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A Multitude of Supporters

An atheist, according to Bishop Fulton Sheen, is a man with no invisible means of support. Fortunately for the Commission, its supporting networks have been far from invisible. As with a theatrical performance, it is the 'stars' who are prominent, yet they are totally dependent on the back-stage crew.

At times, there has been animated debate over whether support services should be pooled or integrated into work teams. In much the same way as with the regionalisation/centralisation debate, the fortunes of the proponents of the opposing positions have waxed and waned.

As the magnitude and complexity of the organisation have increased, the need for support services has likewise grown. The cynical may even ask if it has now reached the stage where the supporting tail is wagging the productive dog!

In the early days of the new Commission, it was recognised that the organisation was there to provide water supplies, and it was organised accordingly. There were obvious needs by way of support – people to manage income and expenditure and pay the staff (Accounts); people to hire, fire and manage the entitlements of the staff (Personnel); people to manage the correspondence and other written material (Records); people to purchase materials and equipment (Stores and Supply); people to manage dealings in land such as purchases and resumptions (Land Settlement); people to maintain equipment and to fabricate components for projects (Workshops); and people to help with the production of correspondence and reports (Typing Pool). As time went by, not only did most of these functions grow in magnitude and

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complexity, other requirements emerged. These included computer technology, data management, science and research, policy development, strategic planning and policy, Cabinet liaison, industry regulation and (heaven forbid!) legal services.

Administrative Services were recognised from the start through the provision of an Assistant Commissioner Administration. He was responsible for a multitude of functions and the 'Administrative Branches' were organised to deliver their respective services. There were also general administrative positions to support the ACA including such titles as Administration Officer, held by Col Llewellyn, Senior Clerk (General Clerical), held by Arthur Payne, Warren White and Rod Liddell, and Investigation Officer, held by Grahame Bertram and Jim Walls. There was a well-established policy of giving new recruits a broad training base and the young people (often starting at age 15) were rotated from branch to branch. Even once the formal rotation finished, movement from branch to branch was very common.

As Robyn Martin in Rockhampton reported *we did rotations with our administration staff. One month you might be responsible for the mail and the filing, the next month just typing, the next month you might be on reception, then keying in to the computer. And the idea of rotating from desk to desk was that if someone was away you could all do their job. You moved your belongings with you each month. That allowed you to be able to slot into their job. And you didn't get bored with having to do the same thing all the time. It made you more multi-skilled.*¹



Rockhampton Regional staff 1984

*(Back row) Rod Dew, Linda Cowley (nee McKeon), Gail Rogers, Gavin Grabam, Jim Barrie,
(Front row) Nigel Kelly, Alan McDougall, Kerry Marler, Mick Merrin*

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The plan was to integrate the staff as quickly as possible and to add them to an effective team. And it worked, as Robyn Martin explained. *All the women were in admin – none in other Departments. We were treated quite well, but you had to earn the respect. You were looked down on when you first started but you could earn the respect. The higher up you went the more respect you got – ‘The Trump’ respected all the people in the office – he was that type of man. You were always doing favours for the bosses. “I just forgot my wife’s birthday present. Can you just nip out and get it?” and all that type of little thing and it all meant that the men did treat you with respect.*²

The interviews conducted with administrative staff for this book cover a wide range of geographic and activity locations and it is usually only in the most senior positions that individual staff are permanently wedded to a particular role. Many clerks have served in the country, on construction sites and in a miscellany of branches.

In part, this was due to the fact that promotions were not easy to obtain and the ceiling on promotions was generally low – as Barry Mewburn commented elsewhere. After Bill Meredith became Assistant Commissioner, the ceiling began to be lifted. It is not clear whether this is entirely due to Bill or was more a sign of the times, but Barry likes to give Bill the credit. *The reasoning was that because there were not good promotional prospects, it was difficult to attract and retain high quality staff – as some put it “If you pay peanuts, you’ll have monkeys.”*³ Gradually, it became possible for staff to aspire to higher office and for new recruits with higher qualifications to be attracted. As well, the distinction between administrative and technical staff began to blur as the Commission moved away from a strict engineering organisation. Even engineers such as the Manager Resource Development Planning, moved on to the Administrative scale!

Such a notion would have been foreign to the organisation during Col Taggart’s time. *The administrative side of the Commission in my day never got really closely involved with policy. I suppose you sat in on a lot of things. You were head of, and responsible for, all the administrative people but the people that you mixed with the most were all professional people. You were the one that was invited to professional dos, you were the one who sat in on meetings. They’d take me along, I guess, as somebody to record and remember while they argued and debated rather than having a real input, but that might have been my nature too. I wasn’t a person to put in my bib too often.*⁴

For Col Taggart, even in the days before Position Descriptions, people’s tasks were clearly defined and they knew what they had to do. *When I got to work I didn’t want a cup of coffee, or a cup of tea, or a talk. I had a chair to sit in and work to do*

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*and that was my nature and my approach and I just felt that everybody else should do the same. I think back now about how little I did for my people.*⁵

Accounts Branch is, of course, an absolutely essential part of any organisation. Fortunately, there are always people who enjoy the work, although we are told that “an economist is someone who found accounting just a little too exciting”.

Bob Adamson was Accountant for a number of years, but when Alec Morris became Assistant Commissioner, Bob was promoted to Secretary. Col Taggart applied for the vacancy as Accountant, really hoping that this would result in a salary increase for him in Mareeba. Although the then Sub-Accountant, Rex Bucknell, expected to get the job, Col was appointed *because I had accounting qualifications, I guess. Rex knew the Commission backwards and would have done the job perfectly every bit as well as I could. The first day I was there Rex came into my office and said, “I’ll do what you tell me, but I’ll tell you nothing.” That was the attitude he took. Regrettably, I never asked him a question for the rest of my days there. Rex did a great job for me in 1966 when decimal currency was introduced. He apparently felt he wanted to do that and I let him do it so he was the fellow who introduced decimal currency into the administrative side of the Commission.*⁶



Lyndal Warren, Sue Gannon and Rosemary Thompson in Accounts Branch, 1980s

Col Taggart saw no need to introduce change. *As Accountant I followed whatever had happened in the past. Apart from the introduction of decimal currency and the introduction of accounting machines, I suppose it just flowed on as it had always done. Perhaps we were getting a bit more money as it was the time of the first Commonwealth grants to the States. I can recall a senior audit inspector coming in to me and saying, “You will get every penny you deserve, but you won’t get a penny more.” Penny was the word he used. But we never had any trouble with Commonwealth grants. We had to put in a certificate four times a year and then a final one at the end of the year and the money rolled in pretty well. I can’t recall any real hassles about it. I guess the Commonwealth money coming in for Bundaberg and various places really made the commission start to hum.*⁷

Fred Haigh had a habit of marking files “Bring up and discuss”. Col Taggart got one of these one day and thought, “*Oh no!*” *This was a task that was completely out of my field and probably Fred was giving it to me to get an insight into something*

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*and I went in with this 'bring up and discuss' and I said, "Mr Haigh, this is going to take me two days to check files and to get any background. I know nothing about it." It took me two hours to get out of his room. I said, "You'd do this in about twenty minutes." It took him three-quarters of an hour, but he did it. After the lecture, he and I did it together, but he was really the one who did it.*⁸

Col Taggart did not remain as Accountant. He succeeded Bob Adamson as Secretary in 1968 and went on to become Assistant Commissioner in 1977. He was succeeded as Accountant by Bill Brannelly, who, in turn, succeeded him as Secretary. Ian Campbell became Accountant. Following the appointment of Tom Fenwick as Commissioner (1986), Ray Sutherland became the Director of Administration and Finance. Other senior staff in the Branch included Sub-Accountants Kev Watson and Ian Hoskins.

