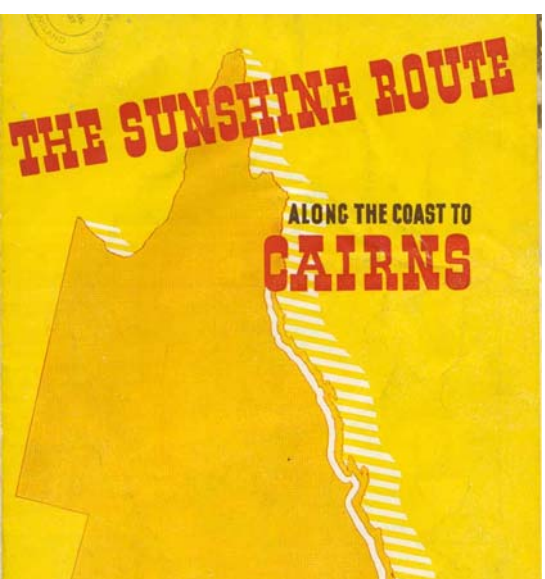
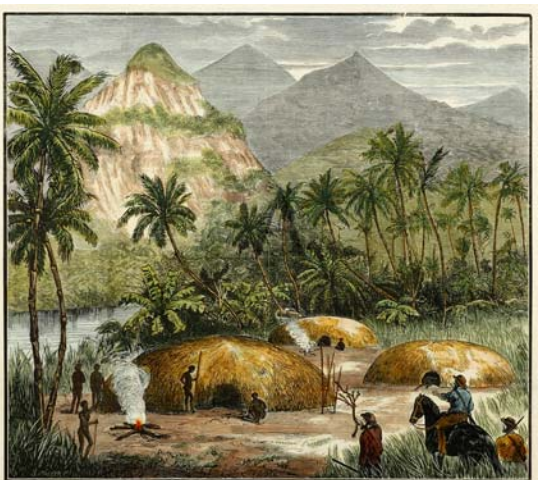




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## A Thematic History of the City of Cairns and its Regional Towns 2011

Prepared for the Department of Environment & Resource Management, Queensland  
and the Cairns Regional Council



This Report has been undertaken in accordance with the principles  
of the Burra Charter adopted by ICOMOS Australia

This document has been completed by  
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#### Document Control

Date	Issue	Signoff
9 June	95% DRAFT	
15 August 2011	FINAL .pdf	DRWx

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### What is Significant?

Cairns was established in 1876 to service the goldfields of Far North Queensland by providing a port to transport goods to and from the region. The site on Trinity Bay was selected as suitable to establish both a shipping centre and township to service the Far North region and the success of this port greatly influenced the subsequent development of specific agricultural pursuits in the region. The isolated position of the town depended on the port, and also resulted in the development of railways, tramways, roads and eventually an airport to enable the increasing need to transport goods, equipment and people to the developing area.

The provision of rail lines played a significant role in the development of the region, including the difficult construction of the line to Kuranda in 1886 and the joining of the railway line from both north and south in 1924, which finally linked Cairns to Brisbane. Both the Kuranda line, which was initially constructed for the purpose of transporting mined products and timber to the port at Cairns, and the Brisbane to Cairns link, ultimately provided a boost to the tourist industry in the Cairns region. Likewise roads, which were originally developed to provide access for the transportation of goods, ultimately provided tourist access to the region.

Timber was one of Far North Queensland's earliest industries, with trees harvested in the early 1870s, before Cairns itself was established. The timber industry was subsequently important to the early economy of the Cairns region soon after settlement and continued to be a significant industry for many years, well into the twentieth century. The timber industry was significantly altered after the World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics of Queensland in 1988, which runs along the coast from Townsville to Cooktown, and most of the remaining sawmills in Far North Queensland now mill plantation timber.

The development of the Cairns region occurred due to the discovery of rich mineral resources such as gold and tin, however once these had been exhausted, agriculture, primarily sugar growing, became the basis of the economy in this region of Queensland. The climatic conditions in the Cairns district were found to be ideal for the growing of sugar cane and this led to the establishment of the sugar industry. This in turn greatly influenced the population of the Cairns region with an initial migration of Melanesian and Chinese labour, and the subsequent migration of Southern Europeans, in particular Italians, to work in the industry. These communities made a lasting contribution to Cairns, with the second largest Chinatown in Queensland situated there at one time.

Cairns is situated on a narrow coastal plain largely surrounded by mountain ranges. As the area became more accessible, the natural landscape of the Cairns hinterland attracted attention as an area of natural beauty. Encouraged by the Queensland government, numbers of tourists were drawn to the region, particularly in the twentieth century, and this resulted in the development of another highly influential industry in Cairns. Tourism provided Cairns with further economic growth and stability.

Towns in the region developed in different ways. The City of Cairns was initially laid out on a narrow sandy strip of land and a grid pattern was used to create settlement blocks in the first township plan of 1877. The next largest provincial town in the region is Gordonvale, which was fully planned by the colonial government prior to settlement. In contrast the town of Babinda developed in an unplanned manner alongside an established tramway and then along a Government Road perpendicular to the tramway. Development of this town was anchored by the State, which built the Babinda Hotel and then assisted settlement through the *Babinda Township Act*, in an attempt to stabilise an otherwise itinerant population.



World War Two greatly altered the operation of the City of Cairns and the surrounding region, particularly after the fall of Singapore in 1942 when it became an important base for the Allied Forces during the war in the Pacific. An initial outcome was the construction of a road leading to the hinterland, via Kuranda, to provide an evacuation route and access to bases and infrastructure situated there. Buildings and sites in Cairns and the region were used for various military purposes and the proximity of the conflict resulted in the evacuation of many local residents to the south. Large numbers of troops from the United States were stationed in the region during these years, however little physical evidence now remains of these turbulent years.

### How is it Significant?

The City of Cairns and the Cairns region has historical, technical and social significance to the State of Queensland.

### Why is it Significant?

The Cairns region is of historical significance for its natural landform, which greatly influenced the selection of the site and the development of the City of Cairns and the surrounding hinterland. Together with the specific tropical climate, the natural landform also played an important role in the development of important industries in the Cairns region, both sugar and tourism.

The Cairns region is of historical and social significance for the influx of a diverse range of migrants that settled in the area largely due to the initial discovery of mineral wealth and subsequently due to developing industries. The establishment of aboriginal missions is of historical significance in the region as an outcome of the conflict experienced after the arrival of European settlers in the 1870s.

The presence of natural mineral wealth, such as gold and tin, and natural resources, such as timber, played an historically significant role in the development of the area by providing the impetus for the initial establishment of the port of Cairns itself. The latter resource remained an important industry in the region for a sustained period of time.

The Cairns region is of historical significance for the development of agricultural industries suitable for the specific tropical climate. By far the most successful and dominant of these is the sugar industry which has had a highly significant influence on the development of the region, the types of people attracted to the region and the appearance of the modified landscape. The other highly significant industry in the region is tourism, which has resulted in the development of transport and facility infrastructure throughout the study area.

The type and diversity of workers, dependent on the developing industries, is of great historical and social significance to the Cairns region as it greatly affected the diverse population in the area through the twentieth century. This is reflected in the lasting contribution these migrant groups have made to the region. The most significant groups included Melanesian, Chinese and Italian migrants.

The isolation of the Cairns region played an important role in the development of a transport system in the area and the resulting network is of historical significance as a reflection of both this isolation and the development of the important industries within the region. Of prime importance was the port, which was the hub of commercial life, underpinning the economic life of Cairns.

Cairns and its provincial towns developed on important transport routes to service developing industries and, as a reflection of this, they are of historical significance. Cairns' development as a port and its specific



need for drainage and land reclamation, which was possible due to continual dredging of the inlet, are unique to this city in the region.

Many of the buildings of Cairns and its regional towns can be considered to be of technical significance. The region has the largest collection of buildings designed in concrete anywhere in Queensland. Whereas masonry construction in other towns is a mixture of stone, brick, block and concrete, the quantity of reinforced concrete buildings particularly surviving from the 1910s to the 1940s is exceptional. Reinforced concrete was used not only for engineering structures but also for houses, hotels, churches, places of assembly, stores, civic and office edifices and in a variety of styles and formats.

The emergence of local identity brought about self-government in Cairns and beyond, and the State of Queensland shaped the area by policing and dispensing justice. Associated needs, such as customs requirements, were specific to the port of Cairns and are of historical significance to the study area.

World War Two played a significant role in the historical development of Cairns as it altered the operation of the city for the period of the war, particularly from 1942, due to its location and port facilities.

Community life is reflected in a variety of forms in the Cairns study area and the existing fabric exhibits cultural diversity and social awareness that are of both historical and social significance. These include churches, public halls, clubrooms, theatres, hotels, sporting venues, parks, schools and health facilities. Together these buildings provide the region with its identity and demonstrate its particular way of life.

□□□



## INTRODUCTION

### Background and Brief

Assessing heritage significance is a necessary step in finding out which places we want to keep and what decisions should be made on how to manage them for their conservation. Heritage places are valuable cultural resources. Our historic buildings, relics, archaeological sites, landscapes, plantings and streetscapes are not renewable and if not protected can easily become scarce. Heritage defines an area's history and character and helps reinforce a local community's sense of identity and stability.

A heritage study identifies, assesses and documents places of cultural heritage significance within a Local Government Area. It includes a holistic assessment in terms of place types, periods and heritage values and is usually divided into two stages, with the first stage involving the preparation of a thematic history and the identification of places of potential cultural significance across the whole municipality. Stage two assesses the places in detail and explains why they are significant.

Commissioned by the Cairns Regional Council and Department of Environment and Resource Management in December 2010, this report expands the earlier heritage studies, 'Cairns Heritage Study', prepared by Environmental Resources Management Australia in 2008, 'Mulgrave Shire Heritage Study', prepared by Pawsey & Prowse Pty Ltd in 1996 and 'Cairns City Heritage Study', prepared by Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd in 1994. The objective of this thematic history is to comprehensively review the previous histories and update them with information that is crucial to furthering an understanding of the key themes and patterns that explain Cairns' heritage, as it exists today. Heritage can relate to places large or small, moveable or fixed and can be tangible or intangible.

Source of information that have recently become more accessible are Australian newspapers which have been undergoing a digitisation process through the National Library of Australia. Pertinent to this study are the newspapers available in Queensland which reported issues occurring in Cairns, particularly *The Queenslander* and *The Brisbane Courier Mail*, and the local newspaper *The Cairns Post* in its various guises. Correspondents also reported events for the Townsville and Rockhampton newspapers and these build an interesting picture of life in the emerging town. The digitisation process has meant searching newspaper articles can be done quickly using search keywords, and this has become an immensely powerful and useful tool to discover the origins of buildings, their architects, dates of construction, their purpose and original owners. In some cases the existing history has proved to require rewriting. The digitisation programme has been fortuitous and timely in the progressing of this study.

As well as this, *heritage Alliance* were originally contracted to complete a large number of citation sheets for more than 200 individual sites in the Cairns region. This required the completion of detailed site histories and the citation sheets should be read in conjunction with this thematic history which contains a historical synopsis of many but not all of the sites studied. Either way the two go together, this (revised) thematic history was prepared to give a context to the individual site histories although it is usual to complete the thematic history before undertaking the citation datasheets.

The work acknowledges the above previous heritage reports prepared for the former Environmental Protection Agency (now Department of Environment and Resource Management) and the former Cairns City Council (now Cairns Regional Council) as well as;

- NQ Research Associates 'Part 1 An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire' and 'Part 2 A Chronology of Historical Points of the Mulgrave Shire' 1995



- State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland, Cultural Heritage Branch Cairns. Qld EPA (now DERM), November 2008

While some of these documents were well researched, the on-line access to newspapers has revealed further information which could be used to expand these studies and in some cases correct the information presented. For this study the authors have as far as possible attempted to return to primary documents, Acts of Parliament and newspaper sources rather than reinterpreting existing material or writings. Histories completed in the last 50 years have been used to provide a framework against which many primary sources have been rechecked and alternative, or confirming, interpretations given.

### Study Team

The study was prepared by:

David Wixted, principal, *heritage ALLIANCE*

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Michele Summerton of *Historica*, cultural heritage projects, Melbourne also assisted with the introductory text on historic themes and their use.

### Copyright

Copyright is held by heritage ALLIANCE, Department of Environment and Resource Management and the Cairns Regional Council, June 2011.

### Abbreviations

AHC	Australian Heritage Commission (now Australian Heritage Council)
AWM	Australian War Memorial
CHB	Cairns Harbour Board
CHS	Cairns Historical Society
CRC	Cairns Regional Council
CWA	Country Womens' Association
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NLA	National Library of Australia
NTQ	National Trust of Queensland
PWD	Public Works Department (Qld)
QATB	Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade
QGTB	Queensland Government Tourist Bureau
QHC	Queensland Housing Commission

QSA	Queensland State Archives
SLQ	State Library of Queensland
SLV	State Library of Victoria
Uni of Qld	University of Queensland (Queensland Places collection).

## Acknowledgements

The study team would like to thank the following people for contributing to the information presented in this report:

- Pat and Alan Broughton of the Cairns Historical Society
- Jan Wegner, National Trust and James Cook University
- Jim Hill of the Mulgrave Historical Society
- Kay Earl, Mulgrave Historical Society
- Dawn May, National Trust
- George Jago & Holly Goriss of Babinda
- Ray Supple, Jo Wills and Cathy Browning of DERM Cairns and Mary Burns of DERM Brisbane.

Thanks are also due to Kaye Nardella of the DERM Map Museum, Brisbane for access to land survey maps and government reserve indexes.

## What is a Thematic History?

A thematic history is the essential guiding component of a heritage study, a study that aims to identify, assess and document all post-contact places of potential cultural heritage significance. A thematic history identifies and explains the major factors and processes that have influenced the history of an area and shaped its distinctive character. It serves to ensure that places identified in the assessment process reflect and represent the historical development of an area. It also provides an historical context for understanding historical importance when there may be little if any physical evidence left at a site.

A thematic history is developed using a framework that identifies and describes themes that are significant and distinctive to an area. The first thematic framework was developed and implemented in regional heritage surveys of South Australia in 1979. More recently, the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) published the *Australian Historic Themes: A framework for use in heritage assessment and management*, in 2001.<sup>1</sup> A great deal of work went into the development and trialling of the AHC themes beforehand, and the framework has since been adopted and used throughout Australia to provide a nationally coordinated and consistent approach to heritage assessment and management. While the framework was designed and developed for heritage practitioners, local historians, teachers, interpreters and students have also found it useful in their approaches to interpreting history. The framework is broad and general at a national level, so that different regional and local frameworks can also be identified and developed while being

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Heritage Commission, *Australian Historic Themes: A framework for use in heritage assessment and management*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001



linked. The nine themes and sub-themes can be used to prompt broad scale thinking about a place and its connections and can be used to focus on the historical values of a place and explain how these values are represented physically in the place and its wider context.

The AHC's framework of *Australian Historic Themes* is used in this report as an organising principle to identify the historical themes that have shaped Cairns' history and its heritage. The AHC themes are reproduced later in this report.

The most noticeable characteristic of a thematic history is its format. Some readers expect a history to be arranged as a chronological outline of key events. However, this is not the aim of a thematic history, which:

*differs from traditional approaches by focusing on key processes rather than topics or a chronological treatment. It provides a means of developing a comprehensive and thorough framework by attempting to identify the key human activities that have shaped the built environment.<sup>2</sup>*

### Thematic History as a Continuing Process

Ideas about heritage inevitably change as a community's values, levels of knowledge, perceptions and tastes change. As some things inherited from the past are cherished and retained for future generations, others fade and disappear from living memory. The notion of disappearing heritage applies especially to the cultural landscape of the everyday. Its familiarity is something we take for granted. Factories, standard types of houses, flats and schools, petrol stations, hotels, shops and even commercial signage are some examples of this overlooked heritage. Some things tend to be valued more than others because of their associations, their history or their intrinsic qualities, such as their design or character.

Many heritage places are still growing in value as we learn more about our history and understand the context of places in the broader cultural landscape. Our recent history is also growing in value; as it gels into perspective it becomes clearer to understand. Consequently, our views on what is significant are not static and invariably change with growing appreciation of our past. Identifying and determining significance is an ongoing process of gathering historical information, consulting with people and making informed decisions.

From time to time it is necessary to update the components of a local government area heritage study, including the thematic history. Communities expect that their local council will identify, respect and protect their local heritage, and councils have a statutory responsibility to manage the heritage in their areas and protect it through local planning schemes that responds to the rhythms of its local history.

While historical themes have helped guide judgements about the types of places of potential cultural heritage significance, they have also drawn attention to gaps in existing histories and have prompted a reassessment of some heritage places that have previously been overlooked in a local government area.

This report reviews the 'Cairns Heritage Study', prepared by Environmental Resources Management Australia in 2008, 'Cairns: a Concise History', prepared by Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle in 1994 and 'Mulgrave Shire Heritage Study', prepared by Pawsey & Prowse in 1996, and in doing so reconsiders the historical themes and sub-themes on which they are based, filling gaps and updating the content with new information to reflect community values and current approaches to heritage identification and assessment.

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<sup>2</sup> Thom Blake, developer of the Queensland thematic framework, cited in Context Pty Ltd & Heritage Victoria, 'Victoria's Framework of Historical Themes', Final Report, vol 1, September 2007 (draft format)



As before, the history does not provide a chronological account of what happened in the Cairns region, nor does it record all the individuals, events, associations and clubs that may have left their mark in the community. Its first objective is to reconsider the key themes that explain Cairns' settlement and development patterns, to identify any gaps and help explain how and why the Cairns region looks the way it does today.

### The City of Cairns and the Cairns Region

The study area for this thematic history is the Cairns Regional Council area but excluding the former Douglas Shire. It is defined by the boundaries of the former Mulgrave Shire and the City of Cairns, the two being amalgamated as the City of Cairns in 1995 and this was followed by the Douglas Shire being incorporated as the northern division (10) of the Cairns Regional Council in 2008. The study excludes the former Douglas Shire, which includes the towns of Mossman and Port Douglas. Appendix A contains a map of the Cairns Regional Council area and the study zone.

In addition to Cairns and its immediate suburbs, the towns and localities included run from north of Palm Cove via Smithfield, Redlynch, Freshwater, Stratford and Aeroglen to Cairns, and then south from Edmonton via Gordonvale, Aloomba, Fishery Falls, Babinda and Mirriwinni. These latter towns below Gordonvale are in the coastal strip between the eastern slopes of the Atherton Tableland and the coastal range forming the Wooroonooran National Park.

### Cairns' Historical Themes – What Defines the Region?

In reviewing Cairns' historical themes and thematic history, the focus has been on distilling the key themes that help us to understand what is distinctive about Cairns' history and heritage in comparison to other regions. Eleven principal themes pertaining to Cairns have been identified by the authors, these being similar to the previous studies. They are set out in a framework that organises each theme as an activity. Each highlights places within the Cairns region that express important aspects of the region's historical development, culture and identity. The AHC explains that by focusing 'on human activities that produced the places we value and the human response to Australia's natural environment, places are related to the processes and stories associated with them, rather than to the type or function of place'.<sup>3</sup> This helps to tease out an understanding of the broad historical processes, actions and events that link and overlap. They can expand our notions of historical activity and enrich the way we look at the past.

The themes have additional sub-themes that reflect specific activities and historical processes of Cairns that help to further explain and define the region's particular character, identity and aspects of significance.

The following table of themes includes three separate frameworks:

- The Cairns Region Historical Themes identified in this report,
- The State Themes of Queensland originally drafted by historian Thom Blake and updated in 2011 by the Cultural Heritage unit of DERM,

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<sup>3</sup> Australian Heritage Commission, *Australian Historic Themes: A framework for use in heritage assessment and management*, p 4

- The National Themes identified by the AHC and known as the *Australian Historic Themes*.

The National (AHC) and State (Queensland) themes and sub themes show the context in which the Cairns themes and sub-themes have been identified and how they parallel and interweave with the broader themes of Queensland and Australia. They also highlight variations that relate to Cairns' specific patterns of development and identity, highlighting what is distinctive and different about this region's history and heritage. A thematic application, which refers also to AHC and Queensland frameworks, will help to ensure a consistent approach to heritage identification and assessment from local to state to national level.

<b>Cairns Themes</b>	<b>State Themes</b>	<b>National (AHC) Themes</b>
Themes and Sub-themes specific to Cairns and its region	Queensland's Historic Themes relevant to Cairns and its region	Australian Historic Themes and Sub-themes relevant to Cairns and its region
<b>1 Shaping Cairns' Environment</b>  1.1 Defining the character of Cairns' natural landscape  1.2 Defining the character of Cairns' climate		<b>1 Tracing the evolution of the Australian Environment</b>  1.3 Assessing scientifically diverse environments
<b>2 Peopling Cairns</b>  2.1 The first inhabitants of the Cairns region  2.2 Arrival of new settlers to the Cairns region  2.3 Conflict and interaction between indigenous and non-indigenous people	<b>1 Peopling Places</b>  1.1 The first inhabitants  1.2 Migration from outside and within  1.3 Encounters between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples	<b>2 Peopling Australia</b>  2.1 Living as Australia's earliest Inhabitants  2.4 Migrating  2.5 Promoting settlement  2.6 Fighting for land

<b>3 Developing and utilising the land in the Cairns region</b> 3.1 Exploring and surveying the land 3.2 Utilising natural resources 3.3 Agricultural pursuits	<b>2 Exploiting, utilising and transforming the land</b> 2.1 Exploring, surveying and mapping the land 2.2 Exploiting natural resources 2.4 Agricultural activities	<b>3 Developing Local, Regional and National Economies</b> 3.1 Exploring the coastline 3.2 Constructing capital city economies 3.3 Surveying the continent 3.4 Utilising natural resources 3.9 Farming for commercial profit 3.11 Altering the environment
<b>4 Developing Cairns' local and regional industries</b> 4.1 Experimentation in agriculture 4.2 The sugar industry 4.3 Financing 4.4 Informing the Cairns community 4.5 Tourism in the Cairns region	<b>3 Developing secondary and tertiary industries</b> 3.1 Feeding Queenslanders 3.2 Developing manufacturing capacities 3.7 Financing 3.9 Informing Queenslanders 3.12 Catering for tourists	<b>3 Developing local, regional and national economies</b> 3.5 Developing primary production 3.6 Recruiting labour 3.12 Feeding people 3.13 Developing an Australian manufacturing capacity 3.18 Financing Australia 3.20 Informing Australians 3.23 Catering for tourists
<b>5 Working in the Cairns Region</b> 5.1 Working for the sugar cane industry	<b>4 Working</b> 4.7 Working as exploited/indentured labour	<b>3 Developing local, regional and national economies</b> 3.6 Recruiting labour

<p><b>6 Linking Cairns</b></p> <p>6.1 Developing a rail and tram transport network</p> <p>6.2 Moving goods and people to and from Cairns by ship</p> <p>6.3 Forming Cairns' roads</p> <p>6.4 Establishing communication by air</p> <p>6.5 Establishing telecommunications and postal services</p>	<p><b>5 Moving goods, people and information</b></p> <p>5.3 Using rail</p> <p>5.4 Using shipping</p> <p>5.5 Using motor vehicles</p> <p>5. 6 Using air transport</p> <p>5.7 Telecommunications</p> <p>5.8 Postal services</p>	<p><b>3 Developing local, regional and national economies</b></p> <p>3.7 Establishing communications</p> <p>3.8 Moving goods and people</p>
<p><b>7 Building settlements, towns, and cities in the Cairns Region</b></p> <p>7.1 Planning and forming settlements</p> <p>7.2 Developing urban services and amenities</p> <p>7.3 Buildings and architecture</p>	<p><b>6 Building settlements, towns, cities and dwellings</b></p> <p>6.1 Establishing settlements</p> <p>6.2 Planning and forming settlements</p> <p>6.3 Developing urban services and amenities</p> <p>6.4 Dwellings</p>	<p><b>4 Building settlements, towns and cities</b></p> <p>4.1 Planning urban settlements</p> <p>4.2 Supplying urban services</p> <p><b>3 Developing local, regional and national economies</b></p> <p>3.11 Altering the environment</p> <p><b>8 Developing Australia's cultural life</b></p> <p>8.13 Living in cities and suburbs</p> <p>8.14 Living in the country and rural settlements</p>

<b>8 Administering Cairns</b> 8.1 Establishing law and order in Cairns 8.2 Establishing local government in Cairns 8.3 State government presence in Cairns 8.4 Establishing customs services in Cairns 8.5 Defending the country	<b>7 Maintaining order</b> 7.1 Policing and maintaining law and order 7.2 Government and public administration 7.3 Customs and quarantine services 7.4 Local government 7.6 Defending the country	<b>7 Governing</b> 7.2 Developing institutions of self-government and democracy 7.6 Administering Australia 7.7 Defending Australia 7.8 Establishing regional and local identity
<b>9 Creating social and cultural institutions in Cairns</b> 9.1 Worshipping in Cairns 9.2 Participating in cultural activities in Cairns 9.3 Joining organisations, clubs and societies 9.4 Pursuing leisure activities	<b>8 Creating social and cultural institutions</b> 8.1 Worshipping and religious institutions 8.2 Cultural activities 8.3 Organisations and societies 8.5 Sport and recreation	<b>3 Developing local, regional and national economies</b> 3.21 Entertaining for profit <b>8 Developing Australia's cultural life</b> 8.1 Organising recreation 8.5 Forming associations 8.6 Worshipping
<b>10 Establishing schools and places of learning in Cairns and its region</b> 10.1 Primary school education 10.2 Secondary school education 10.3 Tertiary education facilities	<b>9 Educating Queenslanders</b> 9.1 Primary schooling 9.2 Secondary schooling 9.3 Educating adults 9.4 Tertiary education	<b>6 Educating</b> 6.2 Establishing schools
<b>11 Providing health &amp; welfare services in the Cairns Region</b> 11.1 Caring for the whole community 11.2 Caring for pensioners	<b>10 Providing health &amp; welfare services</b> 10.1 Health services	<b>3 Developing Local, Regional and National Economies</b> 3.26 Providing health services



## 1. SHAPING CAIRNS' ENVIRONMENT

The natural landform of the Cairns region, the presence of natural resources and the tropical climate of the region, greatly influenced the way certain patterns developed in the cultural landscape. These include the development of region's specific industries and agricultural pursuits, the development of transport routes and tourism in the region, the location of the City of Cairns itself and the type of building constructed within the city.

### 1.1 Defining the Character of Cairns' Natural Landscape

The Cairns region is situated on a narrow coastal plain at the base of the Great Dividing Range, specifically the Whitfield Range and the Lamb Range. The city of Cairns itself is located on the flat western shores of Trinity Inlet, where deep water provides a safe anchorage for ships. This influenced the selection of the site for a port town. At the time when Cairns was first established in 1876, sand dunes and bands of wet lowland Melaleuca swamp and saltwater mangroves lined the coastal area. The Barron River, which flows from the northern Tablelands into the Coral Sea, forms tidal wetlands in the region.

In 1886 the location was described as one that 'possesses few advantages – facilities for drainage there are none and urban picturesqueness which depends on inequalities of elevation can never be created.'<sup>4</sup> The deep harbour therefore appears to be the only apparent advantage of Trinity Inlet as a settlement site.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the ranges mentioned, the presence of the Murray Prior Range to the east of Trinity Inlet, results in a mountainous semi-circle around Cairns. This ring of mountains is a prominent feature of the city. Upper slopes of the Whitfield Range are vegetated with tropical rainforest and areas of eucalyptus and acacia forest, with lower slopes of grassland. The abundance of timber provided a dominant building material in the region, particularly in the early years.

The soil structure of the coastal plain is a combination of clays with an overlay of sand. The layer of highly plastic grey silty clay, above a deep layer of stiff clay, is of low bearing capacity and has influenced the type of construction that has occurred in the Cairns city area.

### 1.2 Defining the Character of Cairns' Climate

Cairns and its region lie in an area of extreme climatic variations. The wet tropical climate divides into three seasons – a hot-wet period from December to April, a cooler drier period from May to August and a hot dry period from September to November. The climate is characterised by seasonal rainfall, 85% of which generally falls in the hot-wet period.<sup>6</sup> This wet season can result in localised flooding, with much of Cairns itself being flood prone.

The region has the highest mean annual rainfall in Australia. The observation station at Happy Valley near Babinda has recorded this at an average of 4,446 millimetres.<sup>7</sup> The top station at Mt Bellenden Ker, 60 kilometres south of Cairns, recorded the highest rainfall in Australia (12,461 millimetres), which occurred in

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<sup>4</sup> A. Garran, *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*, as quoted in P Watling and M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p10

<sup>5</sup> P Watling and M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 10

<sup>6</sup> P Watling and M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 6

<sup>7</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896-1996*, p 33



2000.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this, Cairns has a mean daily minimum of just over 20 degrees and a mean maximum of just less than 29 degrees.<sup>9</sup>

The Cairns area is also subject to cyclonic conditions and a large number of cyclones have passed through the region since settlement. Cairns has the highest cyclonic activity per 100 kilometres of coastline in Australia.<sup>10</sup> Notable amongst these were cyclones in 1911 (damage to most buildings from Port Douglas to Innisfail), 1918 (substantial damage in Cairns and the region), 1920, *Willis* in 1927, 1934, *Agnes* in 1956, 1990, 1997, 1998, *Larry* in 2006 and *Yasi* in 2011, the latter causing more devastation to towns south of Cairns.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 1 Devastation by the 1918 cyclone on the fledgling township of Babinda. Source George Jago Collection, SLQ

Queensland appointed its first meteorologist in 1866 and by 1887 had started collecting meteorological data. From 1882-1957 meteorological records such as rainfall were measured at the Cairns Post Office. By 1896 there were 504 weather collection stations, by 1901 there were 604 and by 1913 there were 803.<sup>12</sup> In 1921 a facility was set up on Willis Island in the Coral Sea, some 450 kilometres east of Cairns, primarily as a cyclone warning station.

After 1901 the Commonwealth took over the role of national meteorological observations and by 1996 there were some 2000 observation stations in Queensland.<sup>13</sup> The Bureau of Meteorology in Cairns has carried out observations at their station near the airport since 1942 and this has continued to the present time. During World War Two the Bureau provided forecasts for the military.

<sup>8</sup> Media release, Dean Collins, National Climate Centre, Melbourne 5 January 2001

<sup>9</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896-1996*, p 30

<sup>10</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896-1996*, p 47

<sup>11</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896-1996*, p 48

<sup>12</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896-1996*, p 29

<sup>13</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896-1996*, p 29

## 2. PEOPLEING CAIRNS

This theme introduces the people who have been associated with the Cairns region and traces the patterns of their activities.

People have occupied Queensland over tens of thousands of years and have given shape to its landscape. The terrain of the Cairns region was part of a rich natural and cultural landscape that was traversed and used by Aboriginal people. The connection to their known landscape was central to their culture and identity. In the 1870s the displacement of these original inhabitants began with an influx of gold prospectors and cedar getters, many of whom subsequently settled in the Cairns district. The following years saw migrants arrive from a broad range of countries and this changed the face of the Cairns region.

### 2.1 The First Inhabitants of the Cairns Region

Before European settlement, Aboriginal tribes had inhabited the region around Cairns for thousands of years. Indigenous Australians throughout the continent used the environment peculiar to their region and in the wet tropical area of North Queensland the Bama, or rainforest aboriginal people, occupied the land.<sup>14</sup> From Ingham to Cooktown, there were four major language groups inhabiting a narrow coastal strip west to the coastal range. This land contained swamplands, rainforest, rivers, creeks and waterfalls.<sup>15</sup> In order to understand the traditional aboriginal groupings, Timothy Bottoms has re-investigated the ground breaking work of Norman Tindale who had divided the groupings into four tribal lands; from the northern beaches to Port Douglas (Irukandji), the area of the hills to the back of Cairns including East Tolga to Kuranda (Buluwai), the Cairns' flatlands and Deeral to Lake Barrine (Idindji), and the area from Cape Grafton to the Mulgrave Mouth (Kongkandji).

The rainforest region to the north and west of Cairns was occupied by the Djabugay speaking people and to the south by the Yidiny speaking people, and within these language groups were a number of different tribes and clans.<sup>16</sup> The Yidiny people inhabited the land running from the Barron River in the north to the Russell River in the south, just past the present township of Babinda; and from the Murray Prior range in the east to Tolga in the west.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the dialect variations, aspects of the social, cultural and ritual life of these Bama aboriginals were similar. Largely due to the rich and diverse environment and the presence of permanent water supplies, the Bama camps were large and semi-permanent for much of the year and the annual cycle of their activities was based on, and regulated by, seasonal changes.<sup>18</sup> Walking paths crossed the region from the coast to the inland and north to south, allowing the Bama people access to seasonal food and places. A number of these provided a base for tracks that were established by Europeans, including Douglas's Track that provided access for miners and packers travelling between Cairns and Thornborough, on the Hodgkinson goldfield, from 1876.<sup>19</sup>

The Gimuy-Walubarra clan, one of eight clans making up the Yidiny tribe, were the traditional custodians of the land that was to become known as Cairns. The foreshore area of the City of Cairns was traditionally known as Gimuy, after the slippery blue fig tree, which grew extensively in the vicinity and the term Walu

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<sup>14</sup> T Bottoms, *Bama Country: the indigenous rainforest people of tropical North Queensland*, p 3

<sup>15</sup> T Bottoms, *Bama Country: the indigenous rainforest people of tropical North Queensland*, p 3

<sup>16</sup> T Bottoms, *The Bama: people of the rainforest, Aboriginal-European relations in the Cairns rainforest region up to 1876*, p 3

<sup>17</sup> <http://aletal.files.wordpress.com/2003/09/cairns-esplanade-interps1.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> T Bottoms, *Bama Country: the indigenous rainforest people of tropical North Queensland*, p 31

was the tribal name for 'side of the hill'.<sup>20</sup> Various clans occupied surrounding regions including the Wadjanbarra of the low lying forest between the tableland mountains, the Bundabarra of the tableland mountains, the Gulgibarra of the southern lands and the Mallanbarra of the Gordonvale region.<sup>21</sup>

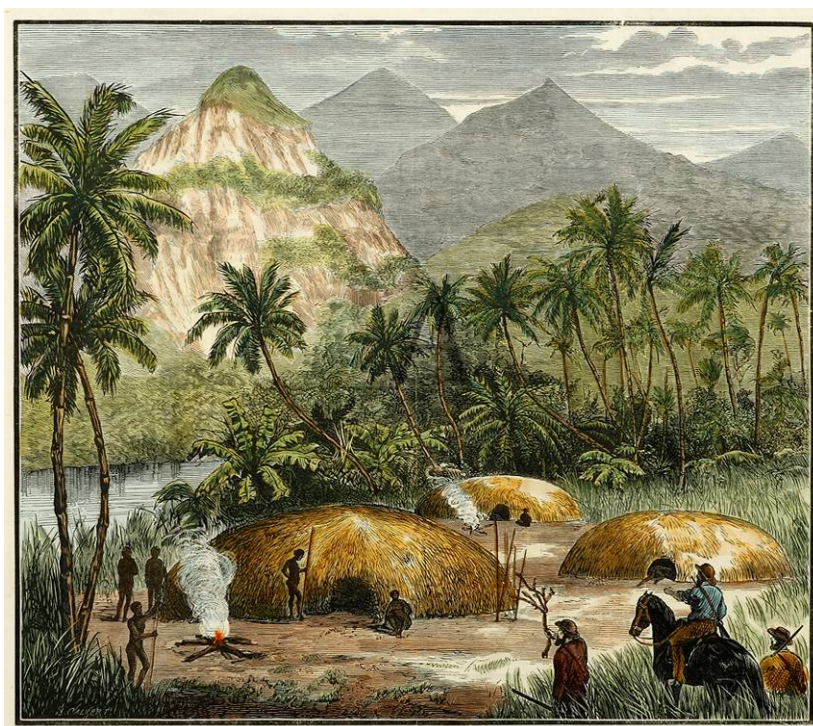


Figure 2 Grass Huts at Trinity Bay engraved by Samuel Calvert, published by Ebenezer & David Syme, 14 May 1877. Source *Illustrated Australian News*.

## 2.2 Arrival of New Settlers to the Cairns Region

European migration to the Cairns region began in the early 1870s. An influx of prospectors to Far North Queensland occurred with the announcement of gold discoveries in the Palmer River area, north-west of Cairns, in 1873, and the larger, more extensive goldfield at the Hodgkinson River,<sup>22</sup> 122 kilometres west of Trinity Inlet, in 1876.<sup>23</sup> The size of this field encouraged the government to establish the town of Cairns; a port and settlement on the coast. These gold rushes increased the activity along the coast of Queensland and resulted in the first large non-indigenous populations to inhabit Far North Queensland.<sup>24</sup>

European timber getters, cutting cedar, were also active in the area during the 1870s; however they did not contribute to permanent settlement in the region.<sup>25</sup> It was reported that by 1883 the stands of cedars were so depleted that shipments from the coastal area had virtually stopped.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>19</sup> T Bottoms, *Djabugay Country. An Aboriginal History of Tropical North Queensland*, pp 22-23

<sup>20</sup> <http://aletal.files.wordpress.com/2003/09/cairns-esplanade-interps1.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <http://aletal.files.wordpress.com/2003/09/cairns-esplanade-interps1.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Officially declared a goldfield on 25 May 1881 but virtually extinct by 1891.

<sup>23</sup> T Bottoms, 'A Chronology of Historical Points of the Mulgrave Shire'

<sup>24</sup> *Discoverers of the Palmer River Gold Fields Petition*, Qld Votes and Proceedings 1874 vol 2 p 755

<sup>25</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns* p 42

Gold was discovered closer to Cairns, on the Mulgrave River, in 1879,<sup>27</sup> and although not as valuable in money terms, this discovery brought people directly to the region. This provided further impetus to the development of Cairns.

Tin was discovered and mined in the region from the late 1870s and attracted more workers to the Cairns region. The first mining operations commenced at Herberton, south-west of Cairns, in 1880<sup>28</sup> and production peaked in 1881 before declining over the next few years.<sup>29</sup> Copper was also mined from the 1880s.

Those prospectors who came to the Cairns region often stayed to work in agriculture or other service industries, particularly once the gold fields had become overworked. These activities in turn encouraged the influx of migrants from a range of countries, particularly as large numbers of workers were required to work on the land.

The Queensland Year Book of 1901 recorded that 4.7% of the Queensland population were 'coloured asiatic'. This included 1.85% Chinese, 1.85% Pacific Islanders and 0.45% Japanese. 1.32% of the population were Aborigines and 93.98% were recorded to be of 'other nationalities'.<sup>30</sup>

### Dominant and Diverse Nationalities - Chinese, Javanese, Malays and Melanesians

The Chinese, who had arrived in large numbers for the northern goldfields, soon found themselves locked out of tin mining at Atherton after combined legislation<sup>31</sup> made it difficult to obtain mining leases. Such large numbers, which had concentrated around the Palmer, were seen as a threat by southerners as up to 40% of the population were new arrivals for the goldfields. As a result the Chinese were seen as a threat as detailed under such articles as "The Chinese Invasion" in *The Illustrated Sydney News* of 1877<sup>32</sup> and 'The Chinese Plague' in *The Queensland Punch* of 1886.

Once the mining opportunities began to decrease the Chinese turned to other activities, primarily related to agriculture. Settlers who were required to clear land and establish farmland in order to retain their holdings, leased uncleared land to Chinese workers in order to have the land cleared and cultivated.

By 1886 the Chinese population in Cairns accounted for 60% of all farmers and 90% of gardeners<sup>33</sup> and in 1887 *The Cairns Post* reported that 'the Chinese farmers and fruit growers of the North may almost be regarded as the fathers of agriculture in the Cairns district'.<sup>34</sup> Chinese market gardeners established a variety of crops and by the end of the nineteenth century the agricultural production of the local Chinese community had risen to tens of thousands of bushels of rice, corn, bananas and pineapples.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> T. Bottoms, 'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire', p 5

<sup>27</sup> J W Collinson, *Early Days of Cairns*, p 115

<sup>28</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 144

<sup>29</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 64

<sup>30</sup> *Queensland Official Year Book*, 1901, p 71

<sup>31</sup> The Chinese Immigration Restriction Act 1888 and the Gold Fields Act Amendment Act 1877 combined to put a break on Chinese involvement in mining. The Immigration Act treated Chinese much like a restricted shippable commodity.

<sup>32</sup> *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 21 July 1877, p. 12

<sup>33</sup> S. Robb, 'Thematic History: Chinese Settlement in Far North Queensland', 2008

<sup>34</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 28 May 1887, p 4

<sup>35</sup> C May, 'Topsawyers, the Chinese in Cairns 1870-1920', pp 246-251



Figure 3 "The Chinese Plague" front cover of *The Queensland Punch* of 1886. Source SLQ

The early Chinese in Cairns were also land selectors, more so than in other northern settlements.<sup>36</sup> A highly influential Chinese gentleman, Andrew Lee On, arrived on the Palmer River in 1875 and formed a syndicate known as Hap Wah in 1879.<sup>37</sup> The Hap Wah sugar cane plantation, when established by this syndicate, was the first in the district and was worked entirely by Chinese.<sup>38</sup> Lee On was regarded highly, gaining great social status and achieving much before his death in Cairns in 1920.<sup>39</sup>

Large numbers of Chinese were available to develop fallow areas and engaged in the establishment of banana and sugar plantations. As well as clearing and cultivating, they carried and accompanied the crop to market or to the rail or shipping terminal.

Where train and tramway was available, Chinese were to be seen loading and unloading baskets of produce and accompanying the crop on its journey from the hinterlands of Innisfail, the Tablelands and Cairns to the wharves. Some other crops produced in the area from Cairns to Tully was transported up the waterways by small boats and locally built Chinese Junks, which proved an unusual, and no doubt concerning sight given the newspaper coverage that the influx of Chinese had created.



Figure 4 Chinese accompanying vegetables at the Cairns Railway Station 1907. Source SLQ

Figure 5 Chinese junks at the mouth of Trinity Inlet 1910. Source SLQ

Many Chinese became merchants, establishing businesses in Sachs Street between Spence and Shields Street. By 1883 this street had developed into a Chinatown,<sup>40</sup> which provided the Chinese community with

<sup>36</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 158

<sup>37</sup> Prior to the 1920s the spelling was Hap Wah but sometime in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the spelling changed to the more popularly used Hop Wah. Even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century this name was interchangeable but a large number of newspaper advertisements had been placed for "HAP WAH" prior to 1900.

