Centre,
- SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs

14.11.1.9 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Aboriginal culture at present is portrayed in the Arabunna Cultural Centre. The Centre needs assistance to upgrade its displays and provide a more protected environment for artefacts and photographs. Oral history is a possibility here.

In addition to the Arabunna, the Dieri and Dieri-Mitha claim cultural connections with Herrgott Springs and the Marree area. Any interpretation of Aboriginal heritage will need to be carried out in consultation with organisations involved in land claims or Aboriginal heritage committees.

Recommendations

14.11.1.9.1

Consultations be held with the Arabunna Cultural Centre to discuss possible upgrading of displays and greater protection for them.

14.11.1.9.2

Interpretation of Aboriginal heritage should be incorporated wherever appropriate. Decisions on this should be made in consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned.

14.11.1.10 Website and/or CD

There is potential for a website or CD on Marree to be developed by the School. The School would need support to do this.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, Marree Progress Association, Australian Heritage Commission

14.11.1.11 Book

Author Lois Litchfield was reported to be interested in a revised and corrected edition of her book *Marree and the Tracks Beyond* being produced. It was reported that she does not want to undertake the necessary rewriting herself.

Recommendation	Consider financial support for research assistance and underwriting the costs of a new edition of <i>Marree and the Tracks Beyond</i> (Litchfield 1983).
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14.11.2 Mungerannie Roadhouse

The Mungerannie Roadhouse is a logical stopping place for all travellers on the Birdsville Track and is already featured in tourism guides and maps. The publican is interested in the history of the track and the surrounding country, and has an extensive collection of old photographs of the area.

Marree Soil Conservation Board information boards on landforms and land use are set up adjacent to the car parking area outside the hotel. They are designed as a single bay, with text and images on one side only.

Recommendation 14.11.2.1

- 1 Additional interpretation boards be installed, on themes relating to pastoral leases and pastoral life. The boards should cover the issues that the publican reports are those that are most frequently asked about at the hotel. These are:
 - Size of properties, stocking rate, working pastoral country
 - Rainfall.
 - Vegetation – 95% of herbage is edible and very high protein.
 - Careful management now of the numbers of cattle.
 - Water – Artesian Basin. Refer to Mount Gason Bore, depth of bores.
 - Polypipe – thousands of Kilometres of polypipe have transformed stock watering and therefore stock management.
 - The importance of camping away from water.
- 2 Approach the Marree Soil Conservation Board to negotiate the possibility of adding a bay to the rear of their information panels, so that the new interpretation boards could form part of the same visual structure rather than creating a separate bank of signs in the car park. A similar strategy is proposed for additional railway precinct signs at Marree.
- 3 Install a small interpretation board at the side of the Mungerannie waterhole, outlining its significance to Aboriginal people and European settlers.
- 4 Interpret site of the former Mungerannie Police Station under the coolibah tree at the rear of the hotel. Include Aboriginal elements of the story.
- 5 Provide support for the publican in providing small interpretive labels for the collection of historical photographs on display in the room next to the bar.

14.11.3 Mungerannie Roadhouse

The Birdsville Track passes through the Mungerannie Gap a few kilometres north of Mungerannie Hotel. A broad panorama can be seen from the top of the gap, looking north.

Recommendation 14.11.3

Install an interpretation sign in the safe parking area at the top of the gap. Themes should be:

- The landscape, landforms and land use of the surrounding panorama.
 - Aboriginal Dreaming stories if appropriate.

14.11.4 Natterannie Sandhills

The Natterannie Sandhills feature highly in stories of the adventures of the mail runs from Marree to Birdsville, as their shifting red sand made a formidable obstacle for vehicles which sometimes took days to cross the ten miles of the dune system.

With improved pastoral management and the reduction in numbers of rabbits, the dunes have stabilised and vegetation has regenerated to a point where the traveller does not readily identify this landscape as the notorious Natterannie system.

Recommendation 14.11.4

A single interpretive sign is recommended on the western side of the track at the first main rise between Cooper Crossing and Mulka, in a clear patch by the roadside.

Themes to be covered:

- Aboriginal relationship to this landscape (to be determined in collaboration with the traditional owners).
- The challenge of crossing these dunes in the old days of the Birdsville Track.
- Tom Kruse's mail run – use anecdote as example with picture.
- Revegetation and dune stabilisation since rabbit numbers have come under control and with improved pastoral management.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, with involvement of others as appropriate.

14.11.5 Town of Birdsville

The existence of an active local government authority in the Diamantina Shire Council sets Birdsville apart from the South Australian townships of Marree and Innamincka as it provides a strong basis for local initiatives working within a locally developed strategic framework, together with the ability to raise and allocate resources effectively. Birdsville has a Visitor Information Centre which is co-located with the Library, and is the base for the Shire Tourism Coordinator.

The tourism strategy for Diamantina Shire gives primary emphasis to nature based tourism, and refers to the opportunities to promote desert culture, lifestyle and heritage as part of Birdsville's attraction. It refers to fostering and encouraging the development of

local area development plans including landscape, streetscape and townscape initiatives. Such initiatives could assist in identifying techniques for managing the built character of the town so that its history and identity as an outback centre are retained.

The Tourism Strategy indicates that consideration is being given to developing themed signage, displays and visitor information, covering both printed materials (such as brochures) and information boards. There are many places of historical interest in and around Birdsville which would benefit from simple interpretation, either in a printed form or on-site interpretive signs. All sites recommended for heritage listing should be included in a printed brochure or map (see recommendation 14.11.5.4 below). Locations for interpretive signs would need to be chosen with care, and in consultation with local government, building owners and townspeople.

Recommendation 14.11.5

The following general recommendations are made for Birdsville as a whole. Recommendations for individual sites should be read in conjunction with these general recommendations.

1. This report endorses the Diamantina Shire Tourism Strategy to foster and encourage the development of local area development plans including landscape, streetscape and townscape activities.
2. Birdsville's history and outback culture should be incorporated as part of its attraction in all marketing activities.
3. Presentation of Birdsville's cultural heritage should include all aspects of Birdsville's history. It should include its Aboriginal as well as European settlement history, and decisions on presentation and interpretation should be made in consultation with members of the communities concerned. Themes for interpretation should include Aboriginal occupation, stock routes and life in the outback (incorporating stories of families and children).
4. Birdsville's historical sites and other places of interest such as the race track should be promoted via a colour brochure or illustrated map. This may form part of a promotional tool designed to cover the whole local government area.

Places of heritage value to be included in such a brochure are:

- Birdsville Hotel
- Birdsville Australian Inland Mission Nursing Home (former Royal Hotel)
- Birdsville Court House
- Birdsville Cemetery
- Birdsville Hydro Power Station
- Birdsville Chinese gardens site
- Birdsville Burke & Wills tree
- Diamantina Crossing

14.11.6 Innamincka Regional Reserve

National Parks and Wildlife SA manages this area with minimum resources. Tourism into the area is growing and is imposing increasing pressure on the heritage fabric, the existing infrastructure and the park managers.

14.11.6.1 General Tourism Management Issues

Throughout the State Heritage Area, there are a number of tourism-related management issues which need to be addressed. The NPWS is well aware of them but lacks resources to deal with them effectively. These issues include:

- 14.11.6.1.1** Collection of wood for camp fires has led to serious vegetation loss. Wood collection is more tightly controlled in NSW national parks than in SA, so wood loss here is particularly severe.
- 14.11.6.1.2** 4WD traffic moving off marked trails and venturing into other areas, damaging vegetation and disrupting fauna.
- 14.11.6.1.3** 'Souveniring' or theft of artefacts from archaeological sites and ruins.
- 14.11.6.1.4** Vandalism at remote sites.
- 14.11.6.1.5** Camping outside of approved camping areas, with site damage and fouling through inappropriate toilet behaviour.

14.11.6.2 South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC)

The SATC commissioned a tourism strategy for the outback region of the State in 2001. This strategy makes several recommendations relating to infrastructure and accommodation within the park. These are:

- 14.11.6.2.1** Upgrade the Innamincka airstrip.
- 14.11.6.2.2** Establish a working party between the South Australian Tourism Commission, the National Parks and Wildlife SA and Transport SA to deal with access roads to national parks.
- 14.11.6.2.3** SATC, in consultation with the Outback Areas Community Development Trust and National Parks and Wildlife SA, 'provide assistance to upgrade a package of infrastructure items necessary to support the growing tourism industry in Innamincka, as a matter of high priority'. Specific mention is made of new accommodation development in Innamincka.

Recommendation

1. This consultancy team supports the recommendations that infrastructure and access issues be discussed jointly between the agencies specified above.
2. It also recommends that Heritage SA be included in discussions involving the State Heritage Area, to ensure that any developments avoid damage to places of heritage significance and surrounding areas, including damage to visual amenity.

3. Include the track from Innamincka to Birdsville via Cordillo Downs in discussions on public access roads (see recommendations on Cordillo Downs).
4. The proposed joint SATC/NPWS working party identify the most effective ways of managing visitor behaviour in the heritage reserve and the resources required to achieve essential improvements.

14.11.6.3 Innamincka Township Interpretation

The National Parks regional officers have identified opportunities for interpretation in the Innamincka township and at key Burke and Wills sites. The recommendations made here are consistent with the Parks Service proposals.

Town Heritage Trail

Develop a trail which links sites of historic and natural interest in the old town of Innamincka. The starting point should be the NPWS headquarters, a reproduction of the AIM Nursing Home. The trail should be designed so that it is suitable for walking or driving.

Small on-site interpretive boards should be used to convey information about the historic township and its environment, with illustrations such as photographs, and a small amount of information. Together, the signs should convey information about the changing fortunes of Innamincka as well as the individual sites.

Recommendations

- 14.11.6.3.1** An interpretive trail be developed in the Innamincka historic township, with on-site interpretation, suitable for walking or driving. (National Parks and Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA)
- 14.11.6.3.2** Guidebook for Innamincka township, Innamincka Regional Reserve and Strzelecki Regional Reserve and connecting areas.
- 14.11.6.3.3** A quality book on Innamincka Town, the Innamincka Regional Reserve and the Strzelecki Regional Reserve would be a major interpretive tool for these areas. Content should cover land forms, flora and fauna, Aboriginal culture and history, settlement history, pastoralism, development of the Strzelecki Track and the oil and gas fields. It could assist in directing tourists to areas of the reserves which are better equipped to manage visitation.

Such a book should also include the lands between the two reserves, so that travellers have complete information, rather than entering a hiatus at park boundaries. Collaboration of pastoral leaseholders would be required.

John Deckert from Westprint, who produces an excellent series of maps on the Outback, has expressed an interest in working on such a project.

- 14.11.6.3.4** A quality illustrated guidebook be produced to cover the Innamincka township, Innamincka Regional Reserve, Strzelecki Regional Reserve and the areas between the two reserves. (SATC, NPWS. Heritage SA and Westprint to discuss options).