Gradually accounting systems became computerised. In much the same way as the old engineers could compute more quickly on a slide rule than the new breed could on the early computers, the old works accountants were ahead of the new game. But in time, they, too, were supplanted.

The new systems were not infallible. Some of the problems were described by Barry Mewburn. *When we were doing water charges by hand, we would get the meter readings, subtract them from what they'd been charged before and charge them the balance including penalties. Then they brought in this really ingenious computer program – except that it led to anomalies. Say in September of one water year (which went from 1 July to 30 June) we sent out a minimum charge for half of their allocation. They had six months to pay, so that had to be paid by the end of March. What happened then was, if we sent an invoice for water use, say, in January for usage above the minimum charge that was due in February. The system worked well if everybody paid both bills. Instead of looking at the latest invoice, it would look at the next date for payment. However, some of them couldn't quite pay both bills and they were quite happy paying a bit of interest on a month or so. But if they came in and paid their minimum charge invoice, the system would wipe out the water use bill first and then charge interest back to the date of the invoice. Finance thought that was 'stiff bikkies'. We had to manually credit the bill they wanted to pay.*

The other interesting anomaly was, if a client was a couple of days late in making a payment, it would charge them interest back to the date of the invoice and there was no discretion. People knew that, so that was fine. But the database was set up so that the interest was paid before the original invoice, leaving arrears in interest for which the computer would issue an invoice. By the time that was paid, there was another, smaller, invoice for interest. It wasn't possible for the water user to ever settle his bill, because he couldn't pay in advance, either. This was really good

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for PR. So what we did was develop our own system incorporating a little sub-program setting a condition that if the interest was paid within thirty days of the invoice, there would be no further interest charges. We used that for years until a programmer in Brisbane thought it was such a good idea, he put it State-wide. Finance heard about it and sent through a sub-sub-program to wipe out our system. At this stage. I sent a very dirty e-mail and eventually they agreed that if the charge was under \$2 it wouldn't be invoiced. However, the program remembered forever, and if it ever got over that \$2, it would promptly send out an invoice going back four, five or six years on that money he had never paid us! That was the mentality of some of the Head Office people.⁹

Once the Commission was incorporated into DPI, new systems had to be introduced to cover the three former departments. There were the inevitable teething troubles and disputes as successive new standards were introduced. Certainly, none of them is perfect and there have been difficulties in tracking costs.

The review of the Water Production Program conducted in 1992 concluded that it was difficult to produce definitive figures on financial performance,¹⁰ a conclusion drawn again by the water pricing review carried out in the late 1990s.¹¹

Following the regrouping of various departments into the new Department of Primary Industries and Department of Natural Resources, a separate Customer Service Agency (CSA) was set up, independent of the departments, to service both.

For many, many years the staff were paid fortnightly in cash. The cash had to be calculated, then obtained in the right denominations, counted into each pay envelope and then distributed, in the company of an armed policeman, to each individual who had to sign for it. Anyone not present when the pay procession passed through the work area had to go to the paymaster's office later. This was an extremely cumbersome and expensive operation, particularly as then each employee had to go and deposit the money in the bank. As part of an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, staff agreed to be paid electronically (at the same time as they gave up their free clean towel service in return for a pay rise). There is nothing to suggest that clerks like Ken Parry who did the fortnightly pays missed it at all!

Supply Branch, for most of the Old Boys, is synonymous with Garnet 'Garney' Johnson, for many years Stores Supervisor and Supply Officer (SS&SO). During the war, Garney had been a prisoner of war in the notorious Changi prison camp and worked on the infamous Burma Railway and in after life displayed the indomitable spirit that would have been a prerequisite for survival. Garney was later shipped to Japan to work in mines. Incidentally, Rex Bucknall was also a prisoner of the Japanese after losing his right arm. One of his wartime mates told Bernie Credlin years ago at

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St George, that Rex's arm was so badly damaged by an exploding shell that he cut off the remnant himself with scissors.¹²

Garney Johnson ran Supply Branch as if he were personally responsible for every item and was determined that no purchase would be made that was not fully justified or at least requisitioned according to the approved standards. Many an officer has felt Garney's wrath for not following correct procedure.

Col Hazel, when District Engineer in Longreach, purchased two Polaroid cameras from the local pharmacy on Local Order and received a 'Please Explain' from Garney. He explained in the following terms: "I needed them. I bought them."¹³ Jim Mylne was involved in the early days of Bingegang Weir and transgressed the purchasing standards. He received a 'Please Explain' and asked Regional Engineer John Moreton what to do about such missives. *John replied, "Put them in your bottom drawer until it's full, then put them in the second bottom drawer."*¹⁴

Such transgressions were not new. When one of his men was having trouble with his car in Mt Isa, Charlie Ogilvie bought another one at Mt Isa on Local Order.¹⁵ Gerry O'Hanlon did even better. Not only did he buy a car on Local Order, but he did it in NSW – when he was working at Bonshaw.¹⁶

Those were the days when it was necessary to hand in the old item (such as a pencil stub) before it could be replaced. An apocryphal tale has it that a certain field officer lost his canvas water bottle from the front of his vehicle and, because he did not have an old one to hand in, couldn't get a new one. So he borrowed an old one from a mate, cut it in half with an axe, and got two new ones in return for the halves.

John Connolly recalls *in the old Gympie office, all the water pipes went up the external walls of the building, and it got pretty hot in Gympie during the summer. Everyone thought that we should get a water cooler, because you could almost make the tea from the cold water tap. So I made a few requests to Garney for a water cooler for the office but, no, because there were only eight or ten of us in the office, that was outside the public service department's guidelines for water coolers. Garney was quite sympathetic to our needs, so instead of sending us up a water cooler, he sent us up three canvas water bags. That was Garney. He was everconscious of trying to save the Department money.*¹⁷

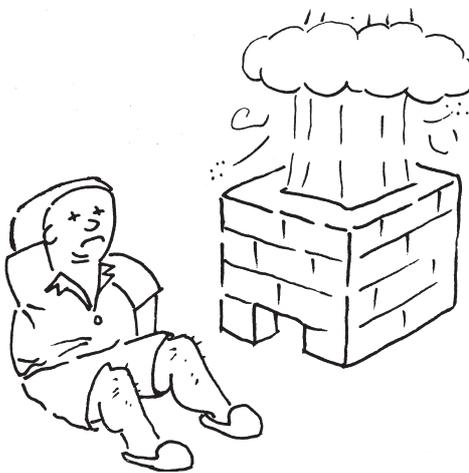
For all his assiduousness, Garney was held in high regard and admired for his honest attempts to protect the Commission's interests. Col Taggart considers *Garney Johnson to be my mentor in the Commission. He was a great bloke. The feature of Garney was he had no grey in his thinking. He was just black or white. If he bought a Morris car, then every other car was rubbish or if he bought a Volta vacuum cleaner ...*¹⁸

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Bernie Credlin was one of the many who held Garney in high regard. *He would go to no end of trouble to make private purchases on your behalf, get bedrock prices and arrange for the items to be sent out, often in the next Commission vehicle.*¹⁹

Towards the end of his career, Garney had an unfortunate domestic accident with a backyard incinerator, from which he recovered, recorded in *Aquarius*.