<sup>38</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 160

<sup>39</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 160

<sup>40</sup> J W Collinson, *Early Days of Cairns*, pp 84-85

an area catering for its cultural needs, including recreation, worship and meetings.<sup>41</sup> As a result few Chinese lived outside this community. In addition to respectable businesses, opium dens, gambling dens and brothels operated in the Sachs Street precinct.<sup>42</sup>

By 1910 the reduced number of Chinese workers in the Cairns region impacted on Chinatown and from the late 1920s there was increased assimilation within the local community.<sup>43</sup> Few shops in Grafton (Sachs) Street were run by Chinese by the late 1950s.<sup>44</sup>

The presence of the less desirable businesses in Chinatown may have encouraged some members of the Chinese community to locate to quieter areas, such as Draper Street (named Canton Street until c1911). Philip Wu Won and his family ran a shop at 350 Draper Street between 1960 and 1995.<sup>45</sup> Next door at 354 and 356 Draper Street is the former home and grocery shop of the Kum Yuen family. In 1929, Pearl Kum Yuen married Fred Tong and the Tong family lived there from the 1930s until 2003.<sup>46</sup> Historian Sandi Robb, in the 'Cairns Chinatown Cultural Heritage Study', has surmised that there is little evidence to indicate that Canton Street in the formative years had a large population of Chinese residents. But she does point out that it was close to the area around Alligator Creek known as Malay Town, which was associated with Malays, Javanese and South Sea Islanders. From the 1930s, very few Chinese families lived in Chinatown. Most families lived either on small farms or in the residential streets surrounding the main business district.

A number of plantations employed a range of nationalities including Melanesians (Kanakas), Europeans, Chinese and Javanese. The Melanesians, preferred by planters for their easy, willing nature, were well cared for but died in large numbers and each plantation had its own Kanaka hospital and graveyard.<sup>47</sup> In contrast the Javanese, who were introduced in 1885, were more volatile and were separated from the Melanesians. The Chinese were the third main group of plantation workers, best employed at clearing and stumping. Malay workers were also employed on the plantations. As an example, in 1886 the Pyramid Estate employed 127 Kanakas, 25 Europeans, 50 Chinese and 37 Javanese.<sup>48</sup>

The *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act* of 1880, amended in 1884, progressively controlled the use of Melanesian labour.<sup>49</sup> It eventually resulted in the mass deportation of Pacific Islanders in 1907, although descendants remain in the Cairns region.

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<sup>41</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 38

<sup>42</sup> *North Australian Monthly*, July 1964 and 'Photographic Memories - Glimpses of Cairns Life over 125 years', Cairns Historical Society, 2001, pp. 54-55

<sup>43</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 47

<sup>44</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 50

<sup>45</sup> Handwritten notice on door of shop

<sup>46</sup> J McEnery, *Every Building Tells a Story*, pp. 30 - 32

<sup>47</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 169-70

<sup>48</sup> T. Bottoms, 'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire', p 4

<sup>49</sup> R. Evans, K. Saunders & K Cronin, 'Race Relations in Colonial Queensland', p 223





*Figure 6 Chinese workers on the Hap Wah plantation c1878. Source QSA*

*Figure 7 A group of Polynesians awaiting deportation from Cairns, 1906. Source SLQ. IDpicqld-2002-12-09-10-33*

### Other Diverse Nationalities

There was a large influx of Indians into the Cairns district towards the end of the nineteenth century, many from the Northern Rivers District of NSW. Encouraged by the availability of work in the cane fields this influx continued, and by 1906 there was a large Indian camp at the intersection of Lake and Wharf Streets.<sup>50</sup>

There was also a sizable Japanese labour force in Cairns, which continued until their deportation after the outbreak of World War Two in 1939.<sup>51</sup> Parts of Cairns which were inhabited by the Japanese (and some Chinese) population were referred to as “Yokohama” and the term “to be seen in *Yokohama Street*” meant one had been noticed in a less desirable part of town.

<sup>50</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 384



*Figure 8 'Yokohama Street', Cairns (exact location not known but possibly looking west) 1902. Source SLQ Image No omp00005 Image cropped from original size. "Yokohama Street" is pencilled on the reverse side of the photograph.*

While the Melanesian population declined towards the late nineteenth century, many Italians migrated to Queensland in the early twentieth century and entered the sugar industry.<sup>52</sup> Italians were first encouraged to migrate to North Queensland in 1890-91 as an alternative labour source.<sup>53</sup> For more than forty years indentured Melanesian labour had been used to work the cane plantations, and their deportation resulted in a need for other labour. This was partly filled by Italian labourers, despite some anti-Italian feeling.<sup>54</sup> Such intolerance was again prevalent after World War One when the Italians were competing with the Australian workforce for fewer available jobs.<sup>55</sup> In 1918, 60% of farmers in Babinda were Italians and there was an influx of Italian migrants to the Cairns Shire and surrounding shires in the 1920s.<sup>56</sup> By 1924 farmers estimated that 95% of workers in the sugar industry were Italians<sup>57</sup> and in 1925 a Royal Commission, investigating the 'Social and Economic Effects of the Increase in the Number of Aliens in North Queensland',<sup>58</sup> known as the Ferry Report, found that the Italian labour force had a positive impact on the economy.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>51</sup> T Bottoms, 'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire', p 5

<sup>52</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 463

<sup>53</sup> T Bottoms, 'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire', p 5

<sup>54</sup> G Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia*, p 56

<sup>55</sup> G Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia*, p 66

<sup>56</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 25

<sup>57</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 25

<sup>58</sup> *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*, vol. 3, A28, pp.25–52

<sup>59</sup> G Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia*, p 67

## Post-World War Two European Immigrants to the Cairns Region

In 1950, *The Cairns Post* reported that:

*A party consisting of some 400 New Australians will arrive in Cairns tomorrow evening. They are from the Immigration Centre at Greta, NSW, and will take up quarters at the Cairns Immigration Holding Centre, Hartley Street, Bungalow.<sup>60</sup>*

The Main Roads Commission initially constructed the buildings comprising the Immigration Holding Centre during World War Two for US Army workshops. After the war the two large army buildings were converted into this new centre, with modern facilities including a hospital and kindergarten,<sup>61</sup> as part of the post war migration scheme.<sup>62</sup> The men were separated from their wives and children in order to cut cane in the fields. One migrant recalled: 'a cement floor, two beds and a board with nails to hang clothes on. That's all we had.' The sheds were divided by head-high partitions into 30 small rooms. Migrants from Poland, Estonia, Germany and other European countries stayed at this centre for approximately 15 months.<sup>63</sup>

The Immigration Holding Centre ran until December 1952 and re-opened when required in the 1950s to house various workers.<sup>64</sup> Boat loads of migrants continued to arrive, including Italians in 1955, 1956 and 1957.<sup>65</sup>

The majority of the buildings have been demolished, some of them due to cyclone Agnes in 1956.<sup>66</sup> The cyclone left many of these buildings badly damaged and some components appear to have been reused to build the workshops that are presently at the site. As a result the site no longer represents, architecturally at least, the wartime or immigration periods of the history of the site. The original site has also been subdivided.



Figure 9 The Singh family at the Sikh Mission Temple, near Edmonton, built c1988. This is the older of two temples in the region. Source NAA



Figure 10 Italian migrants arriving on the ship Aurelia in 1956. Source NAA

<sup>60</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 August 1950, p 2

<sup>61</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 August 1950, p 2

<sup>62</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle 'Cairns Heritage Study'

<sup>63</sup> B Blaauw, 'The Cairns Immigration Holding Centre 1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 391, 1993

<sup>64</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 27

<sup>65</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 28

<sup>66</sup> Shown in photograph P09920 held by the Cairns Historical Society

## 2.3 Conflict and Interaction Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous People

European exploration into Far North Queensland resulted in inevitable conflict between indigenous and non-indigenous people and there are various records of early confrontation.

In 1870 violence broke out at Smiths Creek between Aborigines and European *beche-de-mer* fishermen.<sup>67</sup> In 1873 the Gold Commissioner sent a telegram to Brisbane suggesting the need for a Native Police officer and at least six troopers as it was felt that there may be serious disturbances at the opening of the Palmer River goldfield.<sup>68</sup> A correspondent in *The Queenslander* of 20 February 1875 stated that miners should protect themselves with rifles against the aborigines, and on 16 March 1878 the Cairns correspondent stated the attention of the inhabitants of the district had been drawn to “the necessity of immediate steps being taken to protect travellers and stock”.<sup>69</sup> Warnings appear to have been heeded, as a report in the *Hodgkinson Mining News* described visitors from Smithfield to the ‘new port’ for the Hodgkinson goldfields as carrying ‘heavy bundles of spears, armed with murderous-looking knives, rifles, revolvers and scrub-hooks’.<sup>70</sup>

In October 1876 both Cairns and Smithfield were officially established as settlements and this resulted in European occupation of what became the Mulgrave Shire. Government land sales began in both centres in 1877.<sup>71</sup> Following this settlement, a number of actual confrontations occurred including that reported in the *Cooktown Herald* in 1877 describing that

*a party ....went up the Cairns Inlet... with the intention of exploring the head of the Mulgrave River.*<sup>72</sup>

It was reported that the party intended ...to camp under the Conical Hill. With this endeavour they walked some eight or nine miles, when they

*came to a blacks’ town of very large dimensions, and as they report containing some four or five hundred inhabitants... they were pretty close when the blacks....poured out of their huts in hundreds and evidently with hostile intentions, as they flourished their spears and only too soon showed that they intended to make use of them, throwing them with great force and precision.*<sup>73</sup>

As white settlement consolidated in the region and conflict continued, the idea of Aboriginal reserves was first raised as a solution to the problem. As early as 1888 a suggestion was made for the reservation of 200-300 acres in the Barron Valley where Aborigines could live, be taught cultivation and be available for employment.<sup>74</sup> The Bellenden Ker Mission was subsequently established in 1892 by Rev J B Gribble and renamed Yarrabah the next year.<sup>75</sup> Located in the coastal area of the Cape Grafton peninsula, it was described as being ‘... extensive enough to accommodate all the Aborigines of North Queensland. ...It is isolated from all white settlers by a lofty jungle-clad range, and forms an ideal reserve for Aborigines.’<sup>76</sup>

Other aboriginal missions were established in the Far North region of Queensland by various religious groups, including the Cape Bedford Mission which was set up by the Lutherans in the late 1880s, and the

<sup>67</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p16

<sup>68</sup> Gold Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, Correspondence letter of 1873, as detailed in J Richards, *The Secret War. A True History of Queensland's Native Police*, p 61

<sup>69</sup> *The Queenslander*, 16 March 1878 p 7

<sup>70</sup> *Hodgkinson Mining News*, 22 June 1877

<sup>71</sup> T Bottoms, ‘A Chronology of Historical Points of the Mulgrave Shire’, 1995

<sup>72</sup> *Cooktown Herald*, 15 September 1877

<sup>73</sup> *Cooktown Herald*, 12 September 1877

<sup>74</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 313

<sup>75</sup> T Bottoms, ‘An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire’, p 6

Mona Mona Mission which was established by the Seventh Day Adventists in 1913 in the Kuranda region.<sup>77</sup> The Mona Mona Mission was finally closed in 1963, after 50 years of operation.<sup>78</sup> The *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of Sale of Opium Act*, introduced in 1897, authorised the removal of Aboriginal people to these reserves, and this continued until 1971.

In Cairns proper, an Aboriginal reserve on Lyons Street was gazetted in June 1938. Another reserve on English Street was gazetted five years later in October 1943. In 1952 Aboriginal housing, located at the English Street Reserve, was moved to the Lyons Street reserve. According to George Skeene, who was a small child living with his family at the English Street reserve at the time,

*In 1952 the government wanted to use the land in English Street for conventional housing and the people in the English Street Reserve were resettled at the corner of Lyons and Hartley Streets. The houses were placed onto low loaders and transported to Lyons Street.*<sup>79</sup>

The English Street reserve was officially cancelled in November 1952. During the early 1950s many Aboriginal people from around the Cairns region were also camped at the Bungalow Railway Reserve, Bessie Point and White Rock although none of these were ever gazetted as official Aboriginal reserves.

South of Cairns, the Queerah Aboriginal Mission was located on private property at Edmonton owned by 'missioner' Charles Thomas Crawley.<sup>80</sup> Referred to as an independent mission, Queerah received no assistance from the Queensland government and according to a newspaper reference to Crawley, the mission commenced around 1937.<sup>81</sup> In mid-1941,<sup>82</sup> a small church was transported to the site, and in 1950 quarters for women were erected.<sup>83</sup> In 1948 the site was inspected by Mr Jones Minister for Health and Home Affairs accompanied by Tom Crowley MLA to enquire into the condition of aborigines at Queerah. The last mention of mission activity at Queerah was in late 1953, and after this time Cairns Post reports of the Mission cease although Crawley's name appears in print in connection with local elections. It is assumed that the site closed around that time.

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<sup>76</sup> Queensland Votes and Proceedings, 2 (1897), cited in W R Johnston, *A documentary history of Queensland*, p 117

<sup>77</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 28 March 1913, p 8 reports on the request to the Protector of Aborigines to allow establishment of Mona Mona and obviously the proposal must have been approved shortly after.

<sup>78</sup> T Bottoms, *Djabugay Country. An Aboriginal History of Tropical North Queensland*, p 79

<sup>79</sup> Reported on Queensland Government Communities website; [www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/ind/community/missions/mainland/c#cairns](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/ind/community/missions/mainland/c#cairns)

<sup>80</sup> Also referred to as C. T. Crowley in the newspapers.

<sup>81</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 February 1953, p 5

<sup>82</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 4 June 1941, p 3

<sup>83</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 13 July 1950, p 5



### 3. DEVELOPING AND UTILISING THE LAND IN THE CAIRNS REGION

The natural landform of the Cairns region influenced the way it was mapped and organised for subdivision. In particular this affected the location and development of the city itself, being confined as it was by the sea, Lily Creek, tidal swamplands and Trinity Inlet. This restricted the available land into a peninsula 700 metres wide and 3.5 kilometres long.

#### 3.1 Exploring and Surveying the Land

##### Trinity Bay – Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Exploration

Trinity Bay was first identified as a place during the voyages of Captain Cook on his expeditions to the Pacific in his ship, the *Endeavour*. While others may have passed the bay, it was Cook who sketched the appearance of the land and gave it an associative name, the one still used today. His sketchbook of charts and illustrations were completed in order to make navigation easier as was his instruction from the British Admiralty.

Trinity Bay was sighted and sketched on Trinity Sunday 10 June 1770. Other ships occasionally passed by or further investigated the Bay. These included Captain King in the *Bathurst* in 1821 while acting as convoy to two Dutch ships, Captain Wickham and Lt Stokes in the *Beagle* in 1839,<sup>84</sup> Captain Blackwood in the *Fly* in 1843 and Captain Owen Stanley in the *Rattlesnake* in 1848. The first real reconnaissance was however by Captain Moresby in the paddle-steamer gunship HMS *Basilisk* and he paid closer attention to the waters of the Bay in c1873-74.<sup>85</sup>

Once Queensland separated from NSW in 1859, expeditions set out to explore the nature and potential of the land, and to locate sites for townships. This resulted in a number of ships passing by on their voyages from Torres Strait to Brisbane or Sydney, then from Brisbane to Townsville and onto Cooktown.

By 1876, when settlement started in Cairns, there were already regular steam ship services from Melbourne, Brisbane, Townsville, via Cardwell, to Cooktown. At the same time the Government was also calling tenders for the installation of telegraph wires from the Cape to the coastal towns and onto Brisbane.<sup>86</sup> As well as providing for the Hodgkinson goldfield, which was situated inland, the establishment of Cairns also acted as an intermediate link in the chain of communication and settlement developing along the Queensland coast.

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<sup>84</sup> E Palmer, *Early Days in North Queensland*

<sup>85</sup> Harbours & Marine, *Port & Harbour Development in Queensland 1824-1985*, p 155

<sup>86</sup> Various Government Gazettes during 1876 and 1877 carried notices of these tenders



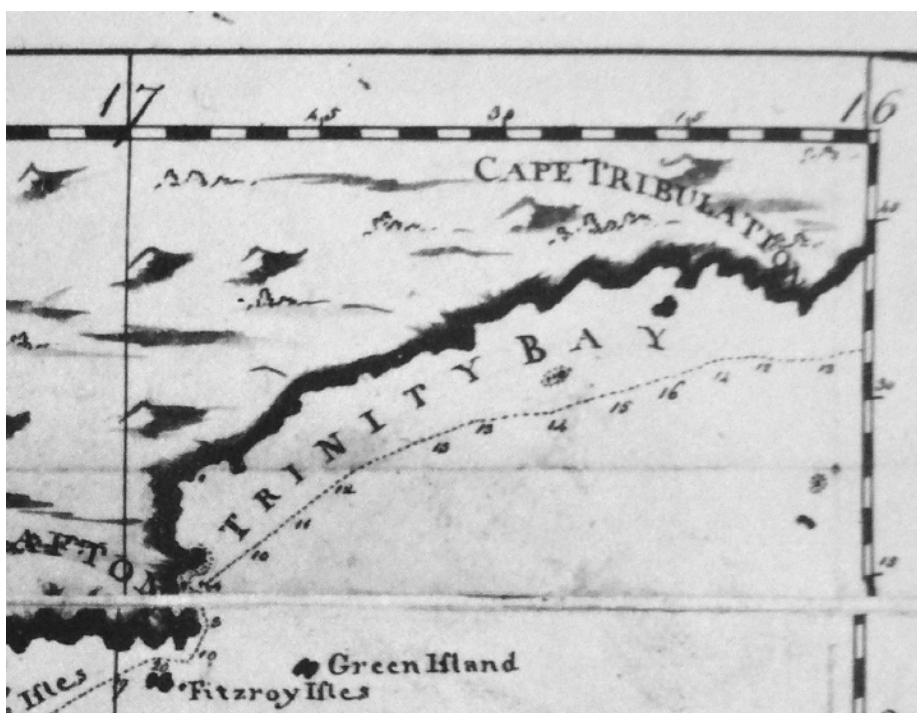


Figure 11 Trinity Bay illustrated as the corner portion of A Chart of the East Coast of New Holland by Captain James Cook, May-June 1770. Source *The Charts and Coastal Views of Captain Cook's Voyages*

## Nineteenth Century Exploration and Mining

In 1873 George Dalrymple was commissioned to lead a survey party to Far North Queensland and to assess locations for suitable ports. This exploration party realised the potential of Trinity Inlet and reported very favourably on its attributes. This included deep water, excellent anchorage and accessibility to the interior through the nearby ranges. Reports also recorded the use of the inlet by beche-de-mer (sea cucumber) fishermen for some years and its present use for that trade and other passing ships.<sup>87</sup>

Three years later, when the Hodgkinson Goldfield was discovered, the port of Cairns was described in *The Queenslander* newspaper on 22 July 1876 as follows:

*Rumours have been in circulation for some days (says the Townsville Times) that a fine new harbour has been found on the north-east coast between Cardwell and The Daintree. These rumours are confirmed to a certain extent. Such a harbour does exist and the locality is Trinity Bay. The distance is sixty miles from the Hodgkinson and passing over a level country through extensive pine and cedar.*

Despite its equivocal nature (and the misguided view about the terrain), this appears to be the first time the greater Queensland public were made aware that a new settlement was likely to occur at Trinity Bay. Given what followed, with a quick procession of official appointments, the Government was unequivocal about establishing a harbour for the Hodgkinson field as quickly as possible.

Mr Brinsley G Sheridan of Cardwell<sup>88</sup> was in the Trinity Bay area for the fortnight prior to 12 August 1876 surveying Trinity Inlet and reported favourably on the locality.<sup>89</sup> Another person pivotal in the settlement of

<sup>87</sup> G. Dalrymple, *Narrative and Report of the North Coast Expedition*, 1873, pp 630-32

<sup>88</sup> Brinsley Guise Sheridan was at various times Land Commissioner, Police Magistrate and Sub Collector of Customs in Cardwell

the area was Mining Warden Mr St. George who was charged with reportage to the Queensland Parliament on the whole matter once all the northern exploration reports had been received.<sup>90</sup> Mr St George was considered to be the Parliament's man on the spot in assessing the suitability of opening the Hodgkinson as a gold field and Cairns as a port.

On 3 October 1876 Captain Lake in the SS *Victoria*, travelling from Cooktown, unloaded his boat of passengers and stores at Trinity Bay. On 5 October 1876 the steamer *Porpoise* sailed from Townsville for Trinity Bay and the next day unloaded cargo, 40 passengers and 8 horses. It also carried a party of officials including Surveyor Sharkey and Mr Spence, sub-collector of Customs (and appointed Harbour Master on 1 October 1876), Mr R T Hartley, assistant collector of customs, Captain John Mylchreest, Harbour Pilot (appointed 2 October), and the pilot crew. That same day the settlement was officially named Cairns to honour Governor William Wellington Cairns, who had recently been appointed to the position.<sup>91</sup> It was not until 14 October that a newspaper, *The Queenslander*, carried a report affiliating the name of Cairns with the locality of Trinity Bay.



Figure 12 Illustration of the first landing at Cairns in October 1876. Source SLQ

On the 8 October 1876 the steamer *Leichhardt* was the first to arrive with freight at the port.<sup>92</sup> At the time it was noted that the population of the area already numbered some 500 persons and orderly settlement was already commencing. Government officials were there to lay claim to the land and waters on behalf of the Crown, to regularise the use of these assets and to immediately survey a route to the Hodgkinson field. Amongst the overland party, which then set out to complete this task, were Mr Sharkey, Mr Spence, Surveyor Warner, Sub Inspector Douglas and Messrs Aplin and Spence.

<sup>89</sup> *The Queenslander*, 12 August 1876, p 7

<sup>90</sup> Mr St George was the mining warden appointed to the area and also appears to be the Queensland Parliament's representative in North Queensland during the opening up of the Hodgkinson Goldfield and the settlement of Cairns. He was responsible for commissioning, compiling and transmitting reports to parliament on the suitability of opening the Hodgkinson goldfield and Trinity Inlet as a place to build a Port. He was stationed at the Hodgkinson field once it opened.

<sup>91</sup> William Wellington Cairns was Governor of Queensland from 1875 to 1877.

<sup>92</sup> *The Queenslander*, 14 October 1876, p 1

*The Queenslander* of 21 October reported that the Secretary for Lands had received a telegram from Mr Sharkey on 16 October, which stated that a site for Cairns had been selected and a survey of the town was now proceeding. This surveying through the mangroves was accompanied by hundreds of men, tomahawk in-hand pegging out allotments in the town with some commencing the construction of jetties on the inlet. A lively account is given of the town's birth in *The Rockhampton Bulletin* of November 1876<sup>93</sup>. It identifies the first streets to be Abbott, Spence, Shields and Aplin with the Esplanade still to be fully cleared and formed. It also notes that Surveyor Sharkey had been instructed to use 33 foot frontages to allotments but the townsfolk agitated for 66 foot frontages to "guard against tropical evils..." A number of smaller allotments were pegged out at the bottom end of Abbott and Lake Streets but the remainder of the town was set out as 66 foot frontages.

Various settlers were also at work sketching the landscape around Cairns and drawings started to appear of the terrain around the Inlet. Notable amongst them is a sepia photograph of a drawing by photographer W. T. Bennett in 1876 (this is too faint to be reproduced here) and a wood engraving of Walsh's Pyramid produced in November 1876 reproduced below.



Figure 13 Trinity Bay North Queensland, wood block engraving, David Syme & Co, 1876. Source SLV

Surveyor Sharkey's survey was published the following year (1877) as a township map titled "Plan of sections no. 1 to 30, township of Cairns, and district of Cook", despite the plan actually containing 40 sections numbered in a curious and somewhat illogical manner.<sup>94</sup> The plan shows reserves set aside for

<sup>93</sup> *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 10 November 1876, p 2

<sup>94</sup> Plan of sections no. 1 to 30, township of Cairns, 1877, published by Lands Dept Brisbane and showing the land blocks numbered from the SE to the NE corners of the township, starting in proximity to the first landing area but avoiding the area

the Customs Boat Shed (on the shoreline), the Customs House (Section 1), Police and Court House (Section 5) an un-named reserve (Section 7), Harbour Pilot Station (Section 9), and a hospital in section 40 at the far end of the town. These reserves provided for immediate Government needs and municipal requirements were considered later. Each regular shaped section of town contained 20 allotments of 1 rood with sides of 250 x 100 links, with roadways 200 links in width. On the right hand side of the 1877 plan (near the end of Sheridan Street) is the note "Dense Mangrove Scrub Subject to Tidal Inundation".

The copy of this plan, held at the State Library of Queensland, also contains pencil notes on the costs of blocks of land and notes some sections of land as being unsold (e.g. one section which later became Norman Park). Of interest are the Council tram tracks later inked onto the plan and shown running from Edge Hill down Sachs Street then turning east a short distance into Spence Street. This was obviously added to the plan post 1910 along with a note on the left hand edge which reads: "Isley Hills: Good Road Metal". The Isley Hills are to the south-west and the note may misname the quarry at the Edge Hill location. A reserve for quarrying Road Metal (R681) was subsequently formalised by the Council on the south west of Edge Hill Rail Station.<sup>95</sup>

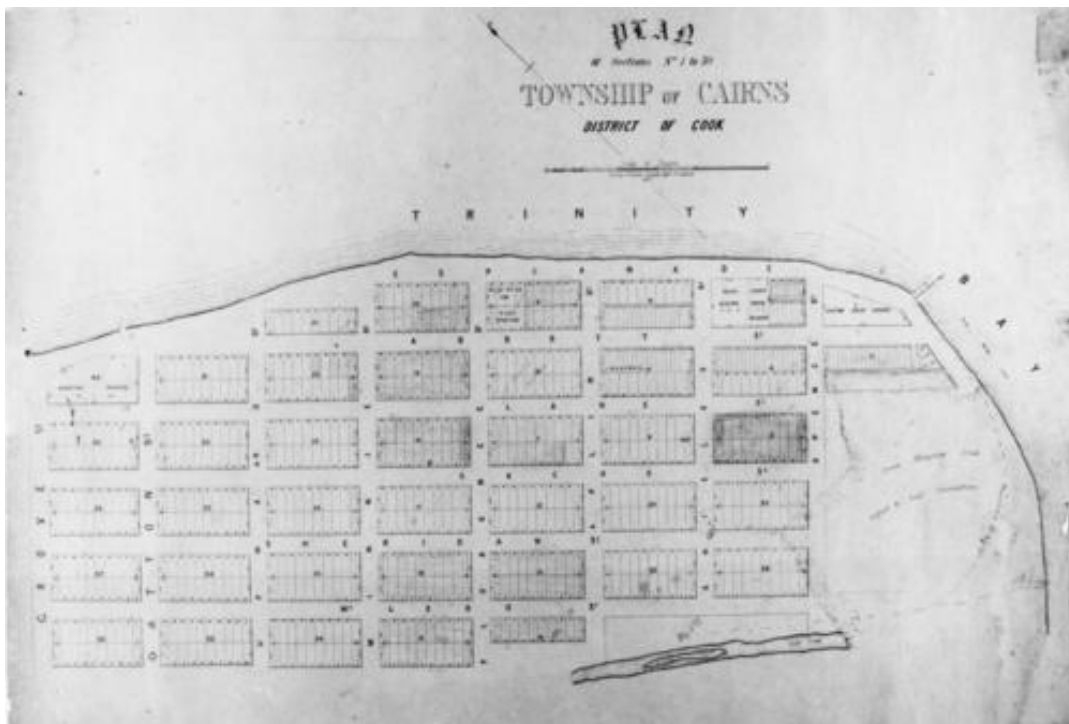


Figure 14 Surveyor Sharkey's plan of the layout of Cairns published 1877. Source SLQ

### Surveying the Harbour

Almost as soon as the land survey was underway, the Government appointed hydrographer Lieutenant Edward Connor R. N. to undertake a survey of the Inlet and his survey chart was completed in 1878. It showed that there were already jetties and wharves established along the mouth of the Inlet onto the

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around McLeod and Sheridan Street between Spence and Aplin Street although these are then shown as Sections 27-30.  
Sections 31-40 are shown north of Upward Street

<sup>95</sup> R681 shown on the City of Cairns map, Dept of Public Lands, Govt Printing Office Brisbane, 1933



present day esplanade. Connor established a tidal survey mark on a large rock at Giangurra (Bessie Point) which survives today<sup>96</sup> as the oldest surviving survey mark relating to the establishment of Cairns and should be protected by the Planning Scheme as a place of great historical importance.



Figure 15 Portion of Connor's hydrographic survey chart published 1878. Source QSA

### 3.2 Utilising Natural Resources

#### Mineral Resources in the Hinterland

The development of the Cairns region occurred due to the discovery of rich mineral resources in the hinterland such as gold and tin. The mining industry created a large influx of miners, packers and businessmen who subsequently demanded from the government improved lines of communications such as roads and railways in order to service the growing needs of developing towns and growing populations. Cairns, on Trinity Inlet, was selected as the terminus of the proposed railway due to its potential harbour facilities and as a result the town prospered.

#### Timber

Timber was one of Far North Queensland's earliest industries, with giant cedar trees harvested in the Johnstone and Daintree catchment areas before Cairns and other coastal areas were established.<sup>97</sup> The timber industry was subsequently important to the early economy of the Cairns region soon after settlement and continued to be a significant industry for many years.

<sup>96</sup> Found at 145 degree 48' 43" East and 16 degrees 54' 12.6 South (+/- 3 metres)

<sup>97</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Forest Giants, Timber boosted sagging economy', 2002, p 3

George Dalrymple's survey of the Cairns region in 1873 identified several areas in the Trinity Bay region that promised cedar<sup>98</sup> and consequently timber getters explored the district in the early 1870s. Gold discoveries increased the need for timber and, together with the need for the clearing of land for settlement, resulted in the felling of much of the available timber. The first saw mill in Cairns was erected on the inlet in 1877.<sup>99</sup> Felled logs from the region were shipped from the inlet, with vast amounts of hardwood, cedar and kauri pine, often accumulated as log rafts. By the 1880s much of the timber was coming from further afield and several mills began operating in the region, including at Redlynch in 1888.<sup>100</sup>

The early transportation of timber was difficult and bullock teams were used to haul logs, until the railway was constructed between the Tablelands and Cairns in 1886.<sup>101</sup> Further land clearing was required for the rail line and labour was needed for clearing and construction of this Barron Valley route, which became the Cairns to Kuranda line.<sup>102</sup>

The industry remained one of importance to the region into the twentieth century with peak shipping export years from the early to mid-1920s. In 1926 the Atherton Tableland was described in *The Cairns Post* as being rich in timber, with its potential hardly realised.<sup>103</sup> By 1932 timber was recorded as the third most valuable export shipped out of Cairns.<sup>104</sup>

A number of mills were established in the Cairns region in the twentieth century including Cairns Timber Limited (CTL) in 1909, which took over two established mills, one of them Griffith's Mill which had been established in the previous century. This company later formed a number of subsidiary companies and was one of the city's largest employers when sold in 1964. Cairns City Council offices occupy most of this former site.<sup>105</sup>

Edward Martin established another mill in Stratford, on the banks of the river, in 1886<sup>106</sup> and this supplied many of the sleepers for the railway constructed that year.<sup>107</sup> In 1921 John Johnston, one of the largest mill owners in Queensland, purchased this mill and on this block he established one of the biggest mills in North Queensland. The mill employed 180 people and had two milling factories, one for cedar, kauri and maple and a smaller mill for penda, rosewood and various scrub woods. The site also had river access and a wharfage area for loading and unloading logs from Johnston's boat fleet that would bring timber from the Daintree. The mill was bought by Rankine Timber in 1962 and milling operations continued until 1975 when much of the site was destroyed by fire. The site is now the largest timber yard north of Brisbane, run by Rankine Timber and Truss.<sup>108</sup>

The World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics of Queensland, including the Daintree, in 1988 enforced strict guidelines on the harvesting of rainforest timber and this altered the timber industry. This listing includes

<sup>98</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 92

<sup>99</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 92

<sup>100</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Forest Giants, Timber boosted sagging economy', 2002, p 4

<sup>101</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', pp 92-93

<sup>102</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 94

<sup>103</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 1 November 1926, p 16

<sup>104</sup> *Cairns Harbour Board*, Records, 1933, pp 26-7

<sup>105</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Forest Giants, Timber boosted sagging economy', 2002, p 4

<sup>106</sup> [www.stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail\\_sites/17.php](http://www.stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail_sites/17.php)

<sup>107</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 94

<sup>108</sup> [www.stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail\\_sites/27.php](http://www.stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail_sites/27.php)



forest areas along the coast from Townsville to Cooktown. Most of the remaining sawmills in Far North Queensland now mill plantation timber.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.3 Agricultural Pursuits

The 1901 *Queensland Official Year Book* reported that:

*In the Cairns and Port Douglas coast districts the formation is principally slate overlying granite with evidence of volcanic action in places; there is a great deal of dense tropical scrub or jungle in these districts also. The low delta land produces excellent crops of sugar cane, bananas, rice and other tropical products, besides maize, sweet potatoes and endless varieties of tropical and semi-tropical fruit. Heavy crops of coffee are grown on the higher lands in the neighbourhood of Cairns.*<sup>110</sup>

The development of agriculture had a great effect on the landscape of the Cairns region, as it required the removal of extensive areas of native vegetation. It also had a significant effect on the development of the town and region as in the 1880s and 1890s it played a large role in establishing an economic base.

The most important and influential of these crops is that of sugar cane; however other crops played a part in the development of the region. Before 1880 fruit and vegetables were produced on a small scale in the Cairns region, largely by Chinese gardeners, however by 1886 such fruits as bananas had become an important export crop.<sup>111</sup> In 1886 *The Cairns Post* reported that 'were it not for the banana trade Cairns would be insolvent'.<sup>112</sup>

Export from the region increased significantly in the period from 1890 to 1892, despite difficulties with fruit spoiling in transit.<sup>113</sup> Banana crops were concentrated on the Barron River and along the present Mulgrave Road.<sup>114</sup> By 1900 there were some 1200 hectares of banana crops in the region<sup>115</sup> and an estimated 2000 Chinese farmers growing this crop.<sup>116</sup> The industry declined in the first two decades of the twentieth century for a variety of reasons.<sup>117</sup> A cyclone of 1918 decimated the industry and it was not really revived until the 1970s. Most of the crop is now grown in the Tully-Innisfail region and was largely destroyed by cyclone *Larry* in 2006 and again by cyclone *Yasi* in February 2011.

Rice growing in the region became a popular crop amongst the Chinese market gardeners and several rice mills were erected around Cairns.<sup>118</sup> The first was possibly on the Hap Wah Plantation and the Cairns Rice Mill was officially opened in 1889.<sup>119</sup> At the time it was noted that the paddy fields were nearly all worked by the Chinese, however the establishment of this mill was expected to encourage European farmers to grow rice.<sup>120</sup> The lack of a large scale mill was cited as the reason

<sup>109</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Forest Giants, Timber boosted sagging economy', 2002, p 28

<sup>110</sup> *Queensland Official Year Book*, 1901, p. 160

<sup>111</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 24

<sup>112</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 1886, as quoted in 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 24

<sup>113</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 252

<sup>114</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 94

<sup>115</sup> *The Brisbane Courier Mail*, 18 May 1901, p 9

<sup>116</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 25

<sup>117</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 94

<sup>118</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 137

<sup>119</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 September 1889, p 2

<sup>120</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 10 May 1930, p 4

the crop had remained in an experimental phase.<sup>121</sup> Like the banana industry, production of rice decreased in the twentieth century.<sup>122</sup>

Less influential crops, trialled and grown in the region, include cotton, tobacco and coffee. Initial attempts to grow cotton were unsuccessful until a particular strain, 'Caravonica', was developed at the turn of the century and grown at an estate known as Caravonica Park by David Thomatis. A German company bought the property after Thomatis left Australia in 1909 and this industry went into decline after 1919 when this estate was sold.<sup>123</sup> The first tobacco crop was produced in 1884 in Freshwater Valley and in 1887 a 50-ton crop was produced. This continued as a small crop in the twentieth century.<sup>124</sup> Coffee was grown from the mid-1880s in the region.

## Sugar Plantations

Attempts to establish a sugar cane industry in N.S.W. date from the 1820s in the Port Macquarie region, however the climatic conditions were found to be unsuitable. It was identified that this crop required a warm, frost-free environment, although it could withstand such extremes as droughts, heavy rainfall, short-term waterlogging, high winds and cyclones. In time it was recognised that it was better suited to the climatic conditions in Queensland, and this has resulted in 95% of Australia's sugar crop presently being produced there.<sup>125</sup>

The industry subsequently began with crops grown in Queensland on the Brisbane River in the early 1840s.<sup>126</sup> Sugar cane was also grown at the Botanic Gardens in Brisbane in the 1860s and this was crushed to extract sugar.<sup>127</sup> In 1863, Captain Louis Hope planted 200,000 cane plants on 20 acres at his property near Brisbane, the first such farming of cane in the State. He built the first sugar mill in Queensland in 1865 to crush the cane.<sup>128</sup>

With legislative assistance the industry got underway and by 1867 there were 2,000 acres under production with six mills at work.<sup>129</sup> Sugar cane was introduced to a number of areas around southern Queensland from the Tweed Heads area to Bundaberg including the south side of the Brisbane River from Oxley to Hemmant.

Like N.S.W., the climate of the Brisbane area was found to be unsuitable for cane growing and the industry began to move northwards as the Far North Queensland region became more accessible. George Dalrymple led an expedition to the region in 1873 and his party discovered several fertile coastal valleys considered to be fit for sugar cane cultivation.<sup>130</sup>

In 1878, the Queensland government began selling Far North Queensland land along the Bloomfield, Daintree, Mossman, Barron, Mulgrave and Johnstone Rivers. Small farmers and larger companies secured land, and sugar was sometimes grown as an adjunct to other crops. The first sugar mill in the Cairns district was the Pioneer on the Hap Wah Plantation, which first crushed cane in 1882, and the Hambledon

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<sup>121</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 10 May 1930, p 4

<sup>122</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 95

<sup>123</sup> T Bottoms, 'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire', p 5

<sup>124</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 28

<sup>125</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 10

<sup>126</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 11

<sup>127</sup> *Queensland Official Yearbook*, 1901, p 241

<sup>128</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 11

<sup>129</sup> *Queensland Official Yearbook*, 1901, p 241

<sup>130</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 113

mill in 1883 and the Pyramid Estate mill in 1884 followed this.<sup>131</sup> By this time the sugar industry had become well established in the region.

Nine plantations were established in Far North Queensland between 1878 and 1891,<sup>132</sup> however closures occurred in the early 1890s due to low prices and the concern about Melanesian labour.<sup>133</sup> In 1893 the Queensland government allocated £500,000 towards the construction of cooperative mills throughout the colony to encourage small farmers,<sup>134</sup> and the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act* encouraged the establishment of central mills and this resulted in the construction of the Mulgrave and Mossman Mills in the Cairns district. The Babinda Mill was constructed south of Cairns in 1914.

Attempts to grow sugar cane further north than Cooktown were unsuccessful, again due to climatic conditions. As a result, the sugar cane growing region in Queensland had become firmly established by the late nineteenth century.



Figure 16 Sugarcane landscape possibly in the Gordonvale region, photograph by Frank Hurley for the Queensland government. n.d. circa 1950-1962.

<sup>131</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 15

<sup>132</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 114

<sup>133</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 116

<sup>134</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 117

## 4. DEVELOPING CAIRNS' LOCAL AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES

Mineral resources first enticed exploration of the remote areas of Far North of Queensland and resulted in the founding of Cairns as a port to service the region. The presence of these resources helped to begin the opening up of extremely difficult terrain. The specific tropical climate then encouraged experimentation to ascertain suitable agricultural pursuits for the region and resulted in the development of a range of industries, including the sugar industry. Developing into the most important industry in the region, the sugar industry had a highly significant impact on the development of both the region and the city of Cairns itself. The associated construction of transport facilities resulted in the opening up of surrounding country, which in turn encouraged travellers into the remote regions. The resulting tourism industry, enticed by the natural attributes of the difficult terrain surrounding Cairns and the appeal of the remoteness of the area, impacted greatly on the region.

### 4.1 Experimentation in Agriculture

The Kamerunga Research Station was officially established by the Queensland Department of Agriculture in 1899 as an experimental station.<sup>135</sup> The aim of this facility was to establish the types of crops that were particularly well suited to the tropical climate and would therefore be economical crops for the State. A site was selected on the Barron River in the township of Kamerunga for this purpose. Different varieties of crops such as sugar cane and tropical fruits were grown experimentally in the nursery to ascertain which types were most suitable and these were subsequently cultivated for prospective growers. Experimentation was undertaken on such diverse crops as cocoa, coffee, tea, vanilla, rubber, oil palms, fibre plants and timber.

#### Kamerunga State Nursery

The earliest mention of the establishment of State Nurseries occurred in September 1888 when there was a newspaper report of Peter McLean, the Queensland under Secretary of Agriculture, discussing the worthiness of 'test stations' or experimental farms in tropical Northern Queensland. It was reported that he strongly advised against this idea but was amenable to the establishment of State Nurseries in Mackay and one further north in a true tropical zone where there was abundant rainfall and particularly in the Cairns region. The purpose of such a nursery would be to grow a variety of economic and fibre plants.<sup>136</sup>

While selectors had offered land for such a purpose, McLean was of the opinion that it would be better to secure land already set aside as Crown Reserve. A site at Kamerunga, ten miles from Cairns with a rail siding on the Cairns to Herberton line, offered a good location which allowed plants landed at the Cairns Port to be delivered direct to the nursery. This (Crown) land within the rail reserve was covered with dense scrub and required clearing.

The Queensland government approved the idea of a nursery and the *Courier Mail* of 16 October 1888 reported the surveying of 20 acres of land around Kamerunga for the nursery reserve (particularly at the southern end of the township). This reserve was added to in 1892 by Extension No 1 (R87), on land formerly under the control of the Railways on the Barron River. In 1895 a second small extension (R88) was made (increasing its total size to 308 acres) and then finally a large extension was made of some 720 acres to the west of the original land reserve. On the whole this was largely steep land and in many ways

<sup>135</sup> S E Stephens, 'Kamerunga State Nursery', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 258, 1981

<sup>136</sup> *The Queenslander*, 29 September 1888, p 576

unsuitable for the required gardens. R87 was subsequently cancelled in 1921 and R88 was cancelled in 1931. R170 (consisting of the large extension and the original nursery land) was cancelled in 1919.

In 1888 Kamerunga was a newly established town on the banks of the Barron River. The Lands Department in Brisbane was advertising tenders for the clearing of scrub and trees on streets and allotments during mid-1887 in this township. In late 1887 various reserves were being set aside for a Post and Telegraph office, recreation and rail line work and then land was subsequently sold for housing and commercial activities. By late 1887 the Cairns - Herberton railway had reached Redlynch, with a small branch line being considered to Kamerunga and suggestions were floated that this should be considered as the terminus of the Cairns urban network in late 1888 rather than Redlynch.<sup>137</sup>

In early 1889 the Department of Agriculture was inviting tenders in the Cairns' papers for clearing the site for the State Nursery at which it 'is intended to carry on experiments with plantings of useful tropical plants'.<sup>138</sup> It was intended that operations would be commenced as soon as the season was favourable.

