

## **BEYOND THE PALE – THE PLIGHT OF REMOTE AREA HERITAGE**

Historic heritage in remote areas is 'beyond the pale,' too far away, too difficult to conserve and passé compared with trendy urban sites. It is the product of pastoralism but wool is no longer the 'Australian story.' Despite the significant wool income to Australia (\$3.3 billion), selling educational services abroad brings in more (\$4.2 billion). A study of the wool export business from 1862 to 1995 found that the Australian economy 'fell off the sheep's back' after World War I despite the aberration of the Korean wool boom (Grattan, 2004:104-5). For 100 years Australia did 'ride on the sheep's back' and from associated activities such as shearing and droving came much of our cultural heritage –in art, literature, poetry, language, music and our essential Australianness. Much of this imagery is associated with the history of western Queensland with its boss drovers, gun shearers, swagmen waltzing matildas and strikers meeting under the tree of knowledge.

With current rates of change in rural property management, ownership and proposed local government amalgamations there is a very real risk of losing a large amount of Queensland's rural heritage. There is a lack of knowledge about the extent and significance of the places, a lack of incentives for owners to conserve them, a lack of skills to assist in conservation work, and a lack of monitoring of the condition of remote places entered in heritage registers.

This paper examines the background to efforts at conserving rural heritage, the historical development of pastoralism in Queensland, issues in remote area conservation and some possible solutions.

### **Background**

Homesteads and woolsheds as Australian architectural icons rose to prominence in the 1970s (Sowden, 1972). The recording work undertaken in Queensland by Peter Forrest and Richard Stringer provided the first studies resulting in entries in the Register of the National Estate (RNE).

Australia ICOMOS undertook a study of *Pastoral Technology and the National Estate* in 1992/3. It recognised that the RNE contained 'big and obvious structures appreciated for their architecture, and ... for the use of local materials and vernacular building techniques,' but beyond these are 'many structures and evidence of technology that influenced the spread of pastoralism and the character of operations and landscapes produced' (Walker, 1995:8). As well as the main homestead building, 73 types of structures/places associated with the rural property complex were identified in the ICOMOS study.

The National Cultural Heritage Forum in 1998 discussed Rural Heritage and advocated establishing a Cultural Heritage Fund to assist in all the aspects of conservation but the response from Canberra was to pass the necessary investigations to the Australian Council of National Trusts. It was not until 2003 that the National Trust's Endangered Places List included 'Rural Homesteads' as a category.

In 2003, the Queensland Heritage Council commissioned a study on issues of Rural Heritage Places with Stage 1 reviewing the known rural homesteads/places and models of management in use elsewhere (Lennon, 2003:3-4). This paper draws on that study in part.

### **Heritage audit of pastoral complexes**

With the exception of the ACT with its distinctive shepherds' huts and outstations, pastoral technology places were not considered to be adequately represented on heritage registers (Australia ICOMOS, 1995:70). The common evidence such as fencing, dams, bores, mills and yards and the pattern of paddocks, is unlikely to meet the thresholds for heritage listing without association with places like homesteads. This is also the case in Queensland.

The following table summarises the listed Queensland rural heritage properties:

<b>Qld Heritage Register</b>	<b>RNE -Commonwealth</b>	<b>National Trust of Qld</b>
Total -125	Total -60	Total -53
Permanent-73	Registered places -28	
Reported/removed -52	Indicative places -29	
	Destroyed/removed -3	

These registers have been constructed over a long period with different recording standards and so are not totally comparable. See Map 1 for their distribution.

The number identified with heritage values is an underestimate as nominations come from local government or theme studies across a region, and much of rural Queensland has not been surveyed. Many places have a richly layered history but the physical heritage values are not intact due to relocation, abandonment, fire, vandalism and ultimately decay.