*SS & SO required.
Has the present incumbent expired?
I mention in passin'
Because he was arson
About with some fuel he was fired.*²⁰



*Bob Kay's illustration of Garney's accident,
from Aquarius, Christmas 1976*

Garney was a formidable opponent in debate or arguments and a tenacious defender of a friend or a valued principle. He retired in May 1979 and was then able to devote himself to his consuming passion, golf. In December 1990, Garney was diagnosed as having a malignant brain tumour. Following an operation, he had some months of quality life, but his fight with the disease ended in November 1991.²¹

Among the 'fixtures' in Supply were smiling, bald-headed Don Manson (who was a temporary clerk for longer than most of the permanent ones) and Senior Clerk Stan Bailey, who had a reserved seat at several local watering holes.

Garney's successor was Grahame Bertram, who pursued his new role with equal dedication but with considerably more restraint. Apart from being a loyal and diligent public servant, Grahame has been a tireless worker for the Old Boys Association.

The problems of people making unauthorised purchases were not confined to Head Office. Regional staff such as District Clerk Mick Williams in Rockhampton spent a lot of time with 'The Trump' sorting out problems. If there was something running off the rails Mick Williams got the job of sorting out the money side. There was a plant supervisor who got a pile driver fixed and the bill was about \$15,000, sufficient to require prior authorisation. But he simply issued a Local Order for it. And on the Local Order form where it required identification of the source of funds, he just wrote, "See Mick Williams."²²

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The rules were abundantly clear and mostly there to help people. According to Bernie Credlin, this was a far cry from the situation that existed in the postwar era before people like Garney Johnson, Grabame Bertram, John Connolly, Don Manson and Bert Hall. *Some of the fellows in that branch, and some other clerical branches too, may have had unhappy work experiences in earlier days and they were not one little bit impressed by the bustle and bustle of younger people in the postwar period. Some had been transferred from other departments to fill positions in the rapidly expanding Commission. The departure of some of these would have overjoyed their former employers and saddened their new supervisors. They seemed to see their role as one of frustrating smaller construction jobs. (I emphasise that these remarks apply only to the older employees in the clerical areas immediately postwar.) One example of this frustration was a requisition for a set of ring spanners needed to install pumping equipment. Ultimately, after correspondence querying and attempting to justify the requisition, I had to buy the set myself to get the job done. One or two officers in Supply Branch delighted in nit-picking some local transactions and in writing unpleasant memoranda to the job.*²³

Ian Ferrier also fell foul of the regulations. In 1980–81 when the Local Government functions were incorporated in the Commission, there was a crisis at Dogwood Creek Weir at Miles during its first overtopping. The flood created caverns under the no-fines concrete slabs and many sections were dislodged. Ian devised a method for temporary reinstatement, rushed home to grab a few clothes and his personal camera and, in company with Ken Aitken, sped to Miles. There they spent 10 days of 12 to 14 hours working with Murilla Shire's day labour force to secure the weir before the next storm arrived. Having returned to base, he sent three rolls of film off for processing. After some considerable time, the prints were returned but with a damning memo and an instruction to explain his unacceptable behaviour to Jim Turnbull. He had forgotten that there were some private shots *of a jestful nature* at the start of the first film. He bitterly resented that after working himself to exhaustion on behalf of the Commission, he had been *held up to ridicule by some shiny-arsed clerk who should have just rung me and asked why I had included personal photos.*²⁴

Clerk Personnel was for many years Jimmy Pill, whose principal tasks were probably not ringing the bell and ruling off the attendance line. In fact, he was responsible for an enormous range of Human Resources activities (to use the modern jargon), which he did efficiently and cheerfully with minimal help. In 1965, Barry Mewburn and Jim made up the entire complement of the branch.²⁵ While numbers of staff were much fewer than they were two decades later, it is hard to imagine how so few could have done so much for so many.

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After Jimmy retired, Harry Horne took over the reins. Harry was an urbane, unflappable Englishman who certainly demonstrated personnel management at a personal level. Eric Porter became Clerk Industrial in 1971.

The tasks involved hiring and firing, arranging transfers, dealing with appeals and complaints and a myriad miscellaneous issues. As staff numbers and expectations grew, so too did the Personnel staff. By the 1970s, the Commission saw the need to engage a Training Officer. The first of these was a large retired army officer by the name of Jim Pashen. Jim endeavoured to introduce a range of training activities from speed reading to more technical courses. When Jim left the Commission for Main Roads, he was replaced by an ex-Boating and Fisheries Patrol Officer Paul Donovan.

Another area in which there was a growth in emphasis was the matter of industrial safety. For a long time this was given only scant attention, but the appointment of Ron Afflick as Safety Officer gave the staff the impetus necessary to implement good practices. A large sign board at the Rocklea depot, for example, showed the number of days since there had been a lost-time or fatal accident. After Ron's retirement, Harry Vogelsang took on the task of spreading the word throughout the State.

By 1987, Organisational Services Division had been created with Bill Clarke as Director and the personnel functions were subsumed into the new structure. In 1987, Human Resources Division was headed up by Anne Epstein. Once the Commission was absorbed into DPI, Human Resources was staffed by many and varied officers and the Commission simply went along with the rest.

Land has always been a matter of concern for the water department. In order to construct works – particularly dams, irrigation areas and reticulation systems – the Commission had to be able to acquire the necessary land and, sometimes, dispose of parcels of land surplus to its requirements. While the Water Act and the Irrigation Act provided the head of power, land is actually acquired either by voluntary sale or under the *Acquisition of Land Act*. The State is entitled to take land required for public purposes, although it must compensate the owner. The compensation comprises the market value of the land plus dislocation allowance (for stamp duty, relocation and so on).²⁶ Whereas the *Mineral Resources Act* allows for additional compensation (10% above market value), the *Acquisition of Land Act* has no such premium, a matter of great contention for 'unwilling vendors'. But, given the volume of land acquisitions that the State undertakes each year, it is hardly surprising that there is no great enthusiasm for adding a premium to each transaction – this of course is different for private sector mining companies.

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If landholders are dissatisfied with the Government offer of compensation, they are entitled to appeal to the Land Court. This tribunal is far less intimidating than a normal court, being populated by people in suits rather than actors in wigs and gowns. But there is a form of double jeopardy – costs are usually awarded against the party whose valuation is farthest from that decided by the Court.²⁷ If the compensation is not agreed, the Department can pay its valuation, with only the disputed amount to be the subject of the appeal. If the landholders so desire, even after settlement they can lease the property from the Department until it is actually required. Some landholders at the proposed Wyaralong Dam on Teviot Brook remain on their properties after having sold them to the South East Queensland Water Board which will not actually require the land until about 2065!