By March 1889 an area of 20 Acres 3 rood 28 perch was officially set aside as the Nursery reserve bounded on three sides by Warden Street (west), Hythe Street (north) and Harley Street (east side). At a similar time tenders were being called by the Department of Agriculture for the erection of the overseer's quarters; a basic timber four-room cottage of the same design as the one planned for Mackay.<sup>139</sup>

Ebenezer Cowley was appointed the overseer in 1889<sup>140</sup> and he provided advice to the agricultural community, particularly in the areas of sugar cane, India rubber and coffee growing. Cowley made a number of trips, particularly to New Guinea, to collect specimens. He died in 1899<sup>141</sup> and a month later Mr. F. Newport, a coffee expert employed by the Department, temporarily took over the running of the Nursery.

The following plants, listed as 'Economic Plants', were grown in the nursery in the 1893-94 period: fruits (citrus, coconuts, bananas, mangoes, custard apple), grasses (sugar canes, millet, red grass, hemp), vegetables (okra, taros and yams), dye plants (indigo, safflower), beverages (cocoa, coffee) and a variety of other items including rubber, perfume plants and sponges. The first Departmental published list contained approximately 100 plants under cultivation and in subsequent years this list was far more extensive.

The Nursery grew stock, in the form of plants, cuttings and seeds, which was available for purchase. The intention was to induce agricultural investment in such crops as fruit trees, stock fodder plants, silkworm plants, broom making millet seeds and many other crops that had proved to be successful in the tropics. In 1893 this list had twenty items and it was predicted that a further 25 economic plants would be available for purchase the following year.

During Cowley's occupation it was realised that the tropical seasons did not provide a sufficient water supply to the plants and it was decided that water should be drawn from the Barron River some distance below the site. After investigation it was decided to run a supply pipe from the river, along the west of the township, utilising a railway reserve which could be re-allocated for agricultural use for a pumping station.

<sup>137</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 October 1888. P 2

<sup>138</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 January 1889, p 4

<sup>139</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 22 March 1889, p 4

<sup>140</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 9 September 1889, p 7

<sup>141</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 9 February 1899, p 6



The Nursery site was extended westward on two occasions to bring its size to a total of 1,028 acres before it was closed in late 1915. At this time it was suggested that the Shire Council could take over the site and run it as a public garden. In a report in *The Brisbane Courier* in June 1916, the Minister for Agriculture noted that the returns at the Kamerunga State Nursery (by then known as Kamerunga Gardens) did not warrant further Departmental expenditure due to financial losses.<sup>142</sup> Subsequently the water supply was disconnected and the supply pipes removed by the Department of Agriculture.<sup>143</sup> This gave the council cause for concern in running this parkland without the necessary water supply.

## 4.2 The Sugar Industry

The growth of the sugar industry in Far North Queensland played a significant role in the development of this part of the country. It was thought that had it not been for this industry, the tropical coast of Queensland may have remained undeveloped and it is also considered by some that white settlement may not have occurred if not for the sugar industry. By 1955 all the necessary infrastructure, such as harbours and port facilities, railways, roads, airports and telecommunications, were in place to service both it and the communities it supported.

In 1878 less than half of Queensland's sugar was grown in the north and by 1885 two-thirds were grown there.<sup>144</sup> As mining in the region declined, sugar growing provided what became a highly profitable industry. In the late 1880s, 166 mills were operating in Queensland, crushing 59,000 tons of sugar per annum. By 1955, 31 mills, 10 north of Townsville, operated, crushing 1,301,245 tons. At this time it was described as 'the largest agricultural undertaking in the State', and Australia was ranked as the "seventh in the scale of world sugar producers."<sup>145</sup>

Three single plantations were particularly important to the early development of the sugar industry in the Cairns region. These were the Hap Wah, Pyramid and Hambledon Estates.

The Hap Wah sugar cane plantation was established in 1879 by Andrew Lee On who formed a syndicate with 100 of his countrymen to develop this estate on 250 hectares at the present day Earlville shopping centre.<sup>146</sup> This early establishment led to the construction of the Pioneer Mill and the first sugar cane crushing in the region occurred in 1882.<sup>147</sup> However the mill closed in 1886 for a number of reasons including crude cultivation methods and labour problems. It has been reported that they initially grew bananas, cotton, coffee, rice, and tropical fruits then sugar cane.

The Pyramid Plantation was established c1882 by Jean-Baptiste Loridan on the banks of the Mulgrave River, about 6 kilometres upstream from Gordonvale. It was a substantial endeavour, which at its peak employed 127 Melanesians, 25 Europeans, 50 Chinese and 37 Javanese workers.<sup>148</sup> Loridan imported mill machinery for crushing the sugar in 1884, but a fire hampered the success of the enterprise. In January 1885 a fire destroyed some of the buildings associated with the sugar mill and it was reported that

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<sup>142</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 15 June 1916, p 8

<sup>143</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 October 1918, p 6

<sup>144</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 21

<sup>145</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 17

<sup>146</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 5

<sup>147</sup> T Bottoms, 'An Historical Overview of the Mulgrave Shire', p 3

<sup>148</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 15



*it was expected to have had the mill going in time for crushing this season but unavoidable circumstances arose to prevent it, and had this accident not occurred the mill would have been complete and thoroughly prepared for starting to crush next season.*<sup>149</sup>

By November 1885, Loridan had sold the plantation and mill. In the season of 1886, the Pyramid Mill produced a very disappointing yield of only 550 tons of sugar, and the new owners decided to appoint a more experienced manager. In 1888, *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser* reported:

*Queensland sugar is now coming to hand. Messrs. Gibbs Bright and Co have received the first shipment of this season's sugar from Cairns, from the pyramid mill, and the market from this time on is likely to receive steady supplies. We hear of the sale of a further parcel to arrive at £24.*<sup>150</sup>

However the Pyramid Mill could not be made profitable and it had ceased by 1890.<sup>151</sup>

The following account in *The Queenslander* in 1892 described the decline of the Pyramid Plantation:

*The Pyramid plantation was on a much larger scale [than the Hop Wah plantation], and the owners loss is set down at anything over £100,000 - all Melbourne money. It ceased to become profitable partly because it was badly managed; partly because the extent of good land on the plantation was not sufficiently large; but chiefly because of transit difficulties, the mill being built upon the wrong side of the Mulgrave River, and supplies and product having to be carried ten miles from and to the navigable water of Trinity Inlet. The plantation is now in the hands of the Bank of Australasia. Its area is 8840 acres, about 1200 cleared for cane, 1800 scrub more or less suitable for cane, and the remainder hilly country.*<sup>152</sup>

The third plantation was known as Hambledon. It was established by Thomas Swallow in c1882, with a mill opening the following year, and the injection of investment in the area has been noted as stabilising the early industry in the Cairns region. By 1890 financial problems necessitated the sale of the plantation and Richard Kingsford purchased it. CSR bought the mill in 1897 and it operated until closure in 1991.<sup>153</sup>

Cooperative mills, established by the Queensland government from 1893, followed the collapse of these early plantations. This enabled groups of landowners to mortgage land to the government in return for capital to develop mills. Mills such as Mossman, Mulgrave and Babinda Central Mills resulted from this development.<sup>154</sup>

Thomas Mackey, and other local farmers he encouraged to join him in the venture, established the Mulgrave Mill in 1895. Machinery arrived from Glasgow in 1896<sup>155</sup> and the first cane was crushed later that year.<sup>156</sup> Initially comprising two mills, an additional mill was installed in 1912. The township adjacent to the mill, initially known as Nelson, was renamed Gordonvale. The Cairns Divisional Board established the Mulgrave Tramway in 1897 from the Cairns wharf to Nelson. This was extended to Aloomba in 1898, Harvey's Creek in 1903 and Babinda in 1910.<sup>157</sup> This serviced mills established in Aloomba in 1896 and Babinda in 1914.

<sup>149</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 22 January 1885, p 2

<sup>150</sup> *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 10 July 1888 p 6

<sup>151</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 20 December 1890, p 3

<sup>152</sup> *Queenslander*, 22 October 1892, p 791

<sup>153</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p16

<sup>154</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', pp 16-17

<sup>155</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 366

<sup>156</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 366

<sup>157</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 17

In 1920, the Mulgrave Mill was expanded with the old mill dismantled and a new plant for three mills installed. This was used for fifty years, despite severe cyclone damage in 1927 and fire damage in 1938. In 1991 the Hambledon Mill closed and their cane assignments transferred to the Mulgrave Mill. This increased the production from the Mulgrave Mill by eighty percent. Subsequent upgrading of the Mill took place in 1993-94.

Small townships developed around the centralised mills to provide services to cane cutters and the farming community in the early twentieth century. Improved conditions for labourers resulted in the construction of more substantial accommodation facilities on the farms in the early twentieth century, and in Cairns itself substantial buildings were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, as a result of the sugar industry.<sup>158</sup>

The introduction of mechanical loaders and harvesters in the 1960s resulted in the redundancy of manually operated cane cutting and loading.<sup>159</sup> New steel structures began to replace galvanised iron sheds on the farms and cane cutter barracks were often used for storage. Facilities in Cairns were also upgraded in the 1960s and 1970s and dredging continued to increase shipping capacity in the Inlet.<sup>160</sup>

### Meringa Sugar Research Station

During the 1880s, cane crops in the Herbert, Johnstone and Cairns districts suffered damage from white grub attacks. More extensive attacks in the mid-1890s threatened the future of the sugar industry and plantation owners lobbied politicians to act.<sup>161</sup>

The Queensland Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations (BSES) was formed in 1900 to lead research and development into Australian sugarcane production. It was initially financed by the sugar industry and subsidized by the government. In response to the threat posed by the white grub, the BSES hired an entomologist in 1911 and established a Division of Entomology.<sup>162</sup>

The first entomologist was located in Gordonvale in a building rented by the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock. The current site at Meringa was set aside specifically as a 10 acre 'Reserve for Entomological Purposes' in June 1916 as R502.<sup>163</sup> At this time the site plan indicated that the area was thickly timbered with gum, wattle and bloodwood, with the southern portion shown as mahogany and undergrowth. The survey plan was subsequently shown in two halves with the southern portion occupied by buildings. A layout plan of December 1916, by the Public Works Department, indicates that two houses, a laboratory and an Insectorium were to be established.<sup>164</sup>

By 1917 the PWD had completed designs for all timber structures on the site. These comprised houses for the head entomologist (drawing of 1917) and the assistant entomologist (drawing of 1916), an entomological laboratory (an undated drawing but presumably 1917) and an

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<sup>158</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p18

<sup>159</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p19

<sup>160</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 19

<sup>161</sup> P Griggs, 'The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

<sup>162</sup> P Griggs, 'The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

<sup>163</sup> Reserve File R502, held by DERM

<sup>164</sup> Reserve File R502, held by DERM

insectorium.<sup>165</sup> The laboratory building was essentially a four room timber house with a small laboratory, an entry office, experimental store room and microscope room. An air gas house was also planned for the middle of the site in 1917, but its specific purpose is unknown.<sup>166</sup> In 1935 the assistant entomologist's house was converted into a second laboratory.<sup>167</sup>

Of these buildings, only the head entomologist's house remains intact, and the original house layout is clearly evident. The base of the glasshouse and a portion of the tractor shed and the implement shed also remain.

James Illingworth took over the role of head entomologist in 1917 and began extensive field tests with lime, fertilizers, arsenic and creosote as soil fumigants to see how they impacted on cane grub attacks.<sup>168</sup> These experiments were not successful, but Illingworth did provide cane growers with advice on improved cultivation methods. It was established that the cane grub, the larvae of the sugar cane beetle, damaged the cane by eating the roots. As an adult, the cane beetle also ate the cane leaves, but it was the grub form which did the most damage.

In 1934, BSES underwent an internal reorganisation and a new Division of Entomology and Pathology, which included cane-breeding, was formed. A BSES station had been established at South Johnstone in 1921 to specifically develop new varieties of sugar cane, but the climate at this location proved too wet for cross pollination.<sup>169</sup> As a result, the cane breeding activities were transferred to the Meringa station in 1934. A further 38 acres of land was subsequently acquired for cane-breeding work.<sup>170</sup>

In the same year, a drawing was produced for a glasshouse, with concrete floor and base walls, timber truss support and outer frame and an upper ventilating section.<sup>171</sup> Seedling tables were established on the lawn at the west front of the glasshouse. Further drawings produced in the same year included designs for unmarried workers quarters and an implement shed and tractor shed.<sup>172</sup> Photographs of the site taken circa 1935, show that the glasshouse, former assistant entomologist's house and the head entomologist's house were the only structures on the site at this time.<sup>173</sup> By 1939 two buildings had been added to the east of the site and these were probably the tractor shed and implement shed.

These alterations to the site can also be viewed as a change of emphasis in the Station's work from purely entomological work to cane breeding and an ongoing search for the most suitable cane types for North Queensland.

In 1935, Reginald Mungomery took over control of BSES's entomological investigations and he began to explore the possibility of controlling cane beetles with cane toads.<sup>174</sup> The cane toad, native

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<sup>165</sup> Reserve File R502, held by DERM

<sup>166</sup> Reserve File R502, held by DERM

<sup>167</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 27 February 1935, p 6

<sup>168</sup> P Griggs, 'The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

<sup>169</sup> J H Buzacott, 'The Northern Sugar Experiment Station', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 181, 1974

<sup>170</sup> J H Buzacott, 'The Northern Sugar Experiment Station', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 181, 1974

<sup>171</sup> Reserve File R502, held by DERM

<sup>172</sup> Reserve File R502, held by DERM

<sup>173</sup> Images ID 1331 and 2980, in photographic collection held by Queensland State Archive

<sup>174</sup> P Griggs, 'The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

to South America, had been successfully introduced to sugarcane plantations in Puerto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippines, specifically to eat beetles which were reducing sugarcane production.<sup>175</sup> Mungomery travelled to Hawaii in 1935 and returned with 102 toads which were initially quarantined in a special pond at Meringa.<sup>176</sup> They bred immediately and more than 3,000 toads were released into the Cairns and Innisfail districts in the latter part of 1935. Peter Griggs reported that he could find no evidence of any pre-release testing by the BSES entomologists to determine if the toads even ate the cane beetles.<sup>177</sup>

At the time of their release, some naturalists and scientists warned of the dangers of liberating cane toads in Australia. The protesters included a former New South Wales Government Entomologist, W W Froggatt, and an Australian Museum Curator, Roy Kinghorn. Their protests resulted in a brief moratorium on the release of toads, but these resumed in 1936.



*Figure 17 Meringa Sugar Research Station in 1935 with the Head Entomologist's house (lhs), glasshouse, and the converted assistant entomologists house (rhs). Source QSA.*

The cane toads released in Far North Queensland spread rapidly with devastating effect. They did not prove to be successful in reducing sugarcane pests under Australian conditions, but instead had a marked effect on Australian biodiversity, substantially reducing the populations of marsupials and native reptiles.

<sup>175</sup> [australianmuseum.net.au/Cane-Toad](http://australianmuseum.net.au/Cane-Toad)

<sup>176</sup> P Griggs, 'The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

<sup>177</sup> P Griggs, 'The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

Figure 18 Cane Toads bred Meringa, late 1930s.  
Source QSA



In the BSES Annual Report for 1945-46, Mungomery reported on promising results from trials at Meringa using a

new organo-chlorine insecticide – benzene hexachloride (BHC), also known as ‘gammexane’.<sup>178</sup> North Queensland cane growers started using gammexane in 1947 and it became the favoured strategy to combat the impact of white grubs. Sir Robert Menzies attended a ceremony in 1954 when the Queensland sugar industry presented the BSES with a plaque commemorating the success of this insecticide.

In 1962 a new office block and laboratory was constructed to a design by Brisbane architects Goodsir & Carlyle. The building was initially designed to accommodate plant breeders, entomologists and a mill technologist. The original laboratory portion was subsequently replaced by a two storey agricultural office in 1969, designed by Goodsir & Carlyle, Baker & Wilde. At this time, staff numbers were at a peak, comprising more than twenty officers and six field labourers.<sup>179</sup> By 1973, cane varieties bred by BSES made up 61% of all varieties grown in Queensland. By 1974, the total area of the station had expanded from the initial 10 acres to 78 acres, 70 of which were under cane cultivation.<sup>180</sup> Today the BSES continues to carry out research on suitable cane types and provides stocks to farmers.

### 4.3 Financing

Few buildings remain in the Cairns study area to illustrate the development of banking in the region. These are confined to two examples of National Bank buildings; one in Cairns itself and the other in Babinda. The latter was built in 1932 to designs by Hill and Taylor after fire destroyed the existing bank building. Most of the other banks in the region have demolished their old building stock and replaced them with buildings dating to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The National Bank of Australasia established a branch in Cairns in 1926, six years after the bank expanded to Queensland. Although no longer a bank, this two storey building remains at the corner of Lake and Spence Streets. The following article in *The Cairns Post* described the building:

*A feature of the building is its eminent suitability to tropical conditions; the arched verandahs on the sunny sides of the building not only give it an air of distinction, but keep the sun from the walls of the building... The fittings of the bank offices which were made on the spot by the contractors Lanham.*

<sup>178</sup> P Griggs, ‘The Role of the Meringa Bureau of Sugar Experiment Station in Combating Cane Grubs 1911-1950’, Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 517, 2004

<sup>179</sup> J H Buzacott, ‘The Northern Sugar Experiment Station’, Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 181, 1974

<sup>180</sup> J H Buzacott, ‘The Northern Sugar Experiment Station’, Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 181, 1974



*Deacon and Watkins, are of silky oak with polished maple counters, while the tellers' compartments are of bronze lattice. There are two strong rooms in the building, one for the bank and another for Murray and McLaughlin, both having very thick walls and strong reinforcing. Two officers will sleep on the bank premises and they are provided with a bedroom and bathroom. The architect for the building is Mr. Richard Hill, in conjunction with Mr. Lance Powell, of Brisbane.<sup>181</sup>*

The National Bank of Australasia had been established in Victoria in 1858. The bank was originally based in the urban and rural areas of Victoria and South Australia. Expansion to other Australian states followed, with branches opening in Tasmania (1859), Western Australia (1866), New South Wales (1885) and finally Queensland (1920). Gradually over the years, it expanded and absorbed a number of other banking institutions in Australia, including the Bank of Queensland in 1922 and the Queensland National Bank (est. 1872) in 1948. The Bank of Queensland was itself the result of the merger in 1917 of the Royal Bank of Queensland (est. 1886) and the Bank of North Queensland (est. 1888). In 1981, the National Bank of Australasia Limited merged with The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney Limited to form the National Commercial Banking Corporation of Australia Limited and subsequently changed its name to the National Australia Bank Limited (NAB).<sup>182</sup>



6890 National Bank built in 1932 to replace building destroyed by fire<sup>19</sup>



Figure 19 National Bank, Munro Street, Babinda c1932. Source SLQ

Figure 20 National Bank, Spence Street, Cairns of 1926 photographed circa 1952. Source SLQ

#### 4.4 Informing the Cairns Community

Early Brisbane newspapers *The Brisbane Courier* (from 1864-1933) and *The Courier Mail* (from 1933) and *The Queenslander* (from 1866 to 1939) were available to the residents of Cairns during the early years of its establishment. More readily available were *The Townsville Daily Bulletin* (from 1883 to 1984)<sup>183</sup> while other popular national newspapers in circulation were the *Illustrated Australian News* from 1876 to 1896 and the *Australasian Sketcher* from 1873 to 1889.

Cairns newspapers commenced in 1883, firstly as *The Cairns Post* in Lake Street until 1893, the *Morning Post* in Abbott Street until 1907, *The Cairns Morning Post* in Abbott Street until 1909 and then *The Cairns Post* again from 1909. This newspaper remains in print today. Another newspaper, the *Cairns Argus*, had offices in Spence Street and was produced from c1889 to c1918, while other local short lived publications

<sup>181</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 26 March 1926, p. 4

<sup>182</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National\\_Australia\\_Bank](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Australia_Bank)

<sup>183</sup> [nla.gov.au/nla.news-title97](https://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title97)



included the *Cairns Telegraph*, *Cairns Advertiser*, *Cairns Chronicle*, *Daily Times*, *Trinity Times* and *Smithfield Observer*.

The first *Cairns Post* was founded by Frederick Thomas Wimble (1846-1936) and first published on 10 May 1883. The newspaper was initially produced in a simple weatherboard building in Lake Street. It was published weekly until 1888 then bi-weekly until publication ceased in 1893.

The newspaper was revived by Edwin (Hoppy) Draper in 1895, initially as *The Cairns Morning Post*. Hoppy Draper died in 1901, leaving the paper to his elder brother Alexander J Draper (1863-1928). A.J. Draper was an important political figure in the early history of Cairns.<sup>184</sup> He held the position of Mayor for several terms between 1892 and 1927 and was a successful local businessman. He was also involved in the export of bananas, the sugar industry and mining.

The paper was officially renamed *The Cairns Post* in 1909. It was owned and controlled by the Draper family until 1965, when Queensland Press Ltd bought the company.

The *Cairns Post* building of 1908 initially comprised three bays to the Abbott Street façade, but five further bays substantially extended the façade to the south in 1924. The first building was designed by Harvey Draper and tendered in 1908<sup>185</sup> while the southern extension, designed by the architect Richard Hill, repeated the original design of giant order Ionic columns and aedicule openings, but a balustraded parapet replaced the original pediment above the entablature.



Figure 21 The original Cairns Post building comprised the three bays on the left (architect Harvey Draper 1908), building was extended to the right in 1924 (architect Richard Hill architect), photograph taken 1930. Source SLQ

<sup>184</sup> C May, 'Alexander Frederick John Draper' in *Australian Dictionary of Biography online edition*

<sup>185</sup> *The Cairns Morning Post*, 15 August 1908, p 4

#### 4.5 Tourism in the Cairns Region

As early as the 1890s, visitors have travelled to Cairns to holiday in the region. This resulted in the construction of several new hotels in Cairns in the 1890s and 1900s, including the Strand, Pacific, Hides and Central Hotels,<sup>186</sup> and associated entertainment facilities, to cater for the tourist. Access at this time was by ship, with shipping companies such as the Adelaide Steamship Company offering cabins for travellers.<sup>187</sup> Attracted by the natural attributes of the region, tourists have visited Cairns and the hinterland, to visit islands, beaches, lakes, forests, waterfalls, mountains and tablelands. The close proximity of the Great Dividing Range to the coast at Cairns, the range and its attractions have always been promoted as very accessible from the town. The Kuranda railway, constructed in 1886-91, and tours to the Barron Falls were amongst advertised highlights from the late 1890s.

The Cairns economy has benefitted from tourism from its early days. Steamships arrived from Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and the Cairns Harbour Board was established in the early twentieth century.<sup>188</sup> Both this and the railways promoted the area as a tourist destination. The Government Tourist Bureau, established in 1910, also promoted the region and produced brochures to advertise the attractions of the region.

By 1910 the Queensland Railways were promoting trips to the region, with tourists travelling to Gladstone by rail, and then by steamer to Cairns. A handbook at the time described highlights both easily accessible, such as the Barron Falls, Cairns Range and Atherton Scrubs, and beyond Cairns itself, including the better known Chillagoe Caves, the Royal Arch, Organ and Snow caves and the lesser known huge limestone cliffs between Chillagoe and Mungana.<sup>189</sup> It was not until 1924 that a rail connection was made to Cairns from Brisbane and this provided further impetus to the tourist industry.

After World War One the district became more accessible by road with the Queensland government providing funding for road works in order to reduce unemployment during the depression of the 1920s.<sup>190</sup> New destinations were made accessible, and access to others was improved, for the benefit of the increasing number of available motor vehicles. Car hiring services were available to transport visitors to such advertised destinations as the Atherton Tableland, Lake Eacham and Lake Barrine, seaside resorts and sugar mills.<sup>191</sup> The linking of Atherton and Cairns by road along the Gillies Highway in 1926 encouraged further exploration of the hinterland.<sup>192</sup>

During World War Two many roads were bituminised and widened and car ownership increased significantly after the war. Improved road infrastructure included improvements to the Gillies Highway, which was widened to two lanes in 1959 and bitumen sealed in 1965<sup>193</sup>, and the bitumening of the Bruce Highway to Cairns in 1963. The latter made the trip north much more feasible.<sup>194</sup>

Between World War One and World War Two, sea travel was very popular and many ships carried passengers from Melbourne to Cairns in the winter tourist season. In the early 1930s a trip by sea from

<sup>186</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Biggest Earner, Tourist industry brings in the dollars', 2002, p 10

<sup>187</sup> *Cairns Argus*, 29 August 1893

<sup>188</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 105

<sup>189</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Biggest Earner, Tourist industry brings in the dollars', 2002 p 3

<sup>190</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 191

<sup>191</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Biggest Earner, Tourist industry brings in the dollars', 2002, p 4

<sup>192</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Biggest Earner, Tourist industry brings in the dollars', 2002, p 4

<sup>193</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Biggest Earner, Tourist industry brings in the dollars', 2002, p 4

<sup>194</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 20

Melbourne took about ten days while the journey from Brisbane took five days.<sup>195</sup> These trips operated between May and October to avoid the cyclone season, and in this way Cairns became a winter destination. However the era of coastal cruising between Melbourne and Cairns was over by the late 1950s, with an increase in car and air travel.<sup>196</sup>

When opened in 1924 the coastal railway trip took 52 hours from Brisbane to Cairns. In 1929 the rail journey became known as the 'Sunshine Route' and an upgrade in 1935 was coupled with the new name the 'Sunshine Express'.<sup>197</sup> By 1938 this train was making the journey between Brisbane and Cairns three times a week<sup>198</sup> and by the 1950s the luxury train was known as the *Sunlander* and ran 5-6 times a week in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>199</sup>

Natural attractions were always drawcards for tourists and amongst those in the lower regional area were Josephine Falls and The Boulders at Babinda with a stop-off at the State Hotel, The waterfalls at the township of Fishery Falls with a stop off at the Falls Hotel, Crystal Cascades via Freshwater, and the Barron Falls at Kuranda. Most of these attractions are still visited in large numbers particularly during the hotter periods of the year.



Figure 22 The Boulders, Babinda n.d. Source Uni of Qld collection

The Barrier Reef was an early attraction for Cairns residents who visited the small coral Green Island in the 1880s. It became a town reserve in 1906, under the jurisdiction of the Cairns Town Council, and a fortnightly service to the island was offered by the 1920s.<sup>200</sup> Through the 1950s and 1960s the island developed further as a tourist attraction with an underwater observatory, theme park and theatre constructed.

<sup>195</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 106

<sup>196</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 196

<sup>197</sup> Cultural Heritage Branch (Cairns), 'State-wide Survey Thematic Histories: Far North Queensland', p 192

<sup>198</sup> Queensland Government Tourist Bureau, 'Cairns and Hinterland Queensland', Brisbane 1938

<sup>199</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 110

<sup>200</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 111

Figure 23 Advertising Poster c1950s by QGTB. Source NLA

During the 1950s tourism was attracting 40,000 visitors to Cairns a year.<sup>201</sup> Tourism continued to grow through the 1950s and 1960s with associated low-rise development. The opening of the Cairns International Airport in 1984 gave international tourists direct access to the region<sup>202</sup> and greatly boosted the tourist industry. High-rise hotels were developed from the early 1980s<sup>203</sup> and this became a feature of the era.

Tourism has also resulted in controversies such as the construction of a road through Cape Tribulation rainforest in 1984,<sup>204</sup> however many positive developments have also occurred including the listing of the Great Barrier Reef on the World Heritage List in 1981 and the wet tropical rainforest between Cooktown and Townsville in 1988.<sup>205</sup> In 1995 a scenic cableway, known as *Skyrail*, was opened from Cairns to Kuranda over World Heritage rainforest, thus promoting the rich environment of the region<sup>206</sup> and the following year saw the opening of the nearby Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park.<sup>207</sup>

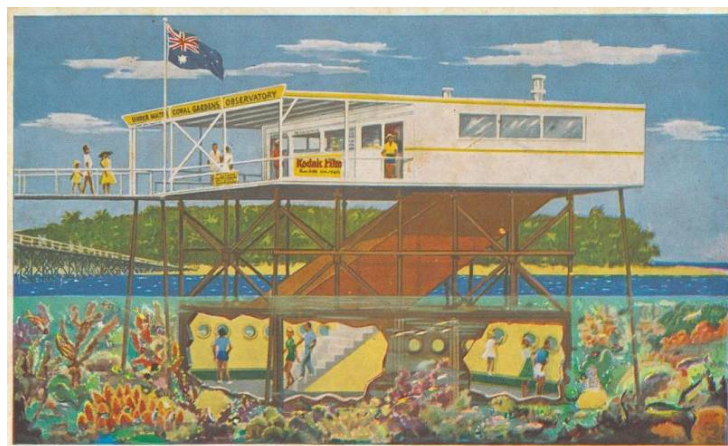


Figure 24 The Proposed Green Island Underwater Observatory, postcard circa 1953-54

<sup>201</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study'

<sup>202</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 April 1984, p 1

<sup>203</sup> eg *The Cairns Post*, 21 February 1981, p 3

<sup>204</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 8 October 1984, p 3, 30 November 1983, p 1, 3 August 1984, p 1

<sup>205</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 10 May 1989, p 2

<sup>206</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 1 September 1995, pp 1-2

<sup>207</sup> Moments in Time Collection, *The Cairns Post*, 'Biggest Earner, Tourist industry brings in the dollars', 2002, p 8



## 5. WORKING IN THE CAIRNS REGION

The profoundly important sugar cane industry provided labour for a large and diverse population. The physically demanding nature of the work initially encouraged Pacific Islanders and Asian workers in the nineteenth century, and this resulted in communities settling in Cairns and the region. European workers who followed in the twentieth century also created their own communities.

### 5.1 Working for the Sugar Cane Industry

#### Cane Cutting

The Queensland government began selling land in Far North Queensland in 1878 along a number of rivers. Small farmers and larger companies secured land, and by 1884 the sugar industry had been established in the region. This early industry was based on the plantation model of cane farming, which relied upon the use of indentured labourers. Most of the first field labourers were Melanesian (or Kanakas/Pacific Islanders), Chinese, Javanese or Malaysian. Cane cutting was very physically demanding and it was thought that the white man was unable to sustain this labour.<sup>208</sup> At this early stage, plantation owners were not legislatively obliged to provide workers with accommodation or facilities, however the *Polynesian Labourers Act* of 1868 ensured that they received adequate food and basic supplies.<sup>209</sup> The labourers generally built and lived in humpies or huts made from grasses and cane tops, which were susceptible to fire.

In 1884, a fall in world sugar prices and concern about the presence of Melanesian labourers in the colony triggered a drive to regulate and europeanise the sugar industry. A petition to the Queensland Parliament in 1885 outlined the difficulties cane farmers had in being confined to the mills of plantation owners and an interest in changing the sugar industry from one dominated by Melanesian labourers to a white industry. Two subsequent pieces of legislation were instrumental in beginning this transformation. The *Pacific Island Act* 1885 stipulated that importation of Pacific Islander labour was to cease in 1890 and the *Sugar Works Guarantee Act* 1893 secured the development of a central milling system.

In 1901, two additional pieces of legislation had a significant impact on Far North Queensland's sugar industry and labour force – the *Immigration Restriction Act* and the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act*. The first excluded people from immigrating on the basis of a literacy test and the second prohibited the recruitment of Melanesians to Australia after 1904. Southern European immigrants gradually replaced the Melanesian workers. Between the wars migration from Southern Europe, particularly Italy, was encouraged to fill severe labour shortages in the sugar industry and by the 1950s these migrants held 40% of sugar cane farms and provided a significant proportion of the labour force.<sup>210</sup>

European workers demanded better working conditions than the indentured Melanesians, Chinese and Japanese labourers. In response, the Queensland government introduced the *Sugar and Shearers' Accommodation Act* in 1905, which prescribed minimum standards of food and accommodation for those employed in both the mills and cane fields. This required mill owners and cane growers to build substantial accommodation for their workers. Many of these early barracks provided for large groups of between 24 and 50 men.

<sup>208</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 24

<sup>209</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p169

<sup>210</sup> B Balanzategui, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry', p 24

Specifications for farm workers accommodation, or barracks, were expanded upon in the *Workers Accommodation Act* 1915 and subsequently the *Workers Accommodation Act* 1952. The requirements for accommodation and sanitation included: the number of beds in rooms; spacing in bedrooms, ventilation, lighting, provision of vessels for cooking, eating and drinking, sanitary conditions and storage. Instead of providing a standard barrack design, the Act stipulated that regional inspectors would annually check for compliance with the Acts. As a result, various types of barracks were built throughout Far North Queensland.

The simplest structure was the single barracks, comprising a kitchen, four bedrooms and a verandah. The intention was to accommodate a single cane cutting gang of four to twelve men. Most barracks were timber-framed and were clad with corrugated iron or asbestos cement. Later barracks, built in the late 1940s and 1950s, were built of concrete. Four major barracks styles have been identified: a linear style, an L-shaped style, a cottage style and double barracks. The legislation also stipulated that the barracks had to be located a certain distance from mills and they were often situated near a tramway or other farm buildings.

The use of seasonal labourers in the cane industry continued until the development of mechanical harvesting in the 1960s, although manual harvesting was not totally phased out until 1976. Cane barracks have not been required since this time, and as a result many have been demolished, adapted for other uses or fallen into disrepair.<sup>211</sup>



Figure 25 "Straguszi" brick cane barracks at Gordonvale. These barracks predate the introduction of associated ablutions after 1915. A shower room was subsequently installed under the right-hand side of the verandah. The building contains a kitchen but rear barrack rooms have been demolished. Source: heritage Alliance, 2011.

Figure 26 "Marino" cane barracks at Caravonica. These corrugated iron clad timber barracks are L shaped with a single row of dormitory rooms. Source: heritage Alliance, 2011.

<sup>211</sup> The Far North Statewide Survey Cane Barracks Inventory Report (June 2009), p. 30

D Formiatti, 'Sugar Cane Barracks of Far North Queensland', St. Lucia 1984

DERM CNS File 5211, 'The Tropical Queensland Sugar Cane Industry -A Structural and Material Survey, 1872 to 1955,' B Balanzategui, 1994



## 6. LINKING CAIRNS

Cairns developed for the purpose of providing a port for Far North Queensland. The location of early mineral discoveries and developing industries greatly influenced the development of transport networks throughout the Cairns region. Rail and tram lines were constructed to provide transport for mineral resources and agricultural products, and roads were developed along already established early tracks. These tracks, which led to the early sites of mineral wealth, often traversed very difficult terrain. Transport to Cairns enabled resources and products to be transferred to the port and thus be shipped from the region. By 1924 rail also linked Cairns to the south which enabled an alternative mode of transport for produce and for increasing passenger numbers. Development of air transport provided further impetus to the latter, and greatly affected the developing tourist industry in the twentieth century.

### 6.1 Developing a rail and tram transport network

#### Queensland Government Railways

Rail transport was established early in the history of Cairns but it was established with the specific purpose of serving the mining township of Herberton although it was the Hodgkinson goldfield which was the *raison d'être* for establishing Cairns. By the time rail-works commenced the Hodgkinson was being serviced from Port Douglas and by the time the rail reached Herberton coal was being obtained at a new mine at Mt Mulligan near the Hodgkinson field.

The site of the government rail reserve bounded by McLeod Street, Spence Street and Lily Creek, was inspected by the Acting Commissioner for Railways in February 1885, then in July 1886 some 1200 tons of steel tracks were landed at the port. These were transported the short distance over the swampy terrain to the reserve where the yards and equipment sheds were being established with the first sod having being turned in April 1886.<sup>212</sup> Eventually the yards were to contain a myriad of tracks and sidings, a turntable, sheds for locomotives, carriage and goods storage, signal buildings, lamp rooms, staff rooms, coal storage bunkers and water tanks, a photo-office, a Traffic Managers Residence, a cottage and the two storey timber rail station on McLeod Street.

While the station yards started to take shape, work was progressed on the station building with the contractors (Messrs Reid) expected to complete their work by late 1886 or early 1887.<sup>213</sup> At the same time Louis Severin had been completing work on a new railway wharf to allow a second shipment of rails and equipment (including a locomotive from Townsville) to allow the commencement of the push northward which was already proceeding apace with the pegging out of the way.

While the rail line proper got underway by late 1886,<sup>214</sup> slow progress was encountered once the track arrived at the foot of the range near Redlynch a year later. The topography of the climb to the hinterland and the dense vegetation made access very difficult and expensive, and initially three different road tracks were cut in the search for an easier route.<sup>215</sup> The railway to Herberton had to conquer many difficulties on its climb up the range including bridging chasms and waterfalls, tunnelling through large rocky outcrops and finally passing the large and awe inspiring Barron Falls before it reached Kuranda and finally travelled to Herberton. The journey was immediately recognised for its sightseeing potential and attracted many visitors to see this feat of engineering and the natural wonders of the hinterland that was just a short journey from the port. This slow progress meant the system was not completed until years after it was actually required. In the case of Kuranda it arrived in 1891, Herberton in 1910 and Thornborough and Mt Mulligan in 1915 where it provided transport for coal from the new mines which had opened in mid -1910. It

<sup>212</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 22 April 1886 p 2

<sup>213</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 2 December 1886 p 2

<sup>214</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 13 May 1886, p 2

<sup>215</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 74

did however serve to connected emergent localities as it ran northward to Gatton Street where it crossed Lily Creek,<sup>216</sup> passed a number of newly established small stations such as Edge Hill (subsequently named North Cairns in 1943) where there was a siding to ballast quarries and then onto Aeroglen (subsequently), Stratford, Lilybank, Freshwater and Redlynch before it climbed to Kuranda. Lilybank was closed in the early days of the railway and many stops only consisted of a short timber platform and occasionally a simple timber waiting and parcel shed. The surviving shed relocated from the Freshwater stop is an example of a parcels-waiting shed although it was not erected in the earliest phase of the railway's construction.<sup>217</sup>

The main purpose of the rail however was to meet ships at the port, to deliver goods to the city and towns to the west, and more importantly to bring back the spoils of the hinterland particularly tin, timber, small amounts of gold and subsequently sugar, tobacco, copper and lead. It was vital to the development of Cairns and the region, encouraging the growth of the port and the development of agriculture, the timber industry, mining and other enterprises in the hinterland. During the 1920s and 1930s the Annual Reports of the Cairns Harbour Board indicate this was a very active rail system.

The passing of the *North Queensland Railway Act* of 1910 allowed the Government to buy up tramway and other rail and land assets along the Queensland coast in order to establish a continuous rail corridor. These included personnel, buildings, repair facilities, rolling stock and stock in hand, such as coal, sleepers, ballast and timber. Importantly (in the case of the Cairns Mulgrave Tramway) it also included the mail delivery contract that had previously been with the Commonwealth and the Cairns Divisional Board. Some people viewed this buy up as a convenient 'out' for the Council which they claimed had been losing financially on the tram system.<sup>218</sup> More recent investigation of the Tramways finances found the finances to be in a healthy position.<sup>219</sup> In 1911 the Government acquired the Cairns Mulgrave Tramway and its assets which are described below. Government trains were then able to run from the main station on McLeod Street, then south on Spence Street to stops at Bungalow, Woree and onto White Rock, Hambledon Junction (later Edmonton), and Gordonvale, Aloomba, Babinda, Moolaba and Daragee where passengers initially crossed the North Johnstone River via ferry to arrive in Innisfail. By late 1920 CSR's Goondi mill tramway was used to take passengers across the river over their light rail bridge<sup>220</sup>.

In 1924 the North Coast railway, upgraded and installed to the north and south concurrently from Innisfail, was joined at Cardwell and then the final link to Cairns was completed by constructing the large steel Daradgee Bridge over the North Johnstone River. Premier Theodore opened this on 8 December 1924<sup>221</sup> thus creating a continuous rail all the way to Brisbane for standardised government locomotives and passenger cars. The new rail service from Brisbane became the longest in Queensland at 1044 miles (1740 kilometres) but for a number of years passengers had a train change and a long wait in Townsville until there were timetable changes in late September 1930<sup>222</sup>. It was not until the *Sunshine Express* commenced that there was actually a through service. The *Express*, which was a complete eight car train with sleepers, specially built and fitted for the continuous run, commenced in May 1935<sup>223</sup> but a second complete *Express* train was not ready to supplement the service until mid December that year.

<sup>216</sup> The rail line was later rerouted to stay fully on the east side of Lily Creek (circa 1910) but still retained some facilities on the west such as a large sandpit at Grove Street which was still there when the Pensioner Cottages were built

<sup>217</sup> The drawing schedule for the rail-line to Redlynch does not show anything more than a waiting platform at Freshwater in 1890-95 period

<sup>218</sup> Letter re Cairns Tramway from Cairns resident to the Board circa 1911, in Cairns Tramway Batch File, State Archives Queensland

<sup>219</sup> D Rapkins, *A remarkable achievement* p 35

<sup>220</sup> B. Carroll, *Australia's Railways Days*, p 76

<sup>221</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 377

<sup>222</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 10 June 1930 p 15 + Thursday 28 August 1930 p 11 combined gives a detailed picture of the timetabling with the coastal services.

<sup>223</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 May 1935 p 8

During World War Two the government rail system was stretched to its limits, carrying works personnel, troops and large amounts of equipment northward and returning injured soldiers to the south. After the war the rail system evolved into a more scheduled arrangement of passenger and freight services. On 4 June 1953 a new rail service known as the *Sunlander* was introduced which ran all the way from Brisbane to Cairns with stops only at the major provincial cities. However it still took nearly two days to reach the northern port. This service was hauled by diesel locomotives, was an all steel air-conditioned train with sleeping and dining cars and attracted large numbers of customers.

Other 'lander' services introduced at the same time were the *Westlander*, the *Midlander* and the *Inlander*, which ran westward out of Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville respectively. The long serving *Sunshine Express* continued its run on alternate days and was hauled by a steam locomotive if no diesels were available. This timber carriage service was not air-conditioned and stopped more frequently.

In 1953-55 a new brick station was constructed by T.J. Watkins at the Cairns Terminus to reflect the new *Sunlander's* modernity, and finally replacing the seventy-year-old timber station. The brick station was demolished in 1995 for construction of a shopping centre (opened 1997)<sup>224</sup> that incorporated a station for the new Tilt Train service. This service reduced travel time, to and from Brisbane, to 21 hours. In November 2010 it was announced that more of the coastal rail system would be upgraded to facilitate the high-speed service.