Pastoralism has left a physical heritage from the initial squatting period of the 1840s to the present day. Regional differences in pastoral technology relate in part to drainage systems, rainfall patterns, soil and vegetation types, distance from markets and supply centres. Historical pastoral regions with distinct technologies are:

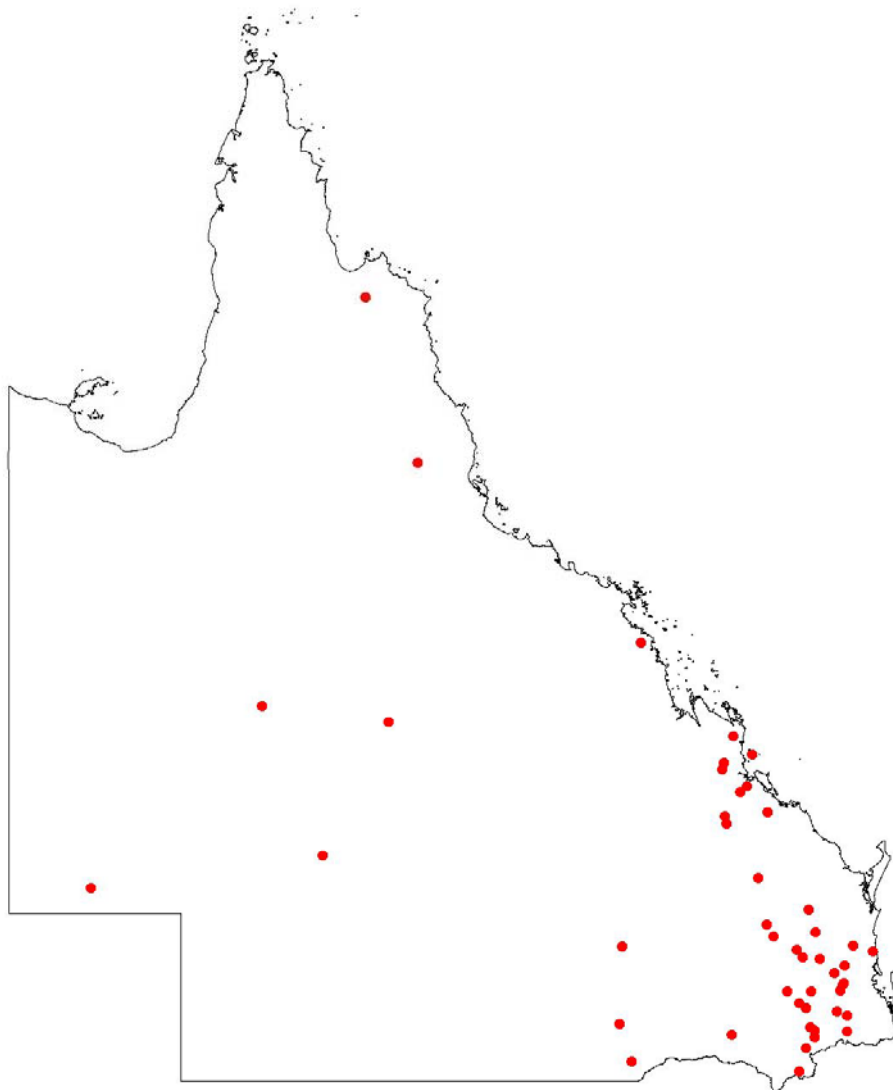
- Western Queensland and the Channel Country
- Central west Queensland
- Cape York and the Gulf rivers
- Atherton Tableland.

Historically, the Queensland cattle industry was closely associated with the Northern Territory and Kimberley through property ownership, stock routes, railheads and store cattle markets.

Regional construction styles reflect the availability of materials and illustrate the changes in working methods and housing on rural properties as well as the ethnicity of builders. The most common structural materials used in most of Queensland were rough-shaped stone, bush timber, sawn timber and corrugated iron. These materials have survived; more ephemeral materials

have disappeared such as brushwood, grass and reed thatch, crude stones in ant-bed matrix and upright saplings with mud infill.

*Map 1: Homesteads entered in the Queensland Heritage Register showing the bias in the distribution towards South-East Queensland*



### **Historical context**

Queensland pastoral settlement was initiated by expansion from NSW to the Darling Downs and by 1844 there were 30 squatting stations. By 1859 one quarter of the colony was occupied by 3.5 million sheep and 500,000 cattle (Fitzgerald, 1986:132ff).