Tommy Hams was Clerk Land Settlement for many years, assisted only by a junior clerk – in 1965 it was Ross Gomersall.²⁸ In Col Taggart's opinion, *Tommy was a man with the ability to have gone a lot further than he ever got, but it was this damn matter of who had some sort of qualification. Tom was a great guy, particularly on the legislative side of the business, and so I learnt a fair bit from him.*²⁹

Alan Ott became Property Officer in 1973, to be replaced in turn in 1977 by Bob Walker, who is still in the Department³⁰, but now absorbed into the old Lands function. Bob has been a diligent worker for the Department and a firm negotiator. While some have criticised Bob for taking a hard line, he has always defended his stance as protecting the taxpayers' money.³¹ Statistics produced in 1992 suggested that only about 1% of resumptions result in Land Court appeals.³² As recorded in other chapters, however, some of those 1% have been spectacularly traumatic. Not surprisingly, a survey of landholders dispossessed by Bjelke-Petersen Dam found that 50% of respondents were somewhat dissatisfied with the process or the outcome, but, surprisingly, the other 50% were very satisfied!³³

The Commission obviously had a need to produce letters, memos, reports and many other documents. While many members of staff may have possessed an excellent hand verging on copperplate, the typewriter had been invented and typed material was more obviously legible. Staff were employed specifically for their skills in typing (a school subject at both Junior and Senior level). These experts (virtually exclusively female) were collected into a typing pool where they undertook the typing for the entire organisation with the exception of the most senior staff.

Heather Murdoch (Clarke) joined the Commission in 1953 at the age of 15 and took up duty in the 'Pool'. Helen Wixted (later Mrs Bill Sharp) was Head Typist. *The girls in the Pool typed and typed and cringed fortnightly as they had to type those wretched fortnightly reports which were handwritten by people like Don Beattie, Ted*



1970s PABX in Executive Building. The consoles nearest the camera were for booking long-distance calls.

*Kernke, Jack O'Shea, John Morse, Harry Stark and Dave Wilmott to name a few.*³⁴ Their handwritings are indelibly imprinted on Heather's mind.

When Heather was typing CE Parkinson's report, Cyril Young, the Commissioner's chauffeur at the time, used to drive her to Mr Parkinson's gracious home on the banks of the Brisbane River at Norman Park and there she would spend day after day taking shorthand from Mr Parkinson.³⁵

After Helen Wixted left, Elaine James (Murphy/ 'Murph') headed up the typing pool. According to Heather, Elaine was responsible for educating the young girls in the Pool in a wide range of interesting

ideas. Many of the 'girls' who were appointed Clerk Typists in 1953 and 1954 still get together at South Bank on the first Saturday of March each year.³⁶

The typing pool was like a schoolroom with the Head Typist facing the 'class'. The difficulties of deciphering illegible scrawls and managing the heavy manual typewriters would have paled into insignificance at the prospect of retyping material several times. Not in those days the joys of redrafts at the touch of a 'print' key. Multiple copies were made by the use of carbon paper (more joy in correcting mistakes) until the Commission gained its first (wet) photocopier which produced copies that faded into blank paper within a short space of time. Later, of course, the technology improved beyond recognition and every day forests must be felled to supply the paper needs of plain-paper copiers and printers.

Not surprisingly, the girls had their favoured officers and the converse. Those adjudged to have difficult handwriting or personalities had to wait for their typing to be returned. The 72 hour rule was introduced under which every piece of work of moderate length must be typed within 72 hours of submission. The work of several selected officers regularly only just made it.³⁷

John Connolly recalls in the 1960s *up to 28 typists sitting in the typing pool. Angela Keboe was in charge there, and it was just like a classroom. They'd be all lined up there and she'd be sitting up the front, cracking the whip, almost. That was just in the days before word processing arrived on the scene. They'd all be there typing up specifications, mainly, and of course every new contract we had, had to be typed from scratch. Coming forward to the '70s, I was in Admin, and we were involved in getting the first word processor in the department – a Wordplex – and it took up a whole room, and probably its capabilities wouldn't have been anything*

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*like the oldest PC we've got left in the place now, I think. It cost quite a lot of money. I have a feeling it was something like about \$10,000, which was a lot of money in those days. That was really the first attempt, and from there the numbers dropped off in the typing pool. It saved a lot of labour.*³⁸

Bernie Credlin remembers Angela as a very pleasant person who supported her girls. She married Chief Surveyor Bernie McDonald, whose first wife died tragically in the mid-1960s.³⁹



The 'Typing Pool' in the 1980s

Muriel Vivers (Lyard) joined the Commission in 1952 and rose to become Head Typist, a position she held for many years. Muriel will be remembered for her work in training the girls in the Typing Pool and for her ready defence of them when she considered them to be unfairly criticised. Both Muriel and her husband-to-be, Alan, nursed ill mothers for many years. Muriel's own illness required their marriage to be postponed until October 1994. But Muriel took sick again and was in and out of hospital until she died in 1996.⁴⁰

Many girls (and apparently no boys) passed through the Pool, many to higher office or different fields.⁴¹ The senior staff were able to rely on a succession of very competent personal assistants who organised their typing, filing and time and protected them from unwanted interruptions.⁴² Gradually, typists began to be out-posted to the branches where they could become accustomed to the handwriting (and idiosyncrasies) of individuals. This did not necessarily speed up the turnover time for certain selected officers! The major reports were still undertaken by the Pool. Some areas got electric typewriters, creating resentment and jealousy among the have-nots. And then came the word processor. The early printers were so noisy, they had to be housed in sound-proofed "monstrous carbuncles" (to quote Prince Charles). Fortunately, in a very short time these were replaced by the modern laser printers and life returned to quietness, if not humdrum normality.

But still the technological revolution continued and by the early 1990s virtually every desk had its own computer to do word processing. It mattered not if the writer was a touch typist or a two-fingered novice, he (or she) had to do all the fending. Studies have shown that it is more efficient for the incompetent to puddle away at a slow rate than to go through drafts and corrections. Typists, for the hoi polloi, were a thing of the past.

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Typing Pool officers 1980s

(Left to right) Darlene Tipping, Lynette Dabelstein, Julie MacPherson, Carmel O'Leary, Vicky Simpson, Janeen Schouten, baby Nicholas, Lauren Barrie, Sandra Grubb

According to Sir Humphrey Appleby, “everything is minuted and full records are always kept in the Civil Service.”⁴³ A major task for any government instrumentality is to manage these minutes and documents as well as the enormous flood of correspondence the Department receives. For example, when John Moreton was Regional Engineer in Rockhampton he received 30 to 40 letters per day, many of them dealing with subjects that went on for years.⁴⁴ The Head Office turnover dwarfs this – yet correspondents still believe that the Minister or the CEO personally deals with their letters. All this correspondence has to be registered and filed so that it can be dealt with and then retrieved – no small task. In addition, the Commission has to manage books, reports and other publications (mostly by the library) and design files and plans.

Records Branch (or Document Management) has therefore played a pivotal role in the Commission. The tasks certainly did not appeal to all who passed through the branch, a routine rotation for trainee clerks. Some found filing and delivering material boring in the extreme⁴⁵ and some decided to enliven proceedings by unauthorised frivolity, much to the chagrin of Arthur Payne, Paul Kerswell and other Branch heads. Others have found the tasks to their liking – for which those dependent on the services must be grateful. Brian Murnane – current Manager – and long-serving Graham West are more contemporary versions of Arthur Careless and Co. from yesteryear.

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Storage has been a problem and various locations have been used over the years for storing closed batches. These include the College Road premises (some records destroyed by fire), Rocklea (where the 1974 flood performed a similar service) and the basement of the Executive Building. Whereas there was a central Records repository in the *Courier-Mail* Building, the working files were moved for storage purposes to the work areas in Mineral House.

Many systems have been adopted over the years to identify material, ranging from the fanciful portmanteau system of Parkinson described in Chapter 2 to simple numerical systems with alphabetical appendages – G for Geology, H for Investigations, and so on. With the advent of the computer, new retrieval systems could be introduced, such as Recfind, which uses key words.

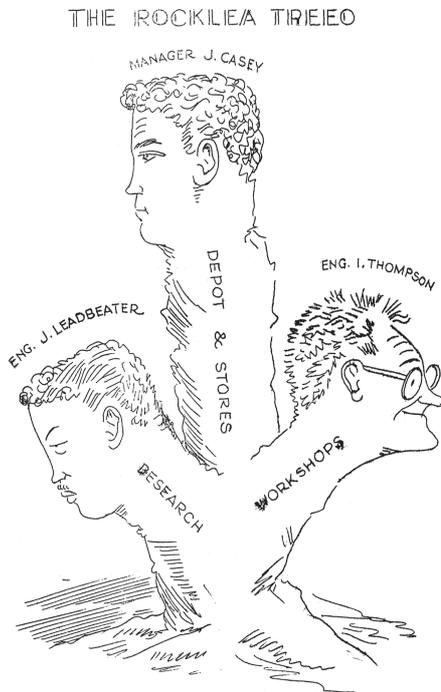
Similar retrieval systems have long faced librarians, leading to the Dewey decimal system. In the late 1960s in the *Courier-Mail* Building, the hardest thing to find was the librarian, Suzanne John. In frustration one day, Ian Pullar suggested to her that she file the books under size and colour as they would be no more difficult to find and would at least be aesthetically pleasing.

The (new) Mineral House provided for a library on the fourteenth floor – the only floor that all lifts went to. Later this logic was abandoned in favour of expediency and the library was moved to Floor 2. Many of the librarians – posted from the State Library – found the job not to their liking. The present incumbent, Margaret Walters, is a treasure although she feels the frustration of trying to house a great deal of material such as Planning files used by almost no one and obviously disordered. (In about 1979 the then Senior Engineer Project Planning decided to cull the work files and directed that all his staff spend half a day per week throwing out duplicate documents or material that was no longer relevant. This edict lasted for a few weeks till it was found that one engineer regarded everything as unnecessary and had thrown a number of files down the chute, never to be seen again.)⁴⁶

The Plan Room has also made a number of attempts to codify its material and in the 1970s adopted the new technology of microfilming. This was not an unmitigated success.⁴⁷



A young Lee Rogers with Suzanne John



The Rocklea Tree.
Cartoon by Billy Kearton in *Splash* 1953

The Rocklea Workshop and Stores were an integral part of the Commission's activities. The complex provided a wide range of services, some of which, such as the laboratories and instrument shop, are recorded elsewhere. The workshops undertook the maintenance of vehicles and equipment and the manufacture of components for projects. When the Commission was reconstituted in the 1940s, the Manager of the Rocklea complex was Jack V Casey. Engineer Ivan Thompson looked after the workshops while Jimmy Leadbeater was in charge of research. Billy Kearton illustrated the management during the 1950s in his *Splash* cartoon. The store was kept by Jack Miller. In the 1950s, George Rees, a Welsh ex-Royal Navy submariner and diver, was in charge of the workshops and did a lot of good work. Later, Alec Clark was the Officer-in-Charge of the workshops while Les Rice managed the vehicle section. Peter Read (who is still with the Department) had the responsibility for the workshops during the last phase of the history, while Brian Shannon chaired a committee of representatives of user branches to oversee the management.⁴⁸

The workmanship was always of a very high standard, with good quality tradesmen being employed. They made all manner of things including the components of gauging stations. Bevan Faulkner recalls *we had the stuff fabricated at Rocklea, gauging butts and all the equipment, the towers and heaps and heaps of wire rope and they packaged it up and sent it out to the countryside.*⁴⁹

The annual Rocklea Christmas party was a notable event with guests from Head Office being invited to mix with the workmen on a social basis at least once in the year.

The workshop, like the laboratories, moved during the 1980s to a commercial basis and was expected to pay its own way. Gradually, the overheads associated with operating the workshop on a full-time basis caught up with the operation. Prices went up, causing demand to fall, and as a result the overheads and prices spiralled. The workshops were no longer able to compete with private sector organisations and the painful decision had to be made to abandon them. Motor vehicle maintenance went the same way.

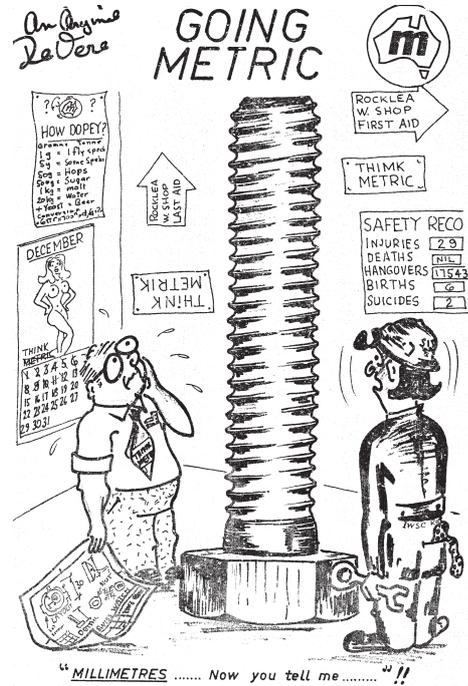
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There has, however, continued to be a motor pool from which vehicles could be ‘borrowed’. Jack Henderson and Bruce Slade both had management roles in the pool, as well as serving as driver for Commissioners (as Cyril Young also did). When Bruce was first employed as a driver in the mid-1960s, because he was under 25, special permission had to be obtained for him to drive a sedan. Normally young drivers could drive only utilities without breaching insurance rules. Women were not allowed to drive either cars or utes.⁵⁰

The stores were also the victim of modernisation. The policy had long been to ensure that adequate supplies were kept of all commodities so that there would be no waiting. Inevitably, this resulted in the storage of obsolescent material that was periodically sold off at auction. Garney Johnson was an expert at putting together lots for the auctions, salting some highly desirable items into batches of ‘white elephants’. Purchasers were required to take their acquisitions with them.