### Queensland Government Railways work for the Cairns Municipal Council

During 1887 the Council received substantial loan funds to undertake works on the town's roads and streets<sup>225</sup> and they must have contracted with the railways to establish temporary rail lines in the town's streets in order to run in ballast wagons from the railway siding established at the Edge Hill quarry. A set of 1890-95 plans of the rail yards<sup>226</sup> indicate a "Temporary siding for Municipal Council 1890" running across McLeod Street and down Shields Street. Photographs from the period c1895- 1910, show ballast wagons and rail tracks in various Cairns streets such as Abbott and Spence Streets. There are also reports of temporary rails being pulled up again in 1892 with sleepers sent to the municipal yards and the steel line returned to the Railways.<sup>227</sup> All these rails were at the standard rail gauge of 3 foot 6 inches and coincidentally later allowed other traffic such as the Cairns Mulgrave Tramway (CMT) locomotives and passenger cars to access various parts of the town. A series of pre 1900 photographs and one 1901 photograph of Abbott Street held by the State Library of Queensland shows rail tracks stacked for laying, laid rail track and then CMT passengers cars in this same area at the intersection of Abbott and The Esplanade (that part which is now Wharf Street) in the lower portion of town. While some of this line would have served the wharves, it is clear that some of it is laid for other purposes.

<sup>224</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 143

<sup>225</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 24 February 1887, p 2

<sup>226</sup> Northern and Carpentaria Division Cairns Station Rail Yards and Sidings, QSA item 291110, 1890-95.

<sup>227</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 19 October 1892, p 2



Figure 27 Rail track for Municipal Council use in place along Shields Street at Lake Street c1890. Source SLQ

## Cairns Divisional Board Tramway

In 1896 a tramway was established by the Cairns Divisional Board to run from Cairns southward to emerging localities. This had been first suggested in 1893 by the Mulgrave Central Mill Company as a mode of conveying sugar to the port. Early sugar and banana plantations used tramways for transportation but it was critical to the establishment of the sugar mills in part as a mode of transporting equipment, labourers and cane stalks and returning with bagged semi-processed sugar to the port.

The Divisional Board established the Mulgrave tramway, or southern line, for this purpose and the first section was opened to the Mulgrave stop at the Mulgrave Mill in 1897.<sup>228</sup> This mill stop would also shortly serve the new town of Nelson (later to be Gordonvale). In addition to carrying sugar, it carried other agricultural products as well as passengers. It was extended across the Mulgrave River to Aloomba in 1898 and eventually to the emerging town and mill at Babinda in 1910.<sup>229</sup> It was constructed using a 3 ft 6 in gauge (the standard gauge of the State Railway system) and this was agreed from the beginning of the system.<sup>230</sup>

The earliest annual report of the line in 1898 indicated the Council had only one locomotive, one passenger car and twenty-two wagons, but due to its popularity the council were considering the purchase of two more passenger cars in 1899 to serve an increasing number of stops.<sup>231</sup> By 1902 they had a fleet of locomotives and passenger cars stored at their Bunda Street yards. The system was also being run to a timetable with scheduled fares as well as used for special events from the centre of town (when there were tracks available) or from the official terminus and office at Bunda and Spence Streets.

In 1911 the State Government acquired this line and all the associated stock for the purpose of the new north - south rail system.

## Cairns Council tramway for 'filling-in' work

In 1910 a meeting was held by the municipal councillors at the Edge Hill quarry to discuss a future tramway system to continue the "filling in" work that had been commenced years previously and was much required on other streets around Cairns. The report in *The Cairns Post* of May 1910 alludes to a number of circumstances in the town's history of road making without actually giving clear facts. The reportage of this meeting indicates that a system of tramways had previously been in place for the filling-in works but the rail

<sup>228</sup> D Rapkins, 'A Remarkable Achievement', Cairns Historical Society, 1997, p 11

<sup>229</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, pp 374-376

<sup>230</sup> *The Queenslander*, 23 December 1899, p 1242

<sup>231</sup> First Annual Report of the Tramway 1899, in Batch File, State Archives Queensland (ID 299923)

lines were not in the control of the Council. These comments appear to confirm the existence of the temporary lines installed by the Railways.

It was proposed at the meeting to re-establish a tramway system for bringing in quarried material but on a two-foot gauge which would have been adequate for the service required.

It would appear that this proposal was acted upon as a tramway was established down Sheridan Street from the quarry and turned into Spence Street although little evidence in the way of photographs of this system have been sighted. A map at the Queensland State Archives has the tramway drawn onto it running the length of Sheridan Street but the exact date of installation is unknown. A 1913 photograph of Spence Street shows a narrow gauge system running along the southern side of the street<sup>232</sup>. The only other known fact is that a Lands Department file contains a map of 1924 indicating that a Municipal Reserve (No R361) at Upward and McLeod Streets was “nearly all occupied by Council’s Tramway locomotive sheds, stables, cart sheds, tool room, plumbers shop, stone breaker, engine room etc”.<sup>233</sup>

It is possible that the track along Sheridan Street was superseded by the more sensible use of a municipal compound directly adjacent to the Government rail line at Upward Street and close by to the quarry where there had been a rail ballast siding in place since at least 1890. Small council locomotives could bring the stone to the municipal crushing yards where it could be distributed by cart or later by motorised truck. This location was also more geographically suited to the expansion of Cairns’ streets and suburbs in their march north and west.

## 6.2 Moving goods and people to and from Cairns by ship

### Shipping & the Port of Cairns

When the first official party landed at Cairns in 1876, the majority of shipping was coastal steamers plying the route from as far south as Melbourne up to Townsville, Cardwell, Port Douglas (after 1877) and Cooktown.

As Surveyor Sharkey was surveying the town, the Government were contracting for a survey of the harbour area. As a result the earliest survey chart drawn of the Inlet is dated 9 February 1878. Edward R Connor, Navigating Lieutenant R.N. on behalf of the Queensland government, undertook this task.<sup>234</sup>

Connor’s chart shows that the future wharf area already contained jetties used by several parties and these would be later converted into a series of Special Leases and official reserves for Municipal and Customs use (the latter was set aside in 1886). The chart identifies the following structures in existence (in italics); *Pine’s Wharf*, the Custom’s *Boat House*, *Gaig’s Wharf* at the end of Abbott Street and *Beardmore’s wharf* at the end of Lake Street.

The chart also shows a series of plot depths standing off from the above noted jetties. These indicate a maximum depth, close to the wharves, in the order of less than eight feet although it was necessary to have at least 13 feet for a useable shipping draft. Ships with a deeper draught were forced to tie up at the Fairway Buoy at the start of the silt bar and then send passengers and goods ashore by boat.

A petition by the inhabitants of Cairns to the government in 1885<sup>235</sup> sought assistance in dredging the port to allow shipping to come right into the existing wharves at any tide. In presenting the petition, the Ports

<sup>232</sup> Photograph by A.L. Taylor held by Cairns Historical Society.

<sup>233</sup> Reserve File R361, held by DERM

<sup>234</sup> State Archives Queensland Series 2010, Item 631206. The survey commenced in early 1878, was completed by the end of March and a report sent to Parliament in early June that year.



and Marine engineer in Brisbane, William Nisbet, calculated the amount of spoil required to be removed for a minimum of both a 13 foot draught and an 18 foot draught. In 1885 dredging commenced on a 200-foot wide and 13-foot deep channel. The dredger *Platypus* was used to carry out the work and in 1887 a further programme of 15 foot dredging commenced. Thereafter dredging kept the new channel open despite continual silting up. This dredging gave Cairns ‘the finest harbour in Queensland’ according to *Pugh’s Almanac*.<sup>236</sup>

By the time the next wharf layout plan was drawn by the Port Master, (undated but after 1887),<sup>237</sup> the wharves were owned by Burns Philip, Walsh & Co (agents for the ASN shipping Company) and a lease with no wharf in favour of WC Smith. At Lake Street there was a municipal reserve gazetted in 1887 for council use.

In late 1905 the *Cairns Harbour Board Act* received official assent and shortly after a ballot was called for the election of nine Board members from Cairns and the surrounding shires. The Board formed in 1906, with E.C. Earl as Chairman but had to immediately resolve a motion of no confidence by the public. The subsequent survey of the population of the Cairns and District resulted in the Board winning a majority of ballots but it is clear that there was a simmering disquiet by the residents. The cause of this fervour appears to have been the financial losses other Harbour Boards had been incurring throughout the State.<sup>238</sup>

Negotiations to buy up the Special Leases within the Harbour Board’s area of operation were made in 1906. The Adelaide Steam Ship Company (for £6500) and the Queensland National Bank (for £1212) owned the existing wharves that were purchased. In the following year the wharves of Burns Philip and Walsh & Co. were purchased, leaving Howard Smith & Co as the last remaining wharf. The 1905 Act set out the bounds of the Harbour and annexed the Special Leases that required a buy-out along the Harbour’s foreshore.<sup>239</sup> All leases and land came into the possession of the Board on 1 August 1906, with the exception of existing government and municipal reserves. One lease containing the Chillagoe Mining & Railway Company wharf was on a Railway Reserve and this was not relinquished until 1915.<sup>240</sup> The Board then commenced strengthening all their wharf assets and dealing with the existing fisheries along the lower foreshore within their area.

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<sup>235</sup> Nisbet’s summary paper prepared for the Queensland Parliament is dated 12 June 1885

<sup>236</sup> *Pugh’s Queensland Almanac and Directory*, Gordon and Gotch, Brisbane various dates

<sup>237</sup> Dredging at Cairns, in Batch File, Queensland State Archives, ID 979818

<sup>238</sup> An editorial piece in the *Morning Post* of 27 April 1905 titled “From our Point of View” is just one of many unfavourable articles on the liabilities that other Harbor Boards had faced in their start up years

<sup>239</sup> These included leases (in order) for Burns Philip & Co, Qld National Bank, Alexander Mathieson, Adelaide Steam Ship Co, Chillagoe Railway & Mines Ltd, James Lyons, Matthew Rooney, & Austin Horn

<sup>240</sup> Cairns Harbour Board Annual Report, 1915



*Figure 28 Cairns Harbour Board Offices (complete with fence) by architects Tunbridge, Tunbridge and Lynch 1907.  
Source SLQ*

1907 was a year of great activity with the Board enacting its published by-laws and shipping fees and commencing the construction of buildings, further wharf strengthening, filling, draining, and securing their land. The Board also grew concerned about the poor operation of the dredger the *Willunga* that continually broke down, and the Board subsequently purchased a grab dredge, two spoil barges from Sydney, the *O'Possum* motorboat, the tug *Cecil Rhodes* and other motor craft. In 1910 they sought assistance from the Queensland Treasury for a new Prussian built "Fruhling" dredge at a cost of £42,000. The dredge finally arrived in Brisbane in March 1913 and in Cairns on 1 April where its six-month trial proved to be highly satisfactory. The (rebadged) SD *Trinity Bay* then returned to Brisbane for certification and remained in Cairns for the next sixty-eight years. Spoil from the dredge was continually pumped ashore along the inlet coastline and was used for reclamation around the end of Lake and Sheridan Streets and in the lower part of Cairns. It also allowed the straightening of Alligator and Chinaman's Creek as part of anti-malarial drainage works after the end of World War Two.

*Figure 29 Mudflats below the town c1920.  
Crossing the picture is a pipeline on trestles and this is likely to be the sludge delivery pipe allowing areas in this section of town to be filled with the dredge from the "SD Trinity Bay".  
Source SLQ*



In 1907 the Board erected its timber office building<sup>241</sup> to the design of Townsville architects Tunbridge, Tunbridge and Lynch<sup>242</sup> at 1 Lake Street at a cost of just over £1,000.<sup>243</sup> In the following year they commenced discussions with the departmental marine engineers in Brisbane about providing a “ferro-cement” section of wharf. In 1908 they also installed a pile lead light and the 90-foot high timber skeleton tower containing the back highlight on railway reserve land.<sup>244</sup> Both these (white) leading lights were powered by acetylene and were to be visible 12 miles out to sea, bringing shipping in through the channel on a SSW bearing. In the mid-1920s the highlight was electrified. The Board also did extensive work on the channel buoys, channel lights and a tidal clock marker at the channel entrance. Shipping as well as wayward timber logs after a severe storm often ran these markers down or they became damaged by cyclones and wave action.

Work on the ferro-concrete wharves commenced in 1910 and continued in stages for another three years. New wharves of 1,200 foot (and then with a 300 foot extension) were constructed in ferro-concrete from 1923 to c1925, with new wharf sheds constructed further south along the inlet. These sheds were all built in timber and corrugated iron. Behind shed No 4 a galvanised iron sugar storage shed was erected. The railways maintained a spur line that served sheds 4 and 5 on the waterside and all the sheds on the inland side. A new terminal was constructed for overseas shipping further south on the north side of the mouth of Alligator creek.

When the wharf restructure commenced, the railways already had a wharf reserve, rail-lines and their own T shaped jetty terminal. They reconstructed their lines on the new wharves and in 1924 an electric powered sugar bag handling system was installed and a small electric crane at the rear of the wharf sheds to handle the increasing volumes of refined sugar.

Over the years the Board prospered and their annual reports indicate this with the early ones reporting solely on the Port’s shipping, dredging and constructional activities, and later reports (around the 1920s) providing statistical analyses of the port’s shipping, as well as statistics on the exported items and their origins, and their means of transport to the port.<sup>245</sup>

The annual reports also started to include illustrations of the ships tied up including naval vessels, and the varieties of goods exported. The photographs also illustrated the growth of Cairns and its hinterland and reported on the natural attractions of the area. In this way the annual reports became tourism propaganda for the region.

World War Two saw a sharp reduction in reportage with Annual Reports of 1939 to 1944 simply presenting the Chairman’s financial statement. All matters relating to building works and shipping were omitted until the 1945 end of year report when it again carried illustrations of some of the larger vessels seen in Cairns’ harbour during the war years.

The Annual Report of 1937 listed the construction of oil farms for Vacuum (Mobil) and Shell Oil companies at the rear of wharf sheds 5 and 6. Thereafter further farms were constructed for Vacuum & Ampol, H.C.

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<sup>241</sup> In 1972 the Board vacated the building and the FNQ Promotion Bureau then occupied it until it was demolished in 1978-79.

<sup>242</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 2 July 1907, p. 2

<sup>243</sup> Although the architects had selected a tender of £1551, the Harbour Board Batch File and the Board’s Annual Report indicates a final cost of £1,000 for the building plus £32 for the work to the immediate grounds.

<sup>244</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 23 November 1907, p 5

<sup>245</sup> Annual Reports of the Cairns Harbour Board 1920-39

Sleigh (Golden Fleece), Caltex and C.O.R. (later BP). Vacuum Oil constructed additional tanks east of Kenny Street after 1962.

The completion of the railway line from Townsville to Cairns in the 1920s saw a decline in the number of passenger ships by steam coastal services as travellers chose the land journey for safety and ease of travel reasons. The rail line also served a larger number of townships than the steamers. The introduction of the *Sunlander* in 1953 added to that decline.

When containerisation of cargo was introduced in the late 1960s, the port at Cairns was not upgraded with a container terminal, although a bulk sugar loading facility opened in early October 1964.<sup>246</sup> Any containers shipped to Cairns had to be craned onto the wharves. The nearest large container port is Townsville and any containers railed to Cairns are unloaded in the new rail-yards between Woree and the city.

In the early 1970s air travel, particularly with the introduction of the Boeing Jumbo 747, saw a decrease in costs of international travel and an increase in air transported goods, thus leading to an almost complete abandonment of passenger ships Australia wide. This included a lowering of international cargo shipping services around Australia, particularly for small items.

In 2011, the Port Authority still exists under the Ports North Corporation. While shipping is substantially confined to small craft and tourist ships, it is said to be one of Australia's busiest cruise ports, although the shipment of goods is statistically low.<sup>247</sup> In late 2010, works to the wharf area were undertaken in preparation for the introduction of very large cruise ships, such as the *Princess* cruise liners and P&O's *Pacific Sun*, which arrived in March 2011.



Figure 30 Peninsula & Orient's maxi cruise ship *The Pacific Sun* at Cairns Wharf in March 2011. Source: heritage ALLIANCE

### 6.3 Forming Cairns' Roads

Almost as soon as Cairns was being surveyed, the identification of tracks from which to create roads north to Smithfield and Cooktown and to the Hodgkinson was underway. Mr McMillan the roads engineer was

<sup>246</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 74

<sup>247</sup> [www.cairnsport.com.au](http://www.cairnsport.com.au)

already spending considerable time identifying the line of paths and having them cleared by November 1876 so that the establishing localities were connected together as soon as possible.<sup>248</sup>

By the time the Cairns Road Board was inaugurated in 1879, two principal routes left Cairns, one south to the Mulgrave River and another north, close to the coast, to Smithfield and the Hodgkinson River.<sup>249</sup> Access to Cairns and the hinterland remained very difficult for many years. Car touring from Cairns was possible from the 1920s; however the condition of the roads made travelling difficult, particularly in the tablelands.

## Roads North

Crossing the river from the Cairns area to towns and farms on the north-side of the Barron River was initially best avoided with traffic best placed on coastal shipping to Cooktown or the burgeoning area of Port Douglas which was established in late 1877. Otherwise a local crossing could be effected from Cairns to Smithfield by boat or horseback via a ford on the north-east edge of the town of Kamerunga, which itself was not established until 1887. This latter location was hazardous if the water was fast flowing or the river was in flood; often the case after torrential rain. A bridge was built here in late 1910, although this still proved hazardous after heavy rain.

Councillor Mason investigated the possibility of establishing a punt in the Stratford area in early 1910.<sup>250</sup> In mid-1910 it was decided to construct a bridge at Kamerunga.<sup>251</sup> Work was underway on this ferro-concrete bridge by November 1910 and completion was reported in December that year.<sup>252</sup> The official opening planned for 5 January 1911 was delayed due to flooding, but it had already been noted that the bridge had withstood floodwaters over the deck in a satisfactory manner.<sup>253</sup>

This was the first bridge to cross the Barron River however a long round trip to Cairns was still necessary for those farming in the Smithfield area. In 1921 a higher-level timber bridge, known as the Farmer's Bridge, was constructed at Stratford.<sup>254</sup> Its main function was to enable the transport of sugar cane and eventually a tramway was constructed on its deck. Damage occurred after various floods and this bridge was repaired, however a new bridge was constructed in 1933, carrying traffic more directly to the commercial heart of Stratford. This eighteen span bridge was constructed on concrete piles with a timber superstructure.<sup>255</sup> This serviced the region until a concrete bridge was completed in 1977, placed approximately 600 metres to the east of the existing bridge. This bridge served the realigned Cook Highway. A duplicate of this new bridge was constructed alongside in 1988 to carry northbound traffic.

A high level crossing at Kamerunga commenced in the late 1970s and this was opened to traffic in late 1980.

A road between Cairns and Port Douglas was opened in 1933<sup>256</sup> but it was not until World War Two that extensive road work was undertaken in Queensland. At this time many roads in the Far North were widened and bituminised to allow greater access to the area as training camps and hospitals were set up

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<sup>248</sup> *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 10 November 1876, p 2

<sup>249</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 140

<sup>250</sup> [Stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail\\_Sites/10.php](http://Stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail_Sites/10.php)

<sup>251</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 7 October 1910, p 3

<sup>252</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 December 1910, p 4

<sup>253</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 December 1910, p 4

<sup>254</sup> [Stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail\\_Sites/11.php](http://Stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail_Sites/11.php)

<sup>255</sup> [Stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail\\_Sites/15.php](http://Stratfordhistory.org.au/Trail_Sites/15.php)

<sup>256</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 78



on the tablelands.<sup>257</sup> This included a road to Kuranda that was opened in 1941. The following decades saw a large increase in car ownership and, together with the improved roads from the wartime works, this resulted in a significant increase in vehicle numbers in Cairns and the surrounding region. The Bruce Highway to Cairns was bituminised in 1963 and this had a great effect on the amount of motor traffic in Cairns and the surrounding region.<sup>258</sup>

### Roads South: The Gillies Highway

The construction of the Tolga-Johnstone railway, a spur of the Cairns-Atherton line, was commenced in 1907. This supported European settlement and aided in the development of the southern Atherton and Evelyn Tableland areas. The high rainfall, steep grades, and numerous creeks and rivers that required bridging, delayed the completion of the line and it was not until 1921 that it finally reached Millaa Millaa. A rail strike in 1917 reinforced the reliance of this Tableland region on a combination of local roads and the railway to transport produce. Tableland residents lobbied for a road connection with the coast and the Gillies Highway was subsequently surveyed and planned.<sup>259</sup>

The route of the Gillies Highway was surveyed in 1922 and the road was opened in 1926.<sup>260</sup> It connected Gordonvale with the Tablelands, via Yungaburra, and also supported tourism to the area. The road initially operated on a one-way system with times specified for ascent and descent and the Mountain View Hotel was built in 1925 at the lower end of the road to cater for those waiting to ascend. However this system was not always honoured, and gates were subsequently built at the top and bottom of the road in 1930 and a toll was imposed. The toll only continued until 1945; but the one-way system lasted much longer, as noted on Royal Automobile Club maps in the 1950s. Widening work on the road commenced in 1958, and the two-way Gillies Highway was finally opened in 1959.



*Figure 31 Mountain View Hotel at Little Mulgrave, designed by architects Hill and Taylor, constructed 1924-25. This building was built to take advantage of travelers on the new Gillies Highway. Source SLQ*

<sup>257</sup> *The History of the Main Roads Commission during World War II*, p 15

<sup>258</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study', p 20

<sup>259</sup> e.g. *The Cairns Post*, 26 August 1917, p 3 & 16 July 1920, p 7

<sup>260</sup> K Earl, 'The Gillies Highway' in *Cairnsnewspapers.com.au*

## 6.4 Establishing Communication by Air

### Cairns Airport

The Cairns airport, located on a saltpan about 6.5 kilometres north of the city centre, was first shown on early maps as vacant land. This is hardly surprising as its siting in the littoral zone, and the associated problems of the effects of seawater on plantings, made the land unsuitable for agriculture.

It is said that the Cairns airport first developed after Tom McDonald (1892-1978), an aviation pioneer of the north, first landed there in 1928.<sup>261</sup> Thereafter he landed with increasing frequency and in increasingly larger planes; his own always named “Miss Cairns.” McDonald carried the occasional passenger in the smaller planes but more importantly mail.

McDonald landed at the southerly end of several salt pans that made up the area, and eventually he sought assistance from the Council to lay an ash runway on the pan. Although the Council initially refused, they relented and supplied and compacted ash from the gasworks to create a 100-yard by 22 yard landing zone.<sup>262</sup> Council’s involvement with this site appears to have occurred around the end of 1929 when they were considering a possible site for a landing field for which an area at Queerah was the major contender. This Queerah site was strongly favoured being above the littoral zone and having no hills directly adjacent the landing field zone. The salt pans site on the other hand required considerable filling. After a year of well publicised debate over the matter in which Queerah continued as the favoured site, it was sometime around early 1931 that the Council was moving in the direction of favouring the Edge Hill salt pans subject to the extent of filling and drainage required.<sup>263</sup> By years end the site was confirmed and more serious works were set to be undertaken. In 1932 a large municipal controlled Crown reserve of 1,230 acres was set-aside by the Lands Department as an “Aeroplane Landing Ground” on these Edge Hill salt pans.<sup>264</sup> The establishment of the Cairns Airport had officially commenced.

One of the prime motivators for building an aerodrome was the commencement in 1930 of a new aviation service, Queensland Air Navigation Ltd, flying from Brisbane to Cairns carrying passengers, post and parcels.<sup>265</sup> At this time there were few flights landing anywhere north of Townsville with the fledgling aviation company QANTAS concentrating on southern Queensland and eventually international flights from Sydney Harbour.

McDonald’s frequent use of the strip (increasingly as a service on the request of QANTAS), as well as new comers such as Queensland Air Navigation, led to a small number of storage sheds being built on the edge of the highway to Stratford. These were augmented by a larger shed built by McDonald as an air hanger for North Queensland Airways Pty Ltd. After World War Two this was enlarged as the Australian National Airways hanger.

The condition of the aerodrome in the early 1930s can be ascertained from a photograph showing the barren salt pans and mangroves with aeroplanes standing next to the small storage sheds.

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<sup>261</sup> Reported in various media including McDonalds reminiscences in a Special Edition of *The Cairns Post*, March 1984, on the opening of the new international airport

<sup>262</sup> Reported in various media including McDonalds reminiscences in the Special Edition of *The Cairns Post*, March 1984 for the opening of the new international airport

<sup>263</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 18 February 1931, p 8

<sup>264</sup> Reserve File R728 of 1230 acres as shown on City of Cairns map, Dept of Public Lands, Govt Printing Office Brisbane, 1933. See also GG1932

<sup>265</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 9 November 1929, p 8



Figure 32 Cairns aerodrome pre World War Two looking south, probable date 1932-39. Small storage buildings are on the RHS as is the old Cook Highway south to Cairns city. Source Mitchell Library of NSW ID "At Work and Play – 04244"

World War Two changed the slow pace of airport development with Cairns being used as a base for a vast number of Australian and American military personnel. This included the air force of both nations as well as Dutch fliers operating from their former Dutch East India colony (Java). During the war QANTAS services were flown on behalf of the military, carrying troops from Townsville via Cairns to Port Moresby and then Milne Bay. The return journey carried the wounded to Townsville for transporting southward by ship or rail. In 1945 QANTAS began a regular service to Port Moresby and Lae from Cairns.

Upgrading the airfield for use during the war resulted in the asphaltting of runways and standing aprons, the provision of more storage sheds and hangars, a weather service, an airport control tower, a fire control section, perimeter fencing and a radio range. The latter was established at Norman Park. This form of transmitter device, which allows identification and direction to an airport, can now be seen at the north end of the airport runways.

All this boded well for the future of air travel to and from Cairns, as the war provided the city with a fully functioning airfield, which progressively grew into an airport. In late 1965 the airport runway was extended to over 2,100 metres in anticipation of the new passenger jet services run by Ansett Australian National Airways (ANA) and Trans Australia Airlines (TAA) which began arriving in April 1966. In 1979 a committee was set up to investigate ways of upgrading the airport facilities and this was facilitated by the *Cairns Airport Act* (1981). This allowed detailed planning and construction to proceed under an authority to raise and expend funds. The Commonwealth Government contributed around \$20 million towards the upgrade and a further \$1 million for connecting roadwork. In 1982 the total of all contracts approved for the airport works was \$33 million.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>266</sup> As reported in detail in the Special Edition of *The Cairns Post*, March 1984 for the opening of the new international airport

In 1982-84, as part of creating an International Airport, the terminals were relocated to the east side of the runways which were themselves extended to 2,600 metres in length and 60 metres in width. Aprons were widened to handle international flights, which were to include the occasional Boeing 747 “jumbo” services. The original sheds built for ANA and the original small air services, continued to operate from the area closest to the Cook Highway. Air services in operation in 1982 were QANTAS, TAA, Ansett-ANA and Air Niugini, as well as minor charters such as Bush Pilots and the Air Ambulance.

Passenger movement at Cairns domestic and international terminals increased from about 85,000 in 1965 to more than 2.2 million in 1994-95. This is illustrative of the tourist airports in Queensland, which experienced particularly fast growth in this period.<sup>267</sup>

In 2008 the airport lease was sold to Cairns Airport Pty Ltd under the *Airport Assets (Restructuring and Disposals) Act* 2008 and in 2009-10 the airport underwent further extensive upgrading of the terminals and ground facilities.

## 6.5 Establishing Telecommunications and Postal Services

At the time Cairns was being settled, Government Gazettes were carrying tender notices for the erection of telegraph wires in the Cape York area in anticipation that the far outreaches of Queensland would be connected by the 1880s. Towns such as Townsville were already connected by wire (1863) and shipping was already running coastal services from the Torres Strait via Cooktown (connected 1876), Port Douglas (1879) and Cardwell (1864). In 1876 information from the Cairns area was being sent by steamer to Townsville, and then wired to Brisbane until it too was connected by wire in 1878.

Steamers carried the post to the main towns and from there it was delivered by horse. *Pugh's Almanac* recorded Cairns postal items being delivered twice a week by steamer and regularly published postal routes and delivery days for the surrounding townships. This service was improved by the introduction of the railway to the north of Cairns and the tramway southward and as the line extended, could carry the mail with greater speed and regularity. After 1911, when the Government took over the tramway, the contract for the mail was one of the items renegotiated by the Commonwealth and the Queensland Railways.

Tramway and railway stations acted as mail collection points for small localities, such as the station at Freshwater, while the larger centres constructed buildings for postal, telegraphic and telephonic purposes. Babinda's first substantial post office, a timber building with a squat municipal clock tower, was designed by Harvey Draper in 1916<sup>268</sup> for the Cairns Shire Council and erected by the end of that year. The Commonwealth erected a new post office to a standard design further along Munro Street, Babinda in 1924 and this, along with the postmaster's house, remains in use today. The new post office was one of three (including Malanda and Yungaburra) to be completed by Mr J. Doyle of Brisbane.<sup>269</sup> The old post office was then used as a store until it was destroyed by fire in 1933.

When a settlement started to form in the locality of the Walsh's Pyramid in c1886, it was centred on the present day Swan Street (on the south side of Gordonvale), and a reserve for a Post and Telegraph office was set aside in the south west block. However this may never have been taken up as a new layout plan for the new government designed township to be known as Nelson, was produced in c1897 with the post office reserve located opposite Norman Park. The mail was delivered to the rail-tram stop until the Post

<sup>267</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 197

<sup>268</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 25 May 1916, p 4

Office was completed by the Commonwealth in May 1912.<sup>270</sup> This Gordonvale post office remains in use to this day.

### Cairns Post Office

The current Cairns Post Office, constructed in 1990 in Grafton Street,<sup>271</sup> is the fifth post office that has been constructed in the city. The previous three post offices were constructed on the one site in Abbott Street at the Spence Street intersection.

The first official Cairns Post Office was established by November 1876<sup>272</sup> on the Esplanade and a photograph identifies the building as a simple bark roofed structure. A photograph dated 1896, shows the second post office as a single-storey timber building in Abbott Street. A new (third) Post and Telegraph Office was constructed on this corner site in 1907-08. The earlier building on the site was then relocated a few metres further along Abbott Street.

This third Cairns Post Office and Telegraph Office, was a substantial single-storey masonry building in a Federation Free-style, with rustication, a large arched window, prominent eaves and a picturesque fleche. The second post office building on Abbott Street, which had a central pedimented porch, was still extant and adjacent to the new building at this time, and was described as the 'Manual Exchange'.

*Figure 33 Cairns' Post Offices, No 2 in timber on the LHS and No 3 on the RHS in brick and render. Source SLQ 1926*



In 1928, a new two storey Telegraph Office was built on the Spence Street portion of the site. The building was designed under the direction of the Commonwealth Chief Architect J.S. Murdoch. The third Post Office was demolished in 1938 and the current building was erected on this site. It was built to the Post Office M6 design, developed by the architect Harold Barker for the Commonwealth Department of Works.

The fourth post office building was last used for postal duties in 1988, when these functions were relocated to the new Grafton Street office. The former Post Office was then substantially altered for retail use, although the façade is still recognisable. The adjacent Cairns Telegraph Office (and Telephone Exchange to its rear) is still extant, but has been internally altered to provide retail and exhibition space and has had a verandah awning attached.

<sup>269</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 7 May 1924, p 4

<sup>270</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 May 1912, p 8

<sup>271</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 143

<sup>272</sup> *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 9 November 1876, p 2





## Bungalow Post Office

A Post Office at Bungalow was completed on behalf of the Post Master General's Department (PMG) in late 1946-47.<sup>273</sup> At this time Bungalow was a small suburb, which was accessible along Hap Wah Road (Mulgrave Road) and Spence Street. It had a parallel railway line and station stop at Bungalow, which was the first stop from Cairns Central.

The Commonwealth did not undertake the design of the post office and files held by the National Archives indicate this was a 'non-official post office'. The brick two-storey structure comprised the post office at ground level and a residence above, in a design similar in detail to that of the Cairns architect S.G. Barnes, although no architect has yet been identified. The short period of building work indicates that the work may have simply been the conversion of an existing building. This post service closed around 1993 and transferred to another site in Bungalow.

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<sup>273</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 4 October 1946, p 4

## 7. BUILDING SETTLEMENTS, TOWNS, AND CITIES IN THE CAIRNS REGION

### 7.1 Planning and forming settlements

#### Development of the Township of Cairns

Described in 1886 as possessing few advantages with no facilities for drainage or variety of elevation,<sup>274</sup> the site of the Cairns settlement had topographical constraints, which limited the formation of streets. The main city streets were aligned in parallel with the sand dunes that formed the site and the main arterial roads to the south and north avoided obstacles and followed established tracks. The topography has also greatly influenced the expansion of the settlement, which is contained between mountains, flood plains and the sea. The available land contained therein has been utilised for urban development or sugar cane.

Originally the business area of Cairns developed adjacent to the wharves, at the end of Abbott Street, while the residential areas spread along Abbott, Lake, Sachs (Grafton) Streets and the Esplanade.<sup>275</sup> Settlements developed in outer areas such as Edgecliffe (Edge Hill), often where there was already some commercial activity.<sup>276</sup>

The business centre moved away from the wharves in about 1900 and substantial buildings were erected in Lake Street. The opening of the coast railway in 1924 resulted in the establishment of businesses between the railway and the wharf area, in upper Abbott, Lake, Spence, Shield and Sachs Streets.<sup>277</sup>

Residential development occurred along the arterial access roads, particularly from the late 1930s to the early 1950s. From the 1950s swamplands were reclaimed and cane farms developed for housing, and as a result development spread to the west of the centre of Cairns. Development also began to take place on the lower slopes of the surrounding mountains. This residential development was coupled with the construction of suburban shopping centres such as Raintrees and Earlville.

#### The Expansion of Cairns

The original township map of Cairns produced in 1877 comprised 40 sections.<sup>278</sup> Further sections were subsequently added to the north and north-west and a small number of sections west of Lily Creek near the railway station.<sup>279</sup> Curiously in Sharkey's set out plans, the original 40 sections were numbered in Roman numerals (I to XL) and subsequent sections in Arabic (common) numerals. The closer settlement sections were generally divided into building allotments of 1 rood (a quarter acre block) with a frontage of 100 links. Agricultural land generally came in irregularly shaped large allotments, often bounded by natural features such as creeks and escarpments, and between these were tracks allowing access to some of the outlying areas.

Hap Wah Road, subsequently known as the Mulgrave Highway, ran to the south reaching the Hap Wah Estate in the present day Earlville shopping centre. Further tracks went to White Rock, Nelson and, with some difficulty, to Babinda. One of the most distinct pathways ran west from North Cairns along the base

<sup>274</sup> *The Picturesque Atlas of Australia*, as quoted in P Watling & M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 10

<sup>275</sup> P Watling & M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 3

<sup>276</sup> P Watling & M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 11

<sup>277</sup> P Watling & M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 11

<sup>278</sup> Plan of sections no. 1 to 30, township of Cairns, 1877, published by Lands Dept Brisbane

<sup>279</sup> Plan of Cairns, Lands Dept, Brisbane, 1907

of Mt Whitfield along what was to become Collins Avenue. This path crossed into the areas around Redlynch at what is known as the Brinsmead Gap. This drew settlement along its route in the lower slopes of the Mt Whitfield Range and this became one of the more prestigious suburbs due its elevation and resultant views over Trinity Bay. This was further aided by the declaration of a scenic reserve along the range area itself in the higher slopes above Collins Avenue.

The first private sub-division and sale of closer settlement land outside the Cairns town boundary was for the Walkerville Estate, in the area of present day Mooroolool. <sup>280</sup> While the sub-division occurred and the sale advertised in July 1884<sup>281</sup>, the suburb did not eventuate due to its distance from Cairns, the lack of viable transport services, and a cleared access roadway.<sup>282</sup> The land was still “virgin forest and patches of scrub” and totally undeveloped in 1890.<sup>283</sup> Mention of the “Walkerville” sub-division started to disappear around 1919 when real estate agents still had a number of parcels of land for disposal “on their books”.

This estate was intended to transform forested land, but it would be more than seventy years before the area became viable as a suburb. Interestingly the Estate sub-division still appeared on a Lands Department Plans in the mid-1960s but this area was eventually over-run by a new sub-divisional layout once drainage of the area started to be addressed by land developers.

A second sale of land occurred in Portsmith, south of the centre of Cairns, in 1889. This was on low-lying reclaimed land, but again this was an unsuccessful venture. The proposed subdivision was in an area where adjacent land reclamation would continue for another seventy years and would eventually be zoned for industrial use.



Figure 34 Walkerville Advertisement for the first private land subdivision in present day Mooroolool. Source SLQ

<sup>280</sup> Published plan of Walkerville held by the State Library of Queensland. 1884, picqlid-2005-08-15-12-37

<sup>281</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 July 1884 p 5 Special one page supplement

<sup>282</sup> Indeed the Council did not feel obligated to ensure a road was made and set aside this proposal until funds were available. *The Cairns Post* 2 July 1885, p 2 reports on the sales and *The Cairns Post* 16 December 1886, p 2 reports on the discussions over the proposed road to Walkerville.

<sup>283</sup> *The Cairns Post* 14 June 1890, p 2

## Cairns Suburbs

*(some information taken from [www.queenslandplaces.com.au](http://www.queenslandplaces.com.au))*

Early twentieth century photographs of Cairns show an orderly, if somewhat sparse, town layout. The most densely populated area developed along Spence Street at Parramatta Park between Bunda and Severin Streets. Here the land was divided into small blocks with 33 foot frontages (10 metres) creating the smallest closer settlement blocks in a suburban area of Cairns. This was highly unusual given the otherwise generous development pattern evident elsewhere in the town. These blocks of land in the Parramatta Park area are unique in Cairns and give the specific area a quality more common in larger cities. Photographs taken from the brewing tower also show that settlement decreased along Spence Street south-west of Severin Street, in part due to the presence of Alligator Creek and the swampy area beyond.

Council maps produced for drainage purposes in 1945, show the Cairns suburbs as spreading in an arc around the main drainage problem areas. The map identified: the Cairns city area (generally land sections 1-50), Cairns North (sections 50 and above), Edge Hill, Parramatta Park, Bungalow, Enmore and West Cairns.

Some of the outer lying areas were subsequently sub-divided in the 1950s with new concepts in town planning applied to the layout of the land blocks. At the far end of Collins Street a small farm holding was sub-divided into approximately 116 allotments with a dumbbell-shaped access street containing a park at each end onto which half the houses would face. Given the geometric layout of the remainder of Cairns, this cul-de sac of houses was an unusual, albeit minor feature, of the Plan of Cairns drawn by the Lands Department in 1965.<sup>284</sup>

Also shown on this plan was the Queensland Housing Commission's Earlville Estate, in an isolated area of Cairns when built. The interesting aspect of the layout of this estate is the central park established as a 'circus' form with a circuit of houses facing onto it. The land was bought in about May 1950<sup>285</sup> for the construction of 200 houses. Water supply issues from the Behana Scheme delayed the completion of work until 1954. The commonality of the house designs, and the layout plan of the estate, makes it a thoughtfully designed, and architecturally cohesive estate of social housing and one which should be recognised in the Planning Scheme. It is also one of the larger, if not the largest, estate in the Cairns regional area. Water supply issues delayed the completion of work into 1954.

Once the post-war drainage system took effect in Cairns, further land was available for settlement. This eventually consumed the area originally sub-divided as the Walkerville Estate. It was not until the 1970s that settlement patterns were sufficiently established to determine that a number of localities had a population sufficient to create a suburb.

The older suburbs of Cairns tend to be located closer to the centre of the city and these were Edge Hill, North Cairns, Parramatta Park and Bungalow. A number of suburbs to the north-west, west and south-west of Cairns have only been formally named since 1970. Descriptions of these suburbs follow.

<sup>284</sup> Parish of Cairns, Cairns Land Agents District Cook, Survey Office, Department of Lands, October 1965

<sup>285</sup> *The Cairns Post* 19 May 1950, p 9



### *North Western Suburbs*

The suburbs of Stratford, Whitfield and Edge Hill lie to the north-west of central Cairns. The Mt Whitfield Range lies between Stratford and Edge Hill and this has become the Mt Whitfield Conservation Park, incorporating Mt Whitfield itself. In 1973 the suburb of Whitfield was formally named, consuming the western part of the existing suburb of Edge Hill. A State primary school was established at Whitfield in 1989 and in 2006 the census population of the suburb was 4219.

Brinsmead, immediately west of Whitfield, was formally named in 1975 after the Brinsmead Gap in the Mount Whitfield Range, which is west of the intersection of Hillview Crescent and Fogarty Street. The Cairns Christian College was established at Brinsmead in 1983 and the census population in 2006 was 5022.

### *Western Suburbs*

Until 1970 the main suburbs west of central Cairns were Parramatta Park, West Cairns and Enmore. West Cairns and part of Parramatta Park subsequently became Manunda, which is separated from the city centre by a few blocks in the intervening suburb of Parramatta Park. Manunda generally developed as a suburb through the 1960s, although an Adventist primary school had already been established there in 1950. The Trinity Bay High School, which opened in 1960, and the adjoining Cairns Technical School (later a TAFE) signified the coming suburbanisation, and a Catholic primary school was opened in 1967. Nearby, the Cairns West primary school opened in 1964 and the Raintrees drive-in shopping centre in 1974. Raintrees also serves as the district centre for the nearby suburbs of Kanimbla and Mooroolool. Large tracts of land were also reserved for sports grounds and industrial uses in Manunda. The census population of Manunda in 2006 was 5067.

The suburb of Enmore included a small number of streets between Reservoir Road and Moodys Creek, located to the west of Manunda. Now almost completely subdivided, the suburbs of Manoora and Mooroolool have replaced Enmore. Manoora was formally named in 1975 after a pre-war coastal trader and an armed merchant cruiser during the war. Manoora has a shopping plaza, a community centre and a census population of 5616 in 2006. The suburb of Mooroolool is located to the south of Manoora. It was named in 1973 after Mooroolool Peak in the Whitfield Range, which is located just west of the suburb. Mooroolool has a primary school which was built in 1954 and a census population of 6618 in 2006.

Westcourt, located east of Mooroolool, was named in 1973 and includes the section of West Cairns between Gatton Street and the Bruce Highway. It contains the Westcourt Plaza shopping centre, two retirement villages and a census population of 3178 in 2006.

Kanimbla, located west of Manoora, was named in 1989 by excision from Manoora and Mooroolool. It was named after a coastal passenger vessel, wartime landing ship in the South West Pacific and a post-war tour ship in north Queensland. Kanimbla had a census population of 1909 in 2006.