Following separation from NSW, rapid expansion occurred west into the Maranoa and Warrego, then north into Mitchell and Burke districts. After retreat in the late 1860s, the pastoral frontier expanded in a second major wave until by the mid 1880s, occupation of the land was complete. Increased efficiency occurred in the 1870s with the widespread introduction of wire fencing (Fitzgerald, 1986:146-7).

The period 1884-1915 was one of mixed fortunes: resumption of stations for agricultural subdivision under the 1884 Land Act, sinking of artesian water bores following the 1884-6 drought, rabbit plagues in late 1880s, severe economic depression of the 1890s, tick fever and the great drought (1894-1902), and shearers' strikes in 1891 and 1894. Sheep numbers rose to nearly 22 million in 1892 – with three stations - *Wellshot*, *Bowen Downs* and *Milo* shearing one million between them. Between 1894 and 1901 nearly three million cattle were lost (Forrest, 2005) but a more realistic approach to pastoral use followed in the 1900s and sheep numbers stabilized at between 15 and 20 million and cattle rose to nearly four million (Fitzgerald, 1986:149-154).

The number of surviving heritage listed places by decade also reflects the boom and bust of pastoral fortunes as illustrated in the following table:

Period	Number of rural homesteads	
	National Trust list	Qld Heritage Register
1840s	6	5
1850s	8	1
1860s –colony of Qld	7	9
1870s	9	8
1880s	4	5
1890s	3	1
1900-1921	6	3
1920s-30s	0	3
Post WW2	0	0
N/A	10	10

This table shows the concentration on early colonial buildings, then a second wave, but no listings after World War I when new building techniques and light weight materials obviously had an impact on rural homestead design and maintenance.

This concentration on the early colonial structures is due to our lack of knowledge of the complete extent of the heritage resource of rural homestead complexes. The earliest survivors seem to have been adequately documented (through property histories, measured drawings, historic and contemporary photographs, oral histories) but not the representative or biggest at different periods.

This is illustrated by *Oakwood* on the Nive River, east of Augathella which had the largest blade shearing woolshed still complete in 1990 with huge wicker baskets for the wool pieces but allowed since then to fall down in sections; or *Isis Downs*, which had the biggest and first woolshed in the nation with electric shearing stands, and which had its stone and rammed earth jackeroos' quarters

bulldozed some years ago as staff numbers post WW2 reduced from the 40 homestead-based staff at its peak in the late '60s and early 1970s.

Abandoned homesteads from the 1880s still remain such as *Eulolo* on the Gilliat River with its separate cookhouse and many outbuildings or *Nelia Ponds* on the Flinders River –both main homestead buildings prefabricated and shipped out there by bullock drays. *Rockvale* has buildings from every period, while some components like wool bins were moved to different properties as occurred with those from *Peak Downs* in the 1860s going to *Cubaroo* remaining in use until 2001 (S. O'Connor, pers.comm.). The history of each individual property is part of the regional environmental history of occupation, clearing, transformation, utilisation of local resources and response to changing seasons, droughts and floods.

The associated stock routes between these properties also need recording and protection of their remaining *in situ* heritage such as cast iron stock route signs, yards, bores, mills and tanks. Margaret Pullar has described the historical evolution of stock routes and the cultural significance of their features, names and remnant vegetation (Pullar, 1995: 31-40).

Patterns largely remained until the mid 1960s when social and economic changes caused a slow but obvious drift away from the bush and a new pastoral framework formed with larger scale corporate ownership, less labour and increased technological assistance. Granting equal pay to Aboriginal stock workers in 1966 hastened the end of the old pastoral system using intensive labour on stations.

Massive changes have occurred since: production of beef for the American market, cattle replacing sheep, beef development roads with truck transport, stock disease control and massive culling of herds, and introduction of new breeds so that 75% of cattle in northern Queensland carry at least half Brahman blood better suited to tropical conditions. Knowledge of the environmental impacts of pastoral activities has increased within the industry, and environmentally responsible care of the land is now the norm rather than the exception. Native Title claims and determinations cover many pastoral lease areas forecasting a new pastoralism (Pearson and Lennon, 2007).