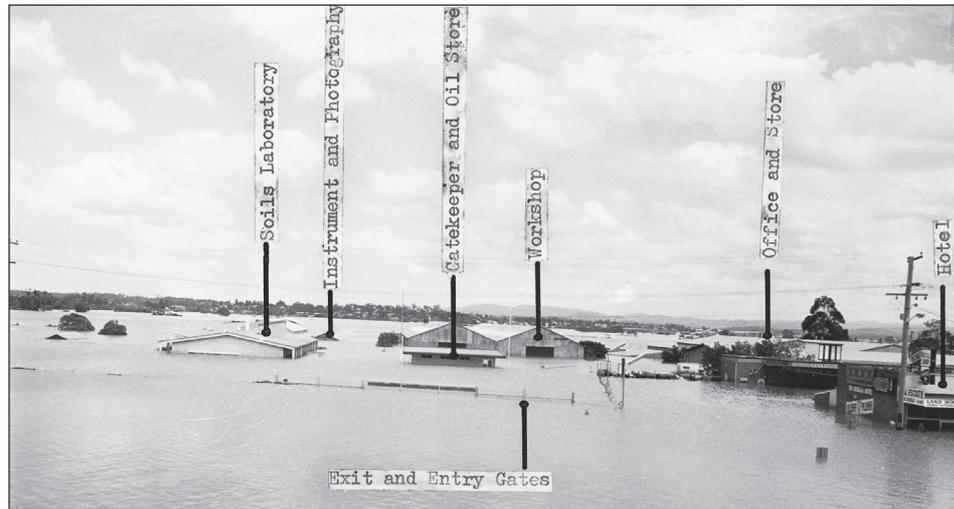
Tom Fenwick illustrates the redundant stores problem. *Ten years after the Mareeba scheme was completed, you could find stuff in the Stores that had been bought back in 1948 or 1950 for the weirs, moved up to Tinaroo, and then moved from Tinaroo. Any gear, parts or equipment that you ever needed, there would be bloody shelves of it – parts for Atlas Copco compressors that had disappeared with the ark – but they were on the books as a thousand dollars worth of stuff, and you couldn’t write them off. The Activities Review Committee, charged with reviewing the stores and storekeepers, got it all together and sold it all off. That was a big contribution. Garney would run an auction, put a pile of junk with two or three things, so that when it came to bidding, you didn’t get the good things until you’d carted all the rest away, too, so they couldn’t just come in and take the two or three things and leave the rest. Garney was a past master at that.*⁵¹

In due course ‘just-in-time’ stock management came into vogue. The long-term Storekeeper, Mick Lister, who had succeeded Sam Elms, presided over a major reduction in store capacity.



A Reg O'Reilly cartoon from Aquarius

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Rocklea complex during the 1974 flood

Perhaps the most historic event in the history of the Rocklea complex occurred around the Australia Day weekend in 1974. Unprecedented rain due to a cyclonic disturbance began to fall just before the weekend and continued. Local creek flooding occurred and Commission volunteers moved into Rocklea to protect the stores, equipment and records stored there. About a score of people lifted the gear above flood level. Fred Haigh was so grateful, he shouted hamburgers all round.⁵² Overnight, the rain continued, the Brisbane River rose and the Rocklea complex was flooded, right over the relocated material. The files were a soggy mess and much could not be retrieved.⁵³ Perhaps, to be as optimistic as Sir Humphrey Appleby, we lost a lot of embarrassing material!

Fred Haigh was very upset about the severity of the flood and his inability to do anything about it. He rang Alan Wickham on the Saturday to see if he could check out the situation – Fred himself was flood-bound. Alan made it around the ridges from Balmoral to the Rocklea Overpass where he explained to the police why he wanted to get as close as possible to the complex. From the water's edge he could see only the roofs of buildings. Alan reported this back to Fred, who took it very badly. Alan suspected that the after-effects contributed significantly to his demise only six months later.⁵⁴

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The advent of the computer brought the need for Commission-wide management and standard setting. By 1971 Systems Branch had been created with Walter Boughton as Officer-in-Charge. Walter was a very experienced hydrologist who had invented the 'Boughton Method' of hydrologic analysis and he was also at the cutting edge of the new computer technology. Even though many of the branches developed their own technical expertise in an informal way, Walter and his staff were responsible for the management of the system, the setting of standards and the (gradual) acquisition of equipment. The dreaded 'punch room' therefore came under his auspices. Bill Eastgate describes it. *In Systems Branch there was a whole bank of punch girls, as they were called, putting data on to punched cards. There were probably 10 to 12 of them. Maria Petracci and Madelyn Pye are still here. People today don't understand that if you wanted a computer run, you'd get your cards punched overnight, you'd get them next morning for checking. One little thing wrong and it would be another day. It often took days to get a run. Today people have megabytes and gigabytes of memory, but in those days, all the hydrologic yield analyses were done on 16k of memory on the PDP 10. It was Peter Nicholson's job to be able to fit it in to that capacity. Those skills don't matter today.*⁵⁵ Tales of the tribulations of punched cards are told elsewhere.

Systems Branch was one of the destinations for junior engineers on rotation, but none of them made a career of it. A very young engineer, Peter Noonan, did a rotation in the branch where he *spent many weeks trying to do a simulation to calibrate a rainfall runoff model for the whole of the Condamine/Balonne catchment. It was no surprise that it didn't work! There were a range of things we were doing there, and people learnt how to program computers using some very, very basic programming for various things, so I suppose that was the beginning of an era, where technology changed dramatically.*⁵⁶ Systems Branch, while it concentrated on computers, also developed an interest in embryonic environmental impact studies. In 1974, Fred Haigh died. According to John Ward, Walter Boughton had never developed an affinity with Don Beattie and he decided his career would be better served by a change. He joined the staff of Griffith University where he served happily and usefully until his retirement.

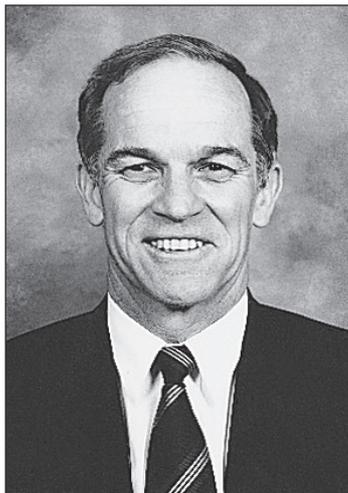
In 1969, Bill Eastgate, who was then an employee of the Department of Primary Industries, got very interested in computing and the question of whether it was part of the future. *So I did a post-grad diploma in computing at the University of Queensland. That was the only computing course available and you could enrol only if you'd done at least two years work in the real world. I'd nearly finished the Diploma when I met a chap called Wally Boughton at a conference. He told me I was just the sort of chap he was looking for. He was at the time looking after Systems*

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Branch in the Commission. So I came. At the time it was quite advanced because Main Roads and IWS had a number of teletypes connected to the PDP 10 at UQ. It was the first time-sharing computing in Queensland.