### *South-Western Suburbs*

In 1970 the built-up suburban area of Cairns ended at Woree, on the Bruce Highway, north of Gordon Creek. Bay View Heights, immediately west of Woree, was named in 1970. Urban development later spread south towards the country town of White Rock. In 2001 the suburb of Mount Sheridan was formally named, lying south of Bayview Heights and west of White Rock. It was named after the peak in the southern Whitfield Range named by George Dalrymple in 1873 after Brinsley Sheridan, the Police Magistrate in Cardwell. The peak includes the headwaters of Gordon Creek, and is 4 kilometres west of Woree. Bayview Heights had a census population of 4090 in 2006. Mount Sheridan has a drive-in



shopping centre on the Bruce Highway, diagonally opposite White Rock primary school, and had a census population of 7235 in 2006.

Bungalow is a residential suburb two kilometres south of central Cairns, separated from the city centre by Parramatta Park. It extends south-west from the showground in Parramatta Park to Chinaman Creek, Woree. Until 1973 Bungalow also extended south-east to the Smiths Creek and Trinity Inlet wharves. In that year the wharf-side industrial suburb of Portsmouth was excised from Bungalow and Hartley Street provides their dividing boundary.

Bungalow was named after a plantation established by Archdeacon Joseph Campbell, c1907, chiefly for experimental cotton growing. It was near the Cairns-Mulgrave tramway (1897), which was acquired by Queensland Railways in 1911. The line ran along the north-west side of Spence Street, and the Bungalow station and post office was a block south of the former post office at the corner of Scott and Aumuller Streets. Further south-west towards Smiths Creek were mudflats, gradually built up by landfill and dredged material from the harbour, a process begun in the 1910s. Smith's Landing was at the mouth of Smiths Creek, and wharves lined the west side of the creek. The Cairns Pineapple Cannery, which was also located here, was demolished in 1985. The vacant land between there and Chinaman Creek was used for a rifle range.

Located to the south of Bungalow, Portsmouth was named in 1973 after William (Bill) Smith, pioneer and promoter of a track from Cairns to the Tablelands. As landfill reclamation work was completed, various industries replaced the rifle range. The railway was also re-aligned south-west from Spence Street to near the alternative route for the Bruce Highway which was moved from Mulgrave Road. Enlargement of the Smiths Creek wharf facilities began with a bulk sugar terminal in 1964, storage sheds, and a loading wharf in Trinity Inlet just beyond the mouth of the creek. Wharves for the seafood industries, freezer facilities and the Water Police are located along the creek, and a shipyard and ship repair businesses are located between the Sugar Terminal and the old cannery site.

Bungalow's and Portsmouth's census populations in 2006 were 2147 and 167 respectively.

The suburb of Parramatta Park is an inner residential suburb of Cairns, located immediately west of the city centre. Ten years after Cairns was founded, a Sydney land auctioneer, John Macnamara, promoted the sale of several estates, mostly prefixed by names from Sydney or other colonial capitals. Parramatta Estate was sold in 1886 and subdivided into broad-acre allotments.

The land at Parramatta Park is largely low-lying or contains watercourses and these swampy conditions slowed the early growth in the area. Lily Creek carries stormwater from Cairns North and a canal drains in a similar direction, passing beside the Parramatta Park reserve.<sup>286</sup> The Cairns Show Society established their annual event at Parramatta Park in the early 1900s, and the venue became the gathering place for the annual May Day trades and labour procession that wended its way from Wharf Street on Trinity Inlet, around the city centre into Mulgrave Road, and finishing at the park.

St Joseph's Primary School was established on the block to the east of the park itself in 1927 and the Marist Brothers' St Augustine's College was added to the site in 1930. Parramatta State primary school (1927) was opened just north of the park. The suburb typically contains houses built in the Queenslander and bungalow-type style.

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<sup>286</sup> From Florence Street to the Inlet, Lily Creek is contained in a closed drain.



By the late 1980s the popularity of the suburb Parramatta Park had decreased, but the trend to inner-city living has encouraged development in more recent years. A 400-unit apartment complex built in 2005 in Mulgrave Road opposite the showground exemplifies this. House prices increased by 40% in 2003-04, despite, dengue fever having been detected in the area the previous year. The census population of Parramatta Park in 2006 was 2905.

### Outer Suburban Areas

(Population statistics are not given for these areas)

#### *White Rock*

White Rock is a residential suburb 10 kilometres to the south of the city centre of Cairns. It is located on the Bruce Highway and the North Coast railway line, and is immediately north of Edmonton. It was named after White Rock Peak in the Freshwater Creek State Forest, 2.5 kilometres to the west of the Bruce Highway.

Several watercourses run down from White Rock Peak, ending in wetlands to the east of the suburb. The highway and the railway follow the high ground at the west of White Rock.

In the late 1960s White Rock was a scattered development along the east side of the railway line, and by the mid-1970s a small estate had developed in the north, next to the Cairns golf club and the White Rock caravan park. The estate filled up in the early 1980s, and new subdivisions occurred to the south, along the railway line. A campus of the Trinity Anglican School opened at White Rock in 1983, and a State primary school opened in 1988.

#### *Old Smithfield*

In the late 1870s a former Cooktown publican, Bill Smith, set up business on the banks of the Barron River, north of Cairns. A number of traders, packers, carriers and prospectors left Cairns to join him and the settlement became known as Smithville then Smithfield. The climate of the riverside township may have been more attractive than Cairns during the wet season. While Smithfield rivalled Cairns in date of settlement, the Government sponsored settlement of Cairns was destined to develop far more extensively than Smithfield. Interestingly the settlement was surveyed concurrently with the Cairns township settlement, as the Government obviously hoped that the establishment of an outlying suburb would eventuate.

When Cairns was surveyed it contained 40 Sections of land each with 20 house allotments, resulting in a potential of 800 households. Smithfield had a mere 2 sections allowing a maximum of 40 house allotments. Cairns also had a broad water portage, while Smithfield was located upstream on a narrow river. At the end of 1877 Smith committed suicide and this, together with cyclones and flooding, led to the abandonment of Smithfield.

Government survey plans of Smithfield, dated 1876 -1877,<sup>287</sup> show the township to be headed by Hill Street, with Smithfield Esplanade on the river and Macdonald, Seymour and Logan Streets as intermediate streets. The township reserves were finally cancelled in 1941;<sup>288</sup> years after the site had been well and truly abandoned.

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<sup>287</sup> Map Museum Brisbane by Surveyor Warner, held by DERM

<sup>288</sup> Government Gazette, 1941.2.998

Each settlement block was 36 perch (being 100 links by 225 links) and one or two were originally withheld from sale, presumably to be made into reserves. The failure of the township didn't appear to mean the end of closer settlement of the area as the land was re-amalgamated and resold after some land had been surrendered to the Crown.<sup>289</sup> Even today the Smithfield streets appear ghosted onto unofficial maps.<sup>290</sup> Interestingly Smith never owned any land in his eponymously named township.

## The Establishment of Townships

### Cairns

*Pugh's Almanac* of 1887 reported that:

*Cairns is a municipal town on Trinity Bay at the mouth of the Trinity Inlet. It possesses the finest harbour in Queensland and vessels of any tonnage could discharge alongside the wharves if the bar were cut through. It is the nearest port for the Herberton tin fields and also for the Mulgrave goldfield and is surrounded by miles of the finest sugar lands, which include Messers. Swallow and Derham's, Loridan's (Pyramid Mill), Mount Buchan, Hop Wah and Co.'s and other plantations. It is also the port for the enormous cedar forests. It has frequent and regular communication with the south, having to steamers calling every week from north and south, besides other vessels.*<sup>291</sup>

From these beginnings, Cairns developed into a thriving city with a series of surrounding suburbs, outer suburbs and substantial towns. The following population data illustrates the substantial growth of the city from its establishment:

Date	Official Census Population <sup>292</sup>	Pugh's Almanac
1881	278	
1887		2250
1896		2460
1901	3557	2460
1909		5000 estimated
1911	5193	
1916		11189
1921		11189
1926		11500
1933	11,993	
1947	16,444	
1961	25,204	
1971	32,747	
1981	48,557	

<sup>289</sup> often for failure to pay rates and taxes or simply a failure to occupy

<sup>290</sup> For example: maps at [www.google.com.au](http://www.google.com.au)

<sup>291</sup> *Pugh's Almanac* 1887, p 56

<sup>292</sup> Statistics from Queensland Dept of Treasury Website: [www.oesr.qld.gov.au/products/tables/historical-tables-demography/index.php](http://www.oesr.qld.gov.au/products/tables/historical-tables-demography/index.php)

Comparison becomes more difficult in subsequent censuses as the northern beaches were included in the total number of 108,933 in 1996 (also included tourists and visitors) or 133,199 (for the whole municipality including the former Mulgrave Shire and including tourists and visitors). In 2006, after deducting an estimate for tourists and visitors, the municipality's population was estimated as 127,438.

### *Babinda*

The small township of Babinda is located 60 kilometres south of Cairns at the southern extreme of the study area. It was established once the tramway reached the area in 1910. The settlement originally developed on the east side of the tramway on a road that became the Bruce Highway. Subsequent expansion occurred to the west of the railway line. A Government Road, established perpendicular to the station, became Munro Street, the main street in the town.

A few buildings were constructed along the Government Road without much aforethought to an overall town plan, unlike Gordonvale which is located on the same road but closer to Cairns. These buildings included a police station (from 1915), post office (1916-17), ambulance station (1918) and court house (1924). Other buildings, such as the National Bank of Queensland (sometime c1915-1921) and the Babinda State Hotel (c1917) opposite, were constructed in the middle of the Munro Street block. The latter provided a new standard of accommodation for the town and reflected the increase in tourism in the region. This hotel also contained a sample room for travelling salesmen to set up displays of their goods and take orders for items to be subsequently sent by rail or steamer.

A number of cyclones caused devastation at Babinda, particularly one in 1918, which completely destroyed sections of the town. Fires often followed these cyclones; however the passing of building by-laws in c1924-25, which required fireproof construction, reduced this risk. Babinda was without a fire brigade for many years.

The Queensland government was determined that the township did not fail and for this reason enacted the *Babinda Township Act* in 1930. This vested much of the land in the Treasury of Queensland and gave it a monopoly, allowing it to set prices on land and encourage more permanent settlement amongst an otherwise itinerant population. The *Sugar Workers Housing Act* replaced the *Babinda Act* in 1951 which gave the same effect to land purchase. Low-income workers were offered a favourable arrangement, which were a compromise between renting and a low cost mortgage. This arrangement also applied in Gordonvale.

The following population data illustrates the fluctuating population of the town from its establishment to the present, peaking in the 1930s:

Date	Official Census Population	Pugh's Almanac
1911	195	
1916		800
1921	980	700
1933	1818	
1966	1553	
1981	1389	

2001	1175
2006	1167

### *Gordonvale*

The township of Gordonvale (initially in an area known as Mulgrave then Nelson) is located on the Mulgrave River about 23 kilometres south of Cairns. Once a separate town, it has become part of the suburban extremities of Cairns.

Gordonvale was originally a sugar-growing locality known as the Pyramid, and a mill was established in 1886, on the river. This attracted some settlement along the road from Cairns, centred on the present day Swan Street. This street was incorporated, at the southern extremity, in a new town layout published by the Lands Department in c1897.<sup>293</sup> This town was named Nelson and was based around a five-acre municipal reserve later to become Norman Park. The civic buildings of the town were placed around this parkland with reserves for police, post and telegraph and ambulance all on Cannon Street on the south side of the park.

*Pugh's Almanac* of 1910 reported that:

*The Mulgrave Central Mill is the chief support of the town and employs during the season between 400 and 500 hands. The land throughout the entire district is of a very rich and fertile nature.*<sup>294</sup>

Operating since c1896, the cooperative Mulgrave Central sugar mill replaced the earlier Pyramid mill which collapsed in 1890. It is located near the town centre east of Mill Street and presently services about 300 sugarcane farms in the local region.

As at Babinda, the various *Workers Accommodation Acts* and loans through the State Advances Corporation (after December 1920), influenced the development of the town by providing financing arrangements for the construction of houses on terms which assisted low income workers to own property.

The importance of the sugar growing industry to the development and continuing growth of the town is reflected in the following population data:

Date	Official Census Population *	Pugh's Almanac
1901	193 (as Nelson)	
1910		Estimated 400
1911	506 (as Nelson)	
1916		Estimated 1000
1921	1243	Estimated 600
1926		Estimated 800
1933	2066	

<sup>293</sup> Identified on a Railway Reserve file held by DERM. (since removed for conservation by DERM Map Museum)

<sup>294</sup> *Pugh's Almanac* 1910, p 792





1981	2375
1991	2658
2001	3582
2006	4420

### *Edmonton*

Edmonton lies further north than Gordonvale, on the Bruce Highway and is about 10 kilometres from Cairns. It is situated on a wet coastal plain into which Trinity Inlet intrudes. Originating as an independent township supporting a sugar mill, it has more recently become an outer suburb of Cairns as urban growth of Cairns has increased and housing estates have been established.

In 1880 the Melbourne biscuit manufacturer, Thomas Swallow, identified the area as a suitable place to produce sugar. Swallow and Ariell were also flour millers and sugar refiners, and in 1882 Swallow established the Hambledon plantation west of the present day township of Edmonton. The following year a mill was opened which was subsequently purchased by CSR in 1897.

By 1897 the Cairns Divisional Board had built a tramway south to Gordonvale, and a CSR line joined the tramway at Hambledon Junction. Confusion between Hambledon Mill and the Hambledon Junction railway station led to a name change for the station to Edmonton. This change was officially made in 1914 after the Progress Association decided on the name change. The station building itself was placed here in 1922 after removal from Selwyn. The station closed in 1986 and fell into disrepair and then the whole platform area was removed by subsequent widening of the Bruce Highway.

The Hambledon Mill's output was similar to that of the central mills at Gordonvale and Babinda, but during the 1970s-80s urban growth increasingly encroached on the mill that was subsequently closed and demolished in 1991.

A State primary school was constructed in Edmonton in 1887 and another in 1998, a Catholic school in 1929 and several linear parks have been established along the suburb's waterways. In c 2000 the section of Edmonton north of Blackfellows Creek was detached as a new suburb, Bentley Park.

Edmonton has had significant growth since the late 1970s.

Date	Official Census Population
1921	262
1933	705
1954	1476
1976	1636
1986	2643
1991	3262
2006	8035

### *Redlynch*

The town of Redlynch is located 10 kilometres north-west of Cairns in the Freshwater Creek Valley. A station was located at Redlynch when the line was constructed to Kuranda in 1887 and a small township

grew around this. The surrounding land is fertile and has been utilised for growing sugar and other tropical horticulture.

A school was opened for the farm community in 1932, and the township around the station had a storekeeper, a butcher, a baker and a greengrocer in 1949.<sup>295</sup> During the period 1943-44 Redlynch had a military staging camp for forces stationed on the Atherton Tableland, and a spur line was built from the Redlynch station to the camp.

The following population data illustrates the continual growth of the town, particularly in the later twentieth century.

Date	Official Census Population
1933	308
1954	461
1966	478
2004	4200
2006	6069

### *Freshwater*

Freshwater is located 8 kilometres north-west of Cairns and, like Redlynch, has a station on the Kuranda railway. Residential development occurred along the south side of the railway line on land rising to the Whitfield Range. It developed as a rural town supporting market gardeners who were producing various tropical crops and sugar cane growers. A primary school was constructed for the farming community in 1896.

In 1949 the town of Freshwater typically contained two stores, a hotel and a butcher.<sup>296</sup> Post-war urban development occurred in the area around the railway station, and by the 1960s Freshwater, and Stratford to the east, began to merge into one. Twenty years later they had essentially become one urban area, separated from central Cairns by the Mt Whitfield Scenic Range.

The following population data indicates significant growth in the latter part of the twentieth century, similar to that in nearby Redlynch.

Date	Official Census Population
1911	108
1933	278
1947	530
1961	720

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<sup>295</sup>Post Office Directory 1949

<sup>296</sup> Post Office Directory 1949

### *Stratford*

Stratford is situated on the Barron River 7 kilometres north-west of central Cairns, and east of Freshwater. The suburb abuts the Mt Whitfield range, now the Mt Whitfield Conservation Park.

After the discovery of gold in the Cairns region in 1876, a road was formed through the scrub around the base of Mt Whitfield. The Barron River then developed as an important trade route as it enabled the transportation of both produce and timber to the port of Cairns. Timber cutters harvested the tropical timbers and a timber mill was constructed on the river bank at Stratford in 1885.<sup>297</sup> In addition to being situated on the river, Stratford's location on the Cairns-Redlynch-Kuranda railway line, constructed in 1887, enabled the transport of saw logs from the Macalister and Lamb Ranges west of Cairns. Stratford subsequently developed into a timber town and the timber industry supported the town for many years, with a timber mill operating until 1975.<sup>298</sup>

The railway also encouraged further residential and agricultural growth and the introduction of a ferry service in 1890 on the Barron at Stratford, created a crossing point in the town. A bridge spanned the river at Stratford in 1921, with a second constructed in 1933 when the new highway was constructed through the town.<sup>299</sup> In 1949 the town of Stratford contained two stores, a picture theatre, a butcher, a post office and a hotel.<sup>300</sup> Schooling was provided in the neighbouring town of Freshwater.

From the 1960s the definition between Stratford and the adjoining town of Freshwater has become less apparent. As the following population data indicates Stratford has experienced gradual growth since its establishment. Unlike Redlynch and Freshwater it has not seen significant growth since the latter part of the twentieth century.

Date	Official Census Population
1921	21
1933	347
1954	671
1961	936
2001	1178

## 7.2 Developing Urban Services and Amenities

### Water Supply

The first collection of potable water would have occurred in the riveted iron water tanks made for shipping which could be purchased and delivered as stand-alone items capable of containing approximately one

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<sup>297</sup> [www.stratfordhistory.org.au](http://www.stratfordhistory.org.au)

<sup>298</sup> [www.stratfordhistory.org.au](http://www.stratfordhistory.org.au)

<sup>299</sup> [www.stratfordhistory.org.au](http://www.stratfordhistory.org.au)

<sup>300</sup> Post Office Directory 1949

cubic metre of water. This practice occurred elsewhere in frontier Australian settlements and these water tanks can still be found at early pastoral properties. They were eventually replaced by the more easily constructed circular corrugated steel tanks which could be built to almost any dimension.

A fresh water supply however is essential to any community and by the early 1890s it was realised that the town of Cairns could no longer depend on collected and underground water for domestic or commercial purposes.<sup>301</sup> The council requested that the government engineer investigate possible water supply to Cairns and he reported on a number of proposals. Although not acted upon for a number of years, a scheme to draw a water supply from Freshwater Creek in the hills north west of Cairns was eventually adopted. The supply here could be taken directly from the creek and a pipeline to the city delivered water. This initial work was completed in 1911.<sup>302</sup> This water was fed from the range area behind and to the south where a weir and intakes were established. This system was later to be formalised as Lake Morris, with a 45,000 mega-litre capacity and an intake at the weir face known as the Copperlode Dam which opened in 1976.



*Figure 35 Crystal Cascades at the head of Freshwater Creek with tourists c1935. Source QSA*

Water requirements continued to grow and in 1925 the first scheme was duplicated with a second pipeline laid beside the first and a second reservoir built. Water supply was subsequently doubled. Further extensions to this scheme were completed in 1936, but continuing demand from the expanding Cairns region necessitated another scheme, the Behana Gorge scheme, south of Aloomba. This was investigated from late in 1937.<sup>303</sup>

From 1934 a number of Water Boards were established at Mirriwinni, Babinda, Gordonvale and Redlynch. These were set up by the Cairns Shire Council, and then became water authorities in their own right under the *Water Authorities Act* of 1891. The Boards' purpose was to investigate, then facilitate, the construction of water supply and drainage schemes to each of these towns. Once the schemes were implemented, with water rates set and premises connected, the various Boards were discontinued and the schemes handed back to council to operate. The most noticeable evidence of the Boards work is the Gordonvale water tower of 1934.

<sup>301</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 87, 1966

<sup>302</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 87, 1966

<sup>303</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 11 January 1938, p 3

The purpose of the Behana Gorge scheme was to augment the existing supplies to Cairns, Redlynch, Freshwater and Stratford from the Freshwater Creek area, provide a gravitational scheme for Gordonvale which was already implementing a water scheme, and provide a new scheme for water supplies to Edmonton, White Rock and localities from Aloomba to Cairns. Water from this source reached Cairns in 1954 and the scheme was completed in 1957.<sup>304</sup> The 1937-38 investigation suggested a cost of £146,000 for the works but the final cost, in 1954, was in the order of £660,000. These costs were to be shared between Cairns City Council (two-thirds) and the Shire Council (one-third).

Water is now taken from Lake Morris and directed to a filtration plant at Tunnel Hill just above Slate Close, Brinsmead where it is stored after processing before being distributed to the northern beaches and the reservoirs at Whites Gap, through which passes the Western Arterial Road. A large number of concrete reservoirs are to be found on hillsides around Cairns. The earliest, built c1909 at Whites Gap (on Reservoir Road) for the 1911 supply, no longer exists although there are now two concrete reservoirs in this location built as part of the Behana Gorge Scheme.

### Drainage and Sanitation

The town site of Cairns is characteristically flat and waterlogged and this resulted in drainage problems for the settlement. This in turn encouraged the breeding of waterborne insects, particularly the mosquito, which resulted in the prevalence of such diseases as malaria.

In 1886, surveyor Thomas Behan began to align street levels to improve drainage.<sup>305</sup> This work continued in an effort to deter water retention and street channelling was designed to utilise natural drainage lines to the sea.

A large system of drains was established toward the end of World War Two in an effort to drain low lying areas of Cairns, most of which lay to the west of Lily Creek. The Fearnley Street drain is the most eastern part of this system. This drain was one of a number of anti-malarial drains to be constructed in Cairns. Drawings were created in June 1945 that showed a series of parallel drains cut through the swampy areas in what were to become the southern suburbs starting at Fearnley Street. These drawings indicate that the system was not simply a matter of expediency but a comprehensive system that was developed by the Cairns City Council as part of a broader scheme of land drainage.

While some drains were concrete (primarily the extension of Chinaman's Creek), most were and still are simple earth trenches, which broaden and deepen from the north-west to the south-east. Some drains have been covered over and the land used as a median reserve (such as half of the Spence Street Drain) or filled entirely (the swamp below the Cairns Showground), but mostly they remain visible reminders of Cairns low-lying land formation when its expansion was limited by the swampy nature of the land.

Many US troops, stationed in Cairns during World War Two, provided manpower for digging a series of shallow trenches mostly in a north west to south east direction toward Trinity Inlet. Although some of the trenches were very shallow and narrow in the upper regions (for example the Fearnley Street trench was 4 feet wide and just 2 feet deep at Gatton Street) they helped in the quest to drain torrential rainwater, which was particularly problematic during the summer months.

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<sup>304</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 87, 1966

<sup>305</sup> P Watling and M Walker, 'Cairns – The Townscape of a Tropical City', p 3



Graeme Haussmann's map of swamps in the Cairns area (undated, but possibly mid to late 1950s)<sup>306</sup> shows that in between Spence Street and Trinity Inlet there were large tracts of brackish saltwater, and between Spence Street and the lower slopes of the Mt Whiffield Range, there were strings of freshwater swamp created by the undulations of the sand dunes. These dunes were eventually flattened out as development commenced, but it was the council's task to drain these areas by a strategic plan involving a series of parallel drains totalling in all some 26 miles (42 kilometres). The City Engineer Mr F. P. Morris was responsible for the design of this system. A series of technical / topographical plans with the drainage alignments, were completed in 1945.<sup>307</sup> A subsequent report was completed in 1952 and some remedial works were implemented from this time until November 1972 when a report by Gutteridge, Haskins & Davey Engineers was completed.

The Fearnley Street drain ran from about Gatton Street to an area of swampland (since reclaimed) on the seaward side of the Showgrounds. This swamp, a basin of water which backed up Alligator Creek, meandered through the landscape just below the sweep in the rail line as it left the city and wound its way southward.

Eventually, in a large reclamation action during the 1960s, the Cairns City Council filled in this land and the Fearnley Street drain was directed in a straight line toward Trinity Inlet. Here it widened to approximately 10 feet, with a depth of 8 feet at Cook Street. These depths were reassessed in the 1972 report and it was concluded that the drain should be substantially widened to 35 feet (10.7 metres) at Cook Street before it entered the inlet.

Similarly drains which had been cut for many of the other streets, needed to be substantially widened. For example the Dillon Street drain was increased in width from 25 to 87 feet where it passed under Mulgrave Road.

This drainage program ran in parallel with land reclamation. The latter was conducted by the council over a long period using silts scooped up by the steam dredger the *Trinity Bay* which for many years cleared the shipping channel as ship sizes and draughts increased. The silts were used to fill a large area along Trinity Inlet and the land was subsequently used for various industrial and recreational purposes.

## Land Reclamation

The earliest reclamation was carried out by the Council in conjunction with the Railways which carried crushed rock into the streets of Cairns on temporary rail lines after 1890.<sup>308</sup> The Council had received £20,000 loan funds for the work and had determined to fill in holes and low areas in a number of the town's streets. After 1910 they once again carried out filling-in work on the expanding township using their own system of tracks and an established stone crushing plant on McLeod Street.

The longer term reclamation work came about through the dredging of the harbour. Although Trinity Bay was initially thought to be deep, the passage of large vessels required constant dredging to keep a serviceable channel open. Spoil dredged from the Inlet to accommodate shipping was at first dumped several miles out to sea.<sup>309</sup> With the establishment of the Harbour Board in 1906,<sup>310</sup> this was recognized as

<sup>306</sup> An original framed water-coloured copy of this plan is held by the Cairns Regional Council. Haussmann began work as the Deputy City Engineer in 1955

<sup>307</sup> Plan of drainage QSA item 205151

<sup>308</sup> See previous Section 6 on government railways

<sup>309</sup> Identified in the 1885 parliamentary briefing paper prepared by William Nisbet engineer to Dept Harbours and Marine

<sup>310</sup> *Morning Post*, 8 March 1906, p 2

an ineffective use of time and resources. The arrival of the dredger *Trinity Bay*, resulted in large amounts of spoil being removed and landed along the foreshore where it was used to fill the area around the end of Lake, Grafton and Sheridan Streets and the rear of the new concrete wharves (Wharf Street). It was then gradually landed along the inlet where fill was used to reclaim the swamp end of Alligator Creek and eventually down to the mouth of Chinaman Creek. Some fill work was still being undertaken in the 1970s enabling new wharves to be built further down the inlet and the *Trinity Bay* dredger was used until 1973 when it was decommissioned.<sup>311</sup> As early as 1925 the sludge was pumped from the wharf area via steel pipes to the fill sites.

The Government rail line was moved from Spence Street (where it had originally been the Cairns Mulgrave tramway) onto reclaimed land along the northside of the inlet and new rail yards were then established northeast of Chinaman Creek near a new container facility. A new by-pass road, Ray Jones Drive, was also established. Photographs show the remaking of the reclaimed areas (noted as East Cairns although really south) during the 1950-60s and this land was essentially to be developed as an industrial zone.

Reclamation of the land in Trinity Bay was also considered by the Harbour Board, as indicated on the cover of their annual reports for the period 1920-1930. This illustration showed ovals and recreational land established on fill in the crescent shore of the bay. This may have been a response to the difficulty created by the undrained swamplands below Severin Street. Ultimately some fill was used in the bay area to extend the mouth of the Inlet. Parkland was also created, however it was only a small portion of the scheme that originally been proposed.

Drainage of the lands below the rail-lines commenced in mid-1945, using a detailed set of plans by the Cairns Council.<sup>312</sup>

These plans showed a number of drains, running parallel with the rail-line along McLeod Street, toward the Inlet from land in the north-west. These drains allowed the reclamation of lands in the area from Severin Street to Earlville. Another drain to the north of Cairns allowed the reclamation of land near the present day Tobruk Pool east of Sheridan Street.

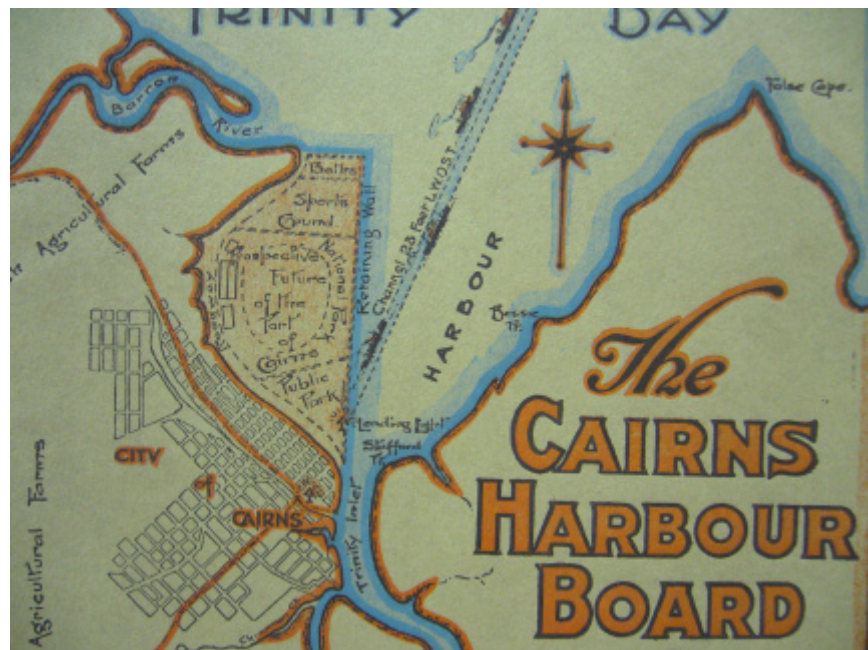


Figure 36 Land reclamation scheme filling Trinity Bay with sports ovals as shown on the standard CHB annual report cover for the period 1920-1930. Source: QSA

<sup>311</sup> ERM, 'Cairns Heritage Study, p 32

<sup>312</sup> State Archives of Queensland "Malarial Control Drainage Scheme" ID 205160

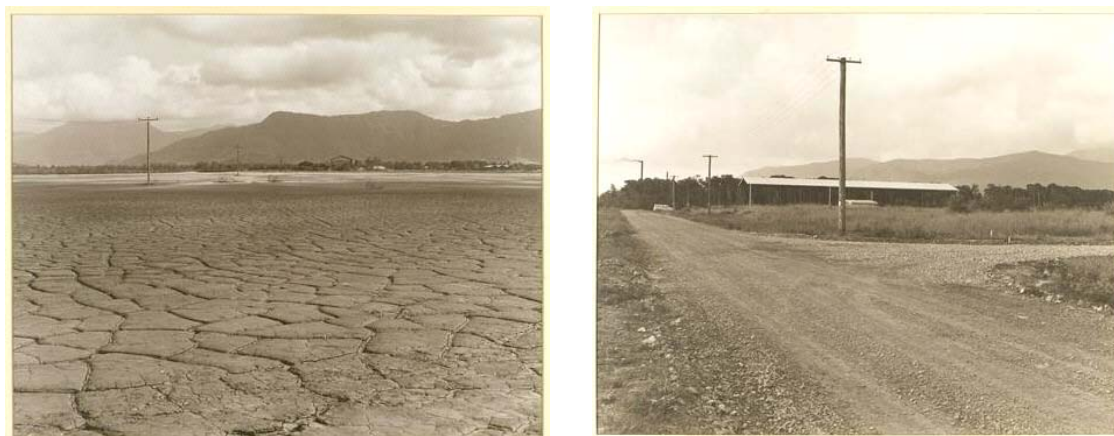


Figure 37 Land reclamation using dredge tailings in “East Cairns” c1965, locations unknown. Source SLQ



Figure 38 Land between the railway and Edge Hill prior to reclamation and development into parkland south of Collins Avenue. Source QSA

## McLeod Street Electricity Depot

Twelve kerosene street lamps were installed in Abbott and Lake Streets, Cairns in 1887, but gas started to supersede kerosene after March 1899<sup>313</sup>, following the establishment of the Cairns Gas Company and this was superseded by electricity from 1925. The Council began investigating an electricity supply in 1923 and a site in McLeod Street was determined as the most suitable for an electric power plant after various other areas had been investigated including a site near the wharves.<sup>314</sup>

An oil-fired plant was initially recommended by the consulting engineers Christie and Gardiner of Melbourne<sup>315</sup> as gas engines were considered to be unreliable and coal fired engines were considered to be less economical than oil.<sup>316</sup> However the State Government wanted the power station to run on coal in order to support Queensland’s coal industry using Bowen basin and Mt Mulligan mines. Despite objection by the Cairns Council the station was eventually forced to use coal.<sup>317</sup> This immediately proved uneconomical and the handling and disposal of waste was an additional concern.

<sup>313</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 March 1899, p 7 & *Morning Post*, 24 August 1899 p 4 (the latter discusses the exchange of contracts with the gas company to supply street lighting). Even so electricity was also discussed as a street lighting source in 1899.

<sup>314</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 17 March 1923, p 5

<sup>315</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 17 January 1923, p 5 gives background to the controversy around the appointment of the engineers by the Council.

<sup>316</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 9 August 1923, p 5

<sup>317</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 9 August 1923, p 5

The power was initially generated to supply the Cairns central district only, not the outlying townships. The station had three steam engines with three sets of generators, two boilers with mechanical stokers and required a minimum amount of labour.<sup>318</sup>

By October 1925 there were 580 customers connected to the power supply and another hundred were waiting to be connected.<sup>319</sup> It was hoped that by the end of the first year of operation there would be in excess of 700 customers connected and in anticipation of the introduction of electricity under 'The Cairns Electricity Scheme', the Council had issued a booklet on the electrical connection by-laws.<sup>320</sup> Similar to those in place today, these by-laws specified that meters be owned by the authority, no tampering of the supply service was to take place and connections were only to be made by qualified electricians. The Council also had the foresight to set up schemes whereby customers could be connected in groups at a lower tariff.

The Mayor's wife Mrs A J Draper switched on the electricity supply to Cairns on 14 January 1925<sup>321</sup> without the fanfare that was to greet the arrival of the hydro-electric scheme ten years later. Once the hydroelectric scheme was constructed, the use of the McLeod Street station declined and it became a stand-by emergency station for some years until the steam equipment was sold to the brewery.

From February 1933 Gordonvale received electricity from the city steam plant pending the completion of the hydro-electric scheme. A substation at the Mulgrave Mill enabled this to occur.<sup>322</sup>

The power station occupied a much larger area than that originally proposed in the west portion of the reserved site. Reserve R631 was designated as the powerhouse reserve in 1924 and this required the removal of existing Health Department buildings.<sup>323</sup> Reserve R361 to the east remained a municipal reserve. The latter was used increasingly as a municipal depot and animal pound (after the tramway facility was removed) until it finally ceded to the Cairns Regional Electricity Board in 1947 for "electricity purposes".<sup>324</sup>

### Hydro-electric Scheme

In 1932-35 the *Barron Falls Hydro Electric Board Power Station* was built, and a second powerhouse was constructed downstream in 1963. The original site of the hydroelectric power station was below the township of Kuranda that is situated on the Barron River, upstream of a series of waterfalls and located 20 kilometres north-west of Cairns. This township of Kuranda was surveyed in 1888 and three years later a railway line, ultimately destined for the Herberton tin mines, surmounted the range and reached the town.

A proposal to construct a hydro-electric power station at Barron Falls was first suggested in 1897, specifically to power ore reduction works to treat copper and other ores from the Chillagoe Copper Mines.<sup>325</sup> There was considerable opposition to this proposal and it was abandoned in 1900, when a

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<sup>318</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 4 December 1923, p 7

<sup>319</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 28 October 1925, p 5

<sup>320</sup> Electric Authority By-Laws of the City of Cairns, Cairns 1924

<sup>321</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 15 January 1925, p 4

<sup>322</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>323</sup> Reserve File R631, held by DERM

<sup>324</sup> Reserve File R361, held by DERM

<sup>325</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9



change of Government made its success unlikely. This episode was most likely a catalyst for the declaration of the Barron Falls area as a National Park in September 1900.<sup>326</sup>

The potential of the Barron Falls area continued to be discussed. Kilburn Scott discussed it at length at Sydney's Royal Society Engineering Lecture in 1908.<sup>327</sup> In 1912 *The Cairns Post* reported that the Queensland government had dismissed further schemes to generate power from Barron Falls.<sup>328</sup> Some discussions occurred thereafter and after World War One it became a frequent point of discussion, with opinion pieces appearing throughout the following decade. Eventually the question became a clamour with various lobbyists and supporters promoting the scheme. The government was compelled to undertake preliminary investigations and these were followed by expert opinion and four substantive reports on the issue. In 1923 the Cairns Hydro Electric Power Investigation Board was formed<sup>329</sup>, comprising Councillors from Cairns City, Cairns Shire, Woothakata, Tinaroo and Eacham shires.<sup>330</sup>

In 1927 P.A.W. Anthony was appointed as Engineer Manager and then as Engineer to the Investigation Board. The scheme was costed at £328,000 and the Queensland government thought this excessive. By 1928 the Government was urged by the Premier, the Cairns Mayor and the Chairman of Council to reconsider the matter, as the existing coal fired power plant in McLeod Street was inadequate and required expanding. In considering the cost benefit of the scheme it was noted that Mt Mulligan and Bowen Coal was used for the McLeod Street electric plant and that the cost of this could be more than offset by the proposed hydro scheme. Once a favourable decision had been made, Commonwealth and Tasmanian hydroelectric engineers were engaged to investigate the practicality of the scheme. This was re-costed at £100,000 if the plant was constructed on the coastal side of the gorge.<sup>331</sup>

In May 1930 the Barron Falls Hydro Electric Board was formed comprising Cairns City and Cairns Shire councillors, with Mr W A Collins as chairman. The Commonwealth Bank of Australia was convinced to advance a £100,000 loan on the Queensland Government Treasurer's guarantee, and arrangements for these loan funds were completed by 1931. Advancing the scheme was delayed due to the depression, but tenders were finally accepted in 1932. A Tasmanian Government hydroelectric engineer, Mr Flockhart, undertook construction of the scheme and was the consulting engineer to the BFHEB until mid-1935.<sup>332</sup>

Construction commenced on 20 August 1932 with appointed tenderers: Bradshaws Ltd for the headworks, the tunnels and the power station excavations and construction, Siemens Ltd & Australian General Electric Co Pty Ltd for machinery, batteries and switchboards, Walkers Ltd for pipes in the tunnel, and Overhead Constructions Ltd for transmission lines.

The scheme consisted of No 1 dam, closest to Kuranda and comprising three weirs; No 2 dam, with a 100 yard diversion tunnel to the Street Creek cutting and pipe lines a quarter mile long to the power station, and the power station itself, with two 2,000hp turbines which produced a three phase alternating current of 6,600 volts when the turbines ran at 1,000rpm.

Initially the power station was to be constructed outdoor on a ledge above the gorge, but due to the occurrence of dramatic landslips, it was decided that it be hewn out of the cliff in a chamber 84 feet long,

<sup>326</sup> *Morning Post*, 25 September 1900, p 2

<sup>327</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 September 1908, p 10

<sup>328</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 12 August 1912, p 4

<sup>329</sup> Pursuant to the 1922 Act of the same name

<sup>330</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>331</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>332</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9



27 feet wide and 26 feet high with an arched waterproof roof. An inspection area was located below the ground and a 15 feet outfall pit carried water from the turbines. Relocating the power station into this underground building and diverting the water added £50,000 to the scheme.<sup>333</sup>

In January 1934 the Board took over the Bradshaw contract. This was partly due to torrential storms that washed away substantial amounts of completed work. Landslips created an obvious peril for the planned outdoor power station, which could be washed away, should the Gorge be subjected to uncontrollable flooding. The construction was also marred by a number of accidents and fatalities, but the Governor of Queensland, Sir Leslie Wilson, officially opened the scheme on 19 November 1935.<sup>334</sup>

Most of the power lines travelled over the range to Smithfield then diverted either north to the beaches or south to Stratford and then to Cairns. Another line travelled to Kamerunga then followed the road to Redlynch, Freshwater and then to Cairns. The inland line was to run from Kuranda to Mareeba, then Tolga and Atherton, where the power station was to be connected and the existing power plant modified as a standby generator. The towns of Kamerunga, Redlynch, Freshwater and Stratford were connected on the 21 November 1935.

The opening of the scheme on 20 November included a special train to Bradshaw's siding, then crossing the Barron River by boat to the pylon at Dam No 2 where the Governor manipulated gears to open the headrace gates. This released water to the diversion tunnel where it ran to the Street Creek intake thence onto the power station. After this the party returned to Kuranda where Mr W A Collins was asked to switch on the power supply at Kuranda, the first town to be connected. A ceremony was also performed to erect the first power pole for the scheme running to Mareeba, Tolga and Atherton.<sup>335</sup>

Ceremonies ended in Cairns that night before a 1,000 strong audience with the switching on of an electric map of Queensland, containing the illuminated words "Barron Falls". Electric street lamps were subsequently switched on using the hydropower. This fanfare was in contrast to the low-key event when the McLeod Street power station was opened ten years earlier.

At the opening various speakers were effusive in their descriptions of the scheme, extolling its benefit to both industry and community. As the only water power undertaking in the State at the time, it was described as a highly significant achievement in both the history of Cairns and Queensland itself. It was even suggested that North Queensland might be made into a separate State, based on the progress being made in the region. Importantly it was also voiced that the scenic beauty of Kuranda and the Barron Falls had not been compromised in any way.<sup>336</sup>

Demand for power soon exceeded supply and in 1940 the two 1,200 kW turbo alternators were supplemented by a 1,400 kW unit. The original site was largely dismantled and decommissioned in 1959 and the present Barron Gorge power station was built further downstream in 1963.<sup>337</sup> In 2006, Stanwell Corporation Limited completed a \$28 million strategy to extend the life of Barron Gorge Hydro for another 40 years. This includes the upgrading of the majority of the installed electrical plant.<sup>338</sup>

<sup>333</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>334</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>335</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>336</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 November 1935, p 9

<sup>337</sup> [www.Stanwell.com](http://www.Stanwell.com)

<sup>338</sup> [www.Stanwell.com](http://www.Stanwell.com)

## Cairns Gas

In May 1898, civil engineer George Swinburne, representative of the Melbourne engineering firm of Coates & Co which had provided small gas works in a number of towns in the country, visited Cairns to assess the suitability of establishing a gas works which would be useful for lighting, heating, cooking and providing motive power (via gas suction engines).<sup>339</sup> Until this time householders had invested in acetylene converters which were installed at individual properties to provide gas lighting. Advertisements for household converters can be found in *(Cairns) Morning Post* in the period prior to the permanent establishment of gas. Similarly acetylene was used for the shipping lights although they were eventually replaced by more powerful electric lighting.

Figure 39 Interior of a town gas plant  
c1914-18. Source AWM

The *Cairns Gas Company Limited Act* of 1898 allowed for the construction and (monopoly) operation of the gas plant and by mid-1899 the gas works opened on Bunda Street. It provided gas for street lighting until 1925 when electric power was produced from the McLeod Street power station. The per annum charge for street lighting was £5.12/6d each with 33 lamps lit in 1899.<sup>340</sup> Illustrations of Cairns show the gas lamp standards as cast iron with cross arms for ladders, and interestingly identical to the ones produced for the Melbourne city area. It is likely that Swinburne had all the gas making plant components and lamp standards shipped from Melbourne.