Nostalgia for a partly real and partly imagined pastoral past has permeated popular culture since the 1970s. 'R.M. Williams' has become a fashion label and pet dogs wear Drizabones, as well as those ordered for the Prime Minister and fellow leaders at the September 2007 APEC meeting. Eulogising the outback is reflected in the establishment of the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach in 1982.

Yet the boundary between nostalgia and imbedded cultural influences is blurred. Pastoralism is the foundation of some of the great legends of Australian life –the outback pioneers riding to prosperity 'on the sheep's back' or on hoof through drought, flood and fire, or the battler eking out a living by shearing, jackarooing, fencing or rabbiting. The distribution of the sheep flock has changed substantially with the wheat-sheep zone of Australia containing

around 55% of the Australian sheep flock and the dominance of the big runs of Queensland is now a memory. But knowledge of pastoral places of real heritage significance is strangely limited.

## Issues

### i. Changing rural economy

Agri-businesses and land holding amalgamations have been replacing family-run farms at an accelerating rate since the 1990s; for example, the Australian Agricultural Company now owns 20 large properties in Queensland and, as 'Australia's biggest cattle rancher, owns and manages 1.2% of Australia's land mass' (*The Australian*, 25 May 2007:21). Investment corporations are also amassing large rural properties into their portfolios, such as the Dutch owned Salentein Holdings buying the historic *Portland Downs* station southwest of Longreach (*Courier Mail*, 18 May 2007:87)

Property amalgamations lead to redundant buildings. In Hughenden Shire in 2003 of eight wool producing properties sold, seven went to adjacent owners expanding their holdings but resulting in seven redundant complexes of buildings. The flock has dramatically declined and with it lower numbers of people in the bush coupled with drought means that even less value will be given to heritage items. It follows that with the big runs going out of sheep the rate of neglect will accelerate. The same applies to the older cattle runs as well with companies controlling larger tracts to the point of nearly entire ecosystems being the domain of a few as in the Channel country.

Changing land uses also result in loss of physical evidence of traditional rural patterns as happened with cotton farming taking over sheep country in the 1990s, and in the far rangelands cattle predominate where sheep were agisted as far as the Gulf in the 1930s. Beef cattle production dominates Queensland's livestock industry increasing 20% since 1989 and Queensland has 45% of the total Australian herd (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).

Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority revealed that rural debt has increased by 13% during 2003-2005 to reach \$8.67 billion. The increase for the Cape, Carpentaria and Central North regions is attributed to activity in the beef industry as well as producers continued investment into infrastructures and herds. In the wool industry 50 % of rural debt is represented by the shires of Barcoo, Winton, Paroo, Balonne and Aramac, with a total of \$59.5 million debt to remain viable. This financial year more than 2600 applications for Exceptional Circumstances Interest Subsidy drought support have been approved totalling \$86.6 million of financial assistance.  
<http://www.qraa.qld.gov.au/mediareleaseitem.jsp?mediarelease=307> (accessed 3 June 2007)

Clearly there is little income for routine maintenance which will be deferred for as long as possible, and no income for maintenance of redundant historic rural structures which form part of many property complexes.

## **ii. Changing rural work practices**

Workers live in towns and commute to work or are employed as contractors across a range of properties. Less staff housing is required. *Headingly* station near the Northern Territory border is an example of this change where one million hectares carries 50,000 cattle and 25 people, but 30 years ago it had 300 people.

With rapid change there is a loss of material before its value is recognised and loss of intangible heritage, such as work practices that are no longer used. This is followed by loss of collective memory but there is a need to record as oral histories the specific terminology of such work techniques so that the language of redundant bush work is not lost. Some of this terminology has been captured in bush poetry and song.

## **iii. Changing personal priorities and attitudes**

Most rural property owners, managers and workers are committed to learning computer skills and associated technologies and have little time for histories or maintenance of old crafts, despite generally being proud of their rural heritage. Some want to share their knowledge and are often active in local historical societies but do not want outsiders to know about the physical heritage remaining on their properties. Some have valuable collections of written records and photographs of the operation of their properties and these should be recorded –as part of the national distributed collection of historical archives. However, many property owners fear the accountability if their properties are included on heritage registers and fear interference by regulators – the ‘heritage police.’