At that stage little hand held calculators were starting to come through as well as slide rules and desk calculators. We decided to buy a new calculator – a Canon – that had three electric memories. It was especially installed next to Wally's office and people had to book in to use it. There was often a waiting list of three days. So we went to see Garney Johnson for another one. Garney said, "No. You don't need one of those. A waste of time and money." So we didn't get it. The power of a mere clerk!⁵⁷

Walter Boughton's departure called for a replacement. Bill Eastgate had left the branch to go to Project Planning but was asked to return to Systems. He *went and talked to George Pearce about going back to Systems Branch for a year because I had some reluctance about going round in circles. He said, "Bill, if they've asked you to go they must have a good reason."* I said, "Thanks, George" and that was probably all that was said.⁵⁸



Bill Eastgate

Bill Eastgate became Acting Engineer-in-Charge of Systems Branch, another part of an on-going involvement in what became Information Technology. Before long, Tom Fenwick became Engineer-in-Charge, Systems Branch, but under Tom the branch emphasis changed and by the next year had changed title to Forward Planning. Nevertheless, the branch continued on with computing.⁵⁹

Once he left Systems Branch, William Irving Eastgate did a tour of duty in Groundwater, was promoted to Surface Water and again promoted into Planning Division. He maintained his interest in computing and chaired the co-ordinating committee (see also later). As part of the move to integrate the Local Government unit, he was transferred to Local Authority Services where he became Director of Local Authority Planning and then General Manager Client Advisory Services. He was appointed General Manager Information Systems in DPI before being promoted to Executive Director Resource Sciences Centre and then Executive Director Regional Infrastructure Development in 1997. He retired from that position in June 2000.

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The branches continued to develop their own capacity, particularly as more and more graduates undertook computer studies as part of their undergraduate or post-graduate studies. As Peter Noonan describes it *computing was spread by the technical people who wanted analysis power, so we had a series of individuals like Russ McConnell and others who got hold of this power and started to really drive it for their own analysis, and I suppose they set this organisation down a path which would give us a technical application, quite different to other organisations which started off using computers as a business management tool.*⁶⁰ Rod Jarvis and Russ McConnell became particularly adept in Designs Branch and would have felt no need at all to call on 'experts' from a centralised Branch. Dave Ryan later became so adept that he became the system administrator for Designs. Other areas eventually created specialist positions and appointed people such as Graham McGill to them.

Although computer technology had initially been pushed by the technical branches, it had also been embraced by the administrative branches and in due course there was disputation over whether its management should be a technical or administrative function. Both sides marshalled their arguments and the verdict came down in favour of the latter. A co-ordinating committee was, however, set up under the chairmanship of Bill Eastgate at the time PCs were starting to come in. Bill recalls *they were totally incapable of being linked up. IBM had introduced a system that could link up to three computers. But Burroughs, which is now part of Unisys, had come up with a new approach that could link a large number, maybe 100. We did a lot of homework and convinced Don Beattie to sign off on it. It was not entirely successful. From a technical point of view, it didn't have the software. It didn't have Fortran. Hence some people in the Department thought it was useless.* This led to a commonly held opinion that "Burroughs are for rabbits". *Engineers couldn't make the best use of it. It was the forerunner of what we take for granted today. From the financial point of view it was OK as far as I know.*⁶¹

Similarly, we had problems with the new satellite technology called QSAT. We were trying to use this technology to transmit all our drawings from Head Office to the Ayr office. We were working with the equivalent of CITEC. It was pretty advanced for those days. We had aerials on the roof here and there and the trouble was you'd pick up a drawing with a whole lot of data dropped out. It obviously had real advantages and everyone was keen to try it but it had severe limitations. When QWRC, DPI and Forestry combined in 1989 to form the new DPI, each had its own computer system and none could talk to the other. In those days you still had to line up to get access to a computer. The objective was to try to get a standard system where there were a hundred different types. Everyone had to change software and programs on to a new system. I had two years in DPI making this happen and it

*was pretty painful. We put out expressions of interest for a new system. One bid was from Unisys, who ultimately got it. They had the Windows system which hadn't been released in Australia. We'd called for proven systems, not at the leading edge. Everyone else in the scientific world wanted to go to Unix. To get it through, we had to hook up with NASA and the Gartner Group, who made predictions about the way of the future. We convinced the scientists that Unix could still sit beside it before we could get (Minister) Ed Casey to sign off on it. We signed the contract on Christmas Eve 1994 – (Director-General) Jim Miller was keen to do his Christmas shopping. Unix is still strong in the scientific world whereas Windows is better for the softer applications.*⁶²

As noted elsewhere, virtually every desk now has a PC on it, but as Bill Eastgate comments, *everyone expects to have a computer on the desk but probably uses only 10% of the capacity. It would be hard to prove that it has been economically justified.*

The Commission has not been the only body in the State to have the responsibility for management of water infrastructure. Obviously, local governments are responsible for their own works (and the Commission has a role as described in Chapter 15). In addition, Boards can be constituted under the *Water Resources Act* for particular purposes.

There are four major Water Boards in Queensland – the South East Queensland Water Board, the Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB), the Townsville-Thuringowa Water Board and the Mt Isa Water Board. As the Minister for Water Resources is responsible for each of these, Commission staff have a role which varies from Board to Board. Fred Haigh was instrumental in setting up the Mt Isa Water Board and served as Chairman. Tom Fenwick chaired the Mt Isa Board for many years, while Bill Webber, Bill Meredith and Bill Eastgate (was the Christian name a prerequisite?) chaired GAWB of which Mike McKenna was a long-term member.⁶³

There are numerous other Boards. The North and South Burdekin Water Boards manage the water distribution of groundwater, surface water and recharge water in the Burdekin Delta. The Pioneer Valley Water Board is responsible for the distribution of water supplied by Teemburra Dam. The Condamine Plains Water Board manages a group scheme distributing water from the Condamine River to a group of farms. Bore Water Area Boards manage the distribution of water from artesian bores – although as seen in Chapter 4, the Commissioner is quite frequently the Board. Drainage Boards manage the disposal of floodwaters and the control of levee banks – usually more difficult on the people side than the technical side. Continuing disputation over issues such as the BDC levee (the owners are Messrs Byrne, Dore and Cavallaro) in the Riversdale/Murray Water Project Area near Tully can remain unresolved and essentially unresolvable for many years.⁶⁴ Rural Water

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Supply Boards, which provide water for stock via reticulation systems from bores or other headworks, are in varying stages of solvency.

Commission involvement can range from membership of the Board, to provision of technical advice, to ensuring that the Board meets its statutory obligations. Both the Department and the Boards have been fortunate to find in Peter Gleeson the ideal person to manage the function. He has technical knowledge (as an engineer), administrative skills (honed on the job) and infinite patience. For more than a decade, Peter has managed up to 49 Boards, assisting with their borrowing programs, helping them with the subordinate legislation that controls them and consolidating their individual Annual Reports into one report to Parliament. As well, he provides a facilitation service over and above that prescribed by law, assisting Boards with technical advice, compliance advice, information on activities of departments, assisting with land and tenure issues and ‘putting out bushfires’. As far as Peter is concerned, *legislation and compliance requirements cannot deal with the people element. As far as possible, I try to anticipate problems and intervene at an early stage.* Some issues require strong intervention – such as the farmer who stacked a Board with his wife, brother and brother-in-law.⁶⁵

The many regional staff who work with the Boards, sometimes venturing into the cross-fire of sectional interests, have also played an important role. Mike Keane had 14 drainage boards in Innisfail, six of which he formed.⁶⁶

The difficulties encountered in gaining agreement from all affected landholders have contributed, in no small measure, to the problems encountered by Graham Young in seeking to establish new Board areas under the Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package.