The gas-works continued to provide town gas until 1964<sup>341</sup> when it was supplanted by bottled liquefied gas. This occurred in many Australian towns as the future of coal was uncertain.<sup>342</sup> An explosion at the plant in 1987 permanently destroyed the site as well as damaging surrounding properties.<sup>343</sup> The 1960s conversion to propane gases resulted in the removal of much of the original coal gas plant. The original gasometer on the site appears in photographs as a rising tank inside a cast iron frame. A second twentieth century gasometer tank also appears in photographs.

At the time of opening in mid-1899, the *Morning Post* reported that George Swinburne would be pleased to allow people to inspect the recently completed gas works.<sup>344</sup> In the same year a range of gas fittings were imported, including wall brackets, pipework, arms, sconces, burners, shades and mantles, and these were advertised in newspapers and sold to the Cairns public.

<sup>339</sup> *Morning Post*, 19 May 1898, p 5

<sup>340</sup> *Morning Post*, 29 March 1899, p 7

<sup>341</sup> QSA Item no 1298596, struck off company file 1964-1974

<sup>342</sup> [www.Boral.com.au/history](http://www.Boral.com.au/history)

<sup>343</sup> QSA Item no 208418, Gas Explosion in Cairns, 1988

<sup>344</sup> *Morning Post*, 28 June 1899, p 2

It is likely that the gas works used the same coal as elsewhere in Cairns, the Mt Mulligan and Bowen coal, which was delivered by ship and rail. The works were well located for the easy delivery of coal off a branch train line from the wharves.

### 7.3 Buildings and Architecture

Tents were the first structures erected in Cairns when it was first settled in 1876. Bark slab huts and then rudimentary timber buildings with corrugated iron roofs augmented these, as milled timber and corrugated iron supplies arrived in the town by steamer. Within half a year a sawmill was being constructed on the inlet by a Mr Ingham<sup>345</sup> and chamfer-boarded buildings started to appear. Many of this first group of timber buildings were unadorned gable ended structures and as time progressed, verandahs were added. A small number of peculiar building types also existed in the early settlement including grass huts but these would have been short-lived.

The more substantial timber buildings, such as the Court House (1884), the Municipal Shire Offices (1886) and Customs House (1889) used timber sparingly by building with an exposed frame under wide verandahs. More exposed areas were covered by weatherboards and this applied to the commercial two storey timber buildings. The Public Works Office in Brisbane would have designed some of the civic and government buildings during this time after it was set up in 1866.<sup>346</sup>

In an article for the Cairns Historical Society, Dawn May<sup>347</sup> suggests that there was a building boom in Cairns in the period around 1910. Some of this may have been helped by cyclones, new by-laws and fees affecting the construction of timber buildings, the introduction of first class blocks which allowed only fire proof buildings and the commercial availability of bricks.



Figure 40 A bush township (Bibbohra, north of Cairns) showing a large bark slab building alongside timber slab and milled timber buildings c1893. Source SLQ

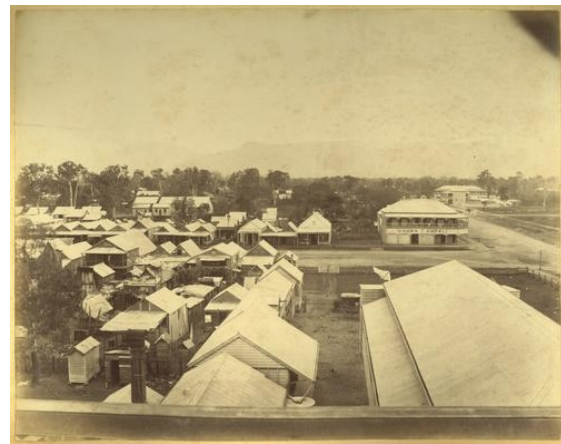


Figure 41 The centre of Cairns c1890 showing a large number of small-scale gable ended timber buildings with corrugated iron roofs. The middle distance is Sachs Street and Chinatown. Source SLQ

The earliest mention of a brick works appears to be an advertisement in *The Cairns Post* of September 1884 made by Thomas Thompson's "Sandy Way Brickfield" at Gordon's Creek East. A second

<sup>345</sup> *The Queenslander*, 26 May 1877, p 12

<sup>346</sup> Information provided by Queensland State Archives. It was responsible for at least the Customs House.

<sup>347</sup> D May, 'Cairns Building Boom 1907-14', undated pamphlet

advertisement mentioning bricks that year was for an auction of some 30,000 bricks made by the Cairns Brickmaking Company with the intention of testing the market.<sup>348</sup>

In February 1888 it was announced that Thomas Bunker & Co had set up a brickyard at Redlynch and had secured the services of the pioneer Cairns brickmaker, Mr Thomas Thompson.<sup>349</sup> Later the advertisement was changed to read that Thomas Linden & Co were the proprietors and later still (in 1888) the yard was owned by Stevens Brothers. These advertisements ceased in October 1888. Such a short-lived brickyard would have had little influence on the building stock but would have supplied much needed bricks for foundations and chimneys.

Louis Severin set up a brickyard in 1900 at the head of the Cairns Inlet and from here he sold a limited supply of bricks.<sup>350</sup> This location, and the lack of mention of a kiln, suggests he was bringing his bricks in via shipping.

In September 1910 *The Cairns Post* carried a feature article on a new brick works at Hambledon, owned by Messrs. Fearnley & Co, and run by the Cairns Brickworks Company. It was capable of producing 40,000 bricks per week. This commercial supply would be the foundation of masonry construction in Cairns in the 1910s period. The plant was near Mackey's Creek<sup>351</sup> but may not have lasted as the second wave of building construction in the mid-1920s appears to have involved only timber and reinforced concrete. It was not until 1948 that another brickworks was opened by the Northern Brick and Pipework Company near Cairns, with labour from returned soldiers.<sup>352</sup> These works also experienced financial problems within half a decade but struggled on for a number of years afterward.

In 1906 the Cairns Town Council determined that by-laws should be introduced for the construction of timber buildings and that the fee for building approval be at two-thirds the rate for brick and concrete buildings.<sup>353</sup>

Commercial buildings evolved from their early rudimentary timber form into brick construction, with some of the first to be built including the two storey School of Arts (1907), the third Cairns Post Office (1907), the two storey Court House Hotel (1908), the first portion of the Cairns Post building (1908), and the two storey Post Office Hotel (1909).

The simple form of timber construction, which used exposed studwork, appears to have been utilised until the 1920s when more substantive timber buildings (essentially houses) began to be erected. At the domestic level they were built to published designs by such firms as Broad and Brown and Campbell Brothers of Brisbane. Both these firms produced construction-ready houses which could be railed to any location in Queensland.<sup>354</sup> Campbell's *Redicut* houses were popular throughout the State and one version of their catalogue range can be found in Minnie Street, Cairns. Other house types became available through the Queensland State Advances Corporation design catalogues<sup>355</sup> with the Corporation providing finance for the construction. Many double and triple gabled houses in Parramatta Park and Edge Hill were built to these designs whether or not they were financed by the Corporation, as the catalogues provided a

<sup>348</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 20 November 1884, p 3; The bricks are sold in an allotment opposite the Hap Wah plantation

<sup>349</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 11 February 1888, p 3

<sup>350</sup> The first mention found of the brickyard is in the *Morning Post*, 11 September 1900, p 2

<sup>351</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 13 September 1910, p 8

<sup>352</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 18 February 1948, p 5 and 20 March 1952, p 5

<sup>353</sup> Council by-laws and a scale of fees are discussed and approved, *Morning Post*, 7 November 1906, p 3

<sup>354</sup> James Campbell & Sons catalogue titled "Campbell Redicut Homes", Brisbane n.d (c mid 1920s)

<sup>355</sup> The Queensland State Advances Corporation provided a series of house design booklets from the 1920s to 1945



convenient and costed set of plans developed by the Public Works Department. Number 100 Collins Avenue Edge Hill, for a Mr Bowles, was built in 1938 as a copy of the type 47 State Advances house illustrated below at a cost of £856.<sup>356</sup>

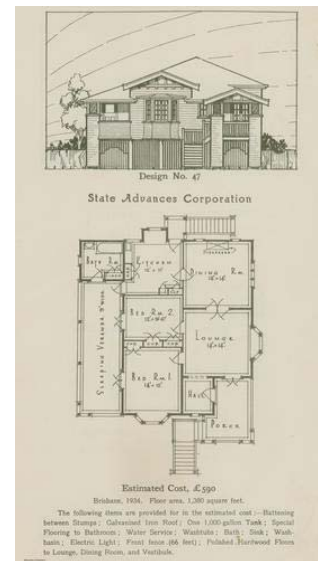


Figure 42 Cairns Motor Boat clubrooms constructed c1920 with exposed stud work. Source SLQ

Figure 43 State Advances Corporation House (type 47), from one of many catalogue designs available in 1934. Source SLQ

In the mid-1950s, the Queensland Housing Commission built a small estate of austere timber houses in Earlville to the south west of the city centre.<sup>357</sup> Their style was a stripped moderne which had been used by the Commission since the late 1940s. The work on the estate was to have commenced by the early 1950s but water supply problems curtailed construction for a number of years.<sup>358</sup>



Figure 44 House at 25 Minnie Street (LHS), a Redicut form of House available as a ready to build structure railed to Cairns. Source heritage ALLIANCE 2008

Figure 45 Martyn Street Houses (RHS) in Standard State Advances Corporation designs possibly circa 1935. Source heritage ALLIANCE 2008

<sup>356</sup> This house plan was illustrated in the CHS publication *Photographic Memories*, 2001.

<sup>357</sup> Completed c 1954-55 in an area west of Balaclava road and centred on Hoad Street

<sup>358</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 20 December 1951, p 8 This article is one of several which identifies Earlville's water supply issues that kept the Commission area from developing





- ❑ Section IV bounded by Abbott, Spence, Lake and Shields Streets
- ❑ Section V bounded by The Esplanade, Spence, Abbott and Shields Streets
- ❑ Section XXVII bounded by Sachs, Spence, Sheridan and Shields Streets

Essentially this action defined what was to become the business centre of Cairns almost as it is today, although the introduction of the Cairns Central shopping complex has increased that area to McLeod Street. Post-1922 changes to the building by-laws also meant a blurring of the boundary of the Central Business District, both north of Shields and south of Spence Street.

As noted earlier, from 1900 a small quantity of bricks were available for construction from Severin's brick yards. The real turning point was the establishment of the Cairns Brickworks, but their factory does not appear to have lasted more than a few years. Around 1907 concrete was available in limited quantities and used in "ferro-cement" construction, but its use required engineering advice and thus the number of buildings constructed in this material was minimal until the 1920s.

Despite the action to upgrade the standard of buildings, 1923 saw a motion of council to abolish the "First-Class blocks". This led to a public protest and the Council was forced to write to the Minister for Local Government to rescind their previous motion.<sup>362</sup> The Council subsequently consolidated their building codes and published the more comprehensive Cairns Building By-laws in 1926 and this became publicly available as a small booklet.<sup>363</sup> Amongst other requirements, the by-laws required buildings within certain boundaries of the city to be built from fire proof materials and for habitable rooms to meet minimum dimensions. These consolidated by-laws had great implications for the evolving appearance of this tropical city. Cyclones and fires, which had destroyed buildings in the past, had less impact on the increasing number of reinforced concrete and brick structures, and the appearance of central Cairns began to change dramatically, particularly as building sites were redeveloped after storms ravaged the older timber buildings from the earlier part of the century. Small timber commercial buildings, such as halls, shops, offices and hotels, were replaced with larger fireproof masonry buildings.

A small number of architects and engineers, who had established themselves in Cairns in the 1920s, were in demand to design these larger structures. *The Cairns Post* contains numerous tender notices by architects, such as Richard Hill and Edwin Orchard, for the new concrete buildings. At one time Richard Hill had eight new buildings in Cairns and the region, tendered in the one edition of the newspaper.<sup>364</sup>

Even before the by-laws came into effect, architects were converting to the anticipated new form of construction. The substantial hotels of Cairns, built after c1924, are amongst the most obvious building type in this new material. In the central area these include the Barrier Reef, Commercial, Federal, Grand, Hides, Oceanic, and Railway hotels and the National just outside the central area.

One unusual example of the by-laws is a three-storey office building (now the *Corona Backpackers*) in Grafton Street. Although it appears to be a large traditional timber building clad in fibro cement sheeting, it was actually built of reinforced concrete in 1954.<sup>365</sup> First class blocks (and associated regulations) were finally repealed in 1958.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 18 July 1917, p 4

<sup>363</sup> Available at the Cairns Library

<sup>364</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 20 September 1924, p 2

<sup>365</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 30 January 1954, p 8

<sup>366</sup> Queensland Government Gazette, 2 June 1958

It would appear that the Mulgrave Shire followed suit with adopting the same building regulations, as a number of commercial buildings constructed after 1924 were completed in masonry in the towns of Babinda and Gordonvale. The latter also had 'first-class blocks'. A number of these new structures replaced premises that had been destroyed by fire in areas where there was no fire brigade. Babinda and Gordonvale had both experienced fires which started in one premise and moved to adjacent businesses. In Gordonvale three separate fires destroyed a number of timber buildings during one week in mid 1927, and this left the township reeling.

Some commentators suggested that when these buildings were rebuilt the owners had wisely decided to use masonry, however it was clearly a requirement enforced by building by-laws. This transition was reflected in tender notices, which appeared in newspapers at the time. In one case a tender notice by the Cairns architect Richard Hill for Butler's building, Gordonvale appeared twice over a two-year period. The second tender notice had the words 'reinforced concrete' inserted.<sup>367</sup>

### Late Twentieth Century Development

Present day Cairns is a tourist destination and one of the major changes to the built landscape has been the development of high-rise buildings along the frontages of Trinity Bay in Cairns and some of the localities to the north such as Trinity Beach. These developments have also resulted in a demographic change in the earliest settled areas of the city, where land prices have forced the working population of Cairns to move to the northern and western suburbs, leaving the land strip between Lily Creek and the Bay for the development of hotels, motels, apartments and other facilities for the tourist market.

By the mid 1960s low scale two and three storey motels were being developed in the area from the Esplanade to Sheridan Street. By the 1980s this low scale development had advanced to multi-storey buildings on a large scale. Such buildings as the Pacific International of 1983 and the 8 storey Hilton International of November 1987<sup>368</sup> were constructed.



Figure 42 The low-scale Lyons Motel Abbott Street, 1964. Source Uni of Qld

Figure 43 Pacific International of 1983. Source Uni of Qld

### Architecture

A substantive number of the buildings of Cairns and its region were completed in derivatives of the classical style. Few of the major civic buildings constructed before World War Two diverged from this

<sup>367</sup> First notice was in *The Cairns Post*, 8 August 1925

<sup>368</sup> *Miami Herald* USA, 27 December 1987, p 1, J travel section

approach whether they were in timber or masonry. The style's general characteristics are symmetry, columns or pilasters on porches and verandahs, the use of eaves blocks and gutter decoration such as acroteria. Civic buildings which display these classical characteristics include the second and fourth post offices, Cairns City Council offices (now the library), the *Cairns Post* building, the government offices in Abbott and Shields Street (now the art gallery), the Cairns Court House (in a "mannerist" classical style) and the Cairns High School, (1939). Simple timber homes also followed this pattern through their use of timber posts with capitals on verandahs, a symmetrical approach to composition and some of the stylised detail.

The *Cairns Post* building and the Cairns Council buildings could be described as *Academic Classical* style where there is an adherence to careful detailing and the correct proportioning of the building while the State Government Offices and the Cairns High School are more *Italianate Palazzo* in appearance and setting.



Figure 48 Cairns Council Chamber designed as a classical temple, drawing by Hill and Taylor 1929.  
Source SLQ Neg No. 29867

The largest civic building completed in the region was the Cairns Hospital of 1912 by Harvey Draper in a Queen Anne- Federation style as was the Central Hotel of 1908 by the Townsville (and Melbourne) architects Tunbridge, Tunbridge and Lynch.

The residence *Embo*,<sup>369</sup> also designed by Tunbridge, Tunbridge and Lynch in 1906, was probably the largest home constructed in Cairns and also the most atypical. Completed in a Federation style with a pepper-pot corner tower, for the solicitor Abijah Murray, the building incorporated half-timbered gables and extensive verandahs supported by dashed render brick piers. Although more akin in style to architecture of the southern states, the design was obviously adapted for the northern climes, with its elevated form and wide verandahs.

A special mention has also to be made of the work of Ed Oribin who completed a number of buildings in the Cairns region (including Innisfail and Mareeba), in what can only be described as a *Wrightian* style. These buildings use geometric motifs not just in their detail but also in their form. In these compositions a larger geometric form is repeated down to small detailing through a variety of materials.

<sup>369</sup> *Embo* was the name given to the house after it was occupied by the Munro family in 1913



## Prominent Cairns Architects

Architect Harvey Draper (1869-1921), brother of A.J. Draper, designed the first stage of the *Cairns Post* building, which was erected in 1908.<sup>370</sup> Harvey Draper was born in Victoria and worked as an architect in Melbourne before travelling to the goldfields of Western Australia in 1892. He worked as an architect in Kalgoorlie and was in partnership with H.L. Brookman for a period of time before relocating to Cairns in 1908. He was listed as an architect, with offices in the School of Arts Building, Cairns, in *Pugh's Almanac* of 1909. In 1910, an advertisement in *Pugh's Almanac* stated that he was a FWAIA (Fellow of the Western Australian Institute of Architects). By at least 1916, he was a Fellow of the Queensland Institute of Architects. He died in Cairns in 1921. Other buildings designed by Draper include Hannan's Club (Kalgoorlie, 1896), the Adelaide Steamship Company's Offices (Cairns, 1910), the Jack and Newell Store (Cairns, 1911), the Palace Theatre (Cairns, 1913), the Howard Smith Building (Cairns, 1914), St Saviour's Church (Kuranda, 1915) and the Cairns Ambulance Station (1921).

Edward Gregory Waters was responsible for the design of a number of early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in Cairns including the Central Hotel (1909), Lyric Theatre (1912), Cairns Theatre (1912), Bolands Centre (1912/13) and Hibernian Hall (1913). Waters practised in Rockhampton from 1889 before moving to Mount Morgan in 1896, where he was the town surveyor from 1900. He returned to Rockhampton and practised as an architect from 1903 to 1907, before spending a year in Gympie and then practising in Cairns as an architect and engineer from 1909 to 1917.<sup>371</sup>

Architect Edwin Orchard practised in Sydney from 1913, designing up-market houses and flats, before commencing practice in Cairns in 1933. In 1942 he joined the Allied Works Council and undertook work for the RAAF and then the Royal Navy, before returning in 1945. He designed reinforced concrete hotels in Cairns, Gordonvale and Innisfail as well as important houses such as the small post war brick house for Fred Mellick in the city.<sup>372</sup>

The architectural partnership of Lawrence and Lordan was formed between Harry Lawrence and Timothy Lordan in 1925, but the practice only continued until 1927. Lawrence then formed a partnership with R. A. Tills, which also continued for only two years. Lawrence then went to Brisbane where the Commonwealth Government employed him. He served in World War Two and spent time in Changi prison.

Richard Hill was born in New Zealand in 1884 and practiced in Cairns from 1919 to 1926. He went into partnership with Arthur Taylor in 1927. From 1933 to 1940 the partnership practiced in Townsville and Cairns. Arthur Taylor was first employed as a draftsman by the Works Department and then worked for Richard Hill from 1925 to 1927 before becoming a partner in the firm. In 1940 he joined the Allied Works Council and after the war he practiced in Brisbane. He died in 1955.

Hill was prodigious in his output of buildings all over the region including many hotels, shops, convents and other civic buildings and cornered a large market when it came to concrete construction.

George Osbaldiston was born in Brisbane in 1893 and employed by the Queensland government and the Commonwealth Government before spending a brief period practising in Cairns from 1932 to 1935.

Sidney Barnes was born in New Zealand in 1899, trained in New Zealand and practiced in Moree and Brisbane before establishing himself as an architect in Cairns in 1931. He died in Cairns in 1959 after

<sup>370</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 December 1932, pp 6 and 10 details the history of the *The Cairns Post* and its building

<sup>371</sup> D Watson & J McKay, *Queensland Architects of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, pp 204-5

<sup>372</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 29 July 1950, p 1





having completed a large number of commissions for the Ambulance Board, the Anglican Church and various private clients. His architectural style ranged from Art Deco to Moderne and later early modernist, when he was joined in partnership by Eddie Oribin.

Eddie Oribin was born in Cairns in 1927 and was in architectural partnership with Sidney Barnes from 1953 to 1959.<sup>373</sup> After Barnes' death he continued to practice in Cairns until 1973.<sup>374</sup> Oribin completed some of the most interesting contemporary architecture in Far North Queensland, including St Pauls Anglican Church, Proserpine (1958), the Oribin house and studio (1958 and 1960), Mareeba Public Hall (1961), St Andrews Presbyterian Memorial Church, Innisfail (1961), Hides Motel and Carpark (circa 1973) and a further Oribin House, in Stanthorpe, South East Queensland (c1980).<sup>375</sup>

Tunbridge, Tunbridge and Lynch were Townsville architects who undertook architectural services in the early years of Cairns development. Lynch was often in Cairns, arriving by steamer to look over works or take on new commissions. Amongst other things they designed the Harbour Board Offices of 1906-07 and Embo of 1906. Eventually Harvey Draper was able to capture a substantial amount of architectural work in Cairns from the outsiders such as Tunbridge and Co. during this period.

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<sup>373</sup> [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Australian\\_architects](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_architects)

<sup>374</sup> [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Australian\\_architects](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_architects)

<sup>375</sup> [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Australian\\_architects](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_architects)

## 8. ADMINISTERING CAIRNS

### 8.1 Establishing Law and Order in Cairns

#### Police and Courts

The earliest mention of a police presence in Cairns is that of Cardwell Police Magistrate Brinsley Sheridan who appears to have acted in a number of official capacities on behalf of the government.<sup>376</sup> He was sent to identify the features of Trinity Inlet in 1876 and his name has been associated with the development of Cairns from that day onward.

The police station and court house were identified as necessary components of the Cairns Township when established in 1876 and they were allocated Section V in Surveyor Sharkey's plan. This section was bounded by Shields and Abbott Streets and the Esplanade. The State Offices and Art Gallery are presently in this location.

The police would have initially operated from a tent and then from a timber building.<sup>377</sup> It is known the timber police station comprised a group of small single storey gabled buildings; however these were replaced in 1912 by a two storey brick building with a street facing verandah and corrugated iron roof.<sup>378</sup> This building was replaced with new offices in 1976. In late 1992 a new police station, watch-house and court complex was opened in Sheridan Street on what had once been railway land.<sup>379</sup>

An 1878 marine survey of Cairns harbour indicates that the first court house was located on the customs reserve, and may have shared premises with the first customs house. This was probably the temporary court house erected by the Works Department in Cairns in December 1877.<sup>380</sup> The temporary courthouse remained in use for several years, but was replaced during the second phase of Cairns development. In 1883 the Works Department prepared plans for a more substantial timber court house, which was erected in 1884 on the Esplanade, but facing Abbott Street, on the police reserve.<sup>381</sup> At the time, this low set classically derived building with exposed stud frame and front and side verandahs, was considered the best erected building in Cairns, in appearance, design and construction.<sup>382</sup>

By 1890 the local court had outgrown the court house, and the building was in a state of disrepair.<sup>383</sup> Despite repeated comment from public and judicial circles alike that the Cairns court house was the worst on the circuit, it was not replaced until the present building was completed late in 1921. In 1917, A. B. Brady, Government Architect and Under Secretary for Public Works, finally acknowledged that the court house was beyond renovation and that a new building was necessary. Plans were prepared by the Government Architects' Office in 1918 and construction was commenced the following year. As a post-World War One initiative by the State Government to create employment for returned servicemen, the new court house at Cairns was constructed using day labour and took two and a half years to complete.<sup>384</sup>

<sup>376</sup> *The Clarence & Richmond Examiner & New England Advertiser*, 8 June 1878, p 5

<sup>377</sup> Photograph, 1896, State Library of Queensland

<sup>378</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 23 September 1912, p 3

<sup>379</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 143

<sup>380</sup> State Heritage Register entry for 1921 Court House

<sup>381</sup> State Heritage Register entry for 1921 Court House

<sup>382</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 July 1884, p 3

<sup>383</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 19 April 1890, p 2

<sup>384</sup> State Heritage Register entry for 1921 Court House



The new court house, which had cost over £13,500, was nearing completion by November 1921, but it was not fully finished until April 1922.<sup>385</sup> This building continued to attract criticism for various defects and shortcomings.

In 1968, the court building was extended at a cost of approximately \$53,000, with the extensions rendered to match the existing facades, and the roof re-clad with corrugated iron sheeting. The remodelling created a second court room and a magistrate's court. The court subsequently moved to new premises in Sheridan Street in late 1992.<sup>386</sup>

## 8.2 Establishing Local Government in Cairns

A road board was set up in Cairns shortly after settlement in 1876, with the main responsibility of locating early roads into the surrounding countryside.<sup>387</sup> The *Local Government Act* of 1878 enabled the establishment of municipal councils in towns in Queensland. At this time Cooktown was the principal town in North Queensland and this town had its council functioning by 1879. The *Divisional Boards Act* of 1879 resulted in the division of Queensland into 74 divisions and Cairns was amongst these.<sup>388</sup> This division was extensive, from Cape Tribulation to Cape Grafton, and was subsequently divided further into a Port Douglas Board and a Cairns Board in 1880. Elections for the first Cairns Divisional Board were held that year.<sup>389</sup>

The Board received annual grants from the government for maintenance and improvement work and special grants for major works. The opening and maintenance of roads remained the priority of the Cairns Divisional Board in these early years, particularly as Cairns was initially settled as a service port for remote mining fields that required long access tracks.

By 1883 the attention of the Board turned to town facilities, including constructing a portion of road to Herberton, but within the boundaries of the town, known then as Hap Wah Road.<sup>390</sup> The following year the Board stated its intention to borrow money to construct a town hall, to build a tramway from the township and to improve principal roads in the town itself and around the wharf.

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<sup>385</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 April 1922 p 5, contains a criticism of the slow progress of the Public Works Dept. in carrying out the work

<sup>386</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 143

<sup>387</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 86, 1966

<sup>388</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 86, 1966

<sup>389</sup> Government Gazette, 27 July 1880

<sup>390</sup> Government Gazette, 12 May 1883



Barron River, running to Freshwater Creek, south to land Section 278 (near Mt Sheridan) across to Skeleton Creek, then up to Trinity Inlet and along the coast to the starting point at the Barron River.<sup>391</sup>

Elections were held on 18 July 1885 and councillors were elected with Richard A Kingsford as Mayor.<sup>392</sup> A preoccupation of the council was the issue of street improvements, largely due to the difficult nature of the land. The council met almost immediately on 22 July and subsequently requested the government to set aside money to appoint an engineer to draw up a plan of the municipality.<sup>393</sup> The government rejected this request and required the council to set out the town's existing section boundaries (1 to 40), its roads, footpaths and associated drainage in a proper manner, i.e. to make the existing allotments fit for building and habitation.

Local surveyor and engineer Tom Behan (later to become the Government surveyor) was then appointed to lay out the roads, footpaths and drainage in the city area, to re-consider levels and alignments, and to fix the boundaries of each of the sections making up the town.<sup>394</sup> Surveyor Sharkey's original town plan comprised lines on paper, whereas Behan's surveys were detailed and fully engineered, allowing better use and trafficking of the roads and permanent fixing of the allotments. Behan also surveyed other areas and service routes around Cairns.<sup>395</sup> He became well known in the region with two streets, a creek and Behana Gorge near Gordonvale named after him.

A contract was let in March 1886 for the construction of municipal offices in Abbott Street, on land granted in 1880. A government loan was obtained for this purpose.<sup>396</sup> New Shire Offices were constructed on the Esplanade in 1912 to designs by the architects Lynch and Hunt.<sup>397</sup>

The passing of the *Local Authorities Act* of 1902 saw the Divisional Board become the Cairns Shire Council and in 1923 the town of Cairns became a City with a population of more than 8,000.<sup>398</sup> While controlled under the Divisional Board, a number of the town's early reserves which were of State jurisdiction, were allocated. These included harbour, police, customs and school reserves. The Board and the subsequent Municipal Council identified reserves on behalf of the residents of Cairns. These included parkland, recreational areas and cemeteries. Over a long period the State Government also required land for a railway, infectious diseases hospital and high school to be set aside from sale. Similarly the sea and waterways were regarded as being in the possession of the Crown and any jetty or wharf structure into the sea or river required a special lease. After 1906, the Cairns Harbour Board took over the responsibility for allocating landing places that were within their realm of operation. These covered a substantial portion of the shoreline of Trinity Inlet.

### 8.3 State government presence in Cairns

#### Former Public Offices (now the Regional Gallery)

In 1929, the State Government Insurance Office (SGIO) requested that part of the Police Reserve at the corner of Shields and Abbott Street be made available for the erection of a new office. In 1933 the Public

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<sup>391</sup> Government Gazette 30 May 1885

<sup>392</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 86, 1966

<sup>393</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 6 August 1885, p 2

<sup>394</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 87, 1966

<sup>395</sup> Various references in *The Cairns Post*

<sup>396</sup> S E Stephens, 'Local Government in Cairns', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 87, 1966

<sup>397</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 28 August 1912, p 8

<sup>398</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 13 October 1923, p 4



Service Commissioner reported requirements for this office building, which necessitated the relocation of the existing senior sergeant's house to the Esplanade.<sup>399</sup> Construction commenced in 1934, with the plans attributed to architect R C Nowland of the Government Architects' Office.

The new Public Offices occupied a prominent position at the intersection of Abbott and Shields Streets, which contained Cairns World War One memorial. The building was designed to address both the adjacent courthouse and the newly established formal court house gardens, and the classical detailing of the facades re-affirmed the power and presence of government in the community. Although designed with the ability to be extended along Shields Street, with a repeat of the portico on the western end, this planned extension was never undertaken.

The new Public Offices were completed by late March 1936, and were opened officially in July that year. They had cost nearly £31,000. Tenants included the SGIO, Government Tourist Bureau, Land Commission, Agricultural Bank, Forestry Office, Public Curator, District Foreman of Works, Inspectors of Weights and Measures, Health, Slaughter Houses, Fruits and Diseases in Plants, and visiting Tax Inspectors and Parliamentarians.

From the mid-1950s various departments relocated from this building and in mid-1980 the interior was remodelled, and the ground floor occupied principally by offices of the Magistrate's Courts. In 1992-93 the building was converted for use as the Cairns City Council's Fine Arts Gallery.<sup>400</sup>

## 8.4 Establishing Customs Services in Cairns

### Customs House

Cairns was established as a port, and customs was amongst the first agency of government to arrive in the town.<sup>401</sup> Infrastructure to support the port developed in Wharf and Abbott Streets, with the customs reserve located in a triangular section of land between Abbott Street and the Esplanade. This location allowed the sub-collector to watch the activities on the waterfront and the entry and departure of ships.<sup>402</sup>

The first customs house was built in early 1877, facing the Esplanade, and was one of the first buildings in the settlement. It quickly became inadequate and was replaced in 1889 by a single storey, verandahed timber building facing Abbott Street.<sup>403</sup> The first customs house was then converted to a bond store.

After the first customs house was built on the customs reserve, a number of traders and storekeepers established themselves opposite the reserve in Abbott Street. Hotels, bond stores, warehouses and banks were also constructed in the vicinity.<sup>404</sup>

In 1936 the customs building had become outdated both in accommodation and appearance.<sup>405</sup> It was described at that time as 'out of keeping with other buildings and the general progress of the city'.<sup>406</sup> In July of that year it was reported that the existing timber customs house building was being moved back 80 feet

<sup>399</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 5 December 1933, p 6

<sup>400</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 143

<sup>401</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 61

<sup>402</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 58

<sup>403</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 58

<sup>404</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 58

<sup>405</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 7 February 1936, p 6

<sup>406</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 19 May 1936, p 6



to enable the construction of a new two storey reinforced concrete building<sup>407</sup> and the official opening of this third custom house building subsequently took place in August 1937.<sup>408</sup>

The customs function was moved to a new building in Aplin Street in 1987<sup>409</sup> and the 1937 customs building has been incorporated into the Reef Casino Complex.

## 8.5 Defending the Country

### The Colonial period to World War Two – The Australian Naval presence in Cairns

The earliest naval presence in Cairns was that of the Naval Brigade which was established in 1888.<sup>410</sup> The Queensland Naval Brigade was formed in 1873 when the colonies were required to raise their own defence forces. Companies were subsequently raised in most major centres along the Queensland coast including Bundaberg, Mackay, Townsville and Cairns. Surprisingly such brigades also formed in country towns, often at a distance from the ocean. These provided a training ground for those wishing to pursue a career at sea or who felt an allegiance to the Colony during the period in the 1880s in which there was talk of further threat from Russia. When the Australian Navy formed in 1911, these naval brigades became the Naval Reserve under a more formalised process.

In August 1885 the Commandant of the Queensland Defence Force noted that the towns of Cairns and Cooktown 'have no doubt a great future before them; they are both on the coast and open to direct attack from the sea, and will in the near future require protection. I would therefore strongly recommend the reservation of certain commanding positions as sites for batteries'.<sup>411</sup>

The Cairns Brigade was formed in early 1888, two years after the idea was first mooted.<sup>412</sup> In early 1888 Cairns was visited by the Brisbane based Queensland Navy gunship *Gayundah* and this appears to be the catalyst for the official formation of the Brigade.<sup>413</sup> By 1891 the brigade numbered 25 (a half brigade) although they were always seeking more able-bodied men.<sup>414</sup> They had the use of a 5" breech loading naval gun, which arrived in 1889,<sup>415</sup> and this was shared with the artillery section of the local militia. This gun is currently sited near the RSL building on the Esplanade. The Brigade also had a training reserve and jetty for their use just north of the Customs foreshore reserve. When the Cairns Harbour Board took over the wharf facilities at the end of Lake Street in 1906, the Naval Brigade Reserve still existed, however it is likely to have been removed just a few years later with the formation of the Australian Navy.

The Australian Navy had no further involvement in the Cairns area until World War Two, although passing ships did occasionally stop at the wharves. Of interest is a photograph taken of the Inlet in 1914 showing Australia's World War One submarines AE1 and AE2 with the light cruiser HMAS Sydney at anchor in the inlet. HMAS Sydney was on active duty against the German navy in the Pacific at the time. Some years later Cairns was visited by Sydney's sister ship HMAS Melbourne.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 18 July 1936, p 8

<sup>408</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 24 August 1937, p 3

<sup>409</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 60

<sup>410</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 25 January 1888, p 2

<sup>411</sup> [www.cairnsmuseum.org.au/defence](http://www.cairnsmuseum.org.au/defence)

<sup>412</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 May 1887, p 2

<sup>413</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 7 February 1888, p 6

<sup>414</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 15 August 1891, p 3

<sup>415</sup> Noted on the interpretation sign at the gun

<sup>416</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 6 November 1920, p 5

During World War Two smaller auxiliary patrol craft were accommodated at various small wharves and jetties (including the aquatic club) while larger ships such as corvettes and liberty ships would berth at the Harbour Board wharves as they were accustomed to. An Australian naval base, *HMAS Kuranda*, was established in the Cairns wharf area in May 1944 only to be decommissioned in January 1945.<sup>417</sup> It is likely that the Navy simply took over wharfage and store sheds in order to maintain control on incoming and outgoing naval stores and personnel.

In 1971 a naval patrol boat facility was opened at the end of Grafton Street and in 1974 the site was upgraded as a shore establishment *HMAS Cairns*. In 1979 the former World War Two boat repair facility at the end of Draper Street was refitted and recommissioned as *HMAS Cairns* in 1982.

The present facility is the result of a multi-million dollar upgrade in 2008-09. It is used for defence communications and training, policing patrols in northern waters, the hydrographical service and a stop-over supply base for other navy ships.<sup>418</sup>

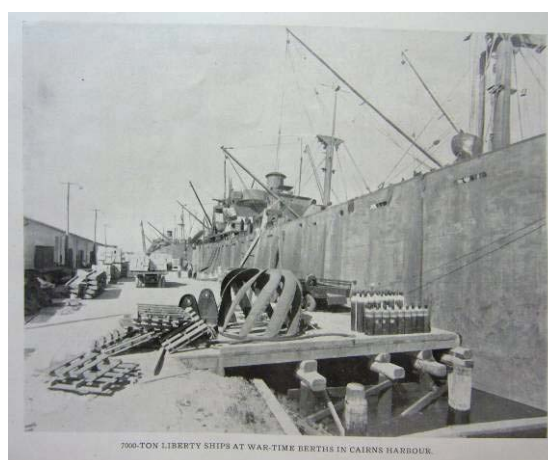


Figure 51 HMAS Sydney with submarines AE1 & AE2 in Trinity Inlet 1914. Sydney was on active duty against German forces in the Pacific during World War One hence her presence in Cairns. Source State Library of NSW

Figure 52 Liberty Ship at Cairns Wharf 1940s. Source CHB Annual Report 1945-46

## The Cairns Militia

A local militia was formed in Cairns in 1885<sup>419</sup> soon after the establishment of the *Queensland Defence Act* in 1884. Again this form of army predated the establishment of defence under the auspices of the Commonwealth. This Colonial Militia was a volunteer defence force against coastal attack rather than an army. The primary object of concern had been the possibility of Russian invasion (although such scares had occurred as early as the mid-1850s) and as a result a number of coastal fortifications had been set up around the country at strategic harbour locations. The closest fortifications to Cairns were at Townsville and in the Torres Strait at Thursday Island, constructed after British Army Major William Jervois and Major General Peter Scratchley carried out a colonial defence review in 1877.<sup>420</sup> This latter fort would eventually

<sup>417</sup> H Pearce, 'WWII in FNQ', Internet published report to EPA, Brisbane 2009

<sup>418</sup> As identified on HMAS Cairns web site [http://www.navy.gov.au/HMAS\\_Cairns](http://www.navy.gov.au/HMAS_Cairns)

<sup>419</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 May 1885, p.2

<sup>420</sup> H Pearce, 'WWII in FNQ', Internet published report to EPA, Brisbane 2009, p 41



be abandoned in the 1920s after further reviews of coastal defence on a national scale,<sup>421</sup> but it was re-fortified during World War Two.<sup>422</sup>

The formation of the Cairns militia followed a well-attended meeting at the Divisional Board hall held in May 1885.<sup>423</sup> The gathering was read a proclamation from the Governor, which re-badged the Cairns Rifle Brigade as the Cairns Volunteer Artillery Corps. Rifle practice would continue to be conducted on the rifle range reserve set up near the Inlet between Alligator and Chinaman's Creeks, at the time quite swampy ground. Later the Corps would have use of the fixed naval gun made available to the Naval Brigade.

Oddly the Cairns Volunteer Corps was being formed at the same time other Colonies were disbanding theirs. In Victoria the Volunteer Corps system was abandoned in 1884 and the State's defence strategy was reorganised. All these Corps were eventually incorporated into a national army once the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for defence in 1901.

### The Volunteer Defence Corp (VDC)

A national Volunteer Defence Corp was formed on 3 July 1940 under the banner of the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL), as a home defence organisation modelled on Britain's Home Guard.<sup>424</sup> In May 1941, the VDC came under the control of the Military Board and was given the role of training for guerilla warfare, providing static defence of each unit's local area, protecting key points, and providing local intelligence.<sup>425</sup> A Volunteer Defence Corp was established in Cairns and other towns throughout Australia.

In February 1942, the Federal Government, sought to curb RSL control of the VDC, and expanded the latter to become a corps of the Citizen Military Forces, incorporated under the *National Security Act*. Membership of the VDC was open to men between 18 and 60 'with the enlistment of young men working in reserved occupations.' The average age was 35.

The VDC reached its peak strength of about 10,000 men across Australia. There were a small number of full-time members but most trained an average of six hours a week at night or at weekends. The VDC's 'primary role gradually changed from providing static defence to operating anti-aircraft batteries, coastal defence and searchlights in emergencies.'<sup>426</sup> On 22 August 1945, the VDC was officially disbanded.<sup>427</sup>

The VDC was responsible for some of the anti-aircraft artillery, although regular army crews initially had responsibility for the 3.7" AA pieces and Bofors. As reserve manpower was decreased due to fighting elsewhere, particularly in New Guinea, the VDC increasingly filled these roles. The Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) also performed in artillery companies, acting as spotters, range finders and searchlight operators.

### World War Two and civil defence in Cairns

World War Two had a great impact on Cairns, which was until then a small tropical city and port which existed largely due to the resources which lay in the hinterland and the development of the sugar industry. The export port of Cairns suddenly became a vast importer of men, women, victuals, medical supplies,

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<sup>421</sup> H Pearce, 'WWII in FNQ', Internet published report to EPA, Brisbane 2009, p 42

<sup>422</sup> H Pearce, 'WWII in FNQ', Internet published report to EPA, Brisbane 2009, p 50

<sup>423</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 May 1885, p 2

<sup>424</sup> R Holmes (ed), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*

<sup>425</sup> R Holmes (ed), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p 558

<sup>426</sup> R Holmes (ed), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p 558

<sup>427</sup> R Holmes (ed), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p 559

equipment and materials. The war brought sudden change to the city and the port itself, and left behind a surplus of materials, new buildings and infrastructure. It also resulted in the evacuation of large numbers of residents to the south after the fall of Singapore in 1942. It was reported that Cairns lost more than a third of its resident population and that more than 7000 people left the north of the State.<sup>428</sup>

Prime Minister Curtin's election in October 1941 was a marked turning point in Australia's attitude to self-defence. Curtin stressed the urgency of defence preparations in fiery speeches given in the national Parliament and at the Sydney Town Hall in late 1941 and 1942. Emphasis was placed on each State's role in taking responsibility for civil works and Queensland passed the required legislation on 23 December 1941.<sup>429</sup>

The onset of the Pacific War in 1942 resulted in a large influx of military personnel, stores and equipment in Cairns.<sup>430</sup> The Allied Forces, in particular the United States, stationed troops throughout the Cairns region to supply and support the Pacific fleet.<sup>431</sup> Trinity Inlet became crowded with ships and Air Force Catalina flying boats and a slipway was constructed for the United States Navy.<sup>432</sup> Troops, stores and equipment also arrived from Townsville and Brisbane (and manufacturing bases in Sydney and Melbourne) via coastal ships and rail. American Troops and supplies arrived on Liberty Ships, converted cruise liners and other cargo vessels. Cairns was to be the southern springboard for the allied offensive to drive the Japanese Forces back from Papua and New Guinea and the Pacific islands and to eventually force them back to Japan.