14.11.6.4 Interpretation Centre

The interpretive display in the Innamincka NPWS headquarters is dated, crowded and text heavy. NPWS have developed a brief to upgrade the interpretation to:

- make it more interactive and more attractive to children
- introduce visitors to what the park has to offer and encourage them to go out into it and see what's there
- improve the historical information component, including petroleum history,
- install touch screens with the capacity to update information in the system from the local office.

Recommendation

Upgrade the interpretation in the National Parks headquarters to make it more interactive and inclusive; encourage appropriate park visitation; and to facilitate easy updating of information.

14.11.6.5 Burke and Wills sites

The Burke and Wills sites within the State Heritage Area provide an excellent for potential interpretation, focussing on the local story of Burke and Wills, their passage through this area on their way north, and the tragedy of the expedition's end.

Burke's Grave

Burke's grave is the most visited site in the park. An estimated 99% of all Innamincka Regional Reserve visitors, around 40,000 to 50,000 a year, make the trip out to the site. The site is no longer directly accessible by vehicle, to protect it from damage. A fence surrounds it, and visitors must walk about 300m from their vehicles to the grave site, through the trees on the river bank, conjuring the feeling of the place.

National Parks report that coach traffic with elderly visitors is increasing, and that some of them have difficulty walking the sandy path to the grave site. The path surface needs hardening to make access easier.

Increasing visitor numbers and coach traffic require additional infrastructure. A new road alignment and coach parking are suggested, together with an additional set of toilets closer to the grave (the only ones now are in the camping grounds, too far away for coaches).

The original Innamincka HS is near Burke's grave. There is potential for on site interpretation at the ruin itself, but with no directional signage from the road.

Recommendation

Additional infrastructure be installed at appropriate locations near Burke's grave site to meet the needs of growing numbers of visitors (path hardening, road re-alignment, coach parking and toilets). (National Parks and Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission).

Wills and King Sites

The Wills and King memorial sites are marked by cairns. Both are heavily degraded by 4WD vehicles driving right up to them. The NPWS proposes strategies to shift the 4WDers into a more active experience, rather than the drive in/drive out which is what many do now.

Recommendation

Upgrade both the Wills and King memorial sites so that access is changed from vehicle to foot access. Parking should be provided further away from the cairns, with a hard surface that will not be damaged in the wet. This will enhance the experience of the sites, and allow revegetation around them. (NPWS, SATC)

King's marker is a cairn erected by two families. The track is quite dangerous at the point where it passes the marker, with some people stopping to look at it and others driving through to the nearby camping area. The road alignment around King's marker be reviewed to improve safety. (NPWS).

Summary of Tourism Recommendations for Innamincka Regional Reserve

1. Support the SATC outback tourism strategy recommendations that infrastructure and access issues be discussed jointly between agencies, especially the NPWS, SATC and Heritage SA.
2. Heritage SA should be included in any discussions involving developments in the State Heritage Area, to avoid damage to places of heritage significance and surrounding areas, including damage to visual amenity.
3. Include the track from Innamincka to Birdsville via Cordillo Downs in discussions on public access roads (see recommendations on Cordillo Downs).
4. The proposed joint SATC/NPWS working party identify the most effective ways of managing visitor behaviour in the regional reserve and the resources required to achieve essential improvements. Heritage SA be included in discussions relating to the State Heritage Area.
5. An interpretive trail be developed in the Innamincka historic township, with on-site interpretation, suitable for walking or driving. (National Parks and Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA).
6. A quality illustrated guidebook be produced to cover the Innamincka township, Innamincka Regional Reserve, Strzelecki Regional Reserve and the areas between the two reserves. (SATC, NPWS. Heritage SA and Westprint to discuss options).

7. Upgrade the interpretation in the National Parks headquarters to make it more interactive and inclusive; encourage appropriate park visitation; and to facilitate easy updating of information.
8. Additional infrastructure be installed at appropriate locations near Burke's grave site to meet the needs of growing numbers of visitors (path hardening, road re-alignment, coach parking and toilets). (National Parks and Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission).
9. Upgrade both the Wills and King memorial sites so that access is changed from vehicle to foot access. Parking should be provided further away from the cairns, with a hard surface that will not be damaged in the wet. This will enhance the experience of the sites, and allow revegetation around them. (NPWS, SATC)
10. The road alignment around King's site be reviewed to improve safety. (NPWS).

14.11.7 Strzelecki Regional Reserve

14.11.7 .1 Strzelecki Crossing

This is a strong site, ideally suited for a camping area and an interpretation node for the Strzelecki Track. People are stopping here now, and its development as a camping site will relieve pressure on other more vulnerable sites. Nothing marks the crossing at present.

Recommendation 14.11.7.1

Toilets to be installed and the area regularised as a camping area.

Interpretation to provided, stressing the themes:

- The Strzelecki Creek, its flow, plant and wildlife
- Pastoral life and history
- Harry Redford .

Action Responsibility

National Parks and Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission

14.11.7.2 The Cobbler

The Cobbler is a sand dune area created by rabbits and overgrazing. It features vividly in the mythology of the Strzelecki Track, with writers such as Elizabeth Burchill graphically describing the horrors of the journey through the shifting dunes in the 1930s. In 2002, the area is transformed, and it is difficult to imagine the scenes described by Burchill and others.

The Monte Collina bore roadside stop at the southern edge of the Strzelecki Regional Reserve is a possible site for interpretation, as there is already an information bay and camping area there. It is managed jointly by NPWSA and Transport SA. There is a group of information boards already here, erected by the Marree Soil Conservation Board,

SANTOS and DEHAA. They contain information and images of the landforms and recommended travellers' precautions. These boards are the same as the ones at Innamincka and Mungerannie.

This is an ideal place to interpret the history of the Strzelecki Track, the Cobbler, the bore and its associated pool, which flows over into a wetland and has plentiful birdlife. Its location is especially good for traffic coming up from the south, but would still be effective for southbound travellers. There is an existing sign from the road to the bore and information area.

This area is heavily used – it was reported that a group of 200 had been camped there 2 nights before we arrived. National Parks and Wildlife SA plan to put in a toilet – we strongly recommend this happen sooner rather than later.

Recommendation 14.11.7.2

- 1 Install interpretation of the history of the Strzelecki Track, the Cobbler, the bore and its associated wetland.
- 2 Install a toilet as a priority and regularise the area as a camping site.

Action responsibility

Location and content of the interpretive signage recommended for The Cobbler should be determined by National Parks and Wildlife SA.

SA Tourism Commission be involved in discussions on potential interpretation of Monte Collina and regularisation of the area as a camping site with toilets provided.

Marree Soil Conservation Board and other interested parties be consulted.

14.11.7.3 Moppa Collina Channel

There is an existing parking bay and lookout with a view south to the Flinders Ranges, providing an ideal place for interpretation of the cultural and natural landscapes visible on the wide horizon.

Recommendation 14.11.7.3

An interpretation sign be erected at the parking bay, stressing the themes:

- landscape (Aboriginal and scientific)
- the water course
- Flinders Ranges.

Action responsibility

SA Tourism Commission, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs

14.12 SUMMARY OF GENERAL TOURISM RECOMMENDATIONS

14.12.1 Research

It is recommended that research be conducted to identify expectations of visitors to the Outback regions, what attracts them and the extent to which their experience in the region matches their interests and expectations.

Action responsibility

Cooperative research is needed, involving all States with Outback tourism - New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

14.12.2 Access Issues

Public access issues beyond the scope of this study but which require consideration in the broader Lake Eyre Basin heritage tourism strategy context include:

- the potential for pastoralists to charge for access to their lands by tour companies, and to make exclusive arrangements with one or more companies;
- the possibility of applying a levy on 4 Wheel Drive owners, similar to that applying in Victoria but adapted to South Australian conditions
- opening new public access routes in the region
- protection and safety of heritage places accessible to visitors and vulnerable to damage by them.

Action responsibility

Lies at State level. Organisations to be involved in policy making and implementation are the Pastoral Board, Tourism Commissions, Transport authorities, National Parks services and Heritage agencies.

The Lake Eyre Basin heritage tourism strategy to consider these issues in relation to its brief.

14.12.3 Managing 4WD and Camping Behaviour

1. A combined approach to managing and monitoring tourism behaviour and use in the region be developed to ensure the sustainability of the natural and cultural resources which form the raw material of tourism resources in the region. This will require cooperation between States, with input from the Australian Heritage Commission and the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources. In addition to national parks, pastoral management, tourism and transport agencies, water management, soil conservation and other land management agencies should be invited to contribute.
2. Consideration be given to adapting the Tourism Optimisation Management Model (developed for Kangaroo Island) to the areas surrounding the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks and
3. The Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism Strategy consider similar measures for the basin as a whole.

Action responsibility Australian Heritage Commission, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, SA Tourism Commission, Lake Eyre Basin Heritage Tourism Strategy.

14.12.4 Managing Seasonal Impacts

- 1 Identify the nature, distribution and effects of seasonal pressures associated with special events, both natural and created.
- 2 Formulate strategies to manage the impacts of these seasonal pressures, giving priority to the areas most affected.

Action responsibility Australian Heritage Commission, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, State Tourism Commissions, in consultation with Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Committee and other relevant organisations.

14.12.5 Public Education

14.12.5.1 A public education campaign be initiated, aimed at both independent travellers and the tourism industry. It should include:

- 1 The message that land in the Outback is not absolutely open to all comers, but is occupied.
- 2 Information on pastoral activity, and the importance of respect for leaseholders rights and 'good manners'.
- 3 Codes of behaviour in Aboriginal lands and protocols for dealing with Aboriginal communities.
- 4 The need to be properly prepared to go into the outback – know how to drive a 4WD, get out of a bog, fix a tyre and take enough supplies.
- 5 Camping codes, including waste disposal and wood collection.
- 6 Basic safety codes and procedures for outback travel.

14.12.5.2 A short, 2 page guide to good behaviour in the outback and in pastoral country be prepared for wide distribution - clear, easy to read and with pictures.

14.12.5.3 Develop strategies to reach the target audience for such a campaign.

14.12.5.4 Involve existing organisations concerned with education (such as Tread Lightly), 4WD clubs, motoring organisations and tour companies specialising in Outback Travel.

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14.12.5.5 Create a full time education officer position to work with the tourism industry and the travelling public, linked to an organisation such as the Lake Eyre Basin Coordinating Committee.

14.12.5.6 Prepare and distribute materials to brief tour managers and coach drivers on places of heritage interest, including ways of ensuring good cultural and natural environment management practice.

Action responsibility

Commonwealth Government:

- Environment Australia, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources.

State Government:

- State agencies concerned with tourism, environmental management, and administration of pastoral lands.
- Lake Eyre Basin Coordination Committee.

14.12.6 Site Protection

It is recommended that site protection and conservation works be undertaken at heritage sites which are also tourist attractions, as a means of preserving both the heritage asset and the tourism attraction it constitutes. Individual site reports for these places contain specific recommendations relating to those sites.

Action responsibility

Tourism and Heritage agencies at State and National level.

14.12.7 Interpretation

14.12.7.1 Themes for interpretation of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks should be the Tracks themselves, not artificial constructs imposed upon them.

14.12.7.2 Interpretation should tell the stories of people who have lived along the Tracks, the physical and cultural landscapes and the shaping of the environment.

14.12.7.3 Where possible and appropriate, interpretation should include information on Aboriginal associations with place. Decisions connected with the Aboriginal cultural meaning of places should be made in consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned.

14.12.7.4 Existing community interpretation activities be encouraged and strengthened where appropriate, and interpretive signs be developed and planned in consultation with local people.

14.12.7.5 Interpretation be concentrated at identified points of interest on existing major routes and locations, to meet the interests of the majority of the

market. Interpretive signage should not be erected in more remote areas off the main routes to avoid intrusion on the wilderness adventure experience.

- 14.12.7.6** Marree, Birdsville and Innamincka are the most suitable places for interpretive nodes, with Mungerannie Hotel and Monte Collina offering opportunities to expand on interpretive activities already in place. Marree community needs a skilled professional to work with them on interpretation of the railway precinct and other historical interpretation of the town.
- 14.12.7.7** Interpretive signs should be unobtrusive, simple and be connected to the place and what visitors can see. Signs needs to be robust to cope with climatic extremes. Consistency of design standards is to be encouraged, and where possible visual links should be made to connect separate theme trails (such as the Kidman Trail) to interpretation along the Tracks.
- 14.12.7.8** Local story telling should be encouraged.
- 14.12.7.9** A quality guidebook be produced for the Birdsville, Strzelecki and Oodnadatta Tracks, using the expertise of someone such as John Deckert, who produces the Westprint outback map series.
- 14.12.7.10** Consideration be given to ways of providing to remote markets information on the history and heritage of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, and of major places of interest connected with them.
- 14.12.7.11** Consider ways in which oral histories can be included in interpretation for the region.

Action Responsibility

Commonwealth Government:

- Australian Heritage Commission

State Government:

- Heritage SA, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, SA Tourism Commission, National Parks and Wildlife SA, Shire of Diamantina.

14.12.8 Aboriginal Heritage Issues

- 14.12.8.1** The Aboriginal story be told for places already in the public eye and wherever appropriate.
- 14.12.8.2** Interpretive signage on landscapes, such as at Mungerannie Gap, Moppa Collina, and Strzelecki Crossing, should include their Aboriginal meaning and story if this is acceptable to the relevant communities and observes correct protocols.

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- 14.12.8.3** Aboriginal places suitable for interpretation be identified along the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks. The Department of State Aboriginal Affairs is willing to undertake some research and consultation.
- 14.12.8.4** Contemporary and recent Aboriginal experience be included in interpretation and story telling where appropriate as well as the more remote past and Dreaming stories. This could cover life in the townships and settlements as well as pastoral life on the stations.
- 14.12.8.5** Future heritage surveys with a tourism component should ensure that Aboriginal history in the post-contact period is included in the brief, and that budget is allocated for necessary research and consultation with the Aboriginal communities concerned.
- 14.12.8.6** Consult with the Arabunna Cultural Centre on the potential to upgrade its displays and provide a more protected environment for artefacts and photographs.
- 14.12.8.7** Aboriginal communities be consulted to identify aspects of Aboriginal history, culture and landscape values that might be represented and interpreted, and ways in which any such interpretation might be carried out.

Action responsibility

Commonwealth agencies:

- Australian Heritage Commission

State agencies:

- Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, SA
Tourism Commission, National Parks and Wildlife
SA

Local government:

- Shire of Diamantina

14.12.9 Interagency Communication

- 14.12.9.1** A working group be established between key government agencies to identify issues of mutual interest and opportunities for joint strategic approaches to tourism management and development in the outback regions.
- 14.12.9.2** National Parks organisations in South Australia, Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory establish a working group to identify means of adopting a consistent approach to visitor management in the outback parks in all states and allocation of resources for managing tourism in them. Specific strategies are required to deal with issues such as collection of fire wood, provision of toilets, common codes of

acceptable behaviour in the outback parks, pricing policies for park entry and camping and mechanisms for collecting fees.

14.12.10 Birdsville/Strzelecki Loop Trail via Cordillo Downs

- 14.12.10.1** The Cordillo Track be recognised as forming a key part of a loop trail from Innamincka to Birdsville via Cordillo Downs.
- 14.12.10.2** The Cordillo Track be maintained to at least a level which would permit easy rather than rugged access;
- 14.12.10.3** The realignment and upgrading of this track be considered.

Action Responsibility SA Pastoral Board, Transport SA, SA Tourism Commission.

14.13 TOURISM MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SITES OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE (PLACES ALREADY ON REGISTER)

14.13.1 Marree Fettleers Cottages

These cottages are an integral part of Marree's railway precinct. They are mentioned briefly on one side of the Ghan trail sign on the Railway Station platform, but there is no indication on the sign as to where they are. Fettleers Cottages have significance to Aboriginal communities in Marree as well as significance in relation to the town's railway history.

A major project to interpret the railway heritage of Marree is planned for the railway precinct. Consultation with the local community is taking part in relation to this project.

Recommendations

- 1 Interpretation of the railway precinct include the fettleers cottages.
- 2 The Aboriginal community be consulted about incorporating information on the cottages' Aboriginal significance in addition to their connection with railway history.
- 3 Interpretation of the railway precinct as a whole include a map, the fettleers cottages, the Railway station buildings, rest centre, the Great Northern Hotel and the shops that provided services to the railways.

Action responsibility Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs

14.13.2 Great Northern Hotel, Marree

The hotel is included in the *Marree Visitor Information Booklet* and should be included in any historical trails developed in Marree.

Murals and photographs of Marree's history decorate the walls of the bar and dining room, giving lively local interpretations of aspects of Marree life. They suit the character of the town and the building.

The Great Northern Hotel should also be included as a key location in the interpretation of the railway precinct, linking to the railway station and to the other buildings forming the Railway Terrace streetscape.

Action responsibility Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission

14.13.3 Lake Harry Date Plantation Site

- 1 The ruins need to be stabilised, with safety warning signs.
- 2 An on-site interpretive sign is recommended, with photographs of the building as it was when standing, and the date plantation.

Action responsibility Heritage SA

14.13.4 Lake Palankarina Fossil Reserve

Lake Palankarina has been a Fossil Reserve since 1954, under the jurisdiction of the South Australian Museum Board. The area is consequently protected, but regulations are hard to enforce because of the remoteness and isolation of the site. It is relatively undisturbed except for scientific collecting regularly conducted by the South Australian Museum under the direction of the Curator of Fossils.

Any interpretation would best be included in an interpretation centre distant from the fossil fields, such as that proposed for the Lake Eyre Basin in the *Outback South Australia Tourism Strategy 2001* (p.19). The South Australian Museum should play a central role in deciding whether any level of interpretation is appropriate and, if so, should be actively involved in such interpretation.

Recommendations

Directional signs are not recommended.

Conscious de-marketing is recommended.

Action responsibility SA Museum, Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission

14.13.5 Fossil Lakes Kanunka, Pitikanta And Ngapakaldi

At present these areas are undisturbed except for scientific study supervised by the South Australian Museum. This situation should remain unchanged to protect the fossil remains from unsupervised interference.

Any interpretation would best be included in an interpretation centre distant from the fossil fields, such as that proposed for the Lake Eyre Basin in the *Outback South Australia Tourism Strategy 2001* (p.19). The South Australian Museum should play a central role in deciding whether any level of interpretation is appropriate and, if so, should be actively involved in such interpretation.

Recommendation

Conscious de-marketing is recommended.

Action responsibility

SA Museum, Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission

14.13.6 Killalpaninna Mission Site

Killalpaninna has potential for active interpretation as some degree of visitation can be expected from tourists along the Birdsville Track.

As a major cultural site, with both Indigenous and historic significance, Killalpaninna is featured widely in tourism literature. The site is vulnerable to damage by foot traffic and theft.

Recommendations

- 1 Consideration be given to a directional sign to the site from the road, indicating that access is available for a fee, and directing those interested to enquire at the Etadunna homestead. This will need to be discussed with Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, leaseholders and Heritage SA.
- 2 Interpretive signs should be installed on the mission site.
At the entrance to the fenced compound, with a map of the site and vehicle turning loop.
Major interpretation signs should be installed at the end of the turning loop.
Themes to be covered :
 - the importance of the lake and surrounding areas to the traditional owner
 - the establishment and life of the mission,
 - the Dieri people and other Indigenous peoples who lived at the mission
 - Mission buildings, with pictures of Vogelsang's house and the church as they were.
- 3 Interpretation and presentation of this site should be conducted through consultation with the relevant Aboriginal communities in accordance with proper protocols.
- 4 The present system of access by payment to station managers be encouraged to continue.

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Action responsibility

Heritage SA, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs,
SA Tourism Commission

14.13.7 Mulka Store Ruins

The existing brown directional sign to the Mulka Store from the Birdsville Track incorrectly names them the Old Mulka ruins. The Mulka Store ruins are close to the Track and appear to have heavy visitation. There are signs of vehicles driving right up to the graves and the ruins, which are unstable.

Recommendations

1. A new, accurate directional sign to the Mulka Store from the Birdsville Track.
2. A defined parking area with protective fencing be established at the lower end of the site, to prevent vehicles driving to the ruins and graves.
3. The ruins be stabilised both to conserve the structure and for public safety.
4. An interpretive sign be erected to cover the history of the store, its establishment and decline and connections with the Liston and Scooby families.
5. A second interpretive sign be erected near the house ruins at rear of the store. This could refer to the graves of Edith Scooby and other burials on site.
6. Implementation of these recommendations will require consultation with the leaseholders.

Action responsibility

Heritage SA, SA Tourism Commission

14.13.8 Cadelga Homestead Ruins

The Cadelga Homestead ruins are suffering from pressure from motor vehicles and camping-related activities.

Recommendations

A Management

1. Lightly fence the ruins to prevent vehicles driving into the site while allowing pedestrian access. A wire fence, such as that used for stock fencing, with no barbs, could be used. A small gate or break in the fence should be installed to manage pedestrian access and exclude vehicles. This would also prevent damage to the fence by people climbing through it.
2. The ruins should be stabilised for safety.
3. Cadelga is a high priority for the installation of toilets and designation as a camp site, similar to those erected by the South Australian Tourism Commission at tourism pressure points on the Birdsville Track.
4. Detailed recording, including measured drawings, of the site is recommended.

5. The basic form and layout of the complex should be retained if at some future stage a potential use for the complex emerges through, eg changes in station management arrangements or provision of tourist / traveller facilities.

B Interpretation

On-site interpretation of the complex is recommended, with three interpretation boards to be prepared around themes incorporating the Indigenous, natural and historic significance of the site.

Location	Themes
Adjacent to the water course	The importance of the waterhole to Indigenous people and pastoralists
Creek side of the main homestead	Pastoral settlement at Cadelga, building of homestead, abandonment, and continuing pastoral occupation with more distant management.
Between the stone outbuildings and the timber shed	Plan of homestead and outlying buildings to explain what they were and how the complex functioned.

The Cadelga management recommendations 1-3 need urgent implementation to avoid further damage to the ruins and degradation of its surrounds. Interpretation recommendations have high priority

Action responsibility SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA, Department of State Aboriginal Affairs, in consultation with pastoral leaseholders.

14.13.9 Homestead and Woolshed, Cordillo Downs Station

Recommendations

The Cordillo Downs road remain open as a public access road and be upgraded to a new alignment.

Action responsibility SA Pastoral Board, Transport SA, SA Tourism Commission.

At least two official campsites with toilet blocks be designated along the Cordillo Downs Track, with at least one each north and south of the station homestead. Installation and locations to be determined in consultation with the pastoral leaseholder, David Brook.

Action Responsibility SA Tourism Commission, SA Pastoral Board.

An interpretation and visitor management plan be prepared for the Cordillo Downs Woolshed, in consultation with the pastoral leaseholder and station managers. Funding assistance for this is recommended.

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Action responsibility

Australian Heritage Commission, Heritage SA.

14.13.10 Regional Reserve Headquarters, Innamincka

Recommendations

- 1 The Regional Reserve Headquarters play an important role as an information and interpretation centre for visitors to the Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves. National Parks and Wildlife SA have developed a brief to upgrade the interpretation in the centre to make it more generally informative about the park and more attractive to a wider range of visitors. It is that these plans be implemented.
- 2 The Centre would make the ideal starting point for a trail linking the sites of historic and natural interest in the old town of Innamincka. Refer to the section of this report relating to the Innamincka State Heritage Area for recommendations on this trail.

General issues relating to management of tourism and interpretation in the Innamincka and Strzelecki Regional Reserves are discussed in the sections of this report relating to the Innamincka State Heritage Area and the Strzelecki Track.

Action responsibility

National Parks and Wildlife SA, South Australian Tourism Commission.

14.13.11 Well and Iron Whim, Mety Merty Station

Recommendations

Non intrusive on-site interpretation would be appropriate, but access to the site will depend on control by the lessee.

14.13.12 Horse Capstan, Pump & Well, Old Mulga Bore

Recommendations

The Horse Capstan, Pump & Well and Old Mulga Bore are not recommended for potential interpretation or presentation as a tourism attraction because of their location remote from a public access road.

14.13.13 Tinga Tingana Homestead Ruins

Recommendations

Because of its fragile state and its location off the current Strzelecki Track, there is limited scope for interpretation. There is potential for one sign on site to identify the ruins as remains of pastoral endeavour, and the Strzelecki Track mail runs in the 1930s. Directional signs from the main track should not be installed, to avoid increasing casual traffic which may include vandals.

14.13.14 Lake Callabonna Fossil Reserve

About 12km from the Strzelecki track near Mount Hopeless Station, the reserve although isolated is vulnerable to plundering by organised thieves. At present it is essentially undisturbed.

Recommendations

Increasing tourist use of the nearby Strzelecki Track may present problems. No additional visitation to this site is desirable. No directional signs should be erected, and no on-site interpretation is recommended.

Conscious de-marketing is recommended.

14.13.15 Blanchewater Homestead Ruins

Recommendations

- 1 The site presents an ideal opportunity for the development of visitor facilities including information signs to do with the history of Blanchewater.

Interpretation themes here should include the role of Sir Thomas Elder in the region, and Blanchewater's place as a southern staging point of the Strzelecki Track driving route. The story of Augustus Gregory and Harry Redford would appropriately be told here.

- 2 Stabilise the stonework on the ruins.
- 3 Camping near the site should not be encouraged.

Action responsibility SA Tourism Commission, Heritage SA.

14.14 PLACES RECOMMENDED FOR REGISTER OF NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACES

14.14.1 Burke And Wills Sites

These sites are mostly within the Innamincka Regional Reserve. See the tourism management recommendations for the Reserve (especially the Burke and Wills sites) in Section 14.11.6, and the recommendations for the Dig Tree in Section 14.5.4.

14.14.2 Strzelecki Creek

This area is identical with the proposed Strzelecki Creek State Heritage Area. See the recommendations for the Strzelecki Regional Reserve in Section 14.11.7.

14.14.3 Dog Fence

Recommendation

An interpretive sign be placed on each of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks at the point where the Dog Fence crosses the track. These signs should be placed on the side of the road on which there is more room for vehicles to pull off and park.

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The theme of the signs should be the links between dingoes, rabbits, pastoral settlement and sheep and cattle grazing.

Action responsibility SA Tourism Commission, Transport SA.

14.15 RECOMMENDED PLACES OF STATE HERITAGE VALUE

14.15.1 Kopperamanna Mission Site

The Kopperamanna Mission Site is off the public access road (the Birdsville Track) and is accessible only via a station track whose condition is highly variable and on which inexperienced travellers are likely to be bogged. The Etadunna managers do not want visitors using this track or camping at the waterhole. The site is also extremely fragile, with bare earth building remains which are vulnerable to foot traffic and wooden structures which are in very poor condition (and attractive sources of firewood). There are Aboriginal camp sites in the vicinity.

Recommendation

This site is not recommended for tourism development for these reasons:

- Its cultural sensitivity as an Aboriginal settlement site.
- Its physical vulnerability, with potential destruction of the archaeological record.
- the pastoral managers do not want unauthorised visits to this site.

14.15.2 Koonchera Waterhole

The Koonchera waterhole is about 20km from the public access road (the Birdsville Track) and is accessible only via a station track whose condition is highly variable and on which inexperienced travellers are likely to be bogged. The Clifton Hill managers do not want visitors using this track or camping at the waterhole. Unauthorised camping is taking place, and the waterhole is marked on tourist maps and is mentioned in the Lonely Planet Outback guide.

Recommendation

This site is not recommended for tourism development for these reasons:

- Its cultural sensitivity as an Aboriginal massacre site.
- Its physical vulnerability, with potential destruction of the archaeological record.
- The pastoral managers do not want unauthorised visits to this site.

14.15.3 Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins

Manuwalkaninna Homestead ruins are more than 60km from the public access road (the Strzelecki Track) and are accessible only via a station track whose condition is highly

variable and on which inexperienced travellers are likely to be bogged. The Murnpeowie managers do not want visitors using this track or camping at the waterhole.

Recommendation

This site is not recommended for tourism development for these reasons:

- Its potential cultural sensitivity for Aboriginal people.
- Its physical vulnerability, with likely destruction of the archaeological record.
- The pastoral managers do not want unauthorised visits to this site.

14.15.4 Dig Tree and Fort Wills Site

Existing interpretation and management of the site is basic. At the entry is a brush shelter containing various information about the area. Both the shelter and the information it contains are tired. The Dig Tree itself is surrounded by a wooden walkway and a commemorative cairn is adjacent to it. Three organisations have combined to put up three free standing interpretation boards on Burke and Wills.

The Dig Tree and Fort Wills site needs a professional approach to interpretation, site management and visitor management that is linked with the management of the Burke and Wills sites in nearby South Australia.

Recommendation

That the National Parks Services of South Australia and Queensland discuss with the Queensland Historical Society the best way of improving interpretation and management of this site to link it with the South Australian sites managed by National Parks and Wildlife SA. Management by National Parks and Wildlife SA should be considered as an option.

14.16 RECOMMENDED PLACES OF LOCAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**14.16.1 Dulkaninna Trig Point**

The cairn is featured on the Westprint map of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks (Deckert 2000). It is close to the road and is surrounded by vehicle tracks, indicating an existing high level of visitation. A small interpretation sign could be erected near the cairn explaining its significance.

14.16.2 Etadunna Woolshed Ruin

Low key interpretation of the site is possible but not a high priority.

14.16.3 Apatoongannie Homestead Ruins**Management issues**

The two well shafts on the site are a potential hazard. The mud mortar is soft and it is likely that more sections of the walls may fall.

Recommendations

1. Stabilise the ruins, and take steps to discourage climbing on them.
2. Install safety grates to cover the wells, working with advice from Primary Industries and Resources SA
3. Site interpretation, identifying the structures and speculating on their function.
4. Directional sign from roadside be installed only after the site has been stabilised and safety measures implemented.

Action responsibility SA Tourism Commission.

14.16.4 Old Mulka Homestead Ruins

These fragile ruins are on a station track, not a public access road. They are not suitable for tourism development.

14.16.5 Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins

The Transport SA directional sign to the ruins is miss-spelled Ooranillanie

Recommendations

- 1 Interpretive sign with pictures (John Hammond at Mungerannie Hotel is a potential source for these) Themes:
 - Hardship and drought. Even the experienced defeated.
 - Stony desert and terrain.
 - Government dam. Watering spot for cattle, drovers.
- 2 Replace the existing incorrect directional sign with one spelled correctly.

Action responsibility SA Tourism Commission, Transport SA.

14.16.6 Mirra Mitta Bore

The bore and its small associated wetland are a popular stopping place immediately on the roadside of the Birdsville Track. The heat of the water issuing from the bore pipe is a potential safety hazard, especially as the existing sign is illegible. In addition to the heritage values of Mirra Mitta Bore, it is of historical interest that Josiah Dunn coaxed a thriving vegetable patch here in the 1930s and that these hot bores were tended in the 1950s by a man wearing a special protective rubber suit.

Recommendation

An interpretive sign is recommended for the site, to convey the following:

1. This is hot artesian water – why it is hot and the need for care.
2. How the bores were managed - 1950s protective gear.
3. The vegetable patch.

14.16.7 Page Family Grave

The Page Family Grave is located well off the public access road and station leaseholders do not wish to encourage visitation to this site. Tourism development is not recommended.

14.16.8 Bull Hole Bore and Pump Ruins

Camping at the nearby Bull Hole waterhole is fouling the water and the nearby area.

Recommendations

1. Install an interpretive sign on the importance of underground water in this region and why bores were put in.
2. Close to the eastern side of the road, near the creek, a sign is needed to say *This is a stock watering point, please don't camp here.*

14.16.9 Coongie Homestead Ruins

The site is vulnerable to damage from casual visitors wandering over it with no understanding of what is there. The existing interpretation boards, erected by Australian Geographic are about 200m distant from the homestead, and have aged to the point where they need replacement. Their primary focus is on the natural environment of the Lakes.

Recommendations

1. A small sign is needed to identify the site and inform visitors of appropriate behaviours, such as not collecting surface artefacts.
2. Negotiate with Australian Geographic to replace and update the existing interpretive signs.
3. New signs to include cultural and historic information as well as natural environment.

Action responsibility

National Parks and Wildlife SA, SA Tourism Commission.

14.16.10 Kudriemitchie Outstation

A drop toilet has been installed here and the site is used as a camping area..

Recommendations

1. The content of the existing sign is misleading. This sign should be replaced and content revised.

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2. There is potential for an additional sign on the stockyards.

Action responsibility

Decisions on signage upgrade should be made by National Parks and Wildlife SA, in consultation with Innamincka Pastoral Company.

14.16.11 Nappacoongie Outstation Ruins

The existing markers for Harry Bird's grave have distinctive character, fitting to the site where he met his death. Additional signage for his grave is not recommended.

A sign identifying the outstation is possible, but not a high priority.

14.16.12 Toolatchie Outstation Ruins

No directional or interpretive signage is recommended for this site, which is off the main track and could easily be damaged by high visitation.

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15.0 SUMMARY OF HERITAGE PLACES IDENTIFIED

This section contains a list of 68 places identified during the fieldwork for which a recommendation is made in this report. The list includes places in the study area currently entered in the South Australian State Heritage Register or the Queensland Heritage Register, places recommended to be entered in those registers, places considered to be of national heritage significance, and places considered to be of local heritage value.

The list gives the following information:

PLACE NUMBER:	This is the place's identification number on the maps.
PLACE:	This is the name of the place in current or general use.
ADDRESS:	Location of the place.
CURRENT STATUS:	This refers to existing listings in State registers: SHR State Heritage Register (SA) QHR Queensland Heritage Register
RECOMMENDATION:	The suggested recommendation for the place: N Places recommended as having national significance R Places currently entered in the relevant state register S Places recommended for the relevant state register X Places recommended to be removed from the register L Places of local heritage value

Maps and plans showing the locations of all these places are in section 3 of this report. The locations of existing State Heritage Places are also shown on the maps.

15.0 Heritage Places Identified**Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey****NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACES**

PlaceNo.	Place	Current status	Recom
NHP:001	Burke & Wills Sites on Cooper Creek		N
NHP:002	Dog Fence/Dingo Barrier fence		N
NHP:003	Strzelecki Creek		N

STATE HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

PlaceNo.	Place	Current status	Recom
SHP:001	Fettlers Cottage, Marree	R	S
SHP:002	Great Northern Hotel, Marree	R	S
SHP:003	Lake Harry Date Plantation Site	R	S
SHP:004	Lake Palankarina Fossil Reserve	R	S
SHP:005	Lakes Kanunka ... Fossil Sites	R	S
SHP:006	Killalpaninna Mission Site	R	S
SHP:007	Mulka Store Ruins	R	S
SHP:008	Cadelga Homestead Ruins	R	S
SHP:009	Homestead and Woolshed, Cordillo Downs Station	R	S
SHP:010	Gray's Grave, Lake Massacre	R	X
SHP:011	Innamincka Regional Reserve Headquarters	R	S
SHP:012	Well & Iron Whim, Merty Merty Station	R	S
SHP:013	Horse Capstan, Pump & Well, Old Mulga Bore	R	S
SHP:014	Tinga Tingana Homestead Ruins	R	S
SHP:015	Lake Callabonna Fossil Reserve	R	S
SHP:016	Blanchewater Homestead Ruins	R	S
SHR:001	Marree Mosque Site, via Marree		S
SHR:002	Marree Afghan Quarter, Marree		S
SHR:003	Kopperamanna Mission Site, off Birdsville Track		S
SHR:004	Koonchera Waterhole, off Birdsville Track		S
SHR:005	Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins, off Strzelecki Track		S

STATE HERITAGE PLACES (QLD)

Place No.	Place	Current status	Recom
QHP:001	Birdsville Hotel, Birdsville	R	S
QHP:002	Birdsville AIM Nursing Home, (former Royal Hotel), Birdsville	R	S
QHP:003	Birdsville Court House, Birdsville	R	S
QHR:001	Dig Tree & Fort Wills Site, Nappa Merrie		S

STATE HERITAGE AREAS (SA)

Place No.	Place	Current status	Recom
SHA:001	Strzelecki Creek		S

LOCAL HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

Place No.	Place	Current status	Recom
LHP:001	Railway Station, Marree		L
LHP:002	School, Marree		L
LHP:003	Hospital, Marree		L
LHP:004	Cemetery, Marree		L
LHP:005	Aboriginal Cemetery, Marree		L
LHP:006	Herrgott Springs, via Marree		L
LHP:007	Dulkaninna Trig Point, Dulkaninna Station		L
LHP:008	Canny Trig Point (Milner's Pile), Etadunna Station		L
LHP:009	Etadunna Woolshed Ruins, Etadunna Station		L
LHP:010	Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins, Etadunna Station		L
LHP:011	Apatoongannie Homestead Ruins, Mulka Station		L
LHP:012	Old Mulka Store Ruins, Mulka Station		L
LHP:013	Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins, Mulka Station		L
LHP:014	Mirra Mitta Bore, Cowarie Station		L
LHP:015	Mount Gason Bore, Cowarie Station		L
LHP:016	Page Family Grave, Clifton Hills Station		L
LHP:017	Old Pandie Pandie Homestead, Pandie Pandie Station		L
LHP:018	Miranda Homestead Ruins, Pandie Pandie Station		L
LHP:019	Bull Hole Bore & Pump Ruins, Cordillo Downs Station		L
LHP:020	Providence Dam Sheep Yards, Cordillo Downs Station		L
LHP:021	Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins, Cordillo Downs Station		L
LHP:022	Coongie Homestead Ruins, Innamincka Regional Reserve		L
LHP:023	Kudriemitchie Outstation Ruins, Innamincka Regional Reserve		L
LHP:024	Gidgealpa No. 2 Well, Gidgealpa Station		L
LHP:025	Innamincka No. 1 Well, Innamincka Regional Reserve		L
LHP:026	Nappacoongie Homestead Ruins, Gidgealpa Station		L
LHP:027	Toolatchie Homestead Ruins, Gidgealpa Station		L
LHP:028	Manu Main Homestead Ruins, Murnpeowie Station		L
LHP:029	Junction Well Hut, Murnpeowie Station		L

15.0 Heritage Places Identified

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

LOCAL HERITAGE PLACES (QLD)

Place No.	Place	Current status	Recom
LHP(Q):001	Hospital, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):002	Cemetery, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):003	Aboriginal Cemetery, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):004	Hydro Power Station, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):005	Chinese Gardens Site, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):006	Burke & Wills Tree, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):007	Diamantina Crossing, Birdsville		L
LHP(Q):008	Nappa Merrie Homestead, Nappa Merrie		L
LHP(Q):009	Oontoo Hotel Ruins, Nappa Merrie		L
LHP(Q):010	Oontoo Customs House Site, Nappa Merrie		L

16.0 SUMMARY OF PLACES VISITED

This section contains a list of all sites and places visited during the fieldwork for this survey. The list includes places considered to be of heritage value, for which recommendations are made in sections 5 to 12 of this report. It also includes places which were inspected, but for which no recommendation was made.

PLACE	RECOMMENDATION
Mundowdna railway siding	none
Fettlers cottages, Marree	on Register
Great Northern hotel, Marree	on Register
Hospital, Marree	local
School, Marree	local
Afghan Quarter, Marree	State
Marree mosque site	State
Cemetery, Marree	local
Aboriginal Cemetery, Marree	local
Herrgott Springs	local
Lake Harry date plantation site	on Register
Dog Fence	National
Dulkaninna trig point	local
Dulkaninna homestead	none
Milner's Pile	local
Cannuwulkalanna bore	none
Lake Palankarinna Fossil Reserve	on Register
Etadunna homestead	none
Etadunna Woolshed ruins	local
Killalpaninna Mission ruins	on Register
Kopperamanna Mission ruins	State
Bucaltaninna homestead ruins	local
Cooper Creek ferry crossing	none
Natterannie sandhills	none
Mulka Store ruins	on Register
Old Mulka Store ruins	local
Mulka homestead	none
Ooroowilannie homestead ruins	local
Ooroowilannie coal prospect (Kuntha Hill)	none
Mungerannie homestead	none
Mungerannie Hotel	none
Mirra Mitta bore	local
Mount Gason bore	local
Clifton Hills homestead	none
Kooncherra waterhole	State

16.0 Places Visited

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

PLACE	RECOMMENDATION
Page Family Memorial	local
Pandie Pandie homestead	none
Old Pandie Pandie homestead	local
Birdsville Hotel	on Register
AIM Nursing Home (former Royal Hotel) , Birdsville	on Register
Court House, Birdsville	on Register
Brooklands Store, Birdsville	none
Racecourse, Birdsville	none
Cemetery, Birdsville	local
\Aboriginal cemetery, Birdsville	local
Chinese Gardens, Birdsville	local
Hydro Power Station, Birdsville	local
Burke & Wills Tree, Birdsville	local
Diamantina Crossing, Birdsville	local
Miranda homestead ruins	local
Appamanna homestead ruins	none
Cadelga homestead ruins	on Register
Twelve Mile bore	none
Bull Hole bore	local
Providence Dam sheep yards	local
Haddon Downs homestead ruins	local
Cordillo Downs homestead and woolshed	on Register
Coongie homestead ruins	local
Kudriemitchie outstation	local
Innamincka Hotel site	in State Heritage Area
Innamincka police station site	in State Heritage Area
AIM Nursing Home, Innamincka	in State Heritage Area
Cemetery, Innamincka	in State Heritage Area
Cullamurra Mission ruins	in State Heritage Area
Innamincka homestead	in State Heritage Area
Old Innamincka homestead	in State Heritage Area
Burke's Tree	in State Heritage Area
Wills' Tree	in State Heritage Area
King's Tree	in State Heritage Area
Howitt's Depot	in State Heritage Area
Gidgealpa No. 2 Well	local
Innamincka No. 1 Well	local
Nappa Merrie homestead	local
Oontoo town site	none
Oontoo Hotel ruins	local
Oontoo Customs House ruins	local
Dig Tree	State
Nappacoongie homestead site	local
Toolatchie homestead site	local

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

16.0 Places Visited

PLACE

RECOMMENDATION

Merty Merty well & whim	on Register
Merty Merty homestead	none
Carraweena homestead	none
The Cobbler sandhills	none
Strzelecki Crossing	local
Dog Fence	National
Blanchewater homestead ruins	on Register
Manuwalkaninna homestead ruins	State
Manu Main homestead ruins	local
Junction Well hut	local
Murnpeowie homestead	none

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18.0 SURVEY PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS

This index lists all monochrome photographs made during fieldwork for this report. The brief for the project required a photographic record of all historic places visited. Where possible, photographs were made at each site on 35mm black and white film, 35mm colour print film and 35mm colour transparency film. The black & white films are indexed here; the transparencies, which generally have the same subject matter, have been marked with the corresponding black & white film and negative numbers, e.g. **5/14**, meaning film 5, negative 14. All the original black & white negatives, proofsheets and colour transparencies have been provided to Heritage South Australia. The colour print film has been retained by the consultants.

BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 1 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

2-13 Copies from Litchfield, *Marree and the Tracks Beyond*, 1983

16 August 2001**Marree mapsheet**

14-17	Marree	Railway station
18	Marree	Great Northern Hotel
19-21	Marree	Fettlers Cottages
22	Marree	School
23	Marree	Hospital
24	Marree	Mosque site, looking southwest
25	Marree	Mosque site, looking southeast
26	Marree	Mosque site, perimeter wall stumps
27	Marree	Mosque site, camel yard
28-32	Marree	Cemetery
33-34	Lake Harry	Date Plantation ruins

17 August 2001

35-36 Clayton Station Dog Fence

BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 2 (Pentax SP1000 / Ilford FP4)

2	Dulkaninna Station	Stone Pile (trig point)
3	Dulkaninna Station	Stone Store
4	Dulkaninna Station	Homestead, looking east

Kopperamanna mapsheet

5-7	Etadunna Station	Milner Pile (Canny trig point)
8	Etadunna Station	Lake Palankarinna
9-13	Etadunna Station	Killalpaninna Mission ruins

18.0 Photographic Record

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

18 August 2001

14	Etadunna Station	Cooper Crossing Ferry Monument
15-21	Etadunna Station	Kopperamanna Mission ruins
22-23	Etadunna Station	Cooper Vehicle Ferry

19 August 2001

24	Etadunna Station	Bucaltaninna Mission ruins
25-28	Etadunna Station	Etadunna Woolshed ruins
29-31	Mulka Station	Mulka Store (New Well) ruins
32	Mulka Station	Mulka Old Well ruins
33-35	Mulka Station	Apatoonganie Homestead ruins
36	Mulka Station	Ooroowilllanie Homestead ruins

20 August 2001

Gason mapsheet

36A	Cowarie Station	Mirra Mitta Bore
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BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 3 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

2-8	Cowarie Station	Mount Gason Bore
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Cordillo mapsheet

9-10	Clifton Hills Station	Koonchera Waterhole
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21 August 2001

11-13	Pandie Pandie Station	Page Family Grave
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Pandie Pandie mapsheet

14-19	Pandie Pandie Station	Old Pandie Pandie Homestead ruins
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Birdsville mapsheet (Queensland)

20-24	Birdsville	AIM Hospital/Royal Hotel
25-30	Birdsville	Birdsville Hotel

22 August 2001

Pandie Pandie mapsheet

31-36A	Pandie Pandie Station	Miranda Homestead ruins
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BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 4 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

1-4 Pandie Pandie Station Miranda Homestead ruins
 5-13 Pandie Pandie Station Appamanna Homestead ruins

23 August 2001**Birdsville mapsheet (Queensland)**

14-16	Birdsville	Cemetery
17-19	Birdsville	Courthouse
20-21	Birdsville	Hospital
22-23	Birdsville	Burke & Wills Tree
24	Birdsville	Diamantina Crossing
25-30	Birdsville	Power Station
31	Birdsville	Council Shed
32	Birdsville	Aboriginal Hospital Ward
33	Birdsville	Buggy Crossing
34	Birdsville	Chinese Garden
35-36	Birdsville	Copies of photographs, Birdsville Hotel

BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 5 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

2-12 Birdsville Copies of photographs, Birdsville Hotel

24 August 2001

13-16 Birdsville Trackers Hut behind Courthouse

Cordillo mapsheet

17-20	Cordillo Downs	Cadelga Homestead ruins
21-23	Cordillo Downs	Bore and Pump ruins
24-25	Cordillo Downs	Bull Hole Bore and Pump ruins
26-35	Cordillo Downs	Cordillo Downs Homestead and Woolshed

25 August 2001

36	Cordillo Downs	Rocky Hill
36A	Cordillo Downs	Providence Dam Sheep Yards

BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 6 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

1-7 Cordillo Downs Haddon Downs Homestead ruins

26 August 2001 **Innamincka mapsheet**

8-9	Innamincka Station	Wills Grave site
10	Innamincka Station	King Tree site

18.0 Photographic Record

Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Heritage Survey

11	Innamincka	AIM Nursing Home (NPWSA office)
12	Innamincka	Old Innamincka Hotel ruins
13-16	Innamincka	Cemetery

27 August 2001

17	Innamincka Station	Old Innamincka Homestead ruins
18-19	Innamincka Station	Burke Grave site
20-21	Innamincka Station	Howitt Depot site
22	Innamincka Station	Callyamurra Waterhole

Durham Downs mapsheet (Queensland)

23-30	Nappa Merrie Station	Dig Tree
31	Nappa Merrie Station	Copy of historic photograph, Dig Tree
32-33	Nappa Merrie Station	Oontoo Customs House ruins

28 August 2001

34-36	Nappa Merrie Station	House ruins, Oontoo Town site
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BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 7 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

5-8	Nappa Merrie Station	Oontoo Hotel ruins
9-13	Nappa Merrie Station	Nappa Merrie Homestead
14	Nappa Merrie Station	Cooper Creek from Nappa Merrie Homestead

Innamincka mapsheet

15	Innamincka Station	Innamincka No.2 Well site
16	Innamincka Station	Innamincka No.1 Well site
17	Innamincka Station	Breakaway, north of Innamincka townsite
18-20	Innamincka Station	Kudriemitchie Outstation
21-22	Innamincka Station	Coongie Homestead ruins

29 August 2001

Strzelecki mapsheet

23-28	Gidgealpa Station	Nappacoongie Homestead ruins
29	Gidgealpa Station	Moomba Gas Processing Plant
30-31	Gidgealpa Station	Gidgealpa No.2 Well

30 August 2001

32-34	Merty Merty Station	Coochilara Whim
35	Merty Merty Station	Daralingie Well
36-36A	Gidgealpa Station	Toolatchie Yards

BIRDSVILLE & STRZELECKI TRACKS FILM 8 (Pentax SP1000 / Kodak TMX)

1-3	Gidgealpa Station	Toolatchie Yards
4-5	Gidgealpa Station	Alwyn No. 3 Well

31 August 2001

Marree mapsheet

6	Murnpeowie Station	Blanchewater Homestead ruins
7-12	Murnpeowie Station	Manu Main Homestead ruins
13-20	Murnpeowie Station	Manuwalkaninna Homestead ruins
21-23	Murnpeowie Station	Junction Well Hut
24-25	Murnpeowie Station	Junction Well Tank and Troughs
26-28	Murnpeowie Station	Murnpeowie Homestead

19.0 SURVEY BRIEF

HERITAGE SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

***HISTORIC HERITAGE SURVEY OF THE
BIRDSVILLE AND STRZELECKI TRACKS***

PROJECT BRIEF

FEBRUARY 2001

1. BACKGROUND:

1.1 Introduction:

Since 1981 Heritage South Australia has been pursuing a systematic program of heritage surveys in South Australia, known as the Regional Heritage Survey Program. The purpose of this Program is to identify and record all the Non-Aboriginal heritage of the State.

The Regional Heritage Survey Program has identified places of State heritage significance for entry in the State Heritage Register and potential State Heritage Areas. As part of these heritage surveys local heritage places and local heritage areas have also been identified and documented. In order to record all the Non-Aboriginal heritage of South Australia, the State has been divided into fourteen regions. By the end of December 2000 thirteen of the fourteen regions had been surveyed.

The remaining region - Far North & Far West (Region 13) - comprises two-thirds of the area of South Australia and is sparsely populated. Consequently a conventional regional survey is not appropriate and therefore it is proposed to undertake thematic or targeted area surveys to ascertain the heritage resources of this region. The proposal is to identify and document heritage places within Region 13 along known transport corridors, such as the Birdsville & Strzelecki Tracks, the Stuart & Barrier Highways and the former Ghan Railway Line (Marree to SA-NT border) & Indian Pacific Railway Line (Port Augusta to SA-WA border). The first heritage survey for Region 13 was *Oodnadatta Track Heritage Survey* along the route of the former Ghan Railway Line from west of Marree to the SA-NT border. This project is due for completion within the next couple of months.

The next heritage survey in Region 13 will follow routes of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks and will be known as ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey***. It is being jointly funded by the South Australian Government through the State Heritage Fund and by the Australian Heritage Commission.

In the case of the Birdsville Track, the survey area will begin at Marree and finish in Birdsville in Queensland and for the Strzelecki Track the survey area will commence at Lyndhurst in the Flinders Ranges and finish north of Innamincka at the end of the Cordillo Downs Road on the SA-QLD Border near the Cadelga Ruins. The survey area will basically follow the route of the each track and be approximately 100km in width (50km either side). A map of the proposed survey area is included in the attachments to this Project Brief.

Places illustrating the heritage of this survey area encompass such themes as Aboriginal contact, exploration, pastoralism, transport and communications, pastoralism, social life and organisations (hotels, settlements and outback general stores) and the geology and natural history of the region.

The Australian Heritage Commission is particularly interested in testing thematic approaches for assessing and identifying heritage places on a national scale. Therefore it is currently conducting a number of research projects into national themes and national places. In this context the Commission is pursuing a theme related to pastoralism, beef growing and outback communication routes. The ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** should also be cross-referenced to these projects and the data collected should put the significance of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, and the heritage places located along the two tracks, in a national context.

1.2 *Inland Rivers - Outback Tracks* : a regional heritage tourism strategy for the Lake Eyre Basin

Along with the soon-to-be-completed Oodnadatta Track Heritage Survey, the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** is part of a larger project entitled the *Inland Rivers - Outback Tracks* : a regional heritage tourism strategy for the Lake Eyre Basin.

The proposed regional heritage tourism strategy will endeavour to:

- analyse the existing heritage and tourism data and issues;

- prepare a feasibility study of tourism opportunities, matched to community opportunities; and

- provide a Regional Action Plan, which will be the framework for implementing regional heritage tourism ventures by public and private investment over the next 2-5 years.

In addition to assessing and documenting the historic heritage resources of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, recommendations about the potential and suitability of heritage places for use in heritage tourism itineraries will also be required. Therefore the documentation for this heritage survey and its methodology should be suitable for use in developing heritage tourism products as part of *Inland Rivers - Outback Tracks project*.

2. OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** is assessment of cultural heritage resources associated with the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks to test assessment methodologies and recommend places for listing in National, State and local heritage registers, and as an input to developing a regional heritage tourism strategy for the Lake Eyre Basin.

Specifically, the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** will:

- (a) make recommendations about potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area;
- (b) test appropriate methodologies for identifying and assessing nationally significant places
- (c) make recommendations for the entry of places in the State Heritage Register;
- (d) make recommendations for the declaration of State Heritage Areas;
- (e) identify places of local heritage value within the Survey Area, for inclusion in the Out of Hundreds Development Plan; and
- (f) identify areas within the Survey Area which could be declared Historic (Conservation) Zones/Policy Areas and included in the Out of Hundreds Development Plan.
- (g) make recommendations about the potential and suitability of heritage places within the Survey Area for use in heritage tourism itineraries.

3. REQUIREMENTS:

3.1 Overview History

Carry out historical research establishing the principal events and themes that characterise the physical, cultural and social development of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks area and write an overview history which will be the basis for the recommendations of the report.

The Overview History should take into account the framework for historical assessment set out in the document *South Australian State Historic Preservation Plan : Historical Guidelines*, (Department of Environment and Planning, May 1980) and may require revision in light of the evidence revealed by fieldwork. It should be clear, succinct and demonstrate familiarity with the range of historical source materials in existence. A comprehensive bibliography of the relevant primary and secondary sources (documentary, pictorial and oral) is also required.

In addition the Overview History should be put the significance of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks, and the heritage places located along the two tracks in a national context. This aspect should be supported by documentation and research.

3.2 Fieldwork

Carry out a thorough physical inspection of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area, to identify, locate and describe the places which are of heritage value.

This fieldwork should take into account previous assessments within the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks survey area, including those from Heritage SA, the Australian Heritage Commission, the National Trust of South Australia and other authoritative agencies, and should also be guided by the views of the local community groups and residents of area.

When a preliminary list of possibly significant places has been drawn up, the Consultant should contact the owners or occupants of those places and inspect them in more detail. If access is refused, the Consultant should not persist, but simply report that the request was made and denied. Evidence of contact with property owners and occupants will be required to be furnished by the Consultant.

All field observations should be recorded by means of notes, marked maps and photographs, regardless of the recommendations that may finally arise.

3.3 Recommendations : Places for State Heritage Register

Make recommendations for the entry of places in the State Heritage Register, which should reflect the Overview History.

Any land, building or structure, which meets one or more of the criteria in Section 16 of the *Heritage Act 1993*, may be entered in the State Heritage Register, but recommendations should be restricted to places of significant interest. The places may include a building, an industrial site, a monument, a ruin, an vacant area which may be of archaeological significance, a burial place, a garden, a plantation, a geological site or a variety of other places.

Places of a type which are commonplace or frequently encountered will not be entered in the Register unless there is some particular aspect of the place which is of significant value.

Criteria and guidelines for the entry of places in the Register are attached. It is essential that a clear Statement of Heritage Value be given for each recommendation.

The documentation supporting these recommendations should use the pro forma Heritage Assessment Reports, designed by Heritage SA in consultation with the Australian Heritage Commission. A hard copy of the pro forma Heritage Assessment Report for proposed State Heritage Places is attached and it provides full information for the site record, including land description and details of the owner. This pro forma will also be available to the Consultant on computer disk, upon appointment.

The use of the pro forma design will enable recommendations to be presented directly to the State Heritage Authority and will facilitate the clerical processes for entry of those places in the Register.

3.4 Recommendations : State Heritage Areas

Make recommendations for the declaration of State Heritage Areas, which should reflect the Overview History.

The significance of a State Heritage Area should rest on the qualities which are exceptional, not commonplace, and it should constitute a continuous and unified area comprised for the most part of significant fabric, and relatively free from unsympathetic intrusions.

The boundary of a State Heritage Area should be clearly defined, following cadastral boundaries where possible, and simple in outline. It should take in the continuously significant area without the addition of a buffer zone.

The State Heritage Area should demonstrate:

- significant built form composed of historic elements that contribute to the character of the Area.
- physical character including natural and cultural landscapes and land division patterns which relate to the historic development of the Area
- unified, consistent physical form with identifiable historic, economic or social themes associated with an earlier era of development.

The assessment of a proposed State Heritage Area should include the following information:

- heritage value of the State Heritage Area;
- boundary of the State Heritage Area, detailing key historic elements. This information should be accompanied by a map showing State and Local Heritage Places and other Contributory Places; and
- areas and/or individual places that do not contribute to the heritage values of the State Heritage Area.

3.5 Recommendations : Places of Local Heritage Value

Make recommendations for a list of places of local heritage value. These places may include natural features of local heritage value and should also reflect the Overview History.

The report should include a list of local heritage places which the Consultant considered to be important to the local community. The level of documentation accompanying each place should be sufficient to allow the community and Planning SA to support the inclusion of the place on a local heritage list under the Out of Hundreds Development Plan.

The documentation supporting these recommendations should use the pro forma Heritage Assessment Reports, designed by Heritage SA in consultation with the Australian Heritage Commission. A hard copy of the pro forma Heritage Assessment Report for proposed local heritage places is attached and it provides full information for the site record, including land description and details of the owner. This pro forma will also be available to the Consultant on computer disk, upon appointment.

The use of the proforma design will enable those recommendations to be easily included in a Plan Amendment Report, creating a local heritage register under the Out of Hundreds Development Plan.

3.6 Recommendations : Historic (Conservation) Zones

Make recommendations for the declaration of Historic (Conservation) Zones or Policy Areas, which should reflect the Overview History.

Such Historic (Conservation) Zones or Policy Areas should possess a distinctive historic, architectural or other character which it is desirable to protect and enhance through the Development Plan, while not necessarily exhibiting the exceptional merit required of a State Heritage Area.

These Historic (Conservation) Zones or Policy Areas should demonstrate:

- significant built form composed of historic elements that contribute to the character of the Zone or Policy Area.
- physical character including natural and cultural landscapes and land division patterns which relate to the historic development of the local area
- unified, consistent physical form with identifiable historic, economic or social themes associated with an earlier era of development.

The assessment of a proposed Historic (Conservation) Zone or Policy Area should include the following information:

- heritage value of the Zone or Policy Area;
- boundary of the proposed Zone or Policy Area, detailing key historic elements. This information should be accompanied by a map showing State and Local Heritage Places and other Contributory Places; and
- areas and/or individual places that do not contribute to the heritage values of the Zone or Policy Area.

3.7 Recommendations : Heritage Tourism Potential

Make recommendations for the heritage tourism potential of significant heritage places throughout the Survey Area.

The heritage survey documentation for potential State and Local Heritage Places should include how these places are currently being used or managed, their condition, recommendations about potential and suitability of these heritage places for use in heritage tourism itineraries and how they might be used thematically, and in conjunction, with natural and/or indigenous heritage places in the Survey Area.

3.8 Recommendations : Potential Nationally Significant Places

Make recommendations for potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area.

The final report of the heritage survey should include a list of potential nationally significant places within the Survey Area. The draft heritage assessment pro forma for documenting places of potential national significance should be used. The Consultant should test appropriate methodologies for identifying and assessing nationally significant places, using the draft national criteria and themes of 'pastoralism, beef growing and outback communication routes'. The final report of the heritage survey should report on the findings of this exercise.

4. PRESENTATION:

The Consultant will first submit a draft report of the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** to Heritage SA and for discussion and amendment, at a time agreed in the survey timetable.

At the completion of the project the Consultant is to present to Heritage SA the master copy of the final report of the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki***

Tracks Historic Heritage Survey in A4 format ready for printing and binding. In addition a copy of the report should be supplied in a digital format (preferably Microsoft Word) which can readily be used by Heritage SA and the Australian Heritage Commission for online publishing.

The Consultant will also need to provide images as black & white prints in the master copy of the final report, as well as in the digital file version and separately on a CD-ROM (for online publishing). The file format, resolution and file naming of these images will be specified in a style sheet at the commencement of the project.

The final report of the **Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey** is to contain:

- (a) an overview of the history of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks area, including the significance of the Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks in a national context. The Overview History should provide the context for the recommendations of the Survey report;
- (b) recommendations about potential nationally significant places using the draft national heritage assessment proforma;
- (c) assessment of places already entered in the State Heritage Register and if necessary recommendations for the removal of those places from the Register, which in the opinion of the Consultant do not fulfil the criteria under the *Heritage Act 1993*;
- (d) recommendations of places for entry in the State Heritage Register using the pro forma Heritage Assessment reports with accompanying site records, site plans and both black and white photographs illustrating the context and significant features of the places proposed for the Register;
- (e) recommendations for State Heritage Areas in the form of assessment reports with descriptions of their significant characteristics, including lists of State and local heritage places, photographs and a boundary plan;
- (f) recommendations for the list of places of local heritage value;
- (g) recommendations for Historic (Conservation) Zones/Policy Areas in a similar format to that for a State Heritage Area;
- (h) summary of the testing of appropriate methodologies for identifying and assessing nationally significant places, using the draft national criteria and themes of 'pastoralism, beef growing and outback communication routes'.
- (j) a succinct inventory setting out all the places identified, assessed and recommended in (b) - (g) above, as well as those places rejected as not being of State or local heritage value;

- (k) maps showing the location of all the places and areas in (b) - (g) above;
- (l) a bibliography of documentary and other sources consulted during the historical research for the overview history and during the assessment of individual places and areas;
- (m) an index to the Heritage Assessment Reports, by page number. This order of this index should be alphabetical by Town and Street Name/Number, if applicable
- (n) reports on the workshops/presentations conducted during Stage 2 of the survey (For further information, see Section 6 - Liaison)

The report will conform to the conventions of the *Australian Government Publishing Service Style Manual*, Fifth Edition, 1994.

The Consultant should also lodge all marked maps and original photographic material, including negatives, with Heritage SA at the completion of the survey.

The Consultant should retain all research notes, diaries, field sketches and other material related to the heritage survey or lodge them with the Mortlock Library of South Australiana at the completion of the survey.

5. TIMETABLE:

The ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** will commence on **Monday 2 April 2001** and will be completed prior to **Friday 28 June 2002**.

The Survey will be undertaken in two stages:

STAGE 1 April 2001 - June 2001:

The first stage of the project will involve a desktop study and research on potential heritage places in the Survey Area. It will also include planning and a proposed methodology for the fieldwork and significance assessments in Stage 2.

Stage 1 will run from **Monday 2 April 2001** to approximately **30 June 2001**.

STAGE 2 July 2001 – January-June 2002:

The second stage of the project will involve a comprehensive field survey of the potential heritage places in the Survey Area, including making recommendations on heritage significance of places within the Survey Area, the methodologies used and heritage tourism issues.