Common threats to the conservation of pastoral complexes are: intentional destruction, clearing and tidying up, lack of recognition or awareness of the cultural significance of features, indifference and lack of concern for redundant technology, and neglect. Redundant machinery is seen as a nuisance and handed over to ‘folk museums’ often losing its working context.

There are also conflicting interests in relation to the future care of rural places – historic heritage, Aboriginal and green interests do not always cooperate as they may have conflicting values and management objectives. In addition, large tracts of the outback are being purchased by private funds like Australian Bush Heritage with Carnarvon, Ethabuka and Cravens Peak stations in central and western Queensland for nature conservation.

## **iv. Changing rural technologies**

Modern machinery requires less physical labour. In the Channel Country there is still one property using bronco yards, but an amazing number of properties do not run horses –stock work is done from quad bikes or helicopters.

Ancillary structures have been abandoned, fallen into disrepair or collapsed, for example, detached kitchens, cookhouses, laundries, slaughterhouses and meat hanging sheds, creameries, milking cow bales, dips, wool scours, kilns, forges and blacksmith’s shops, stables, coach houses, slab barns, shearers’ quarters.

Computers replace tally boards. There is an associated loss of skills and knowledge of use of tools and implements for the different tasks.

#### **v. Changing construction methods**

Traditional skills are no longer required for carpentry, fencing etc as new products are pre-cut or erected with different methods, such as nail guns compared to hammers, solar panels instead of windmills. Getting tradespeople to tender for repair and maintenance jobs in the outback is a problem much less those with specialised heritage trades skills.

#### **vi. Changing weather patterns**

Outback Queensland has been subject to variable weather for eons making pastoralism marginal at times. The current long drought has exacerbated patterns of abandonment that will continue with property amalgamations and the introduction of new technologies further reducing opportunities for personal care of heritage features.

#### **vii. Occupational health and safety issue**

There is always an element of risk in working with horned stock and horses. Post and rail fencing failing around stockyards can be dangerous. Soils around dips and sheep jetting areas have chemical contamination. The sheer remoteness of some places is also an occupational safety issue because of poor road access and distance from emergency assistance.

#### **viii. Local community difficulties**

Difficulties encountered in rural heritage conservation projects are well known:

- volunteers are overstretched,
- new uses for redundant buildings are difficult to find,
- tourism is not providing an operational income,
- demolition by neglect is occurring,
- sustaining projects (even if funded) is difficult,
- many people who care are city based therefore unavailable on the ground,
- places are isolated, the distance from support is long and people do not have the skills,
- local government has the responsibility but not necessarily the skills,
- the heritage administration system at all levels is not engaging community and the approach is disjointed.

#### **ix. Adaptive reuse**

Some heritage listed rural complexes have found new uses as community museums; for example, *Glengallan*, *Jondaryan* woolshed, *Greenmount*, and Blackall Woolscour were all supported by the Queensland Heritage Trails Network program of capital works funding. These first three properties are located on the Darling Downs, where there is a tourist circuit and another major historic property *Jimbour* has diversified into wine grape production with some outbuildings adapted for a visitor centre.



Tourism provides heritage properties with income to maintain these assets. Some properties have redeveloped shearers' quarters and staff housing for tourists – *Wrotham Park* is one example. Farmstays, with guests involved in active farm operations, were also popular especially in more remote areas such as at *Lorraine* station and *Abbeycourt* in the Longreach district but expensive insurance premiums have forced them to close.

Large structures can be reused for storage. There are examples of destroying sections of the original structure to fit in new uses, or demolition of the structures totally so as not to have a maintenance liability as at *Isis Downs*. The significant *Bimbah* homestead complex, north east of Longreach and built of timber and tin in 1898 in the early Federation style, in contrast to the stone homestead of its parent station *Mt Cornish* at Aramac, was demolished in 1991 as a result of the fear generated by the introduction of interim heritage legislation.

#### **x. Financial and government assistance**

Tax incentives were most effective before GST. They apply to private houses not company owned structures. Maintenance to yards or employee housing is tax deductible but not for owners' houses which might have a large (500 m<sup>2</sup>) corrugated iron roof requiring traditional methods of ridge capping etc.

Assistance such as rate relief is not looked on favourably as the local government areas have such a small population for the rate base that property owners do not like seeking exemptions as they will be denying the whole of community effort, an even hotter issue now with amalgamations.

Since the National Estates Grants Program in the 1970s heritage assistance to owners has varied and never been enough. The short lived Tax Incentives for Heritage Conservation Program (1994-2000) enabled private owners of heritage-listed properties to apply for income tax rebates of 20 cents in the dollar. Preference was given to major conservation works on listed heritage places that were visible or accessible to the community. No homesteads in Queensland received tax relief for conservation works under this scheme.

Heritage advisors attached to local government planning departments do not operate across rural Queensland, although the Productivity Commission noted the extent of this service across Australia where half of local councils provide some form of assistance to property owners for historic heritage conservation (Productivity Commission, 2006:330-336).

Queensland had only expended \$141,000 in 18 grants on rural homestead conservation projects as part of its Community Heritage Grants since 1989-90. However, a new \$5 million heritage fund announced at the last State election has attracted more than 800 applications at May 2007.

#### **xi. Attitudinal problems in Commonwealth and State government towards heritage**

The National Heritage Trust 'captured' the heritage name in the mid 1990s but it only applied to natural heritage and, at the same time, cultural heritage

increasingly referred to either Indigenous heritage or material heritage in museum collections. Historic heritage appears to have fallen between the cracks. Only selected iconic places of historic heritage are protected in the National Heritage List of the revised and fundamentally different Commonwealth heritage legislation.

In a study funded by the Queensland Government, CSIRO and university partners –*Social and Community Dimensions of Natural Resource Management* (Aitken, 2001), cultural heritage was only mentioned once in a table on key research priorities for Australian rangelands. In a department committed to environmental protection, the conservation of rural heritage which constitutes a baseline from which to measure change did not rate a priority.

## **xii. Attitudinal problems in local government towards heritage**

Despite the requirement in the *Queensland Integrated Planning Act* to consider cultural heritage in local government planning schemes, and the availability of excellent toolkits for local planners, the results are very inconsistent.

Only 40 of 125 of local government authorities are known to have conducted historical cultural heritage surveys. Of the 40 surveys, only 25 covered more than 75% of the local government area (2003 Queensland State of Environment).

### **Summary of problems**

In the fast changing economic and social environment of rural Queensland, there is a major attitudinal problem towards historic heritage. In an era of virtual reality, actual heritage is disregarded and is substituted with replicas in television show or museum interpretive programs. Without respect there is no will for identification of heritage *in situ*, of materials and skills required for practical conservation. There is a lack of understanding of the intangible value of rural heritage symbolic of settlement, part of regional identity and social wellbeing.

Until there is respect and understanding, policies and programs will not occur. As professionals we must speak up for this heritage 'beyond the pale' where there is a lack of a perceived 'public good' or community benefit as part of both cultural and regional policies of Governments dominated by the Treasury view that there should be an economic return on any investment.

### **Possible solutions**

As the problems span a range of areas, not just repairing redundant rural buildings, a structured sequence of activities needs to be undertaken as suggested below.

#### **i. Awareness raising**

An urgent program highlighting the significance of rural heritage properties is required. This should target property owners and managers, play on the pride of tradition and survival, be politically bipartisan, involve the Country Women's Association (CWA), 'the font of all local knowledge' and schools.

Heritage groups could provide expert speakers on ABC regional radio and TV. Other groups like Agforce, Queensland Farmers Federation, CWA, Landcare should all be invited to participate as many of the memberships cross over. The Local Government Association of Queensland should be a major partner driving awareness of rural heritage as an asset not a liability.

## **ii. Recording and documentation**

A program of identification is urgently needed—what exactly is out there? This needs to be done before cultural significance can be assessed. It also needs to be undertaken before all the evidence decays at remote or abandoned properties—at the very least the State should record this pioneer phase of Queensland settlement. The ‘romance of ruins’ is as justifiable as the conservation effort for the most significant of them, and so much the better for future generations if there are archival records of these ruins.

There are many models for successful field recording: the HABS (Historic American Building Survey) and HAER (Historic American Engineering Record) programs of the federal National Park Service, the Canadian Inventory of Historic Buildings (CIHB), the summer schools of skilled volunteers recording farm buildings, machinery, artefacts and archives at key sites as part of conservation planning such as the Day’s Mill and Farm study in Victoria.

In Queensland programs should be trialled through local government as a key partner. Teams of tertiary students could undertake the work as part of professional practice or teams of retired professionals; EPA cultural heritage branch could oversee the recording formats. Another model follows from festivals: a local community facilitator could assist in arranging field days inviting interested locals to undertake pilot projects depending on skills, such as identifying on-ground evidence of rural technologies, recording and documenting this evidence, photography, recording oral histories and stories. These workshops would be conducted by conservation specialists with the local facilitator—as happened with the museum development officers in regional Queensland with workshops on cataloguing, conserving artefacts and display techniques.

A speedy response is required as climate change is impacting on the condition of heritage items *in situ*—salinisation of soils with artefacts, wind erosion eradicating surface features and abandoned structures.

## **iii. Funding assistance**

Programs over the last 30 years have never built capacity for sustainability, but there many overseas models. In 2004 the Environment Protection and Heritage Ministerial Council (EPHC) reported its examination of incentives and tools for conserving historic heritage: property tax, rate and stamp duty abatement schemes with exemptions, freezes and deferment, rebates or credits for conservation work and Commonwealth tax deductibility. It also examined financial assistance through grants (entitlements, performance and discretionary) and loans, heritage agreements and revolving funds. But there has been no Commonwealth commitment.

Heritage agreements are potentially useful to encourage conservation especially if they contain incentives. There are parallels in the nature conservation field, through the National Heritage Trust grants system. Covenants are a similar tool.

#### **iv. Advice and specifications**

Specialist advice is required in preparing conservation management plans (CMPs) and works specifications. Whilst CMPs are fundamental to good management, there will be occasions when scarce funds would be better spent on urgent reversible repairs.

General advice brochures are readily available, for example, *Twelve Tips on Caring for Old Buildings* (National Trust and Australia ICOMOS, 1995). Generic guidance for rural property component types is required; there are many available that could be tailored to suit specific local conditions and materials such as cypress pine slab or rammed earth or gidgee twig and pug. Videos of 'how to and how not to' could be used, and training days at rural centres.

One of the most effective programs across Australia has been heritage advisors to local government. In Victoria advisors have their own chat room in which they seek solutions; it is very effective in supplying quick advice. This model could work well for dispersed workers in remote and rural areas. In 2006 the Queensland Heritage Council established a Rural Heritage Advisory Service, a telephone and online advisory service operated by a Brisbane architect giving free maintenance tips for historic homesteads.

#### **v. Training of tradespeople**

Queensland has many avenues and regional facilities for delivering training; for example, through TAFE with its current museum accreditation courses, trades training at Emerald or ranger training, or through rural groups such as Agforce, which offers access to a range of programs through regional coordinators and referral networks. It could be approached to offer training in traditional skills needed for maintenance of historic rural structures.

Queensland Heritage Trails Network in conjunction with TAFE and Museums Australia (Qld) prepared a training CD for basic object/artefact conservation and for tour guiding. It should be possible to provide a similar one for recording and for basic conservation works for rural homesteads.

#### **vi. Undertaking conservation repairs**

Given the scarcity of trained tradespeople and conservation architects in remote areas a *roving works team* could be developed to implement agreed schedules of repairs to historic buildings and structures. A team with a small skilled core plus locals who can be called in to assist and share knowledge of local conditions, suppliers etc and who would benefit by skills transfer from the roving team. This model has been used in Victoria and in South Australia with annual work camps to remote heritage places since 1990.

There may be interest in forming a *Hands on Outback Heritage* –similar in operation to the retired volunteer teachers who travel to the outback in winter and stay on properties tutoring students of School of the Air to assist them face to face with their learning. Volunteers tradespeople could participate under some remote supervision to undertake an agreed schedule of repairs and maintenance, as happened with the Blackall Woolscour machinery restoration.

Maintenance has to be regarded as part of asset management. Just as Bushcare has shared responsibility so too could a proposed Heritagecare with a 1:1 split of materials –labour. Heritage conservation works could become a sub-component of Landcare programs.

The Commonwealth Minister for Agriculture announced a \$50 million environmental stewardship program as a practical approach to protect nationally significant ecological assets on private land recognising the crucial role farmers play in conservation (*The Land*, 10 May 2007:29). This precedent should be extended to stewardship of pastoral heritage.

### **vii. Integration into local community programs**

History is the story; heritage is the remaining physical relics –places and objects, plus the intangible heritage of stories and language. Together these are the basic ingredients for people in rural areas to use in promoting their district as a tourism product. For rural areas the Queensland Heritage Trails Network links to the network heritage attractions and resource guides. See [www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au](http://www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au). The annual calendar of rural events like festivals, shows, etc can also offer opportunities for promotion of rural heritage.

There has been a 13% increase in outback tourism in 2006-7 and this will continue as visitors seek out real stories about past events in these places.

### **viii. Advocacy**

Agforce and National Farmers Federation should support the rural heritage of their members. It is not just the task of National Trust and historical societies. The former have alerted the nation through their annual Endangered Places list but have the lobbyists for the rural community supported them? No, given the absence of historic heritage on the websites of both the farmers groups and environmentalists.

Regional cultural alliances discuss mutual issues across regional education, tourism, arts and training. Rural heritage should be on their agendas.

### **ix. Reuse policy for redundant rural heritage places**

There are a range of options for reuse of redundant rural heritage rather than letting it blow away as at *Eulolo*:

- Friends of *such and such* homestead complex –descendants of former workers on some big properties could be invited to form a group to assist with maintenance tasks in return for an annual camp there.
- Partnerships with the nearest schools –to encourage young people to assist in documenting and maintaining their local heritage.

- Industry sponsors - some city based companies might have an association with a property in their pre-merger histories; these links could be used to promote good corporate citizenship by sponsoring works or materials for repairs. Stanbroke restored the stone buildings at St Anne's in *Nappa Merri Paddock*, near the SA border.

With amalgamations the bigger companies can afford to undertake restoration just as they have appointed environmental officers to undertake Landcare activities and land rehabilitation as part of their 'whole of farm' management.

New incentives are required for pastoral leases, for example, their renewal could be tied into heritage conservation agreements with consideration given to length and terms of leases if the historic features are conserved. Water is becoming a scarce resource and its access is therefore a bargaining tool; as part of a property or pastoral lease Landcare plan, historic heritage has to be factored in as rural homesteads were often sited in relation to water points. Incentives are urgently needed –like the tax credits being investigated for heritage conservation and in long term plans for sustainability of the property.

### **Conclusion**

There has been no response after 10 years by the national level of government, which is charged with heritage leadership, and limited response by State governments to conserve rural heritage which is located beyond the pale, beyond the limits of comfortable urban living. The lobby groups for conserving rural heritage have failed to attract attention and funding. Is it because of prosperity arising from non pastoral activities, population drift to cities, coastal living preferences, transfer of rural holdings to corporate ownership, development of museums at tourist nodes? Yet the myth of our outback connections and cultural identity is constantly perpetuated in marketing bush symbols and Aboriginal art.

The rural heritage of the pastoral industry has national significance – the 'long paddock' or travelling stock routes and associated watering systems still operating in parts of northern Australia are a unique contribution to stock management not practised anywhere else (Macknight, 1977). Many of the unrecorded heritage items are now fragile and subject to the vagaries of the changing weather. But firmly located on the coastal belt with our eyes fixed over the seas, advocacy for this essential building block of our cultural heritage on which we rode to prosperity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has so far failed. What will you do about this?

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