The Americans brought with them a range of service personnel, equipment, buildings and capital items such as ships, tanks and aircraft. Some of this legacy still remains in the Cairns regional areas. US designed Quonset storage buildings were erected in numerous locations by the Allied Works Council, including at the Cairns High School. Like many structures and equipment, the War Surplus Commission sold these after the war, and some were demolished. As a result few still remain. Larger US engineered structures remained in place for many years until sites were redeveloped. These included the large patrol boat manufacturing facility on the inlet near the present day HMAS Cairns. Another prominent structure remains on the edge of the port area at Hartley and Dutton Streets, where Caltex uses it for storage.

The Air Raid Precautions Centre at Munro Martin Park at Cairns was commenced in March 1942.<sup>433</sup> It was to be used as a central listing post where Air Raid Wardens phoned in their observations and the Centre directed responses. Since early July 1940, Cairns had been divided into a number of air raid divisions with appointed Divisional Wardens and Assistant Wardens. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> July the *Cairns Post* printed lists of Divisions and appointed wardens which they urged their readers to cut out and keep handy in their homes. The Chief Warden for Cairns was Mr W. Fish of McLeod Street.<sup>434</sup>

School sites may have had slit trenches or above ground concrete bunkers such as the ones at Anzac Park, Babinda and Norman Park, Gordonvale. Some civilians constructed their own shelters at their houses, such as the one constructed from concrete pipe at the rear of 27 Church Street, Babinda. An Air

<sup>428</sup> R Evans, *A History of Queensland*, p 188

<sup>429</sup> Government Gazette, 1941

<sup>430</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 68

<sup>431</sup> V Bradley, *I Didn't Know That - Cairns and District in the War Years*, p 175ff

<sup>432</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 70

<sup>433</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 March 1942, p 4

<sup>434</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 July 1940, p 4





Raid Precaution Centre was planned for the grounds of the Gordonvale Police Station and presumably one at the Babinda Police Station.

Despite the great impact World War Two had on the city of Cairns and the surrounding region at the time, little remains today to reflect this important period. A small number of sites and buildings remain in the Cairns region, including the camouflaged oil tanks at Edge Hill used for naval bunkering at the Port. These structures were designed to look like large sheds disassociated from the ports activities. The navy at Chowder Bay Sydney undertook similar camouflaged bunkering works. The tanks now form part of a civic Arts Centre.

The Cairns Water Depot Site at Stratford was the former road and earth moving machinery maintenance depot. Equipment brought in for repair, was used to construct airfields and roads and to carry out earthworks for the erection of buildings. Several buildings remain from the War period but are not essentially defence works.

The Stratford explosives site, which had included the surviving magazines near Rankine's timber yards, had been reserved for this purpose from 1900 (and extended in 1911), but when aerodrome clearing works encroached on the perimeter buffer zone and trees were removed,<sup>435</sup> the site was abandoned and a new location found at Queerah south of Cairns. Buildings at the Queerah site were constructed in 1940-41 on Crown land originally reserved in 1931, allowing explosives to be transferred from the Stratford Magazine site in 1942.<sup>436</sup>

During World War Two many buildings in the City of Cairns were procured for military, recreational or other purposes, including the Cairns High School and the Cairns North Primary School, the latter serving as an Army Field Hospital. Buildings in the centre and on the edge of town served as offices, recreational places, postal and victualling supply and storage. Encampments occurred at Parramatta Park, Norman Park and south along Mulgrave Road as well as a number of regional and hinterland towns such as at Gordonvale and Atherton. These uses add an historic dimension to the importance of many of these buildings and places.

There were other sites that were simply influenced by the American presence. The cafeteria at the Coles Department Store in Lake Street had an American style luncheon diner bar, possibly the last one of its type to have survived in Queensland when demolished.

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<sup>435</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 6 March 1940, p 4

<sup>436</sup> [www.dme.qld.gov.au](http://www.dme.qld.gov.au)

## 9. CREATING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN CAIRNS

The community life developed by the residents of Cairns and the surrounding region is reflected in the existing built form and open space. Places of worship, public halls, clubrooms, theatres, sporting venues and parks have provided the community with facilities to partake in chosen activities. In this way these places have brought people together and created social ties important to the establishment of the community. The identity of Cairns and the way of life is expressed through these places.

### 9.1 Worshipping in Cairns

In early 1877, a vacant building at the southern end of Abbott Street was leased to the Government for customs purposes and set aside as a bonded warehouse.<sup>437</sup> The building became known as the 'Old Bond' and the first Church of England services were held here.<sup>438</sup> Robert Taylor Hartley conducted regular Sunday church services in the building and Sunday school classes were held there. While Hartley was not an ordained priest, his services were said to represent the Church of England, and his father, the Reverend F Hartley, conducted more official services in the Old Bond when he came to visit.<sup>439</sup> The Anglican Diocese of North Queensland was formed in 1878.<sup>440</sup>

From 1880, Rev A C Mosley, who had based himself at Port Douglas, would regularly visit Cairns and hold services in the Old Bond. Cairns first resident Anglican priest was the Reverend G. R. F. Nobbs, who arrived in 1884 and held services in the courthouse.<sup>441</sup> St John's Church of England was built in 1884 on the site of the current Cairns City Library in Abbott Street.<sup>442</sup> The parish of Cairns, which initially extended from Hartley's Creek in the north to Babinda in the south and to Kuranda in the west, was established in the same year. The timber church building was destroyed by a cyclone in 1920. A new masonry church, also dedicated to St John, was built on the corner of Lake and Minnie Streets in 1926.<sup>443</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church was concurrently establishing itself in the region. Father P. McGuiness is believed to be the first Catholic priest to take up residence in Far North Queensland, when the Bishop of Brisbane appointed him in 1872. In 1873, he settled at Cooktown where he built a church and residence.<sup>444</sup>

In 1876, the area from Cardwell to Cape York was separated from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brisbane as the Pro-Vicariate of North Queensland, also referred to as the Apostolic Vicariate of Cooktown.<sup>445</sup> This term was typically used for missionary regions, before a diocese was established, and the evangelisation of the Aboriginal people was their primary objective. But the thousands of people who rapidly came to the area following the gold rushes displaced the Aboriginal people. As a result, the Catholic Church's activities were redirected to the pastoral care of the European settlers.<sup>446</sup>

Father Paul Bucas,<sup>447</sup> who was visiting from Charters Towers, said the first Catholic mass in Cairns in 1877. In 1884, three Irish Augustinian fathers took charge of the Pro-Vicariate based in Cooktown and

<sup>437</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 119

<sup>438</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 1 November 1926, p 4

<sup>439</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 119

<sup>440</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 6 March 1884, p 2

<sup>441</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 119

<sup>442</sup> Cairns Historical Society, *Photographic Memories – Glimpses of Cairns Life over 125 years*, p 64

<sup>443</sup> *The Cairns Post* 10 January 1927, p. 4

<sup>444</sup> *The Rockhampton Bulletin*, 12 December 1874, p. 3

<sup>445</sup> [oce.catholic.com](http://oce.catholic.com)

<sup>446</sup> *The Cairns Post*, *Strength to Strength. 120 years of growing business in the Far North*, p 20

<sup>447</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 1 November 1926, sp 4

regularly visited Cairns. Father William O'Byrne arrived in Cairns in 1885 and became the town's first resident Catholic priest. The town's first Catholic Church was built in 1886 near the corner of Abbott and Minnie Streets.<sup>448</sup> Known as St Monica's, the timber-framed building was destroyed by a cyclone in 1927. The site is now St Monica's College and includes St Monica's Old Cathedral (1927) and St Monica's War Memorial Cathedral (1968) by architect Ian Ferrier.<sup>449</sup> In 1906 the Vicar Apostolic of Cooktown moved his residence to Cairns,<sup>450</sup> when it became clear that it had become the principal port of Far North Queensland.

In the 1887 *Pugh's Almanac*, Rev R. Newell was recorded as the representative of the Primitive Methodist Church in Cairns. The first Cairns Primitive Methodist Church was established in Sachs Street in 1886.<sup>451</sup> The timber-framed church was relocated to Aplin Street in 1923 and became known as the Central Church Hall <sup>452</sup> after a new brick church was built on the corner of Sachs and Aplin Streets in 1937.<sup>453</sup>

In 1901, the Reverend James Pattison conducted Cairns first Presbyterian Church service in the Oddfellows Hall.<sup>454</sup> The first Presbyterian Church, St Andrews, was built c1903 in Sheridan Street.<sup>455</sup> It was a timber-framed building and was damaged by three cyclones but survived until 1953.<sup>456</sup> A new St Andrews Church (or Kirk) was built in Sheridan Street in the 1950s. It became a Uniting Church following the merge of the Methodist Church of Australasia, the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Congregational Union of Australia in 1977.

Chinese people, who arrived in the region at the same time as those of European descent, constructed two Chinese Temples, or Joss Houses, in Cairns' Chinatown. This extended along Sachs Street between Spence and Shields Streets. The first temple, known as the Lit Sung Goong Temple and built in 1887, was a timber-framed building, clad with corrugated iron. It was demolished in 1964. A second temple was constructed across the road.<sup>457</sup>

Less common denominations active at some time in the Cairns region include the Assemblies of God, who worshipped in a simple timber church building at 25 Clare Street, Parramatta Park, between c1934 and the 1970s. A Buddhist congregation now regularly meets in the same building. The Greek Orthodox Parish of Cairns was inaugurated in 1993 and the church of St John the Baptist, located in Redlynch, was officially opened the following year.<sup>458</sup> Indian Sikhs first established a single storey concrete temple, the Guru Nanek Sikh Temple, in 1965, just north of Gordonvale. A second Sikh temple is located on the Bruce Highway near Gordonvale. No synagogues have been identified in the Cairns region.

In the 1890s, there was an effort to carry out missionary work in the Cairns area. Ernest Gribble was an Anglican missionary who began to regularly visit Aboriginal people living in the Yarrabah area south-east of Cairns. Gribble set up a mission and with the help of the tribe's leader, Menmuny, encouraged the

<sup>448</sup> J Murphy, *Cairns and District – Our Heritage in Focus*, p 26

<sup>449</sup> Place details for St Monica's Old Cathedral, Queensland Heritage Register

<sup>450</sup> The Cairns Post, *Strength to Strength. 120 years of growing business in the Far North*, p 23

<sup>451</sup> The Cairns Post, 1 November 1926, sp 4

<sup>452</sup> Cairns Historical Society, *Photographic Memories – Glimpses of Cairns Life over 125 years*, p 65

<sup>453</sup> The Cairns Post, 28 May 1936, pp12-13

<sup>454</sup> The Cairns Post, 1 November 1926, sp 4

<sup>455</sup> The Cairns Post, 1 November 1926, sp 4

<sup>456</sup> Cairns Historical Society, *Photographic Memories – Glimpses of Cairns Life over 125 years*, p 65

<sup>457</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 248

<sup>458</sup> [www.stjohnscommunitycare.org](http://www.stjohnscommunitycare.org)

Aboriginal people to settle the mission in 1893.<sup>459</sup> Over time many people were relocated from surrounding homelands to Yarrabah. The State Government assumed control of the mission in the 1960s and in 1986, the Yarrabah Community received a Deed of Grant in Trust land tenure status, which made the Yarrabah Community Council self-governing. The current population of the Yarrabah Community is approximately 3,000.<sup>460</sup>

Further missionary work was undertaken by the Salvation Army in Cairns, who targeted the large community of Melanesians (or South Sea Islanders) working on plantations. From 1898, the Salvation Army began recruiting and baptizing Islander converts.<sup>461</sup> In 1901, the Reverend J Tear Tack of the Methodist Church inaugurated a Chinese Mission in Cairns.<sup>462</sup>

Census figures for Cairns between 1876 and 1886 showed that approximately 40% of Europeans in North Queensland were Anglican, between 25 and 30% were Catholic, approximately 10% were Presbyterian and approximately 7% were Lutheran. One hundred years later, the 1976 Census of Population and Housing for Queensland indicated that 27.5 % of the population was Anglican, that Catholics had increased their presence to 27.5%, 8.8% of the population were Methodist and 8.8% were Presbyterian. Jewish and Muslim people made up only 0.1% of Queensland's population in 1976.

### Surviving Religious Buildings

Few early church buildings survive in the Cairns region, largely due to severe cyclone activity. The disposition of the population has also contributed to this sparsity of buildings.

The earliest surviving church in Cairns appears to be the timber gothic style building at 25 Clare Street, Parramatta Park. Its origin is unknown but it was used, in this location, between 1934 and the early 1970s by the Assemblies of God.<sup>463</sup> It is likely to have originally been built in the 1910s, then repaired and moved to this site, where it has been for some 80 years. It is currently part of a spiritual centre.

St Francis Anglican Church at Edmonton (1924) was followed by St John's Lake Street (1926) as the central city church for the Anglicans. Subsequent churches were established after the war with St Margaret's Westcourt (1960) and the Good Shepherd at Edge Hill (1961).

The earliest surviving Presbyterian Church is at Gordonvale (1924), while its city church on Sheridan Street dates from the mid-1950s. A small timber Uniting Church survives in Freshwater, dating from 1937.

The earliest Catholic Church of note is St Michael's at Gordonvale, which dates from 1934. A small but bold design, with brick façade and timber nave, was completed in Freshwater in 1938. The only other Catholic Church building of note is St Monica's in the city. This brick building was designed in 1968, in a brick brutalist style.

Amongst the more recently erected buildings are the Sikh Guru Nanak Mission church at Edmonton (c1985) and the larger temple at Gordonvale of the late 2000s.

<sup>459</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 316

<sup>460</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 25 October 2007

<sup>461</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 383

<sup>462</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, a History of Cairns*, p 389

<sup>463</sup> Identified on 1937 aerial of Cairns held by the Cairns Historical Society, pamphlet authored by Assemblies of God circa mid 1970 (held at CHS)



Figure 53 Construction of The Good Shepherd Anglican Church at Edge Hill in 1961. Source NAA

Figure 54 Guru Nanak Mission Church at Edmonton built circa 1985. Source heritage ALLIANCE, 2011

## 9.2 Participating in Cultural Activities in Cairns

### Theatres and Cinemas

Both the local community and visiting tourists benefitted from the arrival of the picture theatre in Cairns, in the early twentieth century. To begin with, buildings were often used for a variety of entertainment, including concerts and other musical performances, and sporting events such as boxing. Existing halls were also often adapted for the projection of film.

The first theatre, which was designed to show film, was built in Spence Street, Cairns in 1912. Known as the Lyric Theatre, it was designed by the Cairns architect E. Gregory Waters.<sup>464</sup> It was described at the time as a facility worthy of the town of Cairns, with modern vestibule and furnishings complete in every detail. Its specific addressing of the tropical conditions, with the installation of at least six fans, was noted.<sup>465</sup> In addition to showing film, this theatre was the venue for various concerts, circus performances and even sporting events in the first year after construction. This theatre was renamed the Royal Pictures and then renovated and again renamed, the Palace Theatre, in 1913.

A new Palace Theatre was designed by the architect Harvey Draper and built in Lake Street opposite Hides Hotel in 1914. The original Lyric Theatre building on Spence Street became the Austral Theatre, but was destroyed by a fire in 1923.<sup>466</sup> The new Palace Theatre was extensively altered and remodelled in the mid-1920s by the architects Lawrence and Lordan. The building was sold in 1966 and subsequently used as a warehouse and furniture showroom. The building was divided into a shopping arcade and the Cinema Capri during remodelling in 1971. New owners acquired the building in 1995 and began operating the theatre as the Palace Independent Cinema. This was finally closed in 1997 and the building demolished in 1999.

<sup>464</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 8 January 1912, p 4

<sup>465</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 8 January 1912, p 4

<sup>466</sup> 'Picture Theatres in Queensland', Griffith University, 2001 and [www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/hoskins/396/AustralianlistQueensland.ht](http://www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/hoskins/396/AustralianlistQueensland.ht)

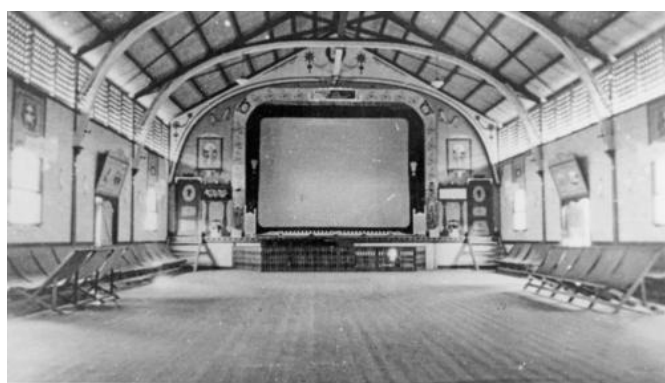


Cairns Pictures was another theatre designed by the architect E. Gregory Waters and it was built on the corner of Abbott and Shields Streets in c.1913. This theatre was renamed the Cairns Theatre and then the Cairns Tropical Theatre. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1938-39 but was demolished in 1976.

Another early picture theatre was the Gaiety, which was described as a huge tin shed with a concrete floor and canvas seating. It appears to have opened by 1928<sup>467</sup> and was demolished in the 1940s. This venue was also used for boxing matches and as a skating rink.<sup>468</sup>

The Rex Theatre in Sheridan Street was designed by the architect V. M. Brown and was officially opened on 11 March 1939.<sup>469</sup> The theatre was equipped with Western Electric Mirrophonic Sound and had a ventilation system that 'assured comfortable atmospheric conditions', including louvres which ran the length of the building. The theatre initially accommodated 600 patrons in easy canvas chairs.<sup>470</sup> It was owned and operated by Northern Theatres, which was known as Far Northern Theatres after World War Two.<sup>471</sup>

Far Northern Theatres owned four cinemas and a drive-in in the Cairns area –the Rex, the Palace, the Tropical and the Plaza (1942-43) Cinemas and the Coral Drive-In, Woree (1961). The last picture was shown at the Rex Theatre on 3 March 1978 and the building was sold in the same year.<sup>472</sup> This theatre building however remains as a remnant of cinema architecture in Cairns. All four of the Far Northern Theatres' cinemas in Cairns were sold to Birch Carroll & Coyle, who closed them to eliminate competition for their more modern Odeon Cinema.



72637 Interior of Beatties Theatre – circa 1930



Figure 55 Interior of Beatties' Theatre, Babinda c1930. Source: SLQ. George Jago Collection

Figure 56 Exterior Beatties Theatre, Gordonvale designed by Hill and Taylor 1927. Source heritage ALLIANCE, 2010

The first pictures in Babinda are believed to have been shown in Maroney's Hall, which was built, adjacent to the Babinda Creek Hotel by 1915. Dances, meetings and boxing matches were also held in this hall.<sup>473</sup> The building was destroyed by a cyclone in 1918.<sup>474</sup>

<sup>467</sup> *The Cairns Post*, various dates in 1928

<sup>468</sup> *The Cairns Post*, various editions from 1928 to the 1930s

<sup>469</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 11 March 1939, p. 3

<sup>470</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 11 March 1939, p. 3

<sup>471</sup> Brochure on Far Northern Theatres Ltd, 1965, Cairns Historical Society D10797

<sup>472</sup> *Focus News*, 3 March 1978, p. 2

<sup>473</sup> *The Cairns Post*, various dates in 1915



A new theatre, which seated 400 patrons, was built on the corner of Munro and School Street, Babinda in 1926. It was known as Beattie's Picture Theatre. The building was owned, or leased, by Mrs H. Beattie between 1926 and 1939. Far Northern Theatres leased the theatre from Mrs Beattie between 1939 and 1942, when a fire destroyed it. Another theatre in Babinda was Slape's Theatre, which was built in 1918 and renamed the Lyric in 1942. This building was destroyed by a cyclone in 1956.<sup>475</sup>

Far Northern Theatres rebuilt a theatre on the site of the former Beattie's Theatre in 1956 and named it the Munro Theatre. Far Northern Theatres operated the theatre until 1969. The lease or ownership of the building has changed a number of times since that date, but it has continued to function as a cinema. Cyclone Larry substantially damaged the building in 2006. Up to 1,000 people signed a petition to restore and reopen the theatre and this was done with financial assistance from the Australian Government.<sup>476</sup>

Beattie's Pictures, Gordonvale, was one of a number of enterprises operating in the 1920s. Some operated from their own premises and others out of hired venues. Beattie's were hiring the Federal Hall when it burned down in May 1927. Shortly after this occurred, Sutcliffe Pictures suffered the same fate when their building was partially destroyed. At the same time a speculative venture was being floated by a Mr Walker who had the architects Hill and Taylor draw up plans for a new cinema building for Gordonvale. Beattie's took the opportunity to secure the new building and no doubt had some influence over the new building's final design. The cinema then operated until c1942 when it was purchased by Far Northern Theatres. It was then converted to a gym. In the 1990s the building was being used by Hodge's Garage and the majority of the interior was a tractor showroom. The building was adapted for use as a veterinary surgery sometime after 2001.<sup>477</sup>

The other cinema hall building (the Lyric in Gordon Street), was used as parachute storage during the war and then reopened for cinema use before being purchased by the RSL at which time the frontage was altered.

The only outdoor cinema in Cairns was *the Coral drive-in* which was located in Woree and opened in April 1961. This closed in 2000,<sup>478</sup> however the drive-in itself remains and was to be redeveloped but this venture stalled in 2010. In mid-July 2011 the main screen and the café - projection building were removed.

The advent of television in Australia in the late 1950s had a significant impact on the commercial decline of cinemas throughout the country. Television was introduced in Cairns in 1966<sup>479</sup> and this is reflected in the decline of cinemas in Cairns and the nearby regional centres.

### 9.3 Joining Organisations, Clubs and Societies

#### Freemasonry

The first recorded steps to establish Freemasonry in Queensland appear to have been taken in the year the State was founded, 1859. The inaugural meeting of the Lodge was held in July that year in Brisbane.

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<sup>474</sup> 'Picture Theatres in Queensland', Griffith University, 2001

<sup>475</sup> [www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/hoskins/396/AustralianlistQueensland.htm](http://www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/hoskins/396/AustralianlistQueensland.htm)

<sup>476</sup> [ronboswell.com/regional-communities/2976-restored-babinda-munro-theatre-back-in-business](http://ronboswell.com/regional-communities/2976-restored-babinda-munro-theatre-back-in-business)

<sup>477</sup> *The Brisbane Courier*, 29 September 1923, p 3, *The Queenslander*, 10 January 1929, p.53. *The Brisbane Courier*, 28 May 1930 p.4. 'Picture Theatres in Queensland', Griffith University, 2001. [www.isdaselfdefence.com/pdf/Bert-Healy-Boxing-story.pdf](http://www.isdaselfdefence.com/pdf/Bert-Healy-Boxing-story.pdf) <http://www.fortunecity.com/lavendar/hoskins/396/AustralianlistQueensland.htm>

<sup>478</sup> [http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2010/06/29/115665\\_local-news.html](http://www.cairns.com.au/article/2010/06/29/115665_local-news.html)

<sup>479</sup> Allom Lovell Marquis-Kyle Pty Ltd, 'Cairns City Heritage Study', p 81

The following year a Lodge was established by Ipswich residents and in 1862 a Lodge was formed in Rockhampton. A Masonic Temple was built in Brisbane in 1886 as the central city headquarters.<sup>480</sup>

### *Cairns Masonic Lodge*

The first recorded gathering of Freemasons in Cairns was in 1885, at Hides' Hotel,<sup>481</sup> and the first Masonic Lodge, was constituted in 1886 in the Lake Street Odd-fellows Hall. The original Lodge Hall was constructed in Lake Street in 1888. By the mid-1920s, there were six Lodges that met in Cairns, in their own two storey timber building in Lake Street built in 1888<sup>482</sup> however, before 1927, the Lodges moved to a building adjoining the site of the present Temple in Minnie Street. In 1921 representatives of the Lodge in Cairns mooted the establishment of a District Grand Lodge (DGL) of Carpentaria, with headquarters at Cairns. This was approved by the Grand Lodge in 1923,<sup>483</sup> and formed the following year with the Carpentaria district extending from Cardwell to Cape York, and west to Normanton.

The Masonic Peace Memorial Temple, dedicated to those who sacrificed so much in the Great War, was constructed adjacent to the existing hall in 1934-35.<sup>484</sup> The architects were Hill and Taylor of Cairns. The dedication was performed by Sir Leslie Wilson, Governor of Queensland and Masonic Grand Master.<sup>485</sup>

### *Other Masonic Lodges in the Cairns Region*

After the establishment of the Cairns Lodge, local Lodges were founded in the larger surrounding towns. Gordonvale's earliest lodge building, of unknown date, was destroyed in a cyclone in January 1906. A replacement, known as the Nelson Pyramid Lodge, was consecrated and constituted at a ceremony held later that year. A second Lodge, the Gordonvale Highleigh No 343, was constituted and consecrated in November 1926 and this building was sold when a new Masonic Hall in Swan Street was consecrated in 1961.<sup>486</sup>

The Freemasons in Babinda met in the Presbyterian Church hall after consecration in June 1917, while they met in Freshwater in the Methodist Church after consecration in 1949. T Roy, the District Grand Architect, completed a dedicated Freshwater Masonic Hall in 1959. A Masonic Hall was opened in Edmonton in 1961. The original Lodge was formed in 1920 with a dedicated hall completed in 1923. This building and land was sold to the Methodist church in 1959 and this enabled construction of the current temple.<sup>487</sup>

### **Friendly Societies**

A number of friendly societies were established in the Cairns region from its earliest days, although a number of these had only a small number of members. They include the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) and later associated with Manchester Unity to form the MUIOOF, the Druids, the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalo (RAOB), the Australian Natives Association (ANA), and the Ancient Order of

<sup>480</sup> [www.queenslandfreemasons.com](http://www.queenslandfreemasons.com)

<sup>481</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 December 1885, p 2

<sup>482</sup> W. Bugden, 'Masonic centres of Queensland : concise histories of the construction and use of Freemasons' Halls throughout the State of Queensland', St Lucia Qld, 2005

<sup>483</sup> [www.queenslandfreemasons.com](http://www.queenslandfreemasons.com)

<sup>484</sup> *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 24 November 1934, p 12

<sup>485</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 October 1935, p 6, includes photograph of the building

<sup>486</sup> W. Bugden, 'Masonic centres of Queensland : concise histories of the construction and use of Freemasons' Halls throughout the State of Queensland', St Lucia Qld, 2005

<sup>487</sup> W. Bugden, 'Masonic centres of Queensland : concise histories of the construction and use of Freemasons' Halls throughout the State of Queensland', St Lucia Qld, 2005



Hibernians. A number of Friendly Society Lodges were established in the Lake and Abbott Street areas. Apart from the Masons, those which had the largest impact in Cairns were the Hibernians and the OddFellows.

The Independent Order of OddFellows opened a hall in Lake Street in 1886,<sup>488</sup> while the Cairns Branch of the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society was established in Cairns in the early twentieth century. In 1906<sup>489</sup> the latter society constructed a two-storey timber hall on Lake and Florence Streets to the design of E. Gregory Waters architect, and this hall served the community for just over 60 years. Hibernian Hall was a large building and, like others such as the IOOF hall, was used for community meetings as indicated in local newspapers at the time. The Hibernian Hall was large enough to hold functions such as musical, social and theatrical events and it served Cairns until 1968 when a Civic Centre was constructed at Florence and Sheridan Streets, on land formerly associated with Norman Park. The Hibernian Hall was demolished in 1969.<sup>490</sup>

The Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffalo was also active in the Cairns district and a RAOB Hall was mentioned as a meeting place in *The Cairns Post* in 1933.<sup>491</sup>

### Country Women's Association (CWA)

The Country Women's Association was first established in New South Wales and Queensland in 1922.<sup>492</sup> Subsequent to this a number of branches were established in country towns throughout Queensland, including Deeral, Gordonvale, Freshwater and Smithfield in the Cairns region.

The Russell Heads Branch of the Country Women's Association was formed in 1927. The inaugural meeting of this branch was held in a private home, and in 1929 an allotment of land at Deeral was purchased for the purpose of building a club room and hall. The new hall was officially opened in 1934. Dances held in the hall were the main source of income for the branch, but church services were also held there and the Red Cross used the hall during World War Two. The dances proved so popular that the hall was enlarged.<sup>493</sup> In 1964 the hall was deemed too large and a portion was removed and sold. Improvements were then made to the remaining section of building.<sup>494</sup>

In Gordonvale, the Country Women's Association had been seeking a portion of the Arts Reserve as early as 1930. In that year they were given a lease of 21 years to 1951, and established a shelter and tennis courts on the land. In 1952 they constructed a timber building on the site.<sup>495</sup>

The first meeting of the Freshwater Branch of the Country Women's Association was held at Freshwater Hall home in 1937.<sup>496</sup> Subsequently Railway Square was resurveyed as a Health and Recreation Reserve in 1940 and the Freshwater Branch of the CWA purchased land to build a hall. After the war, they established a building fund and a new hall was completed in 1955.<sup>497</sup> The CWA at Smithfield was also founded in 1937.

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<sup>488</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 25 February 1886, p 2

<sup>489</sup> *Morning Post*, 4 October 1906, p 2

<sup>490</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 73

<sup>491</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 9 May 1933, p 4

<sup>492</sup> [www.cwaa.org.au/history](http://www.cwaa.org.au/history)

<sup>493</sup> *The Queenslander*, 17 April 1930, p 51

<sup>494</sup> Deeral CWA secured Volunteer Grant in 2008 - [www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/volunteers/funding/vgp2008/Documents/qld.htm](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/volunteers/funding/vgp2008/Documents/qld.htm)

<sup>495</sup> Reserve File R1042, held by DERM

<sup>496</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 17 November 1937, p 9

<sup>497</sup> Freshwater Heritage Trail sign

## Returned Services League (RSL)

The Returned Services League was formed in June 1916 by troops returning from World War One. In effect, the RSL was the first national welfare agency in Australia as it committed itself to providing for the sick, wounded and needy among those who had served in the war and their dependants.

The Cairns Welcome Home Committee initially purchased the site of the Cairns RSL in 1916 and the building was used as a rest home for returning soldiers. At the end of World War One, the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Imperial League of Australia (known as the Returned and Services League of Australia) acquired the building. In 1937, the original house was moved to the rear of the site and a new building constructed to provide a meeting place for war veterans. Throughout World War Two, the club welcomed all serving members of the armed forces.<sup>498</sup>

In 1955 the RSL was granted a club license, but in 1963, a fire destroyed all but the front portion of the 1937 building. Within two years, a new building was constructed behind the original façade. Between 1991 and 1996, a \$2 million renovation and refurbishment project adapted the building for modern use.

The RSL at Gordonvale originally met at the Lyric Theatre. This Theatre building was also used as a dance hall and community hall, but was purchased by the RSL in the late 1950s. A later section at the front of the building was probably built at this time.

## 9.4 Pursuing Leisure Activities

### Norman Park - Munro Martin Park

Pencilled notes on the earliest published plan of Cairns, dated 1877, indicate that the land of Section XVII was unsold at the first land sales<sup>499</sup> and a subsequent plan by surveyor Tom Behan shows the land crossed out as if it was to be excluded from further sale. In 1882 a "Reserve for Public Recreation" (GG1882.2.1187) was set aside under the control of the Cairns Divisional Board. At this time the block was in an outlying area of the fledgling town, although the park was actually at the heart of the forty blocks of land (each a Section of 5 acres) constituting the forty section township reserve set out by Sharkey. This public reserve was all of Section XVII bounded by Grafton (then known as Sachs), Florence, Sheridan and Minnie Streets.

The reserve was named Norman Park in mid-1890 after Sir Henry Wylie Norman, Governor of the Colony of Queensland, who had visited Cairns in April 1890. This land, like much of Cairns, comprised vegetated sand dunes which required clearing, flattening and filling to produce a flat sports and recreation ground. At the end of 1887 the Council called tenders for this flattening work and by late 1888 tenders were called for fencing to enclose the reserve. At this time the reserve contained a pitch erected by the Cairns Cricket Club. By June 1889 permission was sought to construct a running track at the park and shortly after this permission was sought to erect tennis courts. In c1892 a number of shade trees were planted but some of these were removed in 1920 as the sap proved to be a skin irritant.

In 1889 the reserve was enlarged by closing Florence Street and then adding approximately half of Section XII to the south. This land had long been held from sale as a 'reserve' but with no specified purpose. This extension provided an elongated tract of park land which became more fully developed and used as a

<sup>498</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 36 and The Cairns Post, *Strength to Strength - 120 years of growing business in the Far North*, p 59

<sup>499</sup> Lands Dept Plan dated 1877, copy held by State Library of Queensland



circuit for running and cycling. Florence Street was also realigned to skirt around the southern end when the original section of Florence Street was closed off. In 1900 the new recreation reserve was gazetted with an increased size of 8 acres and trustees were appointed to manage the land. In 1912 a set of Park Ordinances were approved and these allowed for organised paid events to take place.<sup>500</sup>

Newspaper reports and letters in *The Cairns Post* indicate that Norman Park was very much in decline during the 1920s. Grounds were reported as overgrown, trees had fallen but not been removed, and the fencing was in decay. Suggestions for revitalising the park area included grazing Council owned horses there to reduce the grass and, in the mid-1920s, it was suggested that some of the land might be suitable for workers housing under the *Worker's Housing Act* of 1919-22. The Land Ranger Mr M. Down, in a letter to the Land Commissioner, cautioned against this stating that 'R279 is the chief resort used for recreation and sport by the Citizens of Cairns..and.. I would consider it a grave injustice for it to be resumed for the purpose of the *Workers Housing Act*...' <sup>501</sup>

The Land Ranger noted that improvements could be made instead, including a picket fence, 2 cricket pitches, a cycling track, bandstand, a shed, and '50 approximate' ornamental trees. He also noted that the council had spent £680 on the filling of this swampy ground and that the Reserve would be used for recreation only when Reserve R365 was ready for use. Reserve R365 was a reserve for sports which was being prepared nearby and later became the showgrounds. Reserve R365 slowly reached completion, but sports groups which transferred there found themselves back at Norman Park during World War Two when the military took over the showgrounds for their own encampment and recreation purposes.

A Council meeting of April 1927 considered planting more shade trees in Norman Park from their Edge Hill nursery. This must have proceeded as it was noted by the Land Ranger and a satirical cartoon appeared in a 1930 edition of *The Cairns Post* showing the trees as only about a metre high and useless for shade purposes. They may have been removed shortly after as an aerial view of the park of 1933 shows only the mature mango trees mainly along the east and west boundaries of the upper park.

The above ground shelter at Munro Martin Park was constructed in early 1942 as an Air Raid Precautions centre which acted as a central listening and control post during air raids during World War Two. In more recent years the Scouts leased the shelter for use as a shop and the fibreglass top was erected as part of this conversion. The shop closed around the mid-2000s although the Scouts hold a special lease until 2023.

In 1944 land in the Cairns area was assessed for the purpose of an airfield locator beacon (a "Radio Range") to guide aircraft toward the Cairns landing strip. Norman Park was deemed by the Civil Aviation Department as the most suitable location for a transmitter aerial. Eventually a site was agreed at the lower end of the park (in the area of Section XII) and a timber tower, transmitter hut and a surrounding wire fence was erected with a £12 annual lease to the Commonwealth for 20 years.

Following the end of World War Two, a land survey map was drawn up to show the reinstatement of Florence Street. Once it was gazetted in 1946, Florence Street was reopened to traffic on its original alignment and the lower portion of the park (part of land Section XII) parted from the main recreation ground.

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<sup>500</sup> Reserve File R279, held by DERM

<sup>501</sup> Reserve File R279, held by DERM

The presence of more than forty military buildings around the periphery of the park,<sup>502</sup> caused significant wear of the ground. These buildings accommodated a number of small military units and C Company 15th Garrison Battalion which protected infrastructure. The arrangement of buildings left a cricket pitch in the centre and tennis courts at the northern end for active sports use. Some recreational activity remained on site with a war surplus building being used by the Cairns Table Tennis club during the 1950s.

In 1967 there was a move to formalise the passive use of the reserve as well as to officially rename it Munro Martin Memorial Park. The Land Ranger for Cairns had written to the Commissioner of Lands in Brisbane noting that some “thousands of pounds had been donated to Council to commence the project..” and that ...”approval be given to change the name to Munro Martin Park”.<sup>503</sup>

Land in the lower Section XII was, at a similar time, to be subject to a Deed of Grant to the Cairns Council to allow permanent occupancy and the construction of a Civic Centre. Primarily an auditorium, this was a facility with which Cairns had not previously been provided. This proposal was considered as early as 1963 with some simplistic block sketch drawings of a Civic Centre being submitted to the Land Commissioner in order to have the land released for use by the Council. The Civic Centre was eventually erected in 1974.

By Gazettal notice of 1967.2.1031, Norman Park was (officially) renamed and the land registered as a recreation reserve R1295 with an area of 4 acre 3 rood 31 perch under the control of the Cairns City Council. Munro and Martin are the surnames of two long-time residents of Cairns, the Misses Janet Taylor Munro (d. 1945) and Margaret Martin (d. 1948) who had come from Victoria and had for a long time been generous donators to various associations, public bodies and the people of Cairns. Margie Hart Martin (d. 1953), niece of Margaret Martin, left her estate to beautify the northern portion of the park and to erect lighting which was carried out at a later date.

In 1956 Mayor Ald Fulton, performed a ceremony in the park which dedicated the central Obelisk monument to the Munro Martin women. The ten metre high obelisk was designed by architects S. Barnes and E. Oribin. The land in Section XVII was formalised by the planting of extra palm trees to augment the existing trees and a "Union Jack" concrete pathway system at the north end of the park. A proposal to construct a performance sound shell and tiered earth seating in the lower middle area toward Florence Street was not realised. The park thereupon became locally referred to as Munro Martin Park, although it was a decade before it was officially recognised by the Lands Department as noted above. This arrangement of trees, pathways and the land of the undeveloped sound shell is the one which can be seen today.

Munro Martin Park is no longer the focus of outdoor recreational activities in Cairns although there has been a continuation of public activities and parades to and from the park for such occasions as May Day and the Fun in the Shade Indigenous Dance festival. Sports, which were once the main activity in the park, now take place at purpose made ovals constructed on the south side of town. Much of the passive recreation has now shifted to new parkland on reclaimed land along the Cairns Esplanade. This new linear park has multi-purpose recreational spaces and a large open swimming pool which draws hundreds of tourists daily. This parkland was rearranged and upgraded with a swimming area in 2003.

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<sup>502</sup> Reserve File R279, held by DERM; plan showing the layout of the military buildings

<sup>503</sup> Reserve File R279, held by DERM



## Parramatta Park – Cairns Showgrounds

The land that became the showgrounds was originally at the very fringe of the township, and was somewhat swampy ground. Since 1909 the Harbour Board had been pumping dredge tailings into areas such as this to allow the commercial development of these fringe areas. The showgrounds is a crown reserve set aside for recreational purposes under the control of the Cairns Agricultural, Pastoral and Mining Association (CAPMA). The reserve had been shown as a recreation reserve under the control of the Cairns Council by Gazettal notice in March 1909. On the side of the Fearnley Street drain, the land was described in an early plan as 'Deep Mud and Mangroves'.

In 1924 the land was designated for 'Sports and Showgrounds purposes' and consisted of 23 acres 1 rood and 13 perches.<sup>504</sup> In 1932 the land was enlarged to 38 acres 3 roods 38 perches with this extra land being reclaimed from the adjacent swampland.

The first Cairns Show was presented by CAPMA in 1891 and included the display of exhibits and the judging of livestock. It was held on a twelve-acre reserve between James and Thomas Streets. In 1899, the Cairns Show relocated to a site on Mulgrave Road, in the approximate location of the current Woree Tavern. It appears that shows were not held between 1906 and 1915, however renewed public interest lead to intermittent shows being held at the Woree Racecourse in 1916, 1922, 1923 and 1924.

During the 1920s the land was being prepared for sports use although this work progressed very slowly, possibly due to land reclamation issues. It was intended that sports would take place at these grounds rather than at Norman Park, but sports continued at Norman Park for quite some time particularly as the war created military encampments in both parks.

In 1931 a public meeting was held in an attempt to revive the Cairns Show and a committee was subsequently formed. The first show at Parramatta Park was held in the same year and a purpose-built pavilion was constructed. In July 1932 some 2,000 members of the public attended a working bee to improve the grounds for the show, which was to commence in the following week. They were confronted on arrival by unemployed itinerants who inhabited the grounds and a riot ensued. They were subsequently removed and the work proceeded.

The Percy Pease Pavilion and the David Headrick Grandstand were constructed in 1936 as the most substantial of the buildings erected for the Association. The Armed Forces took control of the showground in 1941, and shows were not held again until 1946. During Cyclone Agnes in 1956, the roof of the Hedrick Grandstand was damaged causing it to be rebuilt in a simplified gabled form without its feature gablets on the front slope. The de Jarlais Pavilion, built with voluntary labour and opened in 1967, has been subsequently altered and expanded. The Fred Moule Pavilion replaced the Percy Pease and Stillman Trade Pavilions. Shows now continue to be held in July each year.

Some sports were subsequently moved to the Barlow Park Sports Ground on the Spence Street end of the site as well as an Australian Rules football field on Mulgrave Road in Westcourt, currently known as Cazaly's. Barlow Park is used for athletics and rugby league and a 400-seat stadium was constructed there in 1987.

The Cairns Australian Football League formed in 1955, with the South Cairns and the North Cairns teams being formed in the following year. In 1957 the CAFL purchased some swampland on Mulgrave Road for

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<sup>504</sup> Government Gazette, 6 September 1924

£1225 and they progressively cleared and filled this to form a football oval. In June 1969 the CAFL opened a social club building then subsequently purchased a grandstand, shades and seating from Brisbane to create the current arrangement. The ground is also used for national and international cricket events.

## Public Baths

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries public baths were built as a place of ablution. Swimming was also undertaken as a sport and the Cairns Amateur Swimming Club was formed soon after privately owned floating sea baths were erected at the end of a new pier near the Customs jetty in the late 1880s. These baths took the form of a floating caged area, designed by the architect Mr French.<sup>505</sup> A long editorial plea on the need for 50 swimming (and washing) baths, which appeared in *The Cairns Post* in May 1887, may have led to this proposal. Another report the following year indicated that the baths were in operation, albeit requiring extra work to be undertaken as described:

*An impression being prevalent that there has been a large amount of money expended on the Cairns floating-baths owing to the design proving defective, we find upon enquiry that such is not the case. On the baths itself no extra of any kind has been done, but the architect finding that if the baths were placed nearer the shore the water would be muddy and unpleasant, wisely resolved to place them in the deep water where the scour of the tides always keeps the water clean. In order to do this the gang-way had to be extended about 120 feet longer, and in order to make matters still more secure he added another anchor and chain, these two items being the total extras.<sup>506</sup>*

These baths were washed downstream in March 1888. Steps were taken to secure the structure but a storm subsequently washed it away. Thereafter there was concern that Cairns again had no public baths available for washing and sport.