Stage 2 will run from approximately **1 July 2001** and be completed before **Friday 28 June 2002**.

The Consultant will at the commencement of the heritage survey prepare a detailed timetable for the stages of the survey, to be agreed to by Heritage SA and the Australian Heritage Commission.. The Consultant will advise Heritage SA of any proposed changes to that timetable.

6. LIAISON:

An Steering Committee consisting of representatives of Heritage SA, Australian Heritage Commission, SA Tourism Commission and Department of State Aboriginal Affairs will assist Heritage SA in managing the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey***. The Committee will consider progress reports during the Survey and, where necessary, will meet the Consultant (face to face or by teleconference) to consider the progress of the project. The Consultant will maintain regular contact with Heritage SA at all stages of the survey.

The Consultant will consult with the local community about the recommendations affecting their area, particularly concerning any proposed list of places of local heritage value and Historic Conservation Zones/Policy Areas. Workshops will be conducted during Stage 2 of the Survey project including a presentation of the methodologies used and the Survey's recommendations, in particular those recommendations for heritage tourism.

Heritage SA will provide letters of introduction and other reasonable assistance to the Consultant as required. A draft letter of introduction as well as a sample letter to property owners of proposed recommendations are attached to this Project Brief.

7. PAYMENT OF CONSULTANT'S FEE:

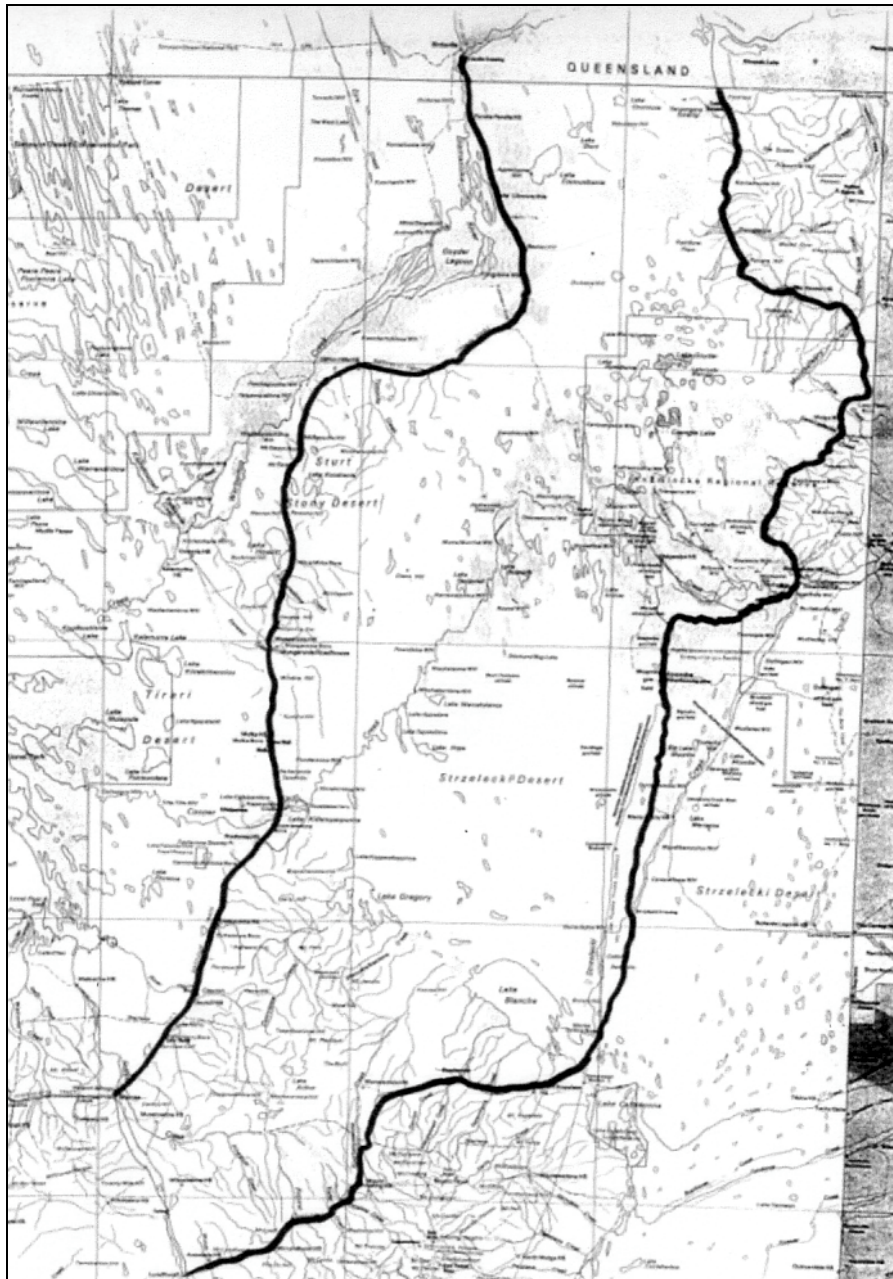
The Consultant's Fee for the ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** will be **\$85,800**, including \$7,800 GST, which will be paid to the Consultant in stages to be agreed at the commencement of the heritage survey.

A final payment, comprising 20% of the total fee, will be made on the completion of the final report of the project to the satisfaction of Heritage SA and the Australian Heritage Commission.

8. CONTRACT:

The ***Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Historic Heritage Survey*** will be carried out under a standard contract between the Department for Environment and Heritage and the Consultant and according to this Project Brief, which will form the basis of the contract.

Any amendment to this Project Brief will be done only with written agreement of the Consultant, Heritage SA and the Australian Heritage Commission.



Plan of Birdsville and Strzelecki Tracks Survey Area.

20.0 INDEX**PAGE****RECOMMENDED NATIONAL HERITAGE PLACES**

Burke & Wills Sites on Cooper Creek	NHP:001	147
Dog Fence/Dingo Barrier Fence	NHP:002	159
Strzelecki Creek	NHP:003	169

EXISTING STATE HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

Blanchewater Homestead Ruins	SHP:016	249
Cadelga Homestead Ruins	SHP:008	219
Fettlers Cottage, Marree	SHP:001	191
Gray's Tree, Lake Massacre	SHP:010	227
Great Northern Hotel, Marree	SHP:002	195
Homestead and Woolshed, Cordillo Downs Station	SHP:009	223
Horse Capstan, Pump & Well, Old Mulga Bore	SHP:013	239
Innamincka Regional Reserve Headquarters	SHP:011	233
Killalpaninna Mission Site	SHP:006	211
Lake Callabonna Fossil Reserve	SHP:015	245
Lake Harry Date Plantation Site	SHP:003	199
Lakes Kanunka ... Fossil Sites	SHP:005	207
Lake Palankarinna Fossil Reserve	SHP:004	203
Mulka Store Ruins	SHP:007	215
Tinga Tingana Homestead Ruins	SHP:014	241
Well & Iron Whim, Merty Merty Station	SHP:012	237

RECOMMENDED STATE HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

Koonchera Waterhole, off Birdsville Track	SHR:004	297
Kopperamanna Mission Site, off Birdsville Track	SHR:003	287
Manuwalkaninna Homestead Ruins, off Strzelecki Track	SHR:005	305
Marree Afghan Quarter, Marree	SHR:002	273
Marree Mosque Site, via Marree	SHR:001	263

EXISTING STATE HERITAGE PLACES (QLD)

Birdsville AIM Nursing Home (former Royal Hotel), Birdsville	QHP:002	257
Birdsville Court House, Birdsville	QHP:003	259
Birdsville Hotel, Birdsville	QHP:001	255

RECOMMENDED STATE HERITAGE PLACES (QLD)

Dig Tree & Fort Wills Site, Nappa Merrie Station	QHR:001	316
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RECOMMENDED STATE HERITAGE AREA (SA)

Strzelecki Creek	SHA:001	328
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RECOMMENDED LOCAL HERITAGE PLACES (SA)

Aboriginal Cemetery, Marree	LHP:005	354
Apatoongannie Homestead Ruins, Mulka Station	LHP:011	369
Bucaltaninna Homestead Ruins, Etadunna Station	LHP:010	367
Bull Hole Bore & Pump Ruins, Cordillo Downs Station	LHP:019	393
Canny Trig Point (Milner's Pile), Etadunna Station	LHP:008	363
Cemetery, Marree	LHP:004	354
Coongie Homestead Ruins, Innamincka Regional Reserve	LHP:022	399
Dulkaninna Trig Point, Dulkaninna Station	LHP:007	361
Etadunna Woolshed Ruins, Etadunna Station	LHP:009	365
Gidgealpa No. 2 Well, Gidgealpa Station	LHP:024	408
Innamincka No. 1 Well, Innamincka Regional Reserve	LHP:025	410
Junction Well Hut, Murnpeowie Station	LHP:029	419
Kudriemitchie Outstation Ruins, Innamincka Regional Reserve	LHP:023	404
Haddon Downs Homestead Ruins, Cordillo Downs Station	LHP:021	397
Herrgott Springs, via Marree	LHP:006	358
Hospital, Marree	LHP:003	352
Manu Main Homestead Ruins, Murnpeowie Station	LHP:028	417
Miranda Homestead Ruins, Pandie Pandie Station	LHP:018	390
Mirra Mitta Bore, Cowarie Station	LHP:014	379
Mount Gason Bore, Cowarie Station	LHP:015	383
Nappacoongie Homestead Ruins, Gidgealpa Station	LHP:026	413
Old Mulka Homestead Ruins, Mulka Station	LHP:012	373
Old Pandie Pandie Homestead, Pandie Pandie Station	LHP:017	388
Ooroowillannie Homestead Ruins, Mulka Station	LHP:013	375
Page Family Grave, Clifton Hills Station	LHP:016	386
Providence Dam Sheep Yards, Cordillo Downs Station	LHP:020	395
Railway Station, Marree	LHP:001	348
School, Marree	LHP:002	350
Toolatchie Homestead Ruins, Gidgealpa Station	LHP:027	415

RECOMMENDED LOCAL HERITAGE PLACES (QLD)

Aboriginal Cemetery, Birdsville	LHP(Q):003	427
Burke & Wills Tree, Birdsville	LHP(Q):006	433
Cemetery, Birdsville	LHP(Q):002	425
Chinese Gardens Site, Birdsville	LHP(Q):005	431
Diamantina Crossing, Birdsville	LHP(Q):007	435
Hospital, Birdsville	LHP(Q):001	423
Hydro Power Station, Birdsville	LHP(Q):004	429
Nappa Merrie Homestead, Nappa Merrie Station	LHP(Q):008	437
Oontoo Customs House Site, Nappa Merrie Station	LHP(Q):010	441
Oontoo Hotel Ruins, Nappa Merrie Station	LHP(Q):009	439

