



# WARTY SORCERERS - AULDIES & BALDIES

## THE YEAR OF THE OLDER PERSON

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WATER RESOURCES RETIRED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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### .....RECOVERIES.....

**Stewie Robinson** has had an operation to improve the sight of one eye and is looking(?) forward to having the second one reconditioned. **Len Redmond** has also had facial treatment.

**Col Cornford** is another who has been poorly but is now well again.

**Alan Vizer** has been using the portals of the Mater Hospital as revolving doors. We earnestly hope that "In again, out again Alan" is soon at home again annoying family, neighbours and friends.

**Stan James** is another who has been trying out hospital care and is now recuperating at home.

Some of us remember **Harold Scholz** who was on the hydrographic staff at Mareeba until his retirement some 17 years ago after 34 years of service. Harold has been in Princess Alexandra Hospital rehabilitating after surgery.

**Joyce Warburton** is in Cairns Base Hospital and we extend our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

**Pat McMahon** has had successful surgery on his hand and is vigorously denying reports that the cause of the problem was the frequent lifting of small, cold, yellow and red cylindrical containers.

**Keith Bedford** is recovering from surgery. Keith was a Hydrologist in the old Groundwater Branch and is with Resource Sciences and Knowledge at Indooroopilly.

**Vince Schmidt** underwent surgery over Christmas and as a consequence was unable to lift many of the said small, cold, yellow and red cylindrical containers. Vince will be remembered as the very affable Chief Engineer of the Department of Local Government.

### .....CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON - BRISBANE.....

The Christmas luncheon was held on 24th November in the Skyline Restaurant at the College of Tourism and Hospitality at Southbank. The function was an outstanding success with almost 70

members and guests sitting down to a pleasant lunch amongst friends in delightful surroundings. It was pleasing to have **Tom Fenwick** and **Peter Bevin** and their wives as our guests and to be able to show appreciation to **Wayne Stewart** and **Margaret Summersford** for their assistance to the Association during the year. We were delighted to have the widows of two of our old members with us:- **Mrs Lottie Hannam** was down from Cairns and **Mrs Pauline Wright** (widow of Harry) came in. It was also good to see **George** and **Merle Beran** from Bargara and their guests.

### .....CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON - MAREEBA.....

The Christmas function was held at the Bowls Club on 26th November and was attended by 26 members and friends. One pleasant aspect was the presence of a some old Tinaroo people who were holidaying on the Tableland.

Heavy rain associated with cyclone Rona caused some flooding in Mareeba and SES members including **Pat Fossett** were called out. Fortunately it appears that none of our members suffered injury or damage to their property. We have been told that a near record depth of 2.32 metres of water flowed over Tinaroo Dam and that the Barron River Falls were at their awesome and majestic best.

### ..... HOW CAN WE HELP? .....

It is good to see groups of members in the country holding functions such as Christmas Luncheons. The Executive would like to hear suggestions on how the Association could foster similar functions in other regions. Please let us have your ideas.

### ..... SUCH IS LIFE .....

If it weren't for marriage, men would go through life thinking they had no faults at all.

The Lakes District of the United Kingdom has a public **Lying Competition**. Lawyers and politicians are barred from entering.

The following is taken from "**The Bulletin**" more than 100 years ago. It concerns a travelling zoo which stopped outside a New South Wales country town to wash out the animals' cages. The lion didn't like water and he became angry and roared loudly thus attracting a large crowd of locals. The lion's keeper asked a gaping youth "How would you like to ride that gentleman?". "Dunno!" he drawled; "Does he buck much."

And in Alabama the loser of an argument over the correct wording of a Biblical passage, shot and killed the winner. (The report doesn't say if the passage was "Thou shalt not kill").

And in an unfortunate slip of the tongue, Ray Martin in "A Current Affair" on 11<sup>th</sup> November said, "Remembrance Day honours thousands of Australian soldiers who died heroically and permanently during the wars."

### ..... LITERACY - DUNCES OR DOLLARS? .....

The debate heats up on literacy and numeracy skills, funding for these aspects of education and the withdrawal of benefits from some who won't try to improve their skills. We are indebted to the United Kingdom's **The Mirror** newspaper on Friday 13th November 1998 for this look at a part of Britain's education system:-

"Exams are a serious business - taking them and marking them. But today **The Mirror** can reveal the lighter side - the hilarious clangers dropped by this years GCSE (Senior in Qld) candidates in history, music, religion and classical studies. The wonderful misunderstandings and misspellings of our 16 year olds were compiled by examiners nationwide. Laugh on:

- Ancient Egypt was inhabited by mummies and they wrote in hydraulics.
- The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere.

- The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book - Guinnessis - Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, asked "Am I my brothers son?"
- Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread made without any ingredients. Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. He died before he ever reached Canada.
- The Greeks were a highly sculptured people, and without them we wouldn't have history. The Greeks also had myths. A myth is a female moth.
- Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates died from an overdose of wedlock. After his death, his career suffered a dramatic decline.
- In the Olympic games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits and threw the java.
- Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Dying, he gasped out: "Tee hee, Brutus".
- Joan of Arc was burnt to a steak and was cannonized by Bernard Shaw.
- Magna Carta provided that no man should be hanged twice for the same offence.
- In midevil times most people were alliterate. The greatest writer of the futile ages was Chaucer, who wrote many poems, verses and literature.
- Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen". When she exposed herself before her troops, they shouted "Hurrah".
- The greatest writer was William Shakespeare. He was born in the year 1564, supposedly on his birthday. He wrote tragedies, comedies and hysterectomies, all in Islamic pentameter. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet.
- John Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained.
- Gravity was invented by Isaac Walton. It is chiefly noticeable in autumn when apples are falling off the trees.
- Another good story was William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple as he stood on his sons head.
- Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music.
- The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West.
- Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She sat on a thorn for 63 years. She was a moral woman who practiced virtue. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.
- Abraham Lincolns mother died in infancy and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands."

## ..... RETIREMENTS .....

**Peter Bevin** retired from the Department of Natural Resources on 31st December. The following passages are very much abbreviated tributes from many people who worked with Peter over the years.

- **He will be remembered as one of the quiet achievers with an uncanny ability to quickly address the practicality of ideas. He has contributed to the organisation, assisted many young engineers, managers and other staff to develop to their full potential and to become effective.**
- **Peter can look back on his working life with significant pride, knowing that the agency he leaves is a better place for his having been part of it. Many of his ideas and contributions have been adopted as everyday organisational practice.**
- **As the senior local engineer, (he) with great skill and perseverance, ultimately persuaded the "locals" to adopt the planned scheme advocated for the Bundaberg District by Fred Haigh. I thank you for the quite enormous benefits you brought to Bundaberg and environs.**

- **I have a lot of respect for him as a person, for his engineering skills and for his quiet demeanour. No fault could be found with his work, his administration of his District or his relations with staff, local authorities, producer groups or the community.**
- **You possess great 'people' skills. Your friendly attitude enables others to feel at ease with you. As well as all that, in the office you were always there for your family - no matter how busy you were. You ensured you made the time for your children and now, as young adults, they have grown up really knowing their Dad.**
- **A workplace is a pleasant and desirable environment to be when there is trust and sincerity between colleagues. Over many years you have made a major contribution to building such a workplace.**
- **His work in regions and on projects, involved moving around the State and thanks must go to his wife Pam and children for accepting these moves so graciously.**

And from Tom Fenwick:

- **Peter, has made an enormous contribution to the direction of water resource development and management in Queensland. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources to personally thank him for his loyal and dedicated service and support over the past years. He has been of immense value to the Department and a tower of strength to me. Peter can be proud of his achievements and on behalf of the whole Department, I wish him every success for the future and a long and well deserved retirement.**

#### ..... Future Retirements .....

Our Association would like to get details of others as they retire from the Department because it is likely they are well known to at least some of our members who would be interested to hear of them. We might also be able to recruit new members. So if you know of other recent retirees or prospective retirees please let us know.

#### ..... REST IN PEACE .....

**Bill Sharp** died on 13th December after a short time in hospital. William Munro Sharp was born on 26th August 1926, the only child of William and Isabella Sharp of Bexley, Sydney.

Bill's education was in the Bexley area and at Canterbury High School before he began the Civil Engineering course at Sydney University. Don Beattie recalls that it was here that Bill really developed his storytelling ability and displayed great knowledge of racing, so much so that he was thought to have "swallowed" Miller's Guide at an early age. Bill's interest in racing and rugby and most other sports continued for the rest of his life.

Graduating in Civil Engineering at the end of 1947, Bill and Don were just two of the graduates who headed north to join the old Irrigation and Water Supply Commission. The pair started work on 23rd February 1948.

They had 6 to 8 weeks in Head Office before being loaded onto a truck with Foreman Bill Kennedy, other construction personnel and materials and taken to St George where a weir and bridge were to be built. Bill spent about six months in St George before being recalled to Head Office to work in Designs Branch.

Back in Brisbane met **Helen Wixted**, Secretary to the Commissioner and they were married in 1953. Shortly afterwards the Sharps moved to Longreach where Bill became District Engineer, a position he held until his transfer to Brisbane in 1960.

With their return to Brisbane the Sharp family increased with the births of Alison in 1960 and Roslyn in 1961.

Bill's engineering career continued in Brisbane with stints in Groundwater and Rivers and Streams Branches before his appointment in September 1979 to the position of Assistant

Commissioner, Rural Water Supplies which position he held until his retirement on 26th August 1986. He was a highly professional engineer with a great knowledge of his specialty areas, a very good feel for those who worked with him and a sense of humour that made working with him such a pleasure. He managed to keep meetings, including Executive Meetings, on a sane level with his ability to defuse potentially delicate situations by relating pertinent, and sometimes impertinent, stories. One example of this, albeit an unintended one, was when he was trying to explain a complicated issue to Commissioner Fred Haigh. The Commissioner said he couldn't understand the explanation, "It's really quite simple Mr. Haigh." Bill replied. "**Even Blind Freddy could see that.**" Fred burst out laughing, most unexpectedly, and Bill made a vow to be more careful in future with his choice of the vernacular.

In July 1990 Bill and his daughters lost Helen after a very long illness.

At one time he was part owner of two racehorses, **Brothers Girl** and **Corbett Park** the names of which reflected his close association with members of Brothers Rugby League Club. He was also an avid follower of Rugby, was a regular visitor to Ballymore and even accompanied the Wallabies on one of their tours of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

A very capable engineer, a great raconteur and a good friend to all who knew him, Bill will be sadly missed

This obituary is based on Don Beattie's eulogy on 17th December when Bill was laid to rest beside Helen at the Pinaroo Garden Cemetery.

Thanks Don.

In the last edition of the Newsletter we mentioned that **Bruce Burke**, a draftsman in the old Commission in the '50's had been seriously ill. Sadly we now report that Bruce died on 7th January. We extend our sympathy to his widow Jan, son Adam and daughter Nicole and her husband Ian.

**Maxie Dean** died on 14th January in Longreach two months short of his 83rd birthday. Maxwell James Dean was born in Longreach where his father at one time had the Longreach to Jundah mail contract. Years before he was old enough to have a drivers licence or tall enough to properly reach the clutch and brake pedals, Maxie took his turn to run the mail. The Postal Institute Museum has a wonderful old photograph of the Dean mail truck grossly overloaded and deeply bogged on the Jundah road.

Max served in the Army during World War 11 and received wounds which troubled him for the rest of his life.

He began work with the Commission at Longreach as a mechanic and was later appointed a Boring Inspector. One of his former workmates described him thus-

"He was second to none as a back-up man on a difficult job, gave 100% support and his loyalty was beyond question and rock solid. When the job was not going well and everything seemed against you, he would boil the billy, suggest we sit down, have a cup of tea and talk about the problem. You know he was usually right. I was very lucky to have his support during my Longreach years and I haven't met anyone quite like him since then."

After his retirement in the late '70's Max and his wife Kitty lived for a short time in Longreach before buying a house in Toowoomba. Tragically Kitty died as they drove to their new home.

**Wladyslaw (Wally) Baturo** passed away on 24th January after a long illness. He was aged 86 years.

Wally was born in Eastern Poland and taught school before serving in World War 11 when he was taken a prisoner of the German Army. Determined to start a new life as far as possible from Europe and communism, he came to Australia in August 1949 with his parents, his wife Paulina and son George. After his compulsory contract with the Government as a labourer at the Gaythorne Army Barracks, Wally began work with Surface Water Branch of the Irrigation Commission and was soon engaged in hydrographic work throughout the State, often spending long periods in the field in anticipation of wet season peak flows. For a long time he was responsible for stream gauging in the Border Rivers area.

Wally retired in 1977 as Senior Hydrographer. He was widely respected for the training of his staff, the quality of his measurements and for his computation skills.

Wally was active in the Polish community and enjoyed helping newcomers settle into their adopted country. With his second wife Hallina, (Paulina died in 1968), he enjoyed several overseas trips.

Wally is survived by his sister, his son, his daughter-in-law and two grand children to whom we extend our sympathy.

**Stefan Granat** died on March 3rd at the grand age of 92. Stefan was born in Poland and when that country was invaded in 1939 he escaped to fight against the Axis countries with the Polish Army in exile. He migrated from Britain to Australia in 1948 and worked in North Queensland cutting cane and as a construction worker. He joined the Irrigation Commission on hydrographic work in 1950 and worked on flood measurements and other gaugings and computations until his retirement in 1972. Stefan was a conscientious and happy member of the staff. He is survived by Stanislawa,(Stella) his wife of 38 years.

**John Crutcher** will be remembered by many members as a very pleasant and helpful Clerk in Supply and several other Branches before he took early retirement. John sadly died recently at the untimely age of 47 years and was interred on 27th January. We send our sympathy to his wife Mary and to their family.

**Peter Tayler** passed away unexpectedly on 28th January aged 52 years. Peter's grasp of his profession (Drafting), his capacity for work, his contribution to his work area and the cheerful assistance he was able to give to his colleagues was recognised in 1989 when he was awarded the **Graham Jobling Memorial Award**. This award was made annually to a person who had made an outstanding contribution to the Commission's activities.

Following his promotion to Principal Technical Officer, Spatial Information and Mapping, Peter earned the high respect of his staff and peers for his drive, his administrative abilities and his leadership qualities.

He is survived by his wife Pamela and children Robert, Cassandra, Steven, and Michael.

**Alan Niven** died suddenly on 5th March at 43 years. Alan worked with QWRC and DNR in Records Branch and Operations Division and in Scientific Publishing and Surface Water Assessment. He has been described as a resourceful and efficient team player and was a member of the Surface Water Assessment team which won last years DNR Achievement Award.

Alan was an outstanding soccer player who represented both Australia and Queensland. He died playing soccer.

Our sympathy goes to Alan's wife **Donna** (nee Chilton) and children. Donna worked in the old Human Resources Branch and is now a Senior Project Officer in DNR.

**Elizabeth (Liz) Hird** passed away peacefully on 11th March after a long illness. She joined Water Resources in the early 1980's in Designs Branch (later Engineering Services) and then in Document Management. Liz will be remembered for the interest and care she took in others.

A poem read at the funeral service by her father described someone who put her own health problems behind her and added to the joy of other lives. It met with spontaneous applause.

We extend our condolences to parents Norm and Pat Melit and her 12 brothers and sisters.

We also extend our sympathy to **Michael McEniery's** widow, **Roslyn**, whose Mother, **Mrs Henry**, died recently in France.

### ..... A BLAST FROM THE PAST .....

Members are invited to recall experiences from earlier days in the Commission/Department. This contribution comes from an anonymous North Queensland person.

### **The Little Boss and the Upwardly Mobile Marsupial**

“What the hell does the OFFICE want us to do this for?” Not an unnatural sort of remark from any I.W.S. workshop supervisor at any time, but this request did seem a bit over the top.

The OFFICE had a good reason for the request (don't they always). It went like this.” Whilst answering a call of nature at three AM “The Little Boss” sympathised with the unfortunate whose car horn was obviously stuck and blared continuously. After tossing and turning and failing to return to sleep, The Little Boss realised the noise was coming from the Commission Workshops area and possibly from one of the dozen or so vehicles parked there. Being possessed of a set of keys of the Workshop and a powerful sense of public responsibility; and being devoid of any fear of the dark, The Little Boss set out on foot to restore peace and quiet to the town of Mareeba. The stroll across the park was pleasant ,except for the noise. Opening the padlock on the first gate was a bit of a problem (not helped by the continuous blast). In through the front door of the office and out through the back and the noise was still ahead from inside the Workshop. Must be a vehicle parked in there. Another search for the Workshop key and for the light switch. There are no vehicles to be seen and the noise is coming from on high. Eureka, it's the siren to announce starting and knock-off times. But where in the hell is the switch for that? Certainly not in the workshop office as he tried all of them with some most unexpected results. Finally The Little Boss finds a switch on a pole about head high all by itself and without a label and it's in the 'on' position. At last blessed relief. Silence.”

“The Little Boss deduced that it must have been the resident possum who turned on the switch while shinnying up the pole and requested a shield be placed over it. He figured he had enough to do during the day placating residents who complained about noise, dust etc without having to set up a night shift to deal with complaints about the siren.”

The sheet of cardboard held up with thumbtacks is probably still there (and strangely enough The Little Boss sometimes wonders if he dreamt the whole thing as no complaints were ever received and surreptitious enquiries among a few nearby residents proved they were mighty sound sleepers or .....)

Our thanks go to the person who sent this contribution. The wish to remain nameless is respected.

### **Another Gaol Breakout**

Last Newsletter's story about the attempted breakout (burnout) from the Wandoan lockup reminded Daree Foster of an incident at St George in the early '50's when she worked for the Irrigation Commission. The District Office then consisted of two rooms at the rear of the Court House next door to the Police Station. The lockup stood alone in the back yard of the of the Government offices about 40 metres from the IWS office and in full view of it. It consisted of two cells and a small verandah enclosed in wire mesh

One day the lockup's “client” was a young and most presentable young lady who had arrived in town and was promptly arrested for some misdemeanours committed elsewhere. She had come to St George see her brother who worked at the Court House!

Our Boring Supervisor Wally Stevenson who occupied one of the IWS rooms spent much time looking at the unfortunate girl, musing on the circumstances of her imprisonment, querying the need for one so young and bright to be incarcerated and admiring the calm way in which she sat on the cell verandah nonchalantly playing with the wire mesh.

Wally turned away for a few seconds and when he looked again at the lockup the young lady was no where to be seen. She had unravelled the wire mesh in full view of Wally and scarpered. Our memories can't recall whether Wally reported the escape to the police or if he suddenly put his head down and became engrossed in his bookwork.

**Readers are urged to send in anecdotes** relating to their life or work in the earlier days of the Commission. There are some wonderful stories out their that should be told before they are lost,

or even worse, grossly distorted. It will be of interest to know that the Department is sponsoring a book recording the earlier days of the "Commission" as outlined in the next paragraphs.

### ..... HISTORY IN THE MAKING .....

The Director General has approved the writing of a "**Peoples History of Water Resources**". This work will record the progress of the Department responsible for water resources in Queensland from the early days to the disappearance of a discernable water resources entity in 1995, through the eyes of the people who experienced the changes. The book will deal with activities rather than chronological events. This will enable the present to be compared and contrasted with the past in the day to day lives of employees and their families.

The book will be written over the next two years by professional historian Margaret Pullar with the assistance of her father Ian, a long-term employee. They propose to collect much of their material through interviewing "Oldies" and present employees. Anyone who is able to provide information by way of yarns, photographs or memorabilia is invited to contact Ian Pullar by phone (07) 3224 728, email [pullari@dnr.qld.gov.au](mailto:pullari@dnr.qld.gov.au) or fax (07) 3224 8205.

The project is being managed by a steering committee of **George Pearce, Alan Wickham and myself (Chairman)**.

### **Appropriate Author**

Our family pharmacist is advertising the health book "**Laughter, Sex, Vegetables and Fish**" by author John **Tickell**. This snippet is totally unrelated to the foregoing story on the "People's History", although the "History" will undoubtedly deal with some of these subjects.

### **Most Appropriate Song for Political Leaders**

"Its My Party and I'll Cry if I Want to." for Messrs. Fraser and Hawke and Ms Hanson.

### **Serving It Up To The Other Services**

Three top ranking officers from the Navy, the Army and the Air Force addressed an important gathering of politicians and businessmen. The Admiral and the General in the course of their speeches referred to the Air Force as the Cinderella of the Services. In his address the Air Commodore said that he didn't know much about Cinderella except that she had two ugly sisters.

### **Watch Your Back**

"It isn't what people say, it's what they whisper!" Errol Flynn.

### ..... ATTIC TO LET .....

An elderly Italian gentleman confessed thus to his long time friend:-

"I have a problem. I sheltered a Jewish refugee in the attic during the war."

"That's very commendable." said the friend.

"I charged him rent." continued the elderly one.

"That's not so good. However it's a long time ago, and you did put yourself at risk, so forget it" replied the friend.

"But should I tell him the war is over?" asked the old one.

### ..... THE FLOOD .....

The Lord said to Noah "In six months I will cover the earth with water and the evil people will be drowned. I want you to build an Ark and to save two of every living species on Earth." With a flash of lightning He gave Noah plans and specifications of the Ark.

Six months passed, the clouds came and the rains started. The Lord looked down and saw Noah weeping but no Ark. The Lord demanded "Noah! Where is my Ark?"

"Lord, please forgive me! I did my best but there were big problems. Your plans could not be passed by the Marine Surveyor. I had to have them redrawn by a Naval Architect. We argued at length over ventilation of the animal holds and the need for a fire sprinkler system. The neighbours objected to the City Council when work started in my front yard and I had to appeal to the Local Government Department."

"I could not get suitable local timber because anti logging protesters blockaded the forests and I had to import planks from far away lands."

"I had to negotiate a work place agreement with the carpenters and have it registered, with amendments, by the Industrial Court. When we started to gather the animals the Animal Protection People sued me, objecting to me taking two only of each species. Then the Environment Department wanted to see the Environmental Impact Statement for **Your** Flood and the Department of Natural Resources wanted a plan of the inundated area. I sent them a globe."

"Right now I am trying to resolve a complaint from the Equal Opportunity Commission about the ratio of white caucasian male workers to other ethnic groups and females. The Taxation Office has seized my assets because they fear I will sail away leaving unpaid taxes."

"I really don't think I can have Your Ark finished for another five years." wailed Noah.

The skies began to clear, the sun shone and a rainbow appeared. Noah looked up and smiled. "You mean you are not going to destroy the earth?" Noah asked hopefully. "No" said the Lord sadly. The Government already has!"

#### ..... DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES .....

Last July we printed an address by Lee Rogers about the organisation of the Department and some of it's activities. Some changes have occurred since then and we are indebted to Ian Pullar for these notes.

Following Peter Bevin's retirement as Deputy Director General, Bill Eastgate is acting in the position pending a slight reorganisation. The two DDG jobs will be replaced by one DDG and an Executive Director Service - Delivery. Mike McKenna will act in this position until it is filled.

The existing five year **Implementation Plan** is currently being revised to reflect changes in Government policy e.g. Water Allocation and Management Plans (WAMPS) as well as changes resulting from further studies.

The Regional Infrastructure Development Group (RID) is carrying out many studies that may lead to new works. There are major studies on the Atherton Tableland (raising Tinaroo, Bilwon Weir, Biboohra Offstream Storage, and Nullinga Damsite), Herbert River area (Wooroora damsite), Burdekin Basin (raising Burdekin Falls Dam and Hell's Gate's and Urannah dam sites), Burnett Basin (Kalliwa/Paradise/Mingo Crossing dam sites and raising Boondooma Dam), Condamine, Nangram, and Brigalow weir sites.

Cheers,

Bernie Credlin.