The Department is now moving towards stepping back from its long-term role and leaving these statutory bodies to manage their own affairs. Peter Gleeson thinks *it will be interesting to see how successful this is.*⁶⁷

Bore Water Trusts, some features of which have been covered in Chapter 4, have also required a continuing Commission input, administration and trouble-shooting.

Another type of administrative body involved in the water industry is a River Improvement Trust (RIT). These bodies are formed under the *Local Government Act* and fall under the aegis of local governments although they also include membership of general community representatives.

The purpose of the Trusts is to manage the flow of water in the stream(s) within their constituted Area, particularly with respect to flood control. As this generally leads to efforts to remove any obstacles that prevent rapid stream flow – such as

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Stream bank erosion – one problem dealt with by River Improvement Trusts

desnagging – the Trusts are criticised by environmentalists. Peter Johnston used to refer to them disparagingly as “River Deprovement Trusts”.⁶⁸

Many Commission officers throughout the State have been involved with RITs, providing advice, technical and administrative support and, on occasion, ‘leadership’.⁶⁹ Many of the meetings take place out of hours, requiring an extra level of devotion.

The Commission has had statutory obligations in relation to the issue of a range of licences and permits, a situation which has from time to time been far from routine.

Except where it is used solely for stock and domestic purposes, a licence is usually required for the diversion of water. Licence conditions are enormously varied, but are based on precedents from English law.

In regulated systems (those where there are works such as dams and weirs from which releases can be made) licences have usually specified an allocation (the quantity of water that will be supplied in a ‘normal’ year). Water is allocated up the limit of water available at a particular reliability. Although there are appeal provisions, generally it is possible to place a ‘cap’ on the supply. When the storage falls below an agreed level, an allocation smaller than normal is announced. (In the past, where storages were not fully allocated, announced allocations could exceed 100% but this practice has been discontinued.)

In groundwater systems within Proclaimed Areas (see Chapter 4), allocations can also be set and capped. Outside Proclaimed Areas (such as the majority of the Lockyer Valley), it is open slather.

In unregulated systems, entitlements have been much more loosely defined and this has led to problems as systems become more and more stressed. Generally, the specification of ‘entitlement’ has been a pump size and a specified stream flow at a local reference point such as a gauge, above which diversion is permitted. Sometimes the licence will specify an area of land that can be irrigated, but it is rare indeed for there to be a volumetric limit.

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When an application for a licence was made, the Commissioner (later Director-General) was required to determine whether the licence should be permitted. Others were permitted the right to appeal to the Commissioner, usually on the grounds of an adverse effect on their operations. The Commissioner would then make a determination before issuing (or rejecting) the licence. Stream Control Officers (SCO) have long been employed to make recommendations regarding applications and then to 'police' the taking of water. The reports of the SCOs, even up to the 1980s, were generally very brief and based on limited information.⁷⁰

The lack of specification of licence entitlements, while it has not posed a problem in many smaller catchments, has been a major problem as catchments have become more stressed and the needs of the environment have achieved greater recognition. The question of what really is a water-user's 'entitlement' has become very vexed indeed.⁷¹

Stream Control Officers⁷² have also had their share of headaches in attempting to 'pinch' people for unauthorised use of water such as pumping out of hours or exceeding the licence conditions. Prosecutions were occasionally launched, mostly against repeat offenders, but the requirements of proof were often too onerous and the consequences of a successful conviction sometimes a rap over the knuckles with a feather.

The administrative role in issuing waterworks licences was for many years attached to Rivers and Streams Branch. John Connolly *can still remember very distinctly issuing these bore licences for 10 years and they were expiring on 30th June 1971, I think it was. I thought that seemed such a long way ahead!*⁷³ Bore licensing was attached to Underground Water Branch as discussed earlier.

Permits are also required for the extraction of sand and gravel (Controlled Quarry Materials or CQM) from rivers and streams. Each year almost two million tonnes of material (nearly 300,000 truck loads) are extracted,⁷⁴ not surprisingly, most in south-east Queensland. These extractions create their own set of environmental risks and those charged with making recommendations have to weigh up the needs of an urbanised and expanding population against the need to sustain the environment. Geoff Eades and his geologists get called upon to make assessments under the auspices of Paul Mills, John Amprimo and their team within whose job description the work falls.

The question of whether the Commission (or Department) should continue to be involved in the issuing of Drillers Licences remains unresolved. The system of licensing was introduced to protect those faced with significant costs of drilling water bores from charlatans and incompetents. Landholders do not have to use licensed

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drillers, but ‘caveat emptor’ certainly applies if they don’t. Practitioners seeking a licence are required to demonstrate their competency and may be called upon to ‘show cause why their licence should not be revoked.’ Ian Pullar recalls writing such a ‘show cause’ letter in 1972 at the direction of Commissioner Fred Haigh to a driller who had drilled an unlicensed bore. The counter-argument is that the Department incurs significant costs in managing the licensing system and that it would be more economical (and perhaps more efficient) for the industry to be self-regulating. Peter Thompson is a defender of the licence system.

Until the Commission became part of DPI in late 1989, it had no qualified legal officers, but depended on Crown Law or commercial firms for advice when it was needed. There was no shortage of bush lawyers or, indeed, of officers who had learnt through experience many of the intricacies of the Water Act and the Irrigation Act. During 1988 and 1989, a revision of the Water Resources Act was carried out. Barrie Fawcett had a major role in this task, but he enlisted the help of numerous experienced officers in reviewing the Act and its proposed amendments. This revision has since been criticised for only tinkering at the edges and not meeting ‘modern’ requirements. Certainly the Act of 2000 has resulted in much more fundamental changes, but nobody in 1989 could possibly have foreseen the advent of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreement and the National Competition Policy which have so heavily influenced the water reform agenda of the 1990s.

Warren Hutton, who served as Ministerial Liaison Officer in Minister Ed Casey’s office (a double agent role?),⁷⁵ tells of discussions with Legal Officers of DPI such as Alwynne Hume and Peter Bridgeman. The old water boys, when a problem arose, would ask, “Where in the Act does it say you can’t do that?” The spoilsport Legal Officer would respond, “Where does it say that you **can** do that?” It emerged that there had been the odd instance in which the Commission had effectively achieved its aims by bluff!⁷⁶

With the emergence of a progressively more litigious society in which we live, there has been a growth in the role of legal services within the Department. Other chapters have discussed celebrated court cases. But the need for legal assistance has not been restricted to these by any means. Legal advice has been required on prosecution for breaches under the Act, litigation, legislation, Commonwealth–State agreements, contractual arrangements and disputes, grievance proceedings and many other matters. The growth in legal services is a reminder of Mark Twain’s tale of the American town in which there was one lawyer making a poor living until a second lawyer arrived. Both became rich very quickly.