*The Cairns Post* of 1897 carried the following editorial piece;

*The Post's Diamond Jubilee suggestion is this - invite subscriptions for the erection of Public Baths. What could be finer or more pleasing to Her Majesty than, in after years, when looking back upon her Record Reign celebrations, to call to mind that was the year when her many Cairns subjects first washed themselves. Architect French need not design them this time, and neither need they get washed away. Joking apart, the idea commands itself to us with the full force of carefully thought out conviction. Cairns, the great agricultural pivot of the North, and no public baths!<sup>507</sup>*

New baths had been erected by 1903 and these were contained in a fixed caged area at the end of a pier in much the same area as the floating baths were erected. *The Cairns Post* described them in 1907:

*The advent of the warm weather has brought about an increased influx of bathers to the Cairns baths, and Mr. A. Meyer, the proprietor, has recently been improving, extending and elaborating the accommodation. Freshly painted, scrupulously clean, the rooms well provided with bathing accessories, and the baths themselves deepened and cleaned regularly, it is a treat to be appreciated to take advantage of the facilities thus offered to residents and visitors for a dip in the briny. Separate baths are provided for children, and special accommodation, including a toilet and dressing room for ladies.<sup>508</sup>*

<sup>505</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 31 August 1887, p 2, report that a number of residents have taken up shares for the new baths to be run by the Cairns Floating Baths Company Ltd

<sup>506</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 25 February 1888, p 2

<sup>507</sup> *Morning Post*, 8 June 1897, p 2

<sup>508</sup> *The Cairns Morning Post*, 28 October 1907, p 4

The baths were seriously damaged by storms in 1919 and repaired by volunteer labour over the 1920-21 year. The Harbour Board was involved in pile driving<sup>509</sup> and volunteer labour fixed battens and cleaned the area. An official reopening occurred on 15 November 1921<sup>510</sup> with a night swimming carnival. The baths were reported to be 75 feet x 50 feet in size.<sup>511</sup> These baths were damaged by a cyclone in mid February 1927<sup>512</sup> and this time closed permanently.

A meeting between the Cairns City Council and the Cairns Harbour Board was held in September 1928 to select a new site for a Council-built public baths.<sup>513</sup> Council Engineer Mr Nicholson prepared plans for baths on the new site in 1930<sup>514</sup> and as result Cairns finally obtained a baths complex befitting the size of the city. This new pool complex, with two-storey timber building, was erected on the Esplanade between Spence and Wharf Streets. The pool was a substantial 150 feet long by 50 feet wide, contained 283,000 gallons of seawater and could hold 200 bathers at any one time.

These baths remained in use until the 1960s when the North Cairns Tobruk Pool opened in 1962. The old pool operated as an oceanarium for some years until it was finally demolished.<sup>515</sup>



Figure 57 The seawater baths enclosed by timber batten work at the end of the pier. Source SLQ

<sup>509</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 27 August 1921, p 5

<sup>510</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 15 November 1921, p 4

<sup>511</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 12 September 1921, p 4

<sup>512</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 15 February 1927, p 5

<sup>513</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 12 September 1928, p 4

<sup>514</sup> *The Cairns Post* 16 July 1930, p 4

<sup>515</sup> A Hudson, *Growing up with Cairns*, p 146





*Figure 58 Municipal baths of 1932, view from the Esplanade. Source SLQ*

### *North Cairns Tobruk Pool*

In 1956, the Rats of Tobruk Association wrote a letter to the Cairns Council advising that they wanted to assist in the construction of an Olympic-sized swimming pool to perpetuate the memory of those who fell in the siege of Tobruk. In response to the letter the Council formed a committee to organise a public appeal for the swimming pool and work commenced in 1960. The pool cost £85,000, with £3,000 contributed by the Rats of Tobruk Association and was officially opened by Mayor Chataway on 24 March 1962. Edwin Orchard and Jack McElroy have been identified as the architects responsible for the design of the pool.<sup>516</sup>

The original pool complex comprised the main 50-metre pool, a children's pool and a circular wading pool. The ground layout allowed for the addition of a diving pool and a manager's residence when finances became available. The Cairns Amateur Swimming Club offered £3-4,000 for the construction of an office and seating accommodation, which were proposed for construction in 1962-63.

The construction of the complex, which included an Olympic-sized pool, reflects the increased interest in recreational and competitive swimming following the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. The swimming pool also provided a safer venue than local rivers and the ocean, particularly the seasons when stingers and jellyfish threatened.

The swimming pool is an example of a functional war memorial, which contrasts with the purely symbolic war memorials which followed World War One. After World War Two memorials, which were combined with a use such as public buildings, were prevalent. Another Tobruk Memorial Pool was built in Townsville in 1951.

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<sup>516</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 26 March 1962



Figure 59 Tobruk Pool 2010. Source heritage ALLIANCE 2010.

## Dance Halls

Lannoy House was designed by Hill and Taylor Architects and built by TB O'Meara and Sons in 1928 for £12,000. The owner of the building was Octave Lannoy. Lannoy was the proprietor of the 'Cairns Argus' newspaper in the first decade of the 1900s, but later moved to Sydney. Mazlins Limited, a company of drapers, originally leased the ground floor of the building. The upper floor of Lannoy House was used as a dance hall known as the 'Trocadero'. The dance hall included a raised dais for the orchestra and a railed off dance floor set on rubber blocks at the centre of the hall. Around the outside of the dance floor were tables and walls panelled with polished timber and mirrors. The fibro cement ceiling was decorated with latticed panels. Other features included one of the earliest electric refrigerators in Cairns, large electric fans, variable coloured lighting and a balcony for patrons on the side of the building adjoining the Palace Theatre to Lake Street. The Trocadero was leased to Jack Sheehy and was a popular dance venue until after World War II when the directors of Mazlins took over the lease and used the space for storage.

## Horse Racing

The first mention of the Cairns Jockey Club was in April 1884 when *The Cairns Post* reported that:

*It is much to be regretted there is not sufficient enterprise amongst our leading citizens to establish a "Cairns Jockey Club." Such an institution properly, managed-and in-good hands would considerably benefit the town. If regular races are held it brings visitors to the town. Money is circulated to the benefit of the tradespeople and others.... It is to be hoped some effort will be made of forming a club which when completed will enable the members to make application to the Government for a reserve of land with which to make a race-course.<sup>517</sup>*

Three months later, the following announcement was made in *The Cairns Post*:

<sup>517</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 29 May 1884, p 2

*I have been requested by several leading residents of Cairns to call a Meeting for the purpose of forming a Jockey Club, and in the application to the Government to grant a Racecourse Reserve. All those interested will kindly meet on WEDNESDAY, the 23rd instant, at the Mining Exchange Hotel, at 5 p.m.<sup>518</sup>*

In October 1884, a CJC race meeting was proposed. The Committee of the CJC announced that they had chartered the S.S. *Bee* to convey passengers to and from the racecourse at that time located some 13 kilometres distance from Cairns at a place known as "The Eight Mile" or "Fretwell's" due to the nearby Fretwell's Hotel. This racecourse of 130 acres was located between the confluence of Skeleton and Blackfellow's Creeks.

In April 1885, the CJC held another meeting to consider the racecourse question.

*The land was granted for this purpose, and marked on the official plan of the town, but through some blunder of the department it was subsequently thrown open for selection. Mr. Smith, who has interested himself in securing the property for the club, stated that he was in receipt of telegram from Mr. McArdle now in Brisbane that having interviewed the Deputy Surveyor-General, that gentleman promised to send instructions by next mail to Mr. Behan to have the original reserve surveyed. It was then decided to wait before taking any further steps."*

An article in *The Cairns Post* in 1887 described how the CJC

*is now practically defunct, and whilst other towns in the North are arranging for race meetings, Cairns is left out in the cold and must depend upon other clubs for sport that we ought to be well able to provide for ourselves. The causes which led to the downfall of the C.J.C. are many, and are all such as might have been averted had proper discrimination been shown when the club was first formed in the election of a competent staff of stewards, and what is still more important, a secretary at once careful, business-like, and energetic, with a thorough knowledge of all matters pertaining to the sport of horse-racing, from our position as one of the leading centres of Northern Queensland, from our population, and from the affluent condition of the district, who should possess the most prosperous club of any place in the North, but to our shame, be it said, we have no club, or worse than that, having had a club have allowed it to become defunct from want of proper management, and now nothing but the most vigorous efforts on the part of those interested will enable us to have a meeting this year at all. However, we are not disposed to waste time in singing a dirge over the moribund society, but would at once urge the sporting people of the Cairns district to take immediate action, and form a meeting to be held at the most convenient date. It can just be done, and only just, and to bring the matter to a successful issue steps must be taken at once, today, to call a gathering of the lovers of the pastime to arrange, a programme of events and a prize list, appoint a president and secretary, and take all further proceedings which may be deemed necessary in the matter...As we have said, it can be done, and should if energy and judgement are brought to bear, and as soon as a properly constituted club is arranged a proper course should be obtained at some spot, should it be found accessory to alter the present site, along the railway line. If properly fenced and made it would pay handsomely, and should bring at least £100 every meeting All we say is, act, and that at once, and a successful affair will certainly result.<sup>519</sup>*

The club changed its name to the Cairns Mulgrave Jockey Club in 1902.

In February 1911, Council applied for this racecourse to be given over as a cemetery and put such a request to the Lands Commissioner. This application was granted and the racecourse was subsequently relocated to a site on the south side of the city.

<sup>518</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 17 July 1884, p 3

<sup>519</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 May 1887, p 2

The Cairns Mulgrave Jockey Club Annual Meeting was held on the 14th and 15th July 1911 *on their new course at Woree... New track. New grandstand. Big improvements.*<sup>520</sup> The CMJC has continued to occupy these grounds, but the original timber and metal buildings, including a small public grandstand, a two storey racing stewards' pavilion with viewing stand, and a members pavilion, have long been demolished. All the present structures have been built in concrete block. A viewing stand, imitating one of the historic stands, was constructed at the south end of the group of buildings in the 1960s.



*Figure 60 Cairns Motorcycle Club's 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of 1930 at the Woree Racecourse. In the background are the public grandstand (LHS) and (presumably) the Members Pavilion (RHS) both demolished.*  
Source SLQ

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<sup>520</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 14 July 1911, p 3

## 10. ESTABLISHING SCHOOLS AND PLACES OF LEARNING IN CAIRNS AND ITS REGION

School education became compulsory in Queensland under the *Education Act* of 1875.<sup>521</sup> The State became responsible for free secular education with a curriculum that included arithmetic, grammar, reading, writing, drill and gymnastics. From 1875 to 1957 education was under the control of the Department of Public Instruction and after that was transferred to the Department of Education.<sup>522</sup>

### 10.1 Primary Schooling

While primary schooling was compulsory, full time attendance was not until a proclamation was made in 1900.<sup>523</sup> This only required sixty days of attendance in each half-year, but this increased to daily attendance requirements in 1912.<sup>524</sup>

In the 1890s the public attitude towards schooling tended to be apathetic, with the requisite for many children to complete long hours of work before and after school resulting in a lack of concentration when in attendance. This was particularly prevalent in both agricultural and urban working class areas.

In 1896 there were 763 government primary schools in operation in Queensland with an almost even distribution between State schools and provisional schools.<sup>525</sup> The government had great difficulty establishing schools in more remote areas of the State and schools were often opened then closed and sometimes re-opened due to the fluctuation of enrolments.

#### *Cairns Central State School*

Schooling was held in a private residence until the first government school was established in Cairns. At first the Government intended to establish a provisional school in Cairns although there was resistance to this. The State School was established on Section X of the town reserve, this being land initially set aside from sale and then later declared a Crown Reserve (GG1882.2.265) under the jurisdiction of the Secretary for Public Instruction. Aplin, Abbott, Florence and Lake Streets bound the site.

Tenders for clearing and fencing the land were called in August 1884.<sup>526</sup> When the school opened in 1885 it was reported that about 90 pupils attended the school, and it was also noted that a new building would be needed to allow for the separation of boys from girls. The school's administrative committee continued to pressure the Education Department for the enlargement of the school during 1889 when the school had just over one hundred pupils. In *The Cairns Post* it was noted

*That the Education Department be again written to, requesting them to make provision for increased attendance by enlarging the school by adding another wing.*<sup>527</sup>

In 1892, in a report of schools published by the Department for the 1890 year, the Cairns State School fared reasonably well. It was reported that:

<sup>521</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 201

<sup>522</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 201

<sup>523</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 201

<sup>524</sup> Presumably this was 5 days a week.

<sup>525</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 201

<sup>526</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 7 August 1884, p 3

<sup>527</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 16 Mar 1889, p 2





*Cairns State School shows an average daily attendance of 187 children (100 boys and 87 girls) against 154 children (84 boys and 70 girls) for 1890. Expenditure for 1891 amounts to £632 13s 1d for salaries and allowances, and £12 10s building expenses. The staff of instructors consist of a head teacher, two assistants and two pupil teachers, a total of five. The Cairns School, by the gazetted table of schools of the colony, has the highest class of any, the discipline is reported very good, the general condition very satisfactory, and the progress good. The attendance, in proportion to the enrolment is shown as being very good.<sup>528</sup>*

Other local schools were also included in the report, stating that:

*Kamerunga State School shows an average daily attendance of 41 children (21 boys and 20 girls), against precisely the same figures for 1890. Expenditure for 1891, £344 11s 10d for salaries and allowances, and £1 10s 6d repairs etc. One master does the entire work.*

*Blackfellow's Creek Provisional School shows an average daily attendance of 25 children (14 boys and 11 girls), against 17 children (10 boys and 7 girls) for 1890. There is only one master, and the expenditure for salaries and allowances amount only to £94 3s 8d.<sup>529</sup>*

By 1897 the school population had increased significantly. It was recorded that:

*There are 257 children on the roll of the Cairns State School, with an average daily attendance of 193 for last month, or an increase of 30 per cent as compared with May of 1896. The accommodation is hardly equal to the demands made upon it, and if this attendance keeps up, additions will have to be made to the buildings. An additional teacher is also wanted badly at the school.<sup>530</sup>*

The school continued to grow with perpendicular wings added to the original building, and then a series of buildings added in parallel by the Public Works Department.

By the time the school closed in December 1994, all the timber buildings had been replaced by a large two storey brick building sited diagonally across the block with an entry on the Aplin and Lake Street corner. This building was completed in a palazzo style with a large rusticated render entry pavilion in the centre of the long brick elevation. The school land was sold for development after the geographic centre of the school population moved further west and south into the post war suburbs.

#### *Cairns North State School ( Edge Hill State School)*

Established in 1917 as the Edge Hill State School, this school was renamed the Cairns North State School in 1939 when a new school (Edge Hill Primary) was opened in 1940 at Pease Street, Edge Hill. The idea of an Edge Hill School had been raised by a public meeting in 1915 and by March 1916 the town council had approved sale of land in Sheridan and Arthur Streets to the Education Department for the establishment of the school. The Public Works Department called tenders in May 1916 for the building construction.

The school was a small high set timber structure with a gabled roof and two side verandahs. It was realised, even at the opening, that the pupil numbers were likely to surpass that provided for in the original building. A photograph of the 1918 class shows more than 60 children in attendance and two female teachers. A short time later the school population was over 100 with a single male teacher. By World War

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<sup>528</sup> *Cairns Post*, 18 June 1892, p 2

<sup>529</sup> *Cairns Post*, 18 June 1892, p 2

<sup>530</sup> *The Cairns Morning Post*, 9 June 1897, p2

Two there were three similar buildings on the site and these were used as accommodation for the Victorian Army brigade of Dockers and then as an Australian Army Military Hospital and a research facility.

The School closed in the late 2000s, and in 2009-10 the school was demolished. The North Cairns Community Health centre has since been constructed on the site in 2010-11.

#### *Parramatta Park State School*

Parramatta Park State School opened in 1927 and comprised three timber high set gabled roofed school wings. Each wing contained three class rooms and the school was constructed to accommodate 400 pupils. After the end of the war and the return of many residents who had left for the south in 1942, the school population increased again in 1948. A number of timber buildings were added to the site in 1958.

#### *Blackfellows Creek, near Edmonton (Hambledon State School)*

Construction of the Blackfellows Creek school was initially proposed on land south of Blackfellows Creek, however it was subsequently sited on Special Lease 186 on the northside of the creek, adjacent to J. J. Swallows tramway line. The school commenced as a 'Provisional' in a small, single room timber building with a front verandah and set low to the ground. It was subsequently moved to Edmonton in 1910 and sited on land then owned by CSR, and previously owned by J.J. Swallow. The building was subsequently extended to the west and set up high to allow the use of the space under the building. Like its predecessor, the extended school façade was symmetrically arranged with a central exit stair. A two storey office section was added to the front of the building in c1940 and the central stair was replaced by two sets of stairs running either side of the new office 'tower'. A large two storey extension was completed at the north east corner of the building in c1950 and further additions were made over the following two decades. Both these buildings formed the school's primary frontage on Mill Road.

By the 1970s the school had grown to become a complex of timber buildings. In more recent years the whole of the original building and its two storey extension of the 1940s was relocated to the west of the site to allow construction of a new school building along Hambledon Road. The original building survives in part although alterations have changed or concealed the original appearance of the building.

## 10.2 Secondary Schooling

From 1875 the minimum school leaving age was 12 while the minimum education required in most vocations was to the end of Class 4.<sup>531</sup> Many children did not go on to complete higher primary education (Classes 5 to 8). In 1912 an amendment to the *Education Act* raised the minimum leaving age to 14 years. Under the *Education Act* of 1964 the minimum age was 15 years (Grade 10 of High School).

In 1896 only a small number of students received a secondary education and pupils who aspired to a higher education were able to attend one of the ten grammar schools or an approved secondary school (including church schools) in the State.<sup>532</sup> Attendance was generally for four years from 14 years of age.

In 1912 secondary schools were first established in Warwick, Gympie, Bundaberg, Mount Morgan, Mackay and Charters Towers. The Brisbane Technical College was established in 1882 and provided the city with secondary education.<sup>533</sup> Secondary departments were located at the primary school where less than 25

<sup>531</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 204

<sup>532</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 213

<sup>533</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 213

pupils were retained. An example of these schools, known as 'high top' schools, was set up near Cairns at Herberton.<sup>534</sup>

From 1928 to 1947 thirty brick schools were built in Queensland by the State, twice the number constructed in the preceding twenty years. School buildings from this period tended to be similar in appearance, of two or three storeys with central entry, flanking symmetrical wings and hipped roofs.

#### *Cairns High School*

Until 1960, the Cairns State High School was the only purpose built State high school north of Townsville. It was initially established in Florence Street in 1917 as the secondary department of the Cairns Boys' State School.<sup>535</sup> In 1924, the Cairns Technical College opened in Sheridan Street with two storey timber classrooms set diagonally back from the street frontages with the entry at Sheridan and Upward Street.

The land for this site (a Technical School and High School) had been set aside as early as 1916 for this purpose. In 1939, the High School and Technical College were amalgamated and accommodated within the newly completed three-storey, known as 'Block A', on the corner of Sheridan and Upward Streets. This building, designed by the Public Works Department, was completed using day labour under the policies of the State Government to provide relief during the Great Depression. Adjacent timber classrooms, which had been used by the Technical College, were then utilized as an intermediate school. The building ('Block A') was completed in an Italianate Palazzo style with a high base course and giant order pilasters supporting a deep cornicing pediment. It is the only high school building in Queensland built to the footpath in a manner that would be expected in an inner city environment.



*Figure 61 Cairns State High School in the final stage of erection, 1939. Source QSA*

Other buildings were added to the school, including 'Block C' (Common Room and Drafting Room) in 1952-53, 'Block J' (Workshops) in 1954. 'Blocks B, D, E, G and H' in the 1960s, 'Block F' in 1979, the Home Economics Block in 1988, Block L in 1993 and the Student Centre in 2001. A new assembly hall was built in the 1960s to replace an earlier hall that was damaged by a cyclone in 1956.

<sup>534</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 213

<sup>535</sup> Cairns Historical Society, *Photographic Memories – Glimpses of Cairns Life over 125 years*, p 45

### *Private Schools*

A Catholic school was established on Minnie Street in Cairns in 1890. It was initially staffed by lay teachers, before the Sisters of Mercy from St Mary's Convent in Cooktown arrived in October 1892. St Joseph's Convent was built in Abbott Street between 1912 and 1914 to house these Sisters, and this replaced earlier cottages on the site.

In 1923, the Sisters of Mercy established a school in Gordonvale, originally dedicated to St Alphonsus, but later known as St Michael's. In 1926, they established St Rita's Convent and School in Babinda.<sup>536</sup> The Sisters of Mercy withdrew from Babinda in 1988 and Gordonvale in 1990, reflecting the global decline of the religious order, and staffing was handed over to lay staff.

It was not until later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the Church of England established a school in Cairns. Trinity Anglican School was opened in 1983, after the Diocese was presented with the idea of establishing an Anglican High School at Cairns in 1980. Campuses are located in White Rock and Kewarra Beach.

A third private school, the Peace Lutheran College opened in 1994 on land purchased in Kamerunga in 1991. It had its origin in the Hopevale settlement established as the Cape Bedford mission by the Lutheran Church in 1886 and re-established as a Lutheran Mission in 1949 after World War Two. In 1988 the Hopevale Mission Board and the Far North Queensland Lutheran Mission Committee met to discuss the possibility of a Lutheran school in North Queensland.<sup>537</sup>

### 10.3 Tertiary Education

The main campus of *James Cook University of North Queensland* was established in Townsville in April 1970. From 1961 it had been established as an annexe of the University of Queensland known as University College. In 1987 the university established a presence in Cairns with a campus within the TAFE Institute, but there was pressure for the University to establish itself as a separate entity on its own site. In 1995 the University moved to its present location at Smithfield, some 15 kilometres north of the Cairns city centre. The University's name was shortened to *James Cook University* in 1998 and has continued to expand its Smithfield campus with new dental and tropical health laboratories constructed in 2010-11.

<sup>536</sup> Mulgrave Shire Historical Society Bulletin No. 205, Feb 1998 & No. 206, March 1998  
[www2.stritasbabinda.qld.edu.au/index.php?vP=106&vC=109](http://www2.stritasbabinda.qld.edu.au/index.php?vP=106&vC=109)

<sup>537</sup> .[www.plc.edu.au](http://www.plc.edu.au)

## 11. PROVIDING HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES

### 11.1 Health services

The local government was largely responsible for health in the nineteenth century. Epidemics often resulted in health legislation with various acts introduced from 1872.<sup>538</sup> The identification of the mosquito as the carrier of numerous infectious diseases, resulted in the establishment of a Mosquito Control Section of the Department of Health, and in 1912 a branch office of the Department was established in Townsville as a fear of smallpox spread. The existing sanitary organisations in tropical Queensland were deemed inadequate for epidemics at the time. In 1936 the Health Department had established branch offices in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and Toowoomba.<sup>539</sup>

In the nineteenth century Queensland hospitals were managed by committees which were elected by subscribers, and were used only by those very ill or highly contagious. The latter were separated from others in isolation wards. Quarantine stations were set up by the Colonial Government on coastal islands after 1896 and lepers in the Cairns region were relocated by boat to quarters set up at False Cape prior to 1889.<sup>540</sup> Established as a temporary station, it became a more permanent facility known as Leper Bay and was used for a number of years.<sup>541</sup>

In 1923 hospital districts and boards were established under the *Hospitals Act*, with funding guaranteed, and by 1936, 37 hospital boards and 112 public hospitals had been established. By 1953-54 there were 54 district hospital boards statewide, administering 127 public hospitals.<sup>542</sup> 13 regional health authorities replaced the hospital boards in 1991. The number of public hospitals and nursing homes increased from 59 in 1895 to 204 in 1994-95.<sup>543</sup>

In 1944 free hospital treatment in public hospitals was made available through government subsidies and this was available until the Federal Government Medibank scheme in 1975. Private hospitals were established in many centres by church organisations, doctors and nurses, and when records were first available in 1937 there were 178 private hospitals in the State.<sup>544</sup>

#### *Cairns Hospital*

It has been recorded that the first hospital in Cairns was an informal one built in the late 1870s on the Esplanade between Shields and Aplin Streets.<sup>545</sup> Subscriptions for erecting and maintaining a hospital were collected from early 1877<sup>546</sup> and the resulting building was 50 feet by 20 feet and contained a number of rooms.<sup>547</sup> Its location is unsurprising as the land originally set aside in 1877 for the hospital was at the far end of the underdeveloped town and by 1882 development had not progressed significantly within the original forty sections of land making up the Cairns township.

<sup>538</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 237

<sup>539</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 241

<sup>540</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 9 November 1889, p 2

<sup>541</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, pp 219-20

<sup>542</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 243

<sup>543</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 246

<sup>544</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 246

<sup>545</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, pp 120-2

<sup>546</sup> *Cooktown Courier*, 3 March 1877

<sup>547</sup> D Jones, *Trinity Phoenix, A History of Cairns*, p 121



In 1884 a deputation requested the Minister for Works to spend money already allocated for the erection of a hospital in Cairns. This appears to have occurred as the present hospital land was gazetted in 1886 for hospital purposes. A photograph, also dated 1886, shows a timber building in an H block arrangement, highset near the edge of sea mangroves, and this is the first hospital building completed on this reserved site. This was perhaps an unfortunate location given the proximity of the ocean, the littoral mangroves and the mosquito population, which would have been ever present.

The original timber buildings were replaced by a substantial brick hospital building that was completed in July 1912. The building was a very large two storey linear building in a Queen Anne style with extensive two storey verandahs. The architect, Harvey Draper, won a competition for the design of the hospital in 1908, and an article appeared in *The Cairns Morning Post* describing the layout of the building.<sup>548</sup> Tenders were not called until August 1910,<sup>549</sup> with the project almost faltering due to the prices received. A symmetrical administration block was subsequently erected in front of the 1912 building, with works commencing in 1927 to the design of the Public Works Department. This early brick building, and its extension, survived into the 1960s.

In 1912 a 5-acre Leper Station reserve was set up to the east of the present day Anderson Street Cemetery reserve, although no evidence of its specific use has been found.<sup>550</sup> The new Cairns hospital building contained an infectious diseases ward, so it is presumed that once released from hospital, lepers were housed at the reserve. The Commonwealth ostensibly controlled these infectious diseases, although the separate States administered the hospitalisation.

*The Cairns Post* revealed few cases of leprosy in the area, with just one person recorded as having the disease in 1914. This patient was reportedly held at the infectious diseases hospital that had been established in McLeod Street. A reserve (R359) had been set-aside in this street for this purpose and a building was erected in 1909-10,<sup>551</sup> however no drawings or photographs of this have been sighted and the reserve files barely mention the land use.

These facilities at McLeod and Gatton Streets were demolished to make way for the power station that was built in 1925. Cairns was subsequently bereft of an infectious diseases hospital until a new facility was completed in 1928 at Lake and Grove Streets. Discussion of a new infectious ward was revived in November 1939 between the Cairns City and Shire Councils. The new facility was to be erected adjacent to the Cairns Hospital and the costs divided between the City and the Shire. At a similar time (1940) a large hospital morgue was erected at the rear of the hospital site.<sup>552</sup> A two storey nurses' home on Kirwin Street and The Esplanade was completed in 1936.

<sup>548</sup> *The Cairns Morning Post*, 24 November 1908, p 2

<sup>549</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 8 August 1910, p 4

<sup>550</sup> Shown as R269 on City of Cairns map, Dept of Public Lands, Govt Printing Office Brisbane, 1933. See also GG1912.499

<sup>551</sup> Reserve Files for the Electricity Board site at McLeod Street, held by DERM

<sup>552</sup> M Balodis, *Drill till you get blood! : Cairns Hospital 1878-1950*



Figure 62 Cairns' first hospital, single storey timber buildings set on the foreshore. Source SLQ

Figure 63 Cairns' second brick hospital designed by Harvey Draper and opened 1912. The foreshore had been reclaimed by the time the new hospital was erected. Source Uni of Qld

## Other Hospitals

### Cairns Private

The Calvary Hospital in Abbott Street was operated by a Catholic nursing order, the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary<sup>553</sup> and was the second hospital in Cairns when established in the 1950s. It was established in the existing private house *Embo* that was built in 1906 for Abijah Murray. It was subsequently sold to the Munro family in 1913 and was the home of the Munro-Martin stepsisters, who became well known in Cairns. It was sold in April 1951 after their deaths and was remodelled and equipped as a private hospital for 27 patients.<sup>554</sup> *Embo* was demolished in the mid-1980s.<sup>555</sup>

### Herries Private Hospital

Herries' Private Hospital was situated at 180 McLeod Street, Cairns, opposite the Pioneer Cemetery. It is an enclosed wooden building moved to site from Cooktown in 1920. It was owned by Janet Abercombie Herries, a nurse and midwife, who ran it as a private hospital from 1921 to 1938.<sup>556</sup> From 1914 there were four nurse training hospitals established in Queensland and nurse Herries is likely to have attended one of these.<sup>557</sup> In 1917 the Cairns Post reported that Council approved the application of a general hospital for nurses Gregory, Davis and Herries.<sup>558</sup> In 1918 Matron Herries opened one of the first private hospitals in Cairns, located on Bunda Street. The hospital cared for nine or ten patients at a time, both maternity and general.

The land on McLeod Street was first purchased at auction on 20 September 1888 for £27. By 1918 Mr. Francis Albert Blucher had purchased the land and in 1920 the building in question was transported from Cooktown. It is suggested that this building had originally been a fashion house known as "Miss Timony's Premises". This is borne out by the truncated front of the building which gives the appearance of being a

<sup>553</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 17 September 1951, p 1

<sup>554</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 17 September 1951, p 1

<sup>555</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 3 November 2006, p 19

<sup>556</sup> Dept of Environment and Resource Management, Queensland Heritage Register

<sup>557</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 244

<sup>558</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 March 1917, p 4

corner business premises. In 1920 Matron Herries leased the premises from Mr. Blucher. On 20 December 1921, the Cairns Town Council records the registration of a private hospital by Janet Abercrombie Herries.

The site was later sold to Mrs. Herries on 26 May 1924. Many of Cairns older residents were born in Matron Herries hospital. During the 1927 cyclone, the building was extensively damaged. After the cyclone, the upper verandah was enclosed with windows and alternate wooden louvres and the roof was lined. The hospital was closed in 1939 when Matron Herries retired and she lived there until her death on 25 October 1958. Charles, Mrs. Herries' last surviving son, lived in the building until his death in 1996. The building is on the Queensland Heritage Register.

### *Gordonvale Hospital*

A committee was established in 1920 to erect a hospital in Gordonvale 'to the memory of those who gave in the war.' The Governor General subsequently opened the Soldiers Memorial Hospital in 1926<sup>559</sup> with the unveiling of memorial entrance gates. The initial hospital comprised three buildings connected by covered ways - a general ward block, a maternity ward and nurse's quarters. None of these three original buildings or the memorial entrance gates is extant.<sup>560</sup>

The small timber hospital morgue, which remains on the hospital site, was formerly the Gordonvale Police Morgue built by the Department of Public Works in 1915. It was relocated to its current site at the hospital in 1926.<sup>561</sup> It has been reported to be the oldest surviving timber morgue in Queensland<sup>562</sup> The architect S. G. Barnes who also designed the Babinda Nurses' Quarters and the Gordonvale, Atherton and Edmonton Ambulance Stations designed the nurses' quarters, built c1947. The central hospital building was designed by J. R. Wray of the Government Architect's office and built in 1958.<sup>563</sup> Recent additions have made its original design unrecognisable and further hospital extensions have been carried out in the 2008-2010 period.

### *Babinda Hospital and Nurses' Quarters*

The first Babinda Hospital was a timber and iron building constructed in 1923. A maternity unit was built in 1925 and nurses' quarters and a morgue in 1926. The morgue is the only extant building from this 1920s period. A photograph of the original nurses' quarters shows it as a single-storey timber and iron building with verandahs.<sup>564</sup>

A plaque on the second maternity hospital (now administration and outpatients) states that it was opened in 1948. The residence of the director of nursing (or matron's house) was originally the domestic quarters, built c.1950. The second nurses' quarters were completed in 1951-52.<sup>565</sup>

The ward block at the Babinda hospital was opened in 1969, accommodating 23 patients. A solarium was also included for convalescing patients and overflow. The architect was Mr P. Edwards.<sup>566</sup> An extension to

<sup>559</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 22 July 1926, p 5

<sup>560</sup> Queensland Health Heritage Survey, PN36/1

<sup>561</sup> Department of Public Works Batch File Police Stations, Gordonvale (State Archives of Queensland)

<sup>562</sup> R Riddell, Queensland Health Heritage Survey, 1996, identifies the Babinda Morgue as the oldest timber morgue on its original site although the Gordonvale morgue is earlier

<sup>563</sup> Royal Australian Institute of Architects, *Buildings of Queensland*, p 88

<sup>564</sup> 'Babinda Hospital - 75 years of Service 1923-1998', p 44

<sup>565</sup> 'Babinda Hospital - 75 years of Service 1923-1998', p 44

<sup>566</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 15 December 1969, p 41

the ward block was opened in 1982, providing a nursery, delivery room and operating theatre.<sup>567</sup> The former maternity block was then to be used for administration, outpatients and X-ray.

#### *Health and Infectious Diseases - Malaria, Dengue Fever*

In 1900 it became compulsory to notify the government of cases of certain infectious diseases.<sup>568</sup> In tropical regions of the State, climatic conditions created breeding grounds for insects, particularly mosquitoes, which carry dengue and malarial fevers. Dengue fever was first reported in Rockhampton in 1885 and an outbreak in northern Queensland in 1897 became a major epidemic throughout the colony.<sup>569</sup> Two further epidemics spread down the coast in 1926 and 1941-43, the latter including both Australian and American armed force members.<sup>570</sup> Malaria was also first reported in 1885 and was contracted by Australian World War One soldiers when overseas. In 1942 700 civilian cases of malaria were reported in Cairns alone.<sup>571</sup>

Other fevers in northern Queensland were commonly referred to as coastal fevers and the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine was established in Townsville in 1910 to identify these.<sup>572</sup>

Dr Edward Koch was a pioneer of tropical medicine in Australia who undertook groundbreaking work in malaria research. As medical director of the Cairns Hospital in the late 1880s, Dr Koch established effective local medical services and strong humanitarian ethics in the fledgling township. He was tireless in his efforts to have local swampland cleared and filled and was often seen in the late afternoon instructing gangs of workers to don long sleeves to avoid being bitten. On his death in 1901, a devoted public paid respect at a grand funeral and with a publicly funded monument, originally erected at the intersection of Spence and Abbott Street. It was relocated to a corner of the gardens close by in 1972 to allow for traffic light installation.

#### *Malarial Drainage*

*(See Drainage and Sanitation)*

#### *Ambulance Services (Cairns, Edmonton Babinda and Gordonvale)*

The City Ambulance Transport Brigade (CATB) was formed at a meeting of concerned citizens in Brisbane in September 1892, following the unsatisfactory management of an accident at a horse racing meeting.<sup>573</sup> It was established that the principal object of such a brigade was to render first aid to the wounded and transport the sick and injured to hospital. At this time a horse and cart were used for this purpose.<sup>574</sup> Public use of the ambulance service steadily increased and voluntary subscriptions proved insufficient to meet associated outlays. In 1895, the CATB secured supplementary funding from the Queensland State Government.

During the late 1890s and early 1900s the ambulance service expanded and a number of centres were established throughout Queensland. These included Charters Towers (1900), Townsville (1900), Rockhampton (1901), Warwick (1901), Ipswich (1901), Toowoomba (1902) and Mackay (1903). The

<sup>567</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 20 February 1982, p 43

<sup>568</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 254

<sup>569</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 259

<sup>570</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 259

<sup>571</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 260

<sup>572</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 260

<sup>573</sup> <http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au/about>

<sup>574</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 250

Cairns Ambulance Service was founded in 1904. This initially operated from rented facilities in Lake Street before relocating to a two storey weatherboard building on the corner of Spence and Sheridan Streets in 1907. The Cairns Aerial Ambulance Service was commenced in 1948.<sup>575</sup>

A new ambulance building was constructed on Grafton Street to designs by the architect Harvey Draper.<sup>576</sup> The foundation stone was laid in 1921, with the building finally completed in 1927.<sup>577</sup> The building closed as an ambulance centre in 1995 and was sold when the Cairns Ambulance Station was transferred to Anderson Street. The old building was refurbished for retail and café use on the ground floor shortly after this sale.

Ambulance services commenced in Babinda in 1912. The original buildings, which comprised tents and modest corrugated iron structures, were destroyed by a cyclone in 1918. These were replaced by a single storey weatherboard building, domestic in style, with an enlarged garage for the ambulances. This building was demolished in 1959 and the present building opened on the same site in 1960, at a cost of £12,800. The architects were Orchard & McElroy of Cairns.<sup>578</sup>

The first ambulance centre in Gordonvale was designed by the architect Mr Waters and built on the present site in 1914. In 1910, *The Cairns Post* advertised a *public meeting of all sympathisers and supporters of the formation of a sub-centre of the Cairns Ambulance Brigade at Nelson... The brigade should be well supported at Nelson and its splendid work needs no comment.*<sup>579</sup>

Discussions were held in 1913 concerning a strip of land to house an ambulance centre, and this became a reality in 1914 when land was reserved for this purpose.<sup>580</sup> In 1917 further land to the east was granted and the whole of allotment 4 was granted as a reserve in January 1918. This land was used for horses, a fumigation shed, benzine sheds and housing a motor vehicle. The land was originally half the current size but was increased to allow for turning vehicles and further buildings.

The current Gordonvale Ambulance Station was designed by the architect Sidney G. Barnes and built in 1945-46.<sup>581</sup> Barnes designed other ambulance centres at Edmonton and Atherton in 1951 and 1955 respectively.

## 11.2 Caring for pensioners

A Department of Public Lands' Plan of Cairns shows that Reserve R967 was established on 27 July 1948 'for Local Government (Pensioners' Homes)'. The Government Gazette of 4 September 1948 confirms that the reserve survey had been deposited in the Survey Office.<sup>582</sup> The reserve, on the north-west side of Grove Street and bound along its north-eastern perimeter by Lily Creek, was approximately seven acres in area. The site had earlier been a railway reserve and then a camping reserve.<sup>583</sup>

The plight of pensioners in the Cairns area had been discussed periodically in local newspapers with concern over the availability of affordable housing in the district. In early 1950, a deputation of delegates

<sup>575</sup> Queensland Government, *Queensland Past and Present, 100 Years of Statistics 1896-1996*, p 250

<sup>576</sup> 'Harvey Draper A Cairns Architect', Cairns Historical Society, D11882

<sup>577</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 1 March 1927, p. 5

<sup>578</sup> *History of the Queensland Ambulance*, compiled by Ernest Bradley, 1999, pp 11-13 and 'Stories from Babinda's Past', Mulgrave Historical Society, 2006, p 13

<sup>579</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 11 June 1910, p 4

<sup>580</sup> Reserve File R461, held by DERM

<sup>581</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 27 June 1945, p 4

<sup>582</sup> Government Gazette, 4.9.1948, p. 1678





from the Cairns branch of the Australian Labour Party, were introduced to the mayor and aldermen of the Cairns City Council, to present their case for the Local Council constructing the pensioners cottages rather than being built by the pensioners.<sup>584</sup> They requested that ten single cottages and five married couples cottages be built on the pensioners' reserve. The Council felt that the case was worthy of consideration.

In June 1950 the State Minister for Public Works was approached by Council about the provision of facilities at the reserve for pensioners' homes, however Government took the view that this was the responsibility of the local authority.<sup>585</sup> It was suggested that plans be prepared and the houses built by the local authority with State Treasury providing half the cost of the building works.

In July 1950, the Cairns City Council received a letter stating that:

*These elderly people are living under conditions unworthy of a city the size of Cairns. They are not seeking charity but feel entitled to the provision of huts and lighting on a rental basis... Existing self-built huts would be a danger to life under cyclonic conditions.*<sup>586</sup>

This letter indicates that there were crude, self-built huts on the site prior to the construction of the later cottages.

In 1952, there was once again lobbying for the building of permanent pensioners homes. Speaking during a debate in the Queensland Parliament on estimates for the Health and Home Affairs Department, Mr Wordsworth said that some pensioners in Cairns were living under 'pretty poor conditions'. If the Cairns City Council could not build the homes, the Government was asked to do so, and the suggestion was made that the pensioner's cottages be modelled on those already built at Mareeba.<sup>587</sup> The Mareeba cottages were built by the pensioners themselves.

Drawings for seven pensioner cottages on the Grove Street site were prepared by the Cairns City Council and dated 30 October 1952. In March 1953, it was reported that the City Council would commence work on five pensioners' cottages facing Grove Street, as soon as the wet season had passed.<sup>588</sup> The construction was to cost £3000. A Treasury loan of £750 and a subsidy of £750 assisted with these costs.<sup>589</sup>

The Grove Street Cottages set the pattern for further pensioner housing to be built in Cairns and surrounding areas. Similar cottages for women pensioners were built in Pease Street c1954 and in the same year the Mulgrave Shire Council invited tenders for pensioners' cottages at Yorkeys Knob, Gordonvale, Babinda and Bramston Beach.

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<sup>583</sup> File CNS/9417 Res 798a, held by DERM

<sup>584</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 21 June 1950, p 8

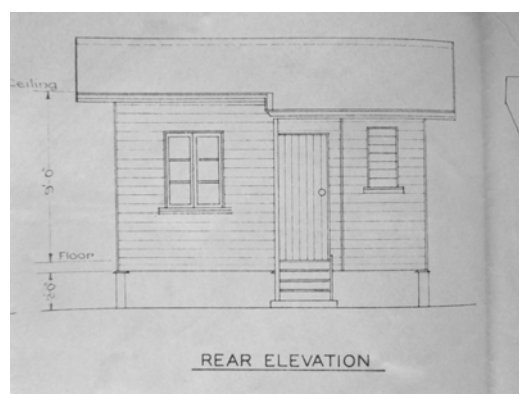
<sup>585</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 16 June 1950, p 5

<sup>586</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 20 July 1950, p 2

<sup>587</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 19 November 1952, p. 5

<sup>588</sup> *The Cairns Post*, 5 March 1953, p. 5

<sup>589</sup> Cairns City Council files on the Grove Street Pensioners' Cottages, dating from 29 September 1952 to 2 April 1954 QSA



*Figure 64 Cairns Pensioner Cottage Standard design by the Cairns City Council in timber with a corrugated asbestos cement roof. Source QSA*

END  
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## APPENDIX A: MAP OF CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA

