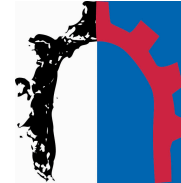# Coonamble Shire
Thematic History

The Federation era Commercial Hotel viewed from Castlereagh Street, Coonamble

Ray Christison

**High Ground
Consulting**
2009

Contents

Contents

Introduction

The thematic history of Coonamble Shire

This thematic history has been prepared as part of a community based heritage study undertaken in the Coonamble Shire in 2009. It gratefully acknowledges the work of local researchers in recording the development of the region. Published and unpublished local history resources, and national reference materials, have been referred to in the preparation of this history, and as far as possible the recollections of current and former residents of the shire have been included in the study.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the Coonamble Shire. Those who are seeking more detailed explanations of people, places and events are encouraged to refer to the works cited in the reference list that is included in **Section 10 References**. Where gaps have existed in existing narratives attempts have been made to provide a more detailed analysis.

Locally based researchers and historians have very ably recorded many aspects of the story of the Coonamble district through a series of historical narratives, reminiscences and oral histories. Local history resources include a multitude of published and unpublished research. Joan McKenzie has made an outstanding contribution to the written record of story of the Coonamble region with her books on the history of the town, the Coonamble Show Society and the life of Jessie Lloyd of *Terembone*. The biography of Jessie Lloyd provides a rare insight into the daily life of women on the early pastoral runs. Marge Lambell of *Weenya*, and other members of the Gulargambone Historical Society have left an impressive record of the development of Gulargambone and the stations in the southern part of the Coonamble Shire.

This history should not be treated as a definitive history. Other researchers are encouraged to add to the written record of the vast, complex and unfolding story of the Coonamble region.

The Australian Historic Themes

This thematic history is designed to tell the story of Coonamble Shire within a consistent national framework. This framework was designed by the Australian Heritage Commission to organise information on the history of places into areas of activity.

> *By emphasising the human activities that produced the places we value, and the human response to Australia's natural environment, places are related to the processes and stories associated with them, rather than the type of function or place …*
>
> *Themes are not intended to follow a chronological order. Rather, they are generic, and designed to be applied and interlinked, regardless of the period or place. They embrace prehistory to the modern period and a multiplicity of human activities.[1]*

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[1] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.

This history has been organised within each National Historic Theme under the relevant New South Wales Historic Themes. The New South Wales themes are dealt with in alphabetical order under the general heading of the national themes.

Timeline of Coonamble Shire

This timeline is based on the events and developments recorded in this Thematic History. Construction dates of churches and community halls are given to indicate the development of rural villages and localities. Prior to European occupation Aboriginal people had lived in the area for between 17,000 and 15,000 years.

1790s Smallpox epidemic raged along river systems
1818 Explorers Oxley and Evans travels through the area between the Macquarie and Warrumbungle (Arbuthnot's) Range
1828 Sturt explored the Macquarie Marshes
1830s Squatters begin moving sheep into the district
1830s Andrew Brown recruited Chinese labourers to work in the region
1836 Squatting legalised beyond the limits of the 19 Counties
1837 Punitive expedition by led by Lieutenant George Cobban against Gamilaraay people
1840 Yurammee and Canamble runs established by Gibson and Patterson
1840 William Charles Wentworth engaged William McMahon to establish runs on the west of the Castlereagh
1842 Alexander McGregor moved into the Gulargambone district
1847 Orders in Council regulating the use of Crown Land instituted
1849 William Blackman held a number of runs north of Canamble
1854 George Tailby held 20,000 acres on the northern side of Merry Merry
1855 Coonamble Reserve established
1859 Post Office established in Coonamble
1861 Robertson Land Act
1861 Auction of first lots in Coonamble
1861 Post Office established at Merri Merri
1870s Government and Roman Catholic schools established in Coonamble
1871 Permanent police presence at Coonamble
1871 Post Office established at Skuthorpe's Inn at Gulargambone
1874 Major flood on the Castlereagh River
1874 Cobb & Co mail coach services established to Coonamble
1876 Andrew Tobin began to develop Wingadee
1877 Cobb & Co route extended through Nugal to Walgett
1878 Public hospital established in Coonamble
1879 Police station constructed at Coonamble
1879 First subdivision of Gulargambone surveyed
1880 Municipality of Coonamble created
1881 Mooy Bros established the first sawmill in Coonamble
1881 Provisional school established in Gulargambone
1883 Brigidine sisters began teaching in Coonamble
1884 Coonamble Hospital opened
1884 Crown Lands Resumption Act
1885 Bushrangers Angel and Thurston escaped from Coonamble lockup, shooting Constable John Mitchell
1887 Volunteer fire brigade established in Coonamble
1887 Brewery established in Coonamble
1892 Aboriginal reserve established at Gulargambone
1893 Great gathering of Aboriginal people at Bulgregar Creek
1894 Coonamble No.1 Bore completed by William Watkins

1897 Artesian bore sunk at Bourbah
1897 Isolation ward constructed at Coonamble Hospital
1898 Bulgeraga Aboriginal Reserve established near Quambone
1898 Provisional school established at Quambone
1898 Cobb & Co service from Gilgandra to Coonamble ceased
1899 Post Office constructed in Quambone
1899 Early moves to establish broad acre agriculture in the district
1902 Dubbo to Coonamble Railway Line completed
1902 Village of Gilgooma surveyed
1903 Typhoid epidemic in Coonamble
1903 Anglican Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd established
1906 Wingadee Shire Council established
1906 Telephone exchange installed in Coonamble
1906 Woodlands Irrigation Farm covered 70 acres
1908 McKay harvester first demonstrated in the district
1911 W.L. Wilcox began development of an irrigation settlement at Mowlma
1912 Gulargambone Aboriginal Reserve disestablished
1916 Development of an electricity supply commenced in Coonamble
1920 Major flood on the Castlereagh River
1920 Post Office constructed at Gilgooma
1920 HRH Edward, Prince of Wales visited Coonamble
1920s New Aboriginal Reserve established at Gulargambone
1921 Major flood on the Castlereagh River
1923 Gulargambone Branch of the Country Women's Association established
1925 Coonamble Branch of the Country Women's Association established
1926 Gulargambone Hospital constructed
1926 Bush Nursing Centre established in Quambone
1928 Coonamble War Memorial X-Ray Ward constructed
1929 Major fire destroyed much of the Coonamble business district
1931 Bulgeraga Aboriginal Reserve largely deserted
1931 Aboriginal reserve created near Quambone
1935 Gilgooma War Memorial constructed
1947 Butler Airlines established an aerial service to Coonamble
1950 Castlereagh River flooded twice
1952 Coonamble Shire Council formed
1953 Warrumbungle National Park gazetted
1955 Major flood on the Castlereagh River
1958 Coonamble War Memorial Ambulance Station opened
1959 Magometon Quarry opened
1975 Passenger train services ceased on the Dubbo to Coonamble Branch Line

1.   Australian Historical Theme: Tracing the evolution of the Australian environment

The environment exists apart from being a construct of human consciousness. However, a thematic approach recognises the human factor in the natural environment, and how our understanding and appreciation of the environment has changed over time.[2]

1.1   NSW Historical Theme: Environment – naturally evolved

The Coonamble Shire sits within the Darling Plains Heritage Region. This region was defined in 1996[3]. The Heritage Office briefly defined the Darling Plains region as follows:

> *Broken country separates New England from the level Darling Plain to the west. Defined by aridity on its western boundary, signified by the shift from woodland to scrub and bushland, it extends over the plains draining rivers to the Darling, including subregions such as Liverpool Plains and the Pilliga Scrub.[4]*

This area is included in the Brigalow Belt South Biodiversity Region[5]. The geology and biodiversity of the region have been described in the Brigalow Belt South, NSW Bioregional Conservation Assessment Scoping Report. The Macquarie Marshes and Warrumbungles have also been adequately described by Whitehead in his work on the path of explorers Oxley and Evans[6].

The landforms of the area can be generally described as follows:

- **Pilliga Outwash** *… a gently undulating plain of deep sandy soils formed by outwash from the sandstone hills to the east. Some of the more productive soils around the margins … have been cleared for agriculture but most of the higher areas remain covered by State forests.*
- **Pilliga** *… contains extensive sandstone hills with areas of higher basalt peaks and has predominantly sandy soils. Much of the forest has been cleared, but there are large areas of State forest, especially on lands with rockier or shallower soils.[7]*

The Warrumbungle Range and Macquarie Marshes are the most prominent natural features of the region. The Warrumbungle range dominates the horizon of south-east of the shire. Much of the range has been declared as national park. The park encapsulates the major features of the former massive Warrumbungle volcano that is believed to have been active around 17 million years ago. It is one element of the impact of the movement of the Indo-Australian Plate over a stationary hot spot in the earth's crust over tens of millions of years.[8] The modern landscape is the result of:

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[2] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[3] Heritage Office, 1996. *Regional Histories*. p.13
[4] Heritage Office, 1996. *Regional Histories*. p.15
[5] Brigalow Belt South, NSW Bioregional Conservation Assessment Scoping Report. pp.9-13
[6] Whitehead, J., 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. pp.176-177 & 193-194
[7] Brigalow Belt South, NSW Bioregional Conservation Assessment Scoping Report. pp.12-13
[8] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. pp.10-11

> *Thirteen million years of rain, wind and ice (that) have eaten away at the structure, stripping off successive layers of ash and lava to expose the volcano's inner workings … (creating) the dramatic landscape of today's Warrumbungle Range.*[9]

The Coonamble Shire includes parts of the Warrumbungle National Park. The clear, dark skies of the region have made it an ideal location for astronomy.

Settlement patterns have been defined by watercourses that cross the region. The Castlereagh River winds from the south of the shire to the north and the Macquarie River flows into the extensive Macquarie Marshes in the west. The marshes have been described as follows:

> *The Marshes comprise a mosaic of semi-permanent wetlands including two major areas, the South Marsh and the North Marsh. The Marshes include extensive areas of reed swamp, river red gum woodlands coolibah woodlands and water couch grasslands. All these wetland types provide essential habitat for many species of waterbirds and other species of wildlife.*[10]

The marshes are also fed by numerous intermittent streams including the Marthaguy Creek, Merri Merri Creek and Terrigal Creek. In the east of the shire streams such as Weetaliba Creek and Teridgerie Creek flow from the Warrumbungle Range. These systems of watercourses have supported Aboriginal society in the area and European use of the land. The rivers and wetlands have also defined patterns of European settlement.

The region's watercourses are prone to flooding and the history of European settlement is punctuated with many flood events as water is carried from other parts of the region. Duke Tritton described a flood event that occurred around 1907 as he and his companions travelled from Charlton woolshed to Calga. The group had camped on a dry stretch of country near the Marra on a clear starlit night:

> *… just at clear daylight I felt myself getting wet and sat up; the next moment I was dragging Dutchy to his feet. There was water all round, and it flowed gently with an occasional gurgle as it found cracks in the ground. It was only a couple of inches deep where we stood, and seeing a patch of dry ground some distance away we made for it. I had heard of floods in the western rivers and had always pictured them in my mind as great walls of water rushing down, sweeping everything before them. So this creeping water had me puzzled, more so when I looked at the rising sun and clear sky which gave promise of a beautiful spring day.*[11]

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[9] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.13
[10] Whitehead, J., 2004. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers Vol.2*. p.133
[11] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.45

2.   Australian Historical Theme: Peopling Australia

This theme group recognises the pre-colonial occupations of Indigenous people, as well as the ongoing history of human occupation from diverse areas.[12]

2.1   NSW Historical Theme: Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures

The area covered by the Coonamble Shire sits at the convergence of the territories of three Aboriginal language groups, the Gamilaraay to the northeast, the Wiradjuri to the south and the Wayilwan to the north and northwest[13]. Archaeological evidence suggests that Aboriginal people have occupied the land to the east of Coonamble for up to 25,000 years and in the Warrumbungle Ranges for up to 17,000 years[14]. Radio carbon dating of occupation sites located northwest of the Macquarie Marshes suggest that people have occupied parts of the region for up to 30,000 years.[15]

Numerous cultural sites testify to the complexity of Aboriginal culture and the people's relationship with the land.

> *The inextricable bond between life and land is a fundamental premise of Aboriginal existence. All features of the landscape, and all life within it, was created during a creation period by ancestral creatures; some human, some animal, some neither. This period … is present in the landscape itself, and the stories and relationships form an integral part of the traditional law that guides all life.*
>
> *This relationship to the land extends to an in-depth knowledge of the incredible wealth of resources available in the local area, including foodstuffs and raw materials for tool and implement manufacture.*[16]

Josephine Flood has noted that "if a time scale of human occupation of Australia were represented by one hour on a clock, Aboriginal society would occupy over fifty-nine and a half minutes, European society less than half a minute"[17]. Despite the fact that the story of the Aboriginal people is "the longest continual cultural history in the world"[18] In her account of the Burra Bee Dee Mission Somerville noted that "the threads of the story have been broken" [19]. Fragments of the past must be drawn together to attempt to understand the history of the first people of this region.

Specific Aboriginal sites around Coonamble that have been identified and studied include rock shelters, open campsites and scarred trees[20]. Some caves in the Warrumbungle Ranges contain hand stencils, marked rocks and engravings[21].

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[12] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[13] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.7
[14] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.52
[15] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.10
[16] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.48
[17] Flood, J., *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, p.15
[18] Flood, J., *Archaeology of the Dreamtime*, p.15
[19] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. p.25
[20] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. pp.50-51
[21] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.51

The first European records of the Aboriginal people of the district come from members of John Oxley's exploration party, which passed through the area between Mount Harris and Mount Bullaway in July and August 1818[22]. They encountered small groups of Aboriginal people near the Macquarie River digging for roots and lighting cooking fires. They also noted many fires. On one occasion they came across a campsite.

> *We found there were eight women and twelve children, just on the point of departing with their infants in their clokes on their backs – on seeing us, they seized each other by the hand, formed a circle and threw themselves on the ground, with their heads, and faces covered. Unwilling to add their evident terror, we only remained a few minutes, during which time the children frequently peeped at us from beneath their clothes.[23]*

As squatters began to move into the country from the 1830s (refer to **Section 3.12 Pastoralism**), starting a struggle for resources, tensions began to be recorded. Connor recounts a series of incidents in 1837 that led to a punitive expedition by the NSW Mounted Police.

> *Kamilaroi (*Gamilaraay*) women were being abducted by stockmen and this probably led Kamilaroi men to kill Frederick Harrington in June at Charles Purcell's station in the Warrumbungles. On 21 September Lieutenant George Cobban of the 50th Regiment, commanding the Hunter River division of the Mounted Police, was ordered to look for Harrington's killers.[24]*

The expedition travelled hundreds of kilometres from its base at Jerry's Plains without finding a culprit. In 1838 a more serious expedition, reminiscent of the pattern of earlier British military expeditions against the Darug on the Hawkesbury, the Wiradjuri on the Cudgegong and the Wonnarua on the Hunter, Major James Nunn of the Mounted Police led an expedition to the Peel, Gwydir and Namoi Rivers. This party surrounded a Gamilaraay camp on Waterloo Creek, southwest of the present day Moree around 26 January 1838. In a brief battle possibly 50 Aboriginal people were killed.[25] This event caused alarm in government circles but response to it was overwhelmed by the Myall Creek massacre later in the same year and an escalation of conflict around the Port Phillip District.[26]

In parts of western New South Wales Aboriginal people actively resisted the intrusion of European settlers into their lands. They have continued to retain a strong sense of identity despite persistent and repeated historical attempts to destroy them as a people. The loss of societal cohesion and impact of disease among Aboriginal people has been recorded in a number of places. As early as the 1790s, well before any Europeans ventured into the region, a small pox epidemic spread along traditional trade routes. A second epidemic occurred in the 1830s.

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[22] Whitehead, J., 2005. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.143
[23] Whitehead, J., 2005. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.143
[24] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars*. p.107
[25] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars*. p.107-111
[26] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars*. p.113

> *With no immunity to the virus, tribes were decimated. As the disease moved inland through the Wiradjuri region river system into South Australia it was interpreted as the result of the powerful magic of distant tribes who had unleashed the terrifying power of the Rainbow Serpent. … in the Wiradjuri region these times remained vivid for generations as a time of death. Fifty years later, the old people recalled how the sickness "Followed down the rivers … Burying bodies was no longer attempted and the atmosphere became tainted with decomposing bodies.[27]*

As Europeans moved into the region they took up the prime grazing land along the river corridors and Aboriginal people were pushed onto marginal lands. Others lived on the fringes of European settlements 'out of curiosity or from whence they could participate in reciprocal exchanges'[28].

Aboriginal people of the region experienced incursions into their land, loss of resources and sexual exploitation. These things severely hampered the society's capacity to resist occupation of their lands, but it is clear that resistance continued for an extended period. In response to a situation of escalating violence on this and other frontiers of the colony Governor Gipps established the Native Police in 1839. Originally intended to protect all interests this force was allowed:

> *… to operate to protect settlers. White officers in charge of Aboriginal troopers, had substantial independence of the local magistracies and operated in accordance with the tradition of the punitive expedition, which was common enough in establishing colonies.[29]*

Punitive expeditions continued to be carried out over an extended period of time. In September 1845 a group of Mounted Police followed the Macquarie River below Warren to track down a group of Wayilwan men who had been implicated in attacks on European property. The party surrounded members of the Mole tribe and six of this group were identified as wanted lawbreakers. The Mole people resisted the police, wounding one corporal in the head. In response the police fired, killing ten or twelve of the group. The others escaped.[30]

The violent suppression of Aboriginal peoples was one aspect of this period of colonisation. Accounts of isolated settlers in the region also carry a common sense that Aboriginal resistance, characterised as 'untrustworthiness', was an issue of concern to them.

As the frontier settled down and conflict diminished Aboriginal people worked alongside the Europeans, although they tended to be marginalised by the racial attitudes of the time. Some Aboriginal groups lived on the runs established by Europeans, working as shepherds and general hands. Crown leases for pastoral runs carried the following provision:

> *"And we do further reserve to the Aboriginal inhabitants of Our Said Colony, such free access to the said run and parcel of Land hereby demise, or any*

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[27] Kabaila, P., 1996. *Wiradjuri Places. The Lachlan River Basin*. p.10
[28] Kabaila, P., 1996. *Wiradjuri Places. The Lachlan River Basin*. p.10
[29] Rowley, C.D., 1978. *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*. p.39
[30] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. pp.32-33

> *part thereof, and to the trees or water thereon as will enable them to*
> *procure the animals, birds, fish and other food on which they subsist."[31]*

Some families lived as station hands and servants on *Gulargambone Station*,
Tonbeburine, *Muriman* and *Tooloon*. Mary Jane Cain of Coonabarabran noted that
Aboriginal people 'made the best servants'[32]. Wayilwan people lived at worked
on properties around Quambone such as *Quambone*, *Sandy Camp* and *Ringorah*[33].

Despite the European occupation of the land Aboriginal people continued to
practice traditional laws and customs. Many ceremonial activities were held on
high ground and intricate stone arrangements have been recorded at places such
as Mount Foster[34].

'R.H. Mathews documents that in 1893 there was a great gathering of the local
Aboriginal people of the Castlereagh with the people of the Macquarie, the Bogan
and the Barwon Rivers for a great initiation ceremony.'[35] Matthews also noted
that over 200 people from all over the region attended a gathering at Bulgregar
Creek near Quambone in 1898. These people came from Gulargambone,
Coonamble, Trangie, Dandaloo, Dubbo, Brewarrina and Conkapeak. He noted
that:

> *From the time the local mob selected the site and commenced preparing the*
> *ground until the last contingent arrived, was more than three months. At*
> *this gathering nine youths were admitted to the status of membership in*
> *their respective tribes.*

This gathering was photographed by Sydney photographer Charles Kerry. Kerry
described the Bora ground on which the ceremony was held as:

> *… a compact space about 35 metres long and 13 metres wide surrounded by*
> *a bush fence about three metres high. 'Two narrow circled passages, also*
> *protected by packed brushwood, were the entrance and exit. … These were*
> *guarded day and night by warriors.'[36]*

Carved trees surrounded the ceremonial area and numerous complex designs
were carved into the clay soil of the site. The Bora ground also contained 'a
colossal horizontal representation of Baiamai', the sky god who was venerated
by Aboriginal people across the north west of New South Wales. A figure of
Baiamai was built up using soil and clay. Daramulan, Baiamai's disgraced one-
legged assistant, the snake figure Wahwee and a number of animals including
emu and kangaroo were also depicted in the Bora ground.[37] Duke Tritton also
noted a large corroboree held at Wee Waa in 1905 as one of the last such great
gatherings in New South Wales[38].

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[31] Gilgandra - Aboriginal History [Online]
[32] Cain, M. 1923. 'Coonabarabran in the 'Sixties'. p.370
[33] Miller, S., 1999. *Sharing a Wailwan Story*. p.8
[34] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. pp.27-28
[35] Gilgandra - Aboriginal History [Online]
[36] Miller, S., 1999. *Sharing a Wailwan Story*. pp.11-12
[37] Miller, S., 1999. *Sharing a Wailwan Story*. pp.13-30
[38] Tritton, D. 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.25-26

From 1880 the Association for the Protection of Aborigines began lobbying the New South Wales Government to take steps to assist Aboriginal people. The Aborigines Protection Board, with specific responsibilities for caring for aged and sick people and training and teaching the young, was established in 1883. By 1892 this Board was administering four Mission Stations and began establishing reserves for Aboriginal people. These included reserves at Coonamble and Gulargambone. The Bulgeraga Creek Reserve of 1,200 acres near Quambone was designated in 1898 as a Reserve for Aboriginal use. During the drought of 1901-1902 the area of this reserve was reduced to 60 acres.[39]

Many Aboriginal people established co-operative farming ventures on land allocated by the government. Maynard notes that during much of the later part of the 19th century over 80 per cent of Aboriginal people in NSW were self-sufficient, 'combining European farming with traditional methods of food production'. After World War I revocation of Aboriginal farms commenced and there was a 'sudden acceleration of taking Aboriginal children from their families'[40].

The NSW Aborigines Protection Act was passed by the NSW Parliament in 1909. According to Faith Bandler this legislation:

> *... was an Act that denied equality to the Aboriginal people, that made them second-class citizens. It meant that their lives could be dominated by station managers, that their homes could be entered by police, that if a friend asked them to share a quiet drink they could be arrested and gaoled.[41]*

A 1915 amendment to the Aborigines Protection Act 'stated that any Aboriginal child might be removed without parental consent if the (Aborigines Protection) Board considered it to be in the interest of the child's moral or physical welfare'. Children were removed to institutionalised care.[42] The affects of this policy are still being felt in Aboriginal communities. The Act also included a ban on the supply or consumption of alcohol. This ban lasted until the 1960s and was one of many small injustices that created resentment among the Aboriginal community.

Policies of separation and segregation carried over into some aspects of community life. Like many of the cinemas in the northwest of New South Wales the Majestic Theatre was segregated with separate seats for Europeans and Aboriginal people. Janet Robinson from the former Burra Bee Dee Mission at Coonabarabran related a story of a visit to the cinema. The cinema in Coonabarabran was not segregated.

> *We went to Gulargambone ... , and we marched in and when the lights came on we was sittin' with all the whites and the blacks sittin' over there and this dark feller sang out, he said. 'You not allowed to sit there', and of course Mavis said, 'Why?' He said 'No, there's white people sit there, and the dark'.*

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[39] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.45
[40] Maynard, J. For Liberty and Freedom: Fred Maynard and the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association.
[41] Bandler, F & Fox, L. (eds), 1983. *The Time was Ripe*.
[42] Huggonson, D., 1993. 'Aboriginal Diggers of the 9th Brigade first AIF'. p.221

> *'Oh' she said, 'No thanks, I'll go and get m' money back'.*[43] (Somerville et al 1994:124)

It was a popular game of Aboriginal children in Gulargambone to sneak into the 'whites only' seats in the dark [44].

The Aborigines Protection Act gave government unprecedented powers to interfere in the lives of Aboriginal people. As late as 1935 many of the Wayilwan people of the Macquarie Marshes were removed from their traditional lands and taken to the Brewarrina Mission[45].

By 1931 the Bulgeraga Reserve had become deserted as Aboriginal families moved closer to Quambone and began camping on the outskirts of the town. A Reserve was gazetted within the village of Quambone in 1931. This area became part of the Town Common in 1960. A housing area was set aside and administered by the Aboriginal Lands Trust.[46]

The Kawambarai people of the Gulargambone district and western Warrumbungle Ranges were related to the Wayilwan people. Around 1890 between 50 and 70 Aboriginal people were camped on land close to the Castlereagh River at Gulargambone on the site of the present day Gulargambone showground. 'This area was thought to have been a long established camping ground for these families'. The Aborigines Protection Board sought to have an Aboriginal reserve established on this site in 1891. [47] A reserve was gazetted in 1892. The reserve was subdivided into 3¼ acre blocks and each family provided with seed for growing vegetables and cereal crops.[48]

During 1908 a special investigation was undertaken into living conditions in the Aboriginal community at Gulargambone. This followed rumours of an outbreak of tuberculosis. Living conditions in the community at this time were considered to be quite poor. Following the inspection Mr. Ardill of the Aborigines Protection Board reported that most houses were comfortable although some were in poor condition. Sanitation was good and water plentiful. Only one case of respiratory disease was identified and hospital treatment was arranged for the sufferer.[49]

This community grew rapidly with a school being established in the 1890s. The Showground Reserve was 'disestablished' in 1912 and the residents forced to relocate to the Burra Bee Dee Mission near Coonabarabran. 'Within a few months most of the families had walked home' to Gulargambone.[50] The living conditions of the returning families were worse than the ones they had left and many had lost personal possessions in the relocation to Burra Bee Dee. The community re-established itself however and many families, including the Weldons, Reeds, Milgates, Webbers, Boneys Duncans, Hammonds and Kings were living on a block leased from Peter Ferguson.[51]

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[43] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin'*. People and Place in Coonabarabran. p.124
[44] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.23
[45] Miller, S., 1999. *Sharing a Wailwan Story*. p.5
[46] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. pp.45-46
[47] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.6
[48] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.207
[49] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School*. p.32
[50] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.6
[51] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School*. p.35

During the 1920s the Aborigines Welfare Board established a new reserve on waste land near the Gulargambone Pumphouse. This area was not conducive to comfortable living and many families relocated to an area near the Gular Bridge that became known as the 'old mission'. Residents of this area fetched water from the river in old kerosene tins and cooked on open fires. During the mid 1960s new weatherboard houses were built for Aboriginal families along Mendooran and Kirban Streets. "By 1968 many Koori families had moved from the 'old mission' into town".[52]

2.2 NSW Historical Theme: Convict

Many of the first European settlers in the region were assigned convicts who worked as shepherds and labourers for the squatters.

> *The normal fate of the well-behaved convict was assignment to private service. … the British government encouraged it, for it saved money by taking the prisoner off the government's hands. … It scattered men throughout the colony, which broke up their 'evil associations', it taught the convicts those 'habits of labour' whose absence had so often started them on their criminal career, and it gave them experience, which would make it easier for them to gain useful employment when their sentence expired.[53]*

Writing in 1839 Charles Campbell indicated that the shepherd's life was excellent for reforming the behaviour of criminals:

> *He who leads it has constant but not laborious employment, enjoys the light of heaven and … is secluded from the company of the drunken and dissolute.[54]*

Assignment created a cheap labour force that assisted many early free settlers to prosper. Convicts were sent with flocks of sheep beyond the limits of the colony (refer **Section 4.2 Land Tenure**) to become the vanguard of European settlement in areas such as those surrounding the Warrumbungle Mountains. Convicts and ex-convicts were in many cases the first Europeans with whom Aboriginal people had substantial contact.

Colonial governments encouraged assignment of convicts as it was a far cheaper method of keeping them than maintaining them in penitentiaries or on road gangs. In 1837 it cost £17 per year to keep a convict on a chain gang. A convict on assignment cost £4.[55] Landholders reaped the benefit of the cheap labour force provided by assigned convicts to build up their fortunes.

2.3 NSW Historical Theme: Ethnic influences

The variety of ethnic groups that have occupied or passed through the Coonamble district have left little concrete evidence of their interaction with the place. There are longstanding records of Indian and Chinese workers being engaged on various properties around the region.

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[52] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. pp.6-7
[53] Shaw, A., 1977. *Convicts and the Colonies*. p.217
[54] Shaw, A., 1977. *Convicts and the Colonies*. p.217
[55] Shaw, A., 1977. *Convicts and the Colonies*. p.254

Indian hawkers plied their trade in the district selling 'rolls of cloth, made up clothing and boots'. These traders provided women living in relative isolation on properties, mill sites or sleeper cutters' camps with one of their few links to the outside world. While most came from the contemporary countries of Pakistan or India these so-called 'Indians' came from many places. Jack Ayoub, who plied his trade in the region, came from Lebanon and other traders are known to have been of Irish descent.

> *Some of them worked on P&O boats and jumped ship on arrival in Sydney.*
> *Others came here to work as camel drivers during the construction of the*
> *Overland Telegraph from Alice Springs to Darwin, and never returned to the*
> *land of their birth.*[56]

These men generally started in trade with a 'bundle basket', a cane basket filled with 'needles, buttons, cottons, pins, safety pins, small mirrors and combs; also blankets, a billy can to boil water, a tin cup, tea, sugar, salt, a small saucepan and curry powder'. They were known colloquially as 'bundly basket men'.[57] As they sold goods and gathered savings many graduated to a cart or waggon and some eventually opened permanent stores in towns and villages throughout the region.

An Indian named Hamenanni was a landholder in Gular Rail early in the 20th century. He had a hawker's can and also sold goods from a cottage in the village.[58] Quambone was visited every two months by Umber Dean and Currin Dad who sold clothes and household goods. Nayef Ayoub carried fruit and vegetables from Coonamble to Quambone on a weekly basis. He also conducted a will and skin buying business.[59]

Churches and headstones in cemeteries provide a testament across the landscape to the ethnicity of the district's early settlers. Many of the early Europeans in the district were Scottish Presbyterians and Irish Catholics. Large Anglican sections in cemeteries also indicate the influence of English settlers in the region.

2.4   NSW Historical Theme: Migration

The first migrations of Europeans into the Coonamble region occurred from the 1830s. Within a fairly short time of John Oxley's first journey through the district in 1818 (refer **Section 3.6 Exploration**) squatters were moving mobs of sheep and cattle from the Liverpool Plains and the Bowenfels-Bathurst region. This movement is covered in **Section 3.12 Pastoralism.** Rolls notes that *Biamble*, James Walker's main sheep station employed over 60 men and no women in 1839. Outstations of *Biamble* such as *Goorianawa* and *Baradine* were operated for years by two men.[60]

It appears that Chinese workers were present in the region from as early as the 1830s. Andrew Brown's diaries noted that he was employing Chinese stockmen

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[56] Hadfield, J., 2006. *The Best of Times*. p.123
[57] Hadfield, J., 2006. *The Best of Times*. p.124
[58] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.27
[59] Quambone Centenary Committee, 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994.* p.29
[60] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.122

and labourers on the Castlereagh at this time[61]. The cessation of transportation of convicts in the 1840s created a shortage of cheap labour in New South Wales. This led to an increase in the 'numbers of Chinese people arriving as indentured labourers to work as shepherds and irrigation experts'. It appears that all of these workers came from Fujian province. Some may have been kidnapped.[62] Ann Nee, who died in 1915 and is buried in Gulargambone General Cemetery, came to Australia in 1830 to work on Brown's '*Tondeburine* with three other countrymen'. His voyage to Australia 'took seven months in a small sailing vessel'.[63]

A number of authors have also noted attempts to bring Indian workers into the area. Attempts were made from the 1840s to supplement a shortage of convict and free labour with workers brought in from India. By all accounts this experiment failed. Chinese workers were found to be more adaptable[64]. Andrew Brown continued to engage Chinese shepherds and hutkeepers during the labour shortages of the 1850s gold rushes[65].

The gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s led to increased immigration from many parts of the world with many coming from southern China in organised groups. In New South Wales the most prominent of these was the Yee Hing Brotherhood. This secret, triad-like organisation grew out of the disruption of the Tai Ping rebellion. This rebellion threw China into turmoil from about 1850. The Yee Hing organised groups of miners to come to Australia under a credit-ticket system.

> *Under this system, individuals secured credit for their passage through personal contacts in their local communities or through supportive merchant houses, often against the security of property. Workers repaid their loans with interest over time.*[66]

In was the role of societies such as the Yee Hing to ensure that debts were repaid by the immigrants once they arrived in Australia[67]. The Yee Hing operated from a base of local groups in regional communities, eventually formed the Yee Hing Company and, in 1911, formed the Chinese Masonic Society[68].

After the gold rush era great effort was put into clearing large tracts of land to foster pasture growth. Gangs of Chinese labourers were employed across the west to ringbark trees and carry out the three to four years of sucker bashing required to ensure no regrowth occurred. These gangs travelled from property to property, generally camping near a source of water.[69]

The Back to Gilgandra booklet records that a pair of Scots owned Tooloon and employed four Chinese workers. They enforced strict discipline backed up with corporal punishment. This included liberal use of the stock whip on their employees. One of the pair went missing one day and his body was discovered by

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[61] Wilton, J., 2004. *Golden threads*. p.11

[62] Williams, M., 1999. *Chinese Settlement in NSW a thematic history*. p.4

[63] Lambell, M. & Byrne, N., 1997. *Pioneers and Personalities*. p.22

[64] Cain, M. 1923. 'Coonabarabran in the 'Sixties'. p.370

[65] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.155

[66] Fitzgerald, J., 2007. *Big White Lie*. p.62

[67] Fitzgerald, J., 2007. *Big White Lie*. p.64

[68] Fitzgerald, J., 2007. *Big White Lie*. pp.81-82

[69] Buxton, G., 1967. *The Riverina 1861-1891 An Australian Regional Study*, pp.247-248

an Aboriginal worker, buried in a stockyard. The four Chinese workers were arrested and charged with murder. One, named Cam, turned Queen's evidence and was reprieved. The other three were hanged. Cam later worked at Mrs Byrne's Hotel in Gilgandra and died in 1907 after a burning accident.[70]

Restrictions on land ownership by immigrants from China encouraged their pursuit of opportunities not dependent upon access to land and established a long association with retail and commercial enterprise. This trend was reinforced by a narrowing of employment opportunities for Chinese people after 1901 that saw a 'dramatic collapse of the NSW rural (Chinese) population in the early years of the 20th century'[71]. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries some Chinese migrants established 'stores and other businesses to supply … customers throughout' the colony[72]. In the 1890s Hop Kee conducted a store and boarding house in Castlereagh Street. This was reputed to be a gambling den.[73]

Goo Gan and his business partner Me Chang established a successful trading business in Coonamble from 1882. In that year the pair extended their Gulgong-based business to Coonamble and constructed a general store on the corner of Namoi and Aberford Streets. They also established a market garden in West Coonamble. Their business later became part of the Sydney-based On Sing Chon Company. Chinese market gardens were operating in Coonamble before Goo Gan and Me Chang established their business. In May 1882 Coonamble Municipal Council discussed issuing a notice to the Chinese gardener in Tooloon Street regarding the removal of water closets located on the footpath.[74]

Immigration restrictions ensured that many Chinese males were unable to be re-united with their families. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries many lone Chinese men worked tending gardens on pastoral properties or in village market gardens. A man named Cam was attached to the Bushman's Arms at Gilgandra. He had a vegetable garden in the vicinity of the current Wrigley and Court Streets.[75] Yap Tow worked for many years on *Ingledale* Armatree. When the property changed hands in 1906 Yap stayed with the new owners. He was skilled in carpentry, having learned his craft in China. Yap Tow died at *Callengeon*, Curban and was buried in the Curban Cemetery in 1924.[76]

Greek immigrants created a long-held tradition in regional retailing. In 1916 there were reputed to be 625 Greek shops in Australia[77]. The very Australian institution of the Greek café is generally considered to have commenced in 1878 when Arthur Comino from Kythera opened a fish shop in Oxford Street, Sydney. 'Comino's shop was the foundation of the Kytherian community in Australia'[78]. Greek café proprietors regarded as having brought American food catering

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[70] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra*. p.14

[71] Williams, M., 1999. *Chinese Settlement in NSW a thematic history.* p.36

[72] Williams, M., 1999. *Chinese Settlement in NSW a thematic history.* p.20

[73] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* p.80

[74] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* p.69

[75] Bartley, B., 2005. *Gilgandra Early Commercial Records.* p.53

[76] Lambell, M. & Byrne, N., 1997. *Pioneers and Personalities.* p.22

[77] Turnbull, C. & Valiotis, C., 2001. '*Beyond the Rolling Wave' A thematic history of Greek settlement in New South Wales.* p.19

[78] Risson, T., 2007. *Aphrodite and the Mixed Grill.* p.33

technology and practice to Australia in the 1920s. Greek cafes introduced the hamburger, soda fountains, milk bars and ice-cream sundaes to Australia.[79]

Much early Greek migration came from the island of Kythera and, consistent with other patterns of migration, migrants from Kythera tended to encourage other family and community members to join them in the new country.

The mid 19th century saw an exodus of people from German states affected by the conflict and famines of the 1840s and 1850s. A number of these emigrants came to Australia, many seeking out opportunities to establish vineyards and small farms.

The Anglo-Celtic population of the area grew after certainty was applied to land titles from the late 1830s and station owners began to move into the district with their families. As development and trade increased people moved from other parts of New South Wales. Moves towards closer settlement ensured that this inward movement of population continued well into the 1950s. Free selection and later soldier settlement saw people moving into the area from other farming areas that were undergoing rural restructuring.

In the late 19th and early 20th century many settlers migrated into the district from Victoria. This movement of people was an outcome of processes that had commenced after the 1850s gold rushes in Victoria. As the dynamic of the goldfields moved towards reef mining and employment was available for fewer people settlers had moved north, seeking land in the pastoral districts of New South Wales. The failure of marginal wheat country in South Australia also forced farmers to move from that colony. Many of these people, taking advantage of the New South Wales Free Selection obtained holdings within the colony.

The period after World War II saw new patterns of migration. Newly settled migrants from Europe moved into many regional areas and made their mark. Former Forest Foreman Buster Davies recalled European migrants who worked in the Pilliga forests after the war:

> *Many of these migrants were told, when they arrived in Sydney, that there was work in the forests out west. So they immediately caught a train and arrived in the Pilliga to begin work as soon as possible. They were good workers, but found the heat difficult to bear. People were tolerant and accepting of these migrants, especially the Poles, and Yugoslavs. Buster, however, found the 'Ukrainians were hard to get along with'.[80]*

The post-war era also saw dramatic population movements within New South Wales. Ongoing downturns in the levels of labour required in the agricultural, pastoral and forestry industries have led to slow but inevitable reductions in the population of many outlying areas.

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[79] Risson, T., 2007. *Aphrodite and the Mixed Grill*. pp.79-83
[80] Curby, P. & Humphreys, A., 2002. *Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage Study*. p.43

3.   Australian Historical Theme: Developing local, regional and national economies

While Geoffrey Blainey conceived of Australian history as dominated by 'the tyranny of distance' this concept is alien to Indigenous Australians. Eighteenth and 19th century developments in technology made it possible to link the continent to distant marketplaces, and the incentive for almost every expedition by the first European 'explorers' was the search for valuable resources. Much subsequent Australian history has revolved around the search for a staple on which to base regional economic development.[81]

3.1   NSW Historical Theme: Agriculture

Early settlers to the region grew grain crops for domestic consumption on stations and small holdings. Any surplus could also be sold. The period 1860 to 1880 saw a movement of wheat growing away from the coastal areas of New South Wales to the inland. This resulted from the combination of closer settlement encouraged by the Robertson Land Acts and outbreaks of rust in coastal wheat crops.[82] Ongoing government moves to develop closer settlement in the northwest of New South Wales were accompanied by efforts to encourage more wheat growing.

Farmers in the north-western districts appear to have been slow to take up innovations in agricultural practice. The distance from commercial markets, difficulties with transport and the unavailability of suitable strains of wheat possibly worked as a disincentive to large-scale cultivation. Into the early 20th century farmers persisted with the ancient and difficult Scottish plough designs, crops were generally sown and harvested by hand, and wheat winnowed and threshed by teams of labourers.[83]

In December 1899 the Coonamble Show Committee arranged for a lecture by Mr. Thompson, Government Instructor in Agriculture to be held in the Coonamble Mechanics Institute. Mr. Thompson indicated that the district would be quite productive if the soil was prepared properly and modern sowing methods were used. He encouraged farmers to thoroughly turn the ground and use drill sowing rather than broadcast methods.[84] Despite this encouragement the introduction of agriculture was delayed by the severe drought that occurred around 1902.

New technology was gradually introduced from other areas. American built McCormick horse-drawn harvesters were available in the late 19th century. A contractor at Binnaway had two of these and travelled the northwest working crops at harvest time. New, rust resistant varieties of wheat such as Federation were introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. These made farming more viable in the inland areas. Around 1908 the Australian built H. V. McKay & Co harvester was first demonstrated in the region.[85]

These technological developments, and the coming of the railway from 1902, encouraged broader cultivation of wheat from early in the 20th century. Soldier

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[81] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[82] Godwin, L., 1983. The Life and Death of a Flourmill: McCrossin's Mill, Uralla. pp.67 & 68
[83] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.211-213
[84] McKenzie, J., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.11
[85] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.213-214

settlement schemes and other ongoing closer settlement also encouraged increases in the cultivation of crops. These developments led to the establishment of modern roller flour mills such as the Castlereagh Flour Mill at Gilgandra to mill the district's prime hard wheats.

In the Coonamble district moves towards closer settlement and the establishment of agricultural industries were accompanied by sinking of bore drains and opening of accompanying irrigation ditches. These ditches were designed to transport artesian water across the landscape for use in agriculture. The success of such schemes varied across the district. In 1876 Andrew Tobin purchased a number of the Blackman properties and developed Wingadee. Bores were sunk, tanks excavated and drains scoured to supply water to most paddocks.[86] During 1897 an artesian bore was drilled to a depth of 1,300 feet at Bourbah. This bore provided a plentiful supply of water. Other bores were sunk and bore drains were delved across the surrounding countryside. This water supply supported closer settlement and by 1900 Bourbah had a population of 200. [87]

By 1906 the Irrigation Farm on *Woodlands* had 70 acres under cultivation with maize and sorghum. A large citrus orchard had also been established on the property. *Woodlands*' owner Michael Landers had irrigated his property by sinking an artesian bore 'at a price of 14s per foot for the first 2000 feet and £1 per foot for the next stage. The bore struck water at 2,030 feet at a flow of 40,000 gallons per hour.[88]

W.L. Wilcox purchased *Mowlma* in 1911 and formed a company to develop an irrigated settlement. Six bores were sunk and large storage tanks constructed. The property was subdivided into 100 acre blocks for lucerne production and orcharding. The venture failed and in 1920 W.M. Angliss purchased the property in conjunction with Riverstone Meat Company. Marra Pty Ltd purchased the property in 1949 and sold it as eleven blocks.[89] Irrigation using bore water was not a success in the region as, despite early successes, the high mineral content of the artesian water proved 'too high for continual irrigation'[90].

By the 1920s artesian bores that had been sunk in the late 19th century were deteriorating 'due to corrosion of casings and lowered water table'. Cultivation using bore water proved problematic and was not pursued into the 20th century. Cereal cropping in the region developed gradually with almost all of the early grain production being transported in bags. In 1923 only 554 bags of wheat were despatched by rail from Coonamble. In 1925 agriculture in the Coonamble district was still regarded as more of a hobby than a 'means of earning a living in this district'.[91]

Grain elevators were constructed along the railway lines of New South Wales from 1920[92]. These structures facilitated the storage and transport of bulk

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[86] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.94

[87] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. pp.79-80

[88] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.18-19

[89] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. pp.79-80

[90] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.19

[91] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p143

[92] Ryan, K., 1990. Storing the Golden Grain.

quantities of cereals, gradually replacing the tedious and labour intensive processes of bagging wheat and other crops for transport. Bulk storage elevators were not constructed in the Coonamble Shire until much later than on other rail lines. Despite the introduction of grain elevators some farmers continued to bag wheat well into the 1960s[93]. **Section 5.1 Labour** contains further information about the handling of bagged wheat.

Market gardens were established in a few locations on the banks of watercourses with a regular supply of water. Chinese market gardens were known to have operated beside the Castlereagh River at various places. The operators of these types of gardens often drew water from the river by means of traditional mechanised water lifting devices. Eric Rolls described a device installed in the Chinese market garden in Coonabarabran:

> *… a horse driven device of their own making… A wide endless belt of greased canvas with wooden slats nailed on at intervals ran under the water and up through a wooden channel.*[94]

Vegetable gardening was not the exclusive domain of Chinese settlers. Conditions in a number of the river and creek valleys of the district proved to be quite suitable for vegetable growing and many selectors grew vegetables to supplement their incomes from other farming activities.

3.2   NSW Historical Theme: Commerce

The earliest commercial undertakings in the region appear to have been inns and hostelries. These were established at suitable points close to river crossings or on specific transport routes. On more popular transport routes these inns were often combined with general stores. In the days of horse transport facilities for blacksmiths, farriers and the repair of livery were as important as inns and general stores.

The Bourbah Hotel was opened on Merri Merri Creek by Edward Byrne in 1886. Byrne ran a store and post office from the hotel for 12 years. At this time Bourbah consisted of three houses and a graveyard. One of the railway routes linking Dubbo and Coonamble was proposed to pass through Bullagreen and Bourbah. The possibility of construction of this route may have encouraged land speculation around Bourbah. The village continued as an important centre until the 1920s with a school operating in 1919 and 1920. The hotel eventually closed in the 1920s.[95]

Retailing in central commercial districts of towns, a phenomenon of the industrial revolution[96], has undergone major changes since the beginning of the nineteenth century. In New South Wales regional towns the earliest retailers appear to have been 'general providers', stores selling almost all the necessities of a growing community, operated by local owners[97]. The shopping and commercial precincts of regional centres have served as gathering and meeting

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[93] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.220
[94] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.298
[95] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.139
[96] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store*. pp.10-11
[97] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store*. pp.17-25

places for decades as people have come to town to stock up on supplies and transact business.

Over time the general provider became less common as retailers began to specialise or to establish department stores. Regional retailers have faced ongoing change in the marketplace and the nature of delivery of retail services. From the 1870s Sydney-based stores such as Anthony Horderns mailed illustrated catalogues to customers across New South Wales 'to instruct people dwelling in the country in the theory and practice of shopping by post"[98].

Chain stores such as Woolworths, established in Sydney in 1924, provided the next challenge to local retailers[99]. Many country-based businesses sought to emulate the model of the chain store by opening branches across a region. The latest challenge to retailers in regional centres comes from the development of shopping malls in regional centres. As the number of independent retailers declines, and as the populations of regional areas become more mobile larger towns are exerting more influence to the detriment of the retailers of smaller towns.

Many commercial enterprises helped to sustain the rural industries of the region through the vagaries of economic and weather cycles:

> *'Wool firms carried many farmers through hard times. They stocked everything to do with sheep from drenches to woolbales, tar, fencing materials, even boots. … Customers were able to borrow from the wool firms against their next year's clip.'[100]*

In the early and mid 20th centuries many small landholders and pastoral workers supplemented their incomes by trapping rabbits and selling their pelts. Skin buyer's shops were an important element of local economies.

3.3   NSW Historical Theme: Communication

The story of communication in the Coonamble district is tied to the developments that occurred in the technology of communications during the 19th and 20th centuries. Postal services were supplemented by telegraphic communication, then the introduction of telephone services and ongoing developments in electronic communication. At various times posts have been carried by horses, horse drawn coaches, trains and motor vehicles.

During the early years of European settlement in the region postal communication arrived by various routes. Until 1873 north-eastern area of the present shire received mail that had been taken from Coonabarabran to Baradine by a postal contractor. It was collected from Baradine by an employee of *Urawilkie* Station who took it via *Terembone* to Walgett.[101] Joan McKenzie charted the development of mail services to Coonamble in the 1870s:

> *By 1872 the Coonamble/Mudgee mail contractor was using a four wheeled coach with two horses and by 1876 Cobb & Co had the contract for a twice*

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[98] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store.* p.10
[99] Webber, K & Hoskins, I., 2003. *What's in Store.* p.24
[100] Shumack, E., 1999. *Going Bush to Goolhi.* p.9
[101] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* p.51

weekly service operating from premises in Namoi Street. A periodic horseback service between Coonamble and Walgett began in 1873 via Nebea, Urawilkie, Terembone and Bullaroora but in 1878 Cobb & Co had a contract for a route via Youie, Bundy, Buggil, Wingadee and Nugal.[102]

Mail was carried on horseback by James McCullough to Merri Merri, renamed Quambone, in 1876. A weekly mail run was later established from Gulargambone to Quambone. In the 1870s a weekly mail service also operated between Coonamble and Coonabarabran via Urawilkie and Baradine. In 1879 R.J. Nowland 'secured the service from Coonamble to Baradine via Nebea, Terridgerie, Billeroy, Terembone and Urawilkie'.[103]

A post office was established in Coonamble in 1859 in the home of Sarah Burtt. Sarah was required to provide premises and all fittings for this operation.[104] A new Post Office was constructed on the corner of Castlereagh and Aberford Streets in 1881. In 1884 post boxes were installed in this building and an agency of the Government Savings Bank established here.[105] In the early 1890s the building was upgraded by Mooy Brothers with the addition of a new wing and a verandah. The district's first telephone was installed in the post office in 1898.[106]

In October 1906 a telephone exchange was installed in the post office and services were extended around Coonamble and surrounding areas. The Weetalibah district was connected soon after 1909.[107] The Post Office was extended a second time in 1914[108].

A post office was established at Merri Merri in 1861 and operated as part of the Quambone holding until 1898 when it was moved close to the town. The first mail service to the district operated from Coonamble via Bumbleyon, Bundy, Ningey and Coanbone from January 1861. A telephone had been installed in 1898 after a telephone line was constructed from Coonamble. Land was reserved for a Post Office on the corner of Tucca Tucca and Buckimbe Streets in 1899 and the existing Post Office was upgraded to a telegraph office. In 1900 an agency of the Government Savings Bank was established at the Post Office. A dedicated Post Office building was constructed in 1900. The Post Office operated from this building until 1994 when postal services were transferred to an agency located in the Quambone Store.[109]

A post office was established in Skuthorpe's Castlereagh Inn at Gulargambone on 1 May 1871. By this time a mail service was being conducted by coach. An electric telegraph service was installed in April 1883. The first telephone was installed in 1907 and the new post office, constructed in 1912, included a magneto telephone exchange. By April 1916 the exchange was connected to 76 customers. An automatic exchange, with 229 subscribers, was installed on 2 December 1986.[110] The Bourbah Hotel was opened on Merri Merri Creek by

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[102] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.48

[103] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.48

[104] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.31

[105] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.66

[106] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.82

[107] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. pp.108-109

[108] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.116

[109] Quambone Centenary Committee, 1994. Quambone. *A Village of 100 Years*. pp.9-13

[110] Gulargambone Historical Society, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.71

Edward Byrne in 1886. Byrne ran a store and post office from the hotel for 12 years.[111]

The first post office in Gilgooma was operated from Matt Kennedy's house in the village then in 1920 a dedicated post office was constructed adjacent to the cottage occupied by James and Ada Campbell. Ada Campbell served as postmistress from this time until the post office closed in 1958.[112] The mail was originally sorted at Gilgooma Post Office for delivery to roadside mail boxes. For much of its life the main function of the Gilgooma Post Office was the maintenance of the manual telephone exchange installed there.

> *Party lines, usually consisting of four or five subscribers, were serviced by the telephone exchange from 9 am to 9 pm on weekdays, half day on Wednesdays and Saturdays, with Sunday a day of rest. However emergency calls could be made for a special opening fee.*[113]

In the late 19th century Coonamble supported two newspapers. These were the Coonamble Independent and the Coonamble Times[114]. The Coonamble Independent was owned by Hugh McDonald and Cornelius Mooy. Hugh McDonald, Member of the Legislative Assembly, died in Sydney in 1906. The newspaper was subsequently purchased by J.J. Sullivan.[115]

3.4   NSW Historical Theme: Environment – Cultural landscape

The environment of the area is described in **Section 1.1 Environment – naturally evolved.** The volcanic outcroppings of the Warrumbungle Mountains are one of the principal features impacting on the development of the cultural landscape of the Coonamble Shire. This range and its extending ridges are the source of the Castlereagh River and many creeks whose presence has influenced the pattern of Aboriginal interactions with the land and European settlement. River and creek geography has influenced the placement and growth of the area's principal town and has also had a major impact on the density of settlement. The Warrumbungle ranges continue to impact on the economy of the region through the presence of the Warrumbungle National Park.

The first European engagement with region occurred in 1818 with Oxley and Evans' exploratory journey from the Macquarie River to Port Macquarie. They entered the shire from the west at Mount Bullaway (named Mount Exmouth by Oxley) on 8 August 1818[116]. From Mount Bullaway Oxley observed the Warrumbungle range that he named Arbuthnot's Range. He also described the area covered by the current Pilliga Scrub[117].

John Whitehead notes that, after European settlement of the region, 'there was a continuous movement of stock by the local squatters and their shepherds in, out and through the mountains' seeking the lush grasses that grew on the volcanic

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[111] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.139

[112] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. pp.9-10

[113] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. p.11

[114] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.98

[115] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.109

[116] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.170

[117] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.175

slopes and valleys of the range[118]. Fertile valleys adjacent to the range were also heavily grazed and farmed, and continue to provide rich environments for pastoral pursuits. Early pastoral runs within the mountains have been identified by John Whitehead as:

- Caleriwi was located on the northern side of Wambelong Creek. It was originally squatted on by Andrew Brown of Bowenfels[119] and taken up as leasehold by Robert Dawson in the 1840s[120]. Dawson ran only cattle on Caleriwi[121]. When Dawson failed in the 1840s depression the run was transferred to Charles Bury along with Walla Walla, Tenandra and Parmidman.   allocated to Alfred Knight after World War I as a soldier settlement block. This run was later taken over by Keith Blackman.[122]
- Tannabar, located south of Mount Caraghnan and Belougery Gap, was leased by John and Louisa Knight in the 1850s in partnership with Henry Ball Lakeman[123]. The run was purchased by John Knight Junior in 1907[124].
- Tonderburn, located south of Wambelong Trig.

Geologists explored the area on a number occasions, the first such visit being undertaken by Government Geologist S. Sutchbury in 1852 in search of iron, coal and gold. Professor Edgeworth David explored the area in 1892 and again in 1911 and in 1905 H. I. Jensen carried out a geological investigation.[125] In 1916 Forestry Commission Forest Assessor Wilfred de Beuzeville, after assessing the forest resources of the Pilliga region, recommended that the Warrumbungles be set aside as a recreational reserve. In making his recommendation de Beuzeville noted that:

> *The country is generally remarkable in formation and has great wild and rugged beauty, with its high mountains showing fantastic shape against the skyline. Under proper management, it should become a great attraction not only for the dwellers of the surrounding plains, but also to the travelling public generally.*[126]

In other parts of the shire forestry, land clearing, pastoralism and agriculture have created landscapes of open pasture broken by ribbons of remnant bushland along waterways and the ridges and rocky places.

The western sections of the shire are defined by the rich marshlands of the lower Macquarie River. The Macquarie River and its tributaries, including the Marthaguy and Merri Merri Creeks, feed the vast but shrinking wetland of the Macquarie Marshes. In 1828 when exploring the region in search of an inland sea Sturt described the northern end of the Macquarie Marshes as follows:

> *… the waters of the marshes, after trickling through the reeds, form a small creek, which carries off the superfluous part of them into Morrisett's chain*

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[118] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192

[119] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192

[120] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.34

[121] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.21

[122] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192

[123] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.77

[124] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.78

[125] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.199

[126] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.203

of ponds, which later again falls into the Castlereagh, at about eight miles WNW and all three join the Darling in a W by N direction, …, at about 90 miles to the NNW of Mount Harris.[127]

Following Sturt's explorations the 'Reedbed Country' attracted graziers seeking well-watered lands. The environs of the marshes have provided sustenance to generations of pastoralists since that time.

Ongoing clearing and development around the marshes and the regulation and damming of the Macquarie River have at the same time diminished inflows and increased the demand for water in the region. Over time this has led to degradation of the marsh country.[128]

In a report on issues related to the extraction of water from rivers Dr Richard Kingsford Smith described the impacts of water harvesting on the Macquarie Marshes:

> *River management and diversions of water have significantly affected flooding patterns of wetlands in Australia. Major causes of wetland loss or degradation are too much water and lack of flooding, compared to natural inundation patterns. Dead floodplain eucalypts usually mark a wetland with too much water. Large areas of wetland have also disappeared because of lack of water. The Macquarie Marshes in arid NSW exhibits all these problems. Water diversions upstream have decreased wetland area by 40-50%. Waterbirds have declined in total numbers as has number of species.[129]*

After the construction of the Burrendong Dam action by landholders around the Macquarie Marshes led to the formation of the Macquarie Marshes Catchment Committee. This body commenced working with government agencies 'to promote the health of the Marshes and the Lower Macquarie River. A Water Management Plan for the marshes was developed in 1996. This was followed in 1997 by the Macquarie Marshes Land and Water Management Plan.[130]

3.5 NSW Historical Theme: Events

Floods and droughts have been major defining events in the story of Coonamble and district. The situation of Coonamble at the confluence of the Castlereagh River and Warrena Creek has meant that the lower sections of the town have been quite flood prone. Early accounts of European settlement record the massive flood of 1874 that came down so quickly that residents 'had to be taken out by boat'[131]. This flood occurred in January 1874 after a prolonged period of drought. Gilgandra postmaster John Fisher Smith described this flood at Gilgandra as being like 'a gigantic waterfall, literally speaking a majestic wall of white foam, fully thirty feet from the riverbed'.

1920 was another year of flood following drought. When Les (Cap) Lemon of Gulargambone recounted his memories of the 1920 Castlereagh flood he recalled

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[127] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000, *Reedbed Country*. p.5
[128] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000, *Reedbed Country*. pp.222-224
[129] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000, *Reedbed Country*. p.217
[130] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000, *Reedbed Country*. p.224
[131] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.45

that sheep, cattle and horses were floating downstream while water lapped at the Gulargambone Post Office steps. In that flood three large rafts were constructed in Bourbah Street ready to take people downstream if the town was inundated. This situation did not arise. Gulargambone was cut off by floodwaters and three men volunteered to take a boat across the river to get supplies from Gular Rail. Constable Day, Bill McGill and Cuthbert Featherstonhaugh were thrown from the boat when it overturned in the swirling river. Day and McGill reached safety but Featherstonhaugh was caught in the top of a tree for a day or two.[132]

The 1950s was a particularly wet period with above average rainfall recorded over most of Australia. The Castlereagh River flooded twice in 1950. Joyce Andrews and her family were living at Gulargambone near Nelson's Sawmill. Joyce recounted the following memory of one of these floods:

> *I remember Dad, Ron, Lorna and I walking down to the Castlereagh River to put in a stick every hour to see how much the river had risen. At 4am, we got up to go down to the river again. I stepped out of bed into water halfway up my legs. We gathered as many possessions as we could carry on our backs and made our way through the water to "Mayfield" which was on higher ground.[133]*

From October 1954 heavy rains fell over much of the eastern half of the country. In February 1955 the prevailing wet conditions 'combined with an intensifying monsoon depression in Queensland bringing torrential rain across New South Wales. On Friday 25 February rivers in the northwest slopes began to flood.[134] The Castlereagh River flooded along much of its course in the following days inundating towns built along its banks.[135]

In 1955 the river broke its banks at Gulargambone and Coonamble during the night, surprising many with the depth and volume of the floodwaters. Joan Skinner, who lived near the showground at Gulargambone, recalled that it took ten days to remove the mud and debris that had been washed into her house by the flood by floodwaters over a metre deep.

Coonamble received its first royal visit in 1920 when HRH Edward, Prince of Wales visited the district.

> *After arriving in the royal train, he was driven to MacDonald Park. He walked through a guard of honour of cadets to flag bedecked band rotunda where he was introduced to the local dignitaries, clergy and the mothers of deceased servicemen. He then inspected and spoke to most of the assembled 'diggers', bandsmen, Red Cross workers and the head teachers of the schools.*

Prince Edward stayed at Wingadee for three days and attended the Jockey Club races in Coonamble. On his journey back to Sydney the Royal Train stopped at

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[132] O'Brien, B. et al, 2001. *Gulargambone Revisited.* p.80
[133] O'Brien, B. et al, 2001. *Gulargambone Revisited.* p.82
[134] Moore, J., 2008. 'And the Waters Rose' in Year of the Great Flood.
[135] Moore, J., 2008. 'And the Waters Rose' in Year of the Great Flood.

Gular Rail where the Prince met the parents of Corporal Alexander Buckley V.C. and inspected 'a squad of returned servicemen'. [136]

Australia's traumatic experience of Wold War I led to spontaneous community action to create memorials. Government regulation limited fundraising for the construction of memorials until after the end of hostilities in 1918. During and after the war there was much debate about the role of memorials. Public opinion was divided between the desirability of pure monument and the creation of memorials that served a civic purpose[137]. The utilitarian point of view seems to have prevailed in Coonamble a memorial x-ray ward at the hospital.

In 1928 a committee of Coonamble citizens began collecting funds for the erection of a war memorial to the 84 soldiers from the district who had been killed in World War I. It was decided that the memorial should be a new x-ray ward for the Coonamble Hospital. Construction of this building commenced 21 March 1928. Each Anzac Day after the erection of the memorial the veterans of Coonamble would gather at the hospital for their dawn service. As they began to age the veterans found it too arduous to trudge out to the hospital. The memorial's honour board was transferred to the Shire chambers and Anzac Day Memorial Services were transferred to the Coonamble War Memorial Ambulance Station after its construction in 1958-59.[138]

The foundation stone of the War Memorial Ambulance Station was laid by A.B. Fisher on 12 December 1958. It was constructed as a memorial to those who served in World War II. A memorial plaque was later added to the building in to commemorate those who served in the Malayan Emergency and Vietnam War. A central war memorial was erected near the southern side of the new Coonamble Shire Council Chambers and dedicated on 1 November 1989. It was built with donations from Coonamble Shire Council, Coonamble R.S.L. and citizens of the Coonamble district.

At Gilgooma, east of Coonamble, a recreation ground was proclaimed in 1916 and fenced in 1935. In the same year a memorial gateway was erected at the recreation ground to honour the 36 men from the Gilgooma district who served in the Great War. The monument was unveiled on 8 August 1935 by Lt. Colonel C.M. Featherstonhaugh D.S.O. When responsibility for management of the Gilgooma Recreation Ground was transferred to the Rural Lands Protection Board the gateway was restored and a protective fence erected.[139]

3.6   NSW Historical Theme: Exploration

The first European engagement with the present Coonamble Shire occurred in 1818 with Oxley and Evans' exploratory journey from the Macquarie River to Port Macquarie. They entered the region from the northwest in July 1818 from a depot site at Mount Harris, having partly explored the Macquarie Marshes. On 7 July 1818 Oxley sent Evans forward from Mount Harris to investigate the line of a route to the north-east that he intended to travel.[140]

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[136] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. pp.142-143

[137] Inglis, K., 2001. *Sacred Places. War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*. pp.138-144

[138] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.147

[139] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. pp.6-7

[140] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. pp.135-140

Between 8 and 17 July 1818 Evans and his party travelled from a point southeast of Quambone towards the locality of Gumin Gumin, crossing the Castlereagh River near Combara. Having reached the edge of the Warrumbungle Range they then turned south-west and crossed the Castlereagh River again at a point about half-way between Curban and Armatree. The party then travelled west towards Mount Foster then changed their direction to reach their starting point.[141] This was the first European incursion into areas now covered by Coonamble Shire. Evans crossed the Castlereagh River on 11 July 1818. He described the river as follows:

> *I came to the edge of a river, the stream of which was thirty or forty yards wide, but, the bed nearly one hundred yards, the banks being eight or nine feet high. I forded it in the middle of a very long reach bearing north and south, the stream clear, running gently from the south, about three feet deep, over a fine sandy bottom.[142]*

The year 1818 was extremely wet and the country was partly flooded and boggy, making progress with loaded horses very difficult. Conditions on the ground had forced Evans to change his route from that requested by Oxley. After Evans had rejoined him Oxley's entire party set out in a north-easterly direction from Mount Harris on 19 July 1818. They headed towards Wingenbar then continued on over Little Merri Merri Creek and Merri Merri Creek, reaching the Castlereagh River at Pine Grove, about 10km north of Gulargambone. They crossed the river on 2 August then headed south and east. The party travelled towards Tenandra Hill and reached Black Mountain on 7 August.[143].

From their campsite at Black Mountain they party climbed Mount Bullaway (named Mount Exmouth by Oxley) and described the Warrumbungle Range[144]. Oxley's group then headed through the Goorianawa Valley and the area around Bugaldie, passing through the Pilliga to the north of the Warrumbungles.

In 1828 Charles Sturt was commissioned by Governor Darling to explore the course of the Macquarie River. In contrast to the conditions faced by Oxley and Evans Sturt transited the country during a time of severe drought. Like Oxley he camped at Mt Harris. Travelling northwest with Hamilton Hume and others he ascertained that:

> *... the waters of the marshes, after trickling through the reeds, form a small creek, which carries off the superfluous part of them into Morrisett's chain of ponds, which latter again falls into the Castlereagh, at about eight miles to the WNW and all three join the Darling in a W by N direction, ... at about 90 mils to the NNW of Mount Harris.[145]*

Sturt reported to Governor Darling that the land beyond the marshes was 'a tableland to all intents and purposes, and has scarcely water on its surface to support its inhabitants.[146]

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[141] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.140
[142] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.141
[143] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.147-167
[144] Whitehead, J. 2004. *Tracking & Mapping the Explorers Vol. 2*. p.175
[145] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.5
[146] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.5

Despite the dire predictions of wilderness and scarcely inhabitable country carried back by government-sponsored explorers such as Oxley and Sturt land hungry settlers moved into the areas they traversed. By the 1850s the region between the Macquarie Marshes and the Warrumbungle Range had been taken up for grazing (refer to **Section 3.12 Pastoralism)**. When Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell travelled through the region with his exploration party in 1846 he encountered pastoralists such as James Kinghorne at Graway and Thomas Parnell at Whybray on the banks of Marra Creek.[147]

3.7   NSW Historical Theme: Fishing
Fishing has played a minor role in the story of the Coonamble Shire.

3.8   NSW Historical Theme: Forestry
When John Oxley moved through the region to the north of the Warrumbungles in 1818 he noted:

> *The appearance of the country passed over the most desolate and forbidding, but quite open, interspersed with miserable rocky crags, on which grew the cypress and eucalyptus. On the more level portions of the country a new and large species of eucalyptus and another of its genus (the iron bark) were the principal if not the only trees.*[148]

As early settlers moved into the Pilliga they cleared native trees and used suitable timbers in the construction of dwellings and sheds. Commercial timber getting began in the Pilliga as early as the 1870s. Initial milling was done using pit-sawing techniques. Over time pit sawing was replaced by steam-powered sawmills that operated within the forest and on its fringes. Saw pits can be found within the forest and on some farming properties. The Pilliga Scrub was dedicated to forestry in 1907 as Pilliga East Block and Pilliga West Block. Small communities developed around sawmilling operations and declined as these mills moved to different parts of the forest. Baradine became a centre for forestry and a Forestry Office was established there in 1937.[149]

The establishment of the Forestry Commission in 1916[150] had a profound impact on the development of the forestry industry in the Pilliga, and on the management of the forest. The Commission played a strongly influential role as managers of the forest. Wilfred de Beuzeville, the first officially appointed Forest Assessor, conducted a forest survey in 1915 with his assistant Ivan Krippner. Ben Harris was District Forester during the 1930s. He directed many improvements in forest management. These improvements included the construction of ground tanks to provide water for working animals and the erection of lookout towers at Lucky Flat, Yarrigan and the Salt Caves.[151]

Other improvements appear to have been undertaken under Ben Harris' management. In the mid to late 1930s Merv Edwards undertook additional road surveys and led a road building programme. During the Great Depression

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[147] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.5
[148] Whitehead, J., 2004. *Tracking and Mapping the Explorers*, Volume 2, p.191
[149] Heritage Office, 1996. *Regional Histories*. p.82
[150] Curby, P. & Humphreys, A., 2002. *Non-Indigenous Cultural Heritage Study*. p.23
[151] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.275

unemployed men were brought from Sydney into the forest, issued with tents, billycans, frypans and rations, and put to work building roads. According to former forestry worker Buster Davies Edwards also used these "susso" workers to make major improvements to the forest's dog-proof fence.[152] This was confirmed by Tom Hatton, farmer of Cuttabri[153].

The first sawmill in Coonamble was established in West Coonamble by Mooy Bros. in 1881. This was later moved across the river to a site in Aberford Street. Some years later it was relocated to a site on the corner of Aberford and Auburn Streets. The mill operated on steam until an electricity supply was made available in 1916. In 1925 a sawmill was operating at Colrose on the western fringe of the Pilliga Forest. Mooy Bros. was established by Rolef Mooy, Jacob Mooy and Cornelius Mooy, who came to the district from Gulgong.[154]

Commercial timber getting began in the Pilliga as early as 1870s. One of the largest sawmills to operate in the Coonamble Shire was located at Ceelnoy in the Pilliga West Block. The date of the establishment of the Ceelnoy sawmill has not been recorded. Ernie (Alfred Ernest) Head and his brother in law Bert Rope, both experienced timber workers, bought the business from Tom Kennedy at some time during the early 1940s. For the next 50 years Ernie and his family were associated with the mill. Money was tight but Ernie loved the industry and saw the purchase of the sawmill as the first step in a prosperous career for himself and his sons.[155]

Prosperity did not come overnight. Bert Rope bought a mill at Yetman and moved a couple of years later. At this time Ernie Head moved his family, who had been living in town, out to the mill site and put all of his boys to work, regardless of age. The mill had been trading as A. E. Head and A. E. Rope. Its name was changed to A. E. Head and Sons. This was the beginning of the Head sawmilling dynasty. According to his son Colin the employment of family was the only way his father could keep the mill operating. They would spend weekends out in the forest felling and carting logs that were processed at the mill during the week. This practice continued until the mill became financially viable.[156]

Eventually Ernie's fortunes improved to the point where he was able to expand his holdings. He bought a property at Boggabri and sawmills at Gilgooma and in Baradine. In doing so he was able establish his sons in the business. Ceelnoy remained with the family until its closure in the mid 1990s. Like other well-known sawmill sites in the Western Pilliga it became a small settlement. For most of the fifty years the 50 years the Head family kept it in operation there were eight to ten families living on site. Unlike the Wangmann and Underwood mills located in other parts of the Pilliga Ceelnoy never hosted a subsidized school. When the mill closed the Forestry Commission bulldozed it. Only the basic framework of the mill remains.[157]

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[152] Information provided by Buster Davies, Baradine. 28 February 2008
[153] Information provided by Tom Hatton, 'Carawatha', Cuttabri, 29 February 2008
[154] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* p.85
[155] Hadfield, J., 2006. Notes on Ceelnoy Sawmill.
[156] Hadfield, J., 2006. Notes on Ceelnoy Sawmill.
[157] Hadfield, J., 2006. Notes on Ceelnoy Sawmill.

A sawmill was erected in Gilgooma by brothers Colin (Monkey) and Mervyn (Mickey) Head in 1969. They had moved from the Ceelnoy Sawmill in the Pilliga West Block to establish Gilgooma Timbers. Initially timber for the mill was obtained from nearby properties and subsequently 'from all over the Coonamble district. Cypress pine milled at Gilgooma was sold locally and also transported to Sydney for use in flooring. The mill operated until 1992 when the Head brothers relocated to Wooleybah.[158]

Messrs Rose and Walden were operating a steam sawmill at Quambone in 1898 and a sawmill was also located on the creek near Quambone Station. A sawmill was operated by Charlie Rankmore at the back of the Post Office Hotel and another mill was conducted by Stan Parker on the northern side of Tucca Tucca Street. This mill was moved to Weribidi Street by Roy Wangmann in the 1960s.[159]

Sleeper cutting was an important aspect of the timber industry for many years. It was possible to make 12/- a day sleeper cutting at a time when farm labourers were receiving 6/- per day.[160] Sleeper cutters lived a more transient existence, moving camps to access the hardwoods from which railway sleepers were fashioned. May Mead of Coonabarabran recalled the working conditions of members of her family who cut sleepers in the Pilliga Forest:

> *The men were sleeper cutters in those times and they used to cut sleepers up in the mountains and forest... They had to walk to find the ironbark trees so you were doin' a lot of walkin'... They didn't have much, the men, because sleeper cutters only get paid once a month. You had flour, sugar, tea, then you'd catch your own rabbits or goats or whatever for the meat part of it, and buy onions and potatoes which weren't as dear as they are today. They'd set traps.[161]*

The sleeper cutting industry changed over time as cutters acquired motor vehicles and power saws were introduced from the 1940s onwards. Judith Hadfield noted that:

> *By the end of the sixties ... most people owned some form of motor transport so they could travel to and from work each day instead of camping on the job. Mechanization meant that fewer cutters were needed to keep up the supply, and by the nineties ironbark sleepers were being phased out, so the local industry gradually came to a stop.[162]*

3.9   NSW Historical Theme: Health

As with other services, colonial society depended largely on the family unit to provide medical care. Over centuries Aboriginal people had developed remedies to illnesses and injuries and the Europeans brought with them folk remedies from their countries of origin. There appeared to be some exchange of information and the application of the wisdom of different cultures to specific medical emergencies.

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[158] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. pp.21-22
[159] Quambone Centenary Committee, 1994. Quambone. *A Village of 100 Years*. p.28
[160] Bull, R., 1986. *Binnaway on the Castlereagh*. p.58
[161] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.131-132
[162] Hadfield, J., 2006. *The Best of Times*. p.11

In some cases new remedies were require d for maladies that struck residents of the outlying areas. During the drought that affected the country in the 1870s many rural workers were struck with the dreaded blinding sandy blight. One afflicted shepherd was found near *Terembone* by George Lloyd and taken to the homestead for treatment. Jessie Lloyd mixed an egg white with breadcrumbs to make a poultice for the man's eyes. After the poultice was removed her was kept in a darkened room. His eyes were bathed frequently with a 'concoction she made from boiled eucalyptus leaves'. Jessie Lloyd later wrote of sandy blight:

> *The writer had seen a strong, brave man roll on the ground in agony and pray to God to relieve him by death, a man who feared no foe, but would nobly, fearlessly risk his life, utterly cowed by a disease, eyes becoming like a mass of red jelly, the inflamed swollen lids refusing to cover them. Even when the worst symptoms have abated, their eyes are left bloodshot for many months. Many lose their sight altogether and most of those who have suffered severely, have their vision permanently injured.[163]*

As the European occupation of the area consolidated formally trained medical practitioners moved into the region to provide health care, although in the early years the nearest doctor was in Dubbo.

The first public hospital in Coonamble was opened in July 1878 in premises owned by Mr. Wilmott located at the corner of Macquarie and Mundooran Streets. The hospital was later moved to premises in Namoi Street. Following community representations to the NSW Government funds were allocated in 1881 for the construction of a hospital and two acres were set aside for this purpose. This property was later extended to six acres. A contract for construction of the hospital was let to Mooy Bros. in 1883 and the hospital was first occupied in May 1884.[164]

The hospital received some financial support from government but was largely dependent upon community fundraising efforts. Fundraising committees held a range of functions each year, including a Hospital Ball, a Hospital Two Day Carnival, Mooy's Dance and various concerts and dances held in woolsheds. Sporting events such as the Nebea Cricket Match and Sports Day were also held with the objective of raising money for the hospital.[165]

An Isolation Ward for infectious diseases was constructed in 1897 and in 1899 the hospital site was connected to the town water supply. An operating theatre, partly funded by a bequest from Dr. D.E. Cornelius, was constructed in 1900. In 1902-1903 Mooy Bros erected an extension to the hospital. This was not complete when a typhoid epidemic struck the town in 1903. Other wards were added to the complex and in 1916 a Nurses Quarters was erected north of the hospital. A septic system was installed in 1922 and by 1925 plans were in place for the erection of a building to

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[163] McKenzie, J. 1986. *Silverleaf.* p.77
[164] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* p.42
[165] McKenzie, J., 1988. The Vision Splendid. p.111

house an X-Ray machine.[166] This was constructed in 1928 as a soldiers' memorial (**refer to Section 3.5 Events**)

Coonamble faced a severe drought in the first years of the 20th century. This drought was widespread and led to much suffering across New South Wales. The 'accompanying heat, lack of water and dead stock was blamed for the outbreak of typhoid fever in January and February, 1903'. This epidemic was so large that it proved beyond the capabilities of the local doctor and hospital staff. The Health Department sent a Dr. Millard, 20 nurses and extra bedding from Sydney to deal with the epidemic. The pavilions and sheds on the showgrounds were made available as treatment facilities and local builders Mooy Brothers volunteered labour and resources for related construction projects.[167]

> *In one day and one night a timber and iron ward was built to hold 28 patients. By the time it was filled, the showground buildings were ready to be occupied. The miscellaneous shed was used as a ward for females and the sheep shed, one of the largest buildings in the district, was floored and divided into wards for both female and male patients. … About 292 cases were treated from the town and three from the country, with a total of 16 deaths by April, 1903.*[168]

The outbreak of the epidemic was traced to a recently opened refreshment shop that was selling milkshakes, a popular new phenomenon. The wife of the refreshment shop operator had recently suffered from typhoid and 41 subsequent infections were attributed to contaminated milk drinks sold by the shop. To ward off the disease houses in the town were fumigated with sulphur burnt on hot coals and streets were flushed with lime.[169]

The Spanish Influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 had an almost equally devastating affect on the region. During the crisis 'Red Cross and other volunteers aided the doctors at the inoculation clinics in the Municipal Chambers and the hospital and also assisted the nursing staff'.[170]

Philosophies of scientific parenting lead in the 20th century to an increasing amount of government involvement in teaching mothering skills and monitoring the health of babies. During the mid 20th century numerous baby health centres were established across New South Wales. In smaller communities these were often combined with other facilities.

A Bush Nursing Centre was established in Quambone in 1926. The service initially operated out of a building that had been the Quambone Hotel. Prior to the appointment of a Bush Nurse in Quambone midwifery services had been provided by local women. A dedicated Bush Nursing Home was opened in 1928. This operated until 1968 when it was replaced by a Community Health Centre.[171]

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[166] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* pp.43-44
[167] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On.* pp.12-13
[168] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On.* p.13
[169] Mckenzie, J., 1988, *The Vision Splendid.* pp.102-103
[170] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On.* p.140
[171] Quabone Centenary Committee, 1994. *Quambone. A village of 100 years 1894-1994.* pp.41-43

Following the establishment of a CWA Branch in Gulargambone in 1923 activities were organised to raise money for the construction of a Hospital. The Gulargambone CWA hospital was constructed in 1926 and officially opened in 1927 (refer to **Section 9.1 Birth and death**). It operated as a private hospital until 1956 when it was transferred to the Hospitals Commission of NSW and managed by the Coonamble Hospital Board as a subsidiary of the Coonamble Hospital. The hospital dealt with general illnesses and emergency cases. Former nurse Elva Redington recalled that, at times when the hospital was quiet the nursing sisters would go to picture shows at the Majestic Theatre, leaving the assistant nurse in charge. A Baby Health Centre was constructed in Gulargambone in 1962.[172]

3.10 NSW Historical Theme: Industry

The Coonamble district has hosted a number of industries which were directly linked to the pastoral and agricultural pursuits of the district. Saddleries were opened in 1873 by William Christian and William Cochrane. Cordial and vinegar manufacture were commenced by Robert Hickson in 1875.[173] Hickson later established a brickyard 'near the corner of Taloon and Dubbo Streets[174].

A brewery was established in Coonamble in 1887 by R.E. Rule and E.R. Shone. Like many regional breweries in the 19th century this brewery had many owners during its short 17year life. Rule and Shone engaged John Atkinson as brewer and manager. Atkinson came to Coonamble from Walgett and had previously worked at breweries in Wilcannia and Hay. Samuel Carmichael and R.J. Boyle purchased the brewery in 1889 and established the Coonamble Brewing & Cordial Mfg. Co. Ltd. in 1891. The venture was purchased by Henry Parsons in 1893 and its name changed to the Red Lion Brewery. The Red Lion Brewery traded until 1900. Following its closure it appears to have become an opium den. Police raided the premises in 1903 and confiscated 'five tins of opium, various items of smoking equipment, and arrested seventeen Chinese men and two white women'. It was re-opened briefly in 1904 by John and Ernest Fletcher who also had a brewery in Walgett.[175]

3.11 NSW Historical Theme: Mining

Aboriginal people were engaged in mining for centuries before the European occupation of Australia. Minerals were extracted to make stone tools and in some places ochres and clays were also mined. Minerals commonly used for toolmaking were quartz, silcrete, flint, obsidian, chalcedony and quartzite[176]. Many of these minerals were traded long distances. The presence of silcrete deposits in the Warrumbungle Ranges was noted by geologist G. H Dury in his 1969 study of volcanic crusts[177]. Given the geology of the region it is anticipated that mining of siliceous materials would have occurred in a number of places. The Coonamble area has experienced very little mining activity since European settlement.

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[172] O'Brien, B. et al, 2001. *Gulargambone Revisited*. pp.107-110
[173] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.45
[174] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.46
[175] Deutscher, K., 1999. *The Breweries of Australia a History*. pp.33-34
[176] Mulvaney, J. & Kamminga, J., 1999. *Prehistory of Australia*, pp.213-214
[177] Langford-Smith, T., 1978. *Silcrete in Australia*, p.9

Coonamble Shire sits over part of the eastern margin of the Great Artesian Basin and during the late 19th century water bores were sunk at many places within the Shire. Accounts of the development and application of bores are included in **Section 3.1 Agriculture** and **Section 4.4 Utilities.**

A quarry was opened on Mount Magometon in 1959 by Coonamble Shire Council for the mining of basalt aggregates in one of the only occurrences of hard rock in the region. These aggregrates have been used in road sealing in the northwest of New South Wales. By the mid 1960s this quarry was crushing about 25,000 tons of basalt per year and at its peak employed 11 persons.[178] It continues to operate under the control of Council.

Exploration of the potential of the existence of petroleum in the northwest of New South Wales during the 1950s included examination of areas in the east of the Coonamble Shire. The report into these investigations concluded that there was little likelihood of petroleum occurring within the Shire. This report discounted reports of pockets of petroleum found in Coonamble No.3 Bore, concluding that these were possibly associated with the occurrence of oil shale on the margins of the Great Artesian Basin.[179]

3.12 NSW Historical Theme: Pastoralism

The 1820s and 1830s in New South Wales were characterised by a push for new grazing lands beyond the Limit of Location established by Governor Darling. This was largely driven by growth in the colonial economy and increasing trade with Britain. The discovery of easy passes over the Liverpool ranges opened paths for squatters to move mobs of cattle and sheep into the rich Liverpool Plains. As these groups were moving out of the Hunter Valley others were moving livestock northwest from the Lithgow and Bathurst regions to establish runs along the Castlereagh.

Andrew Brown of *Cooerwull*, Bowenfels (at the western end of the Lithgow valley) is credited to be the first European to squat on the Castlereagh River. Brown spent the years around 1830 scouting runs for himself and his employer, James Walker of *Wallerawong*. Around the same time squatters such as the Cox brothers, Rouse brothers and representatives of William Lawson's extended family were moving into the region from the east and south[180].

Brown and Walker's sheep were driven to their properties at Bowenfels and Wallerawang for shearing each year. It was easier in those times to move living animals than dead loads of wool. When Charles Darwin visited Walker's *Wallerawong* in 1836 he noted that:

> *The sheep were some 15,000 in number, of which the greater part were feeding under the care of different shepherds, on unoccupied ground, at the distance of more than a hundred miles, and beyond the limits of the colony.[181]*

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[178] Department of Mines NSW, Reports on Annual Inspections of Coonamble Shire Council Quarry.
[179] Mott, W., 1959. Assessment of Petroleum Potentialities of Petroleum Exploration Licences Nos. 43 & 58.
[180] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.83
[181] Darwin, C., A Journey to Bathurst in January, 1836. p.42

From 1833 early settlers in the Liverpool Plains region were pushed further north and westward after appropriation of substantial landholdings by the government supported Australian Agricultural Company[182]. During this period squatters were displaced and herds moved through newly discovered country in a game that Rolls described as having:

> *… rules more complicated than chess. And it was a rough game that extended outside the law of the land and often outside any moral laws. But few men stayed on the board for long. Flood, drought, depression, land laws kept bumping the board and many slid off.*[183]

The general pattern of these early incursions into the region appears to have involved the identification of suitable pastures and the movement of cattle or sheep into the areas identified. Convict labourers, indentured servants or employees were left in small groups in isolated situations to tend the herds and flocks. By all accounts they generally lived in miserable circumstances deprived of decent food and in constant fear of attacks by Gamilaraay or Wiradjuri groups, or bushrangers who had moved beyond the reach of the law. During the 1830s cattle driven out from Mendooran were being depastured along the Castlereagh River[184].

Governor Brisbane's mounted police kept some order, although often squatters and their servants took the law into their own hands. A few punitive military expeditions had been mounted on the fringes of the region to establish the rule of British law. These had included Morisset's expedition against the Wiradjuri around Mudgee and the upper Macquarie in 1824 and Nunn's 1836 military expedition to the Gwydir and Namoi[185]. Policing of the frontier was taken over in the 1830s by the feared and hated Border Police. (Refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**)

In 1836 Governor Bourke established regulations, which legalised squatting beyond the limits of the Nineteen Counties[186]. The ensuing period, which coincided with the height of the economic boom of the 1830s, saw the consolidation of many landholdings around the Castlereagh.

Records indicate that John Jude and John Hall

> *… were the first people to hold licences to depasture stock on the Castlereagh River down stream from Mendooran. They lodged their application for a licence on 31st December 1836 with the description "Carlingangong North Western beyond Wellington Valley". By 30th September 1839 John Jude acquired a licence for the adjoining area called Armatree.*[187]

Andrew Brown extended his and James Walker's holdings, establishing properties between the Warrumbungles and the site of Mendooran. These were

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[182] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.100-101
[183] Rolls, E. 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.65
[184] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15
[185] Connor, J., 2002. *The Australian Frontier Wars 1788-1838*. pp. 59-61, 102-112
[186] Morrisey, S. 1978, 'The Pastoral Economy 1821-1850'. p.59
[187] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.77

Briambil and *Cuigan*. From 1834, with the assistance of James Walker's nephew David Archer, and the guidance of the local Aboriginal people, Andrew Brown explored around and beyond the Warrumbungles, establishing stations on the watering points of *Yarragrin*, *Gundy*, *Bidden*, *Mogie Melon*, *Wallumburrawang*, *Tooraweenah* and *Nullen*.[188]

> *By 1836/37 licences were issued for stations along the river in the vicinity of the present day Gilgandra, Curban, Armatree and Gulargambone. Richard Rouse at Mundooran, Thomas Perrie at Breelong, James Bennett at Bearbong and Curban, Lowes at Carlganda and Yalcogreen, John Hall at Calingoingong and John Jude at Armatree.*[189]

By 1847 Andrew Brown held seven runs of 16,000 acres each. *Caigan*, near Mendooran, appears to have operated as the head station with stores being distributed and staff allocated from this point. Brown's runs to the west of the Warrumbungle Range were *Tondeburine*, *Mogie Melon*, *Illumurgalia* and *Beery*. His developments made a lasting impression on the development of the district south and east of Gulargambone.[190]

In 1840 John Ross Patterson and George Gibson established two runs for James Walker on the Castlereagh River below Brown's *Illumurgalia* run. These were known as *Yurammee* and *Canamble*. Gibson later established his *Bimble* run further west then over time established runs on the lower Macquarie River including *Wallengambone*. For a time Gibson and Patterson maintained a joint interest in the Tooloon run west of the Castlereagh River.[191]

Alexander McGregor moved into the Gulargambone district in 1842. His daughter Ann married John Jones, a former convict who had apparently been assigned to McGregor. 'Ann and John's first home was at *Gunningbong*, later called *Bullagreen*. John and Ann Jones raised five sons. The family selected a number of runs and eventually controlled 'large tracts of country between Collie and Armatree'.[192]

In 1848 Thomas Spicer took up the *Carlgandra* run and John Merritt held *Eringanerin* on the eastern side of the Castlereagh River. *Castlereagh* (later *Boberah*), *Bongeabong* (*Bungy*) and *Marthaguy* were located on the western side.[193]

The economic downturn of the early 1840s impacted hard on pastoral runs at the fringes of settlement. Many squatters suffered severe losses and the pastoral industry was generally saved by the wholesale slaughter and boiling down of livestock. Their reduced fats were sold to Britain at a higher value than that of the animals' meat, hides or fleeces.

Increases in the price of wool in the late 1840s led to changes in land use and an increasing rise to dominance by sheep farming in the west of New South Wales.

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[188] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.116-119
[189] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15
[190] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.26
[191] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. pp.8-11
[192] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.26
[193] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.15

The fortunes of pastoralists were given an additional boost by the gold rushes of the early 1850s, which created an increase in demand for meat, and the American Civil War (1860-1864), which increased the English textile mills demand for wool. The gold rushes also led to shortages of labour on pastoral runs.

The implementation of legislation creating closer settlement in the late 19th century (refer to **Section 4.2 Land Tenure**) increased the number of people living on the land around Coonamble. Despite this development much of the region around Coonamble continued to be characterised by large cattle and sheep runs. Droughts, floods and adverse market conditions combined to drive many smaller and more marginal property holders off the land.

When John Jude died in 1866 he left *Armatree*, *New Armatree* and *Willancorah* to his son Page Otto Jude. 'Page Jude had already acquired *Illumurgalia West* and *Illumurgalia East* from Andrew Brown in 1864'. Alexander McGregor had taken up Merrigal on the western side of the Castlereagh in 1845. His grandsons 'held large tracts of land from Armatree to Collie'.[194]

Andrew Brown passed control of his massive runs over to his two sons, William and John, in 1880. William was killed on *Tondeburine* in 1882 and John took sole control of the properties. John and his wife Caroline Bradley had ten children, including six sons who lived to adulthood. A number of the Castlereagh runs were divided among these sons.

> *Francis Henry …, took over Caigan, John Lawrence (the Younger) – Dooroombah, Charles Henderson – Bergowen near Mendooran, George Leonard – Weenya, William Douglas – Rosewood, and Allan Houghton – Warrien. John Lawrence (the elder) carried on Tondeburine although living most of the time at … Methven at Bowenfels.[195]*

During the 19th century a network of travelling stock routes was established to facilitate the movement of stock around the colony. In many places stock routes traversed pastoral holdings. As stock was moved along these routes landholders had to be warned 24 hours in advance that stock would cross their boundaries.

> *This notice had to be given by hand, so that he could have time to shift his stock off the route and avoid getting them mixed up with the travelling mob. This was known as 'boxing up.' If this happened, the stock would have to be taken to the nearest yards and drafted out, and this might take several days. If the fault was with the drover he would have to pay the cost of drafting…[196]*

The last two decades of the 19th century saw the movement of settlers into country that had been ignored by the earlier pastoralists. Eventually farmers from Victoria, South Australia and southern New South Wales bought blocks of previously unimproved land 'very cheap' as a number of the large runs were broken up. Moves towards closer settlement continued through the 20th century.

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[194] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.77
[195] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.26
[196] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.26

The fortunes of graziers in the region were supported by the wool boom of the 1950s. Demand for wool, partly created by the Korean War, encouraged wool agents to advance credit for purchase of much needed equipment to the soldier settlers who were in many cases 'as free of money as a frog is of feathers' and lacking security to arrange bank loans.[197]

The 20th century saw substantial changes in land management practices and pastoralism. The wool boom of the 1950s saw substantial investment in many rural properties with homesteads and woolsheds being modernised, modified or replaced. Closer settlement reduced the viability of many of the larger homestead and woolshed complexes.[198] The wool crisis of the 1970s and subsequent problems in the wool industry led to a decline in wool growing on many properties and a re-emergence of cattle raising. Many woolsheds have not seen shearing since the 1970s.

The farming of sheep and cattle continue to be major contributors to the economy of the region. Many stations contain the infrastructure of a pastoral industry that has developed over a period of 180 years.

Born the illegitimate son of an Irish convict in 1805 Edward Flood made a fortune as a building contractor in Sydney by the 1840s. An entrepreneurial businessman he began investing in pastoral runs in 1841 when he purchased Narrandera Station. By 1851 he had runs in the Clarence River District, 650,000 acres on the Lower Darling and runs in the Lachlan region. He sold most of his Riverina runs by 1866 and invested in other areas. In 1871 he held 31 runs in New South Wales and, in partnership with others, 18 runs in Queensland. Flood sold 'a large amount of property in 1875-1876. A long-time resident of Sydney and member of the New South Wales Parliament and successful company director Flood died in 1888 with an estate worth £428,000.[199] Flood held a number of runs along the Merri Merri Creek, including Quambone Station.

John Whitehead notes that, after European settlement of the region, 'there was a continuous movement of stock by the local squatters and their shepherds in, out and through the (Warrumbungle) mountains' seeking the lush grasses that grew on the volcanic slopes and valleys of the range[200]. Fertile valleys adjacent to the range were also heavily grazed and farmed, and continue to provide rich environments for pastoral pursuits. Early pastoral runs within the mountains have been identified by John Whitehead as:

- *Caleriwi* was located on the northern side of Wambelong Creek. It was originally squatted on by Andrew Brown of Bowenfels[201] and taken up as leasehold by Robert Dawson in the 1840s[202]. Dawson ran only cattle on *Caleriwi*[203]. When Dawson failed in the 1840s depression the run was transferred to Charles Bury along with *Walla Walla*, *Tenandra* and

[197] Shumack, E., 1999. *Going Bush to Goolhi*. P.10
[198] Sowden, H., 1972. *Australian Woolsheds*. p.29
[199] Rathbone: Flood, Edward (1805-1888). [Online]
[200] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[201] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[202] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.34
[203] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.21

Parmidman. Allocated to Alfred Knight after World War I as a soldier settlement block. This run was later taken over by Keith Blackman.[204]

- *Tannabar*, located south of Mount Caraghnan and Belougery Gap, was leased by John and Louisa Knight in the 1850s in partnership with Henry Ball Lakeman[205]. The run was purchased by John Knight Junior in 1907[206].
- *Tonderburn*, located south of Wambelong Trig.

The Pincham family of Baradine and the Pilliga are descendents of James and Sarah Pincham who married in 1886. They had five children, Minnie, May, Alfred, Bruce, Roy and Coral, prior to James' death in 1896. James and his brother Bill operated a sawmill in Coonabarabran prior to 1896 and by 1909 Sarah had obtained a controlling interest in this mill. After this the operation was moved to Baradine.[207]

Through the successful operation and expansion of this business, and diversification into other commercial enterprises the Pincham family became reasonably prosperous. The family established additional sawmills at Milliwindi[208] and later at Bugaldie[209]. They purchased two pastoral properties, 'one about fifty miles north west of Coonamble, the other in the Warrumbungle Mountains.' Alf ran the latter property while Bruce took care of the mills.'[210]

According to Boyd Blackman of Gilgandra the woolshed currently known as Pincham Woolshed was originally constructed by Aught Knight who owned the *Strathmore* run in the 1920s and 1930s. Alf Pincham purchased *Strathmore* from Aught some time around 1936. There was originally a house near the creek not far west of the woolshed.[211] Brands of corrugated galvanised iron used in the shed indicate that it was possibly built after 1932.

As built the shed was quite small, originally comprising only the area under the gable roof and the current expert's room board. Its three stands were fitted with Lister ratchet shearing gear with an overhead drive. The woolshed had a very limited work area and the small wool room made difficult to bale and handle the wool clip. There was evidently only enough space in the original shed for 12 bales of wool. Immediately after World War II, possibly in 1946, the shed was extended to provide a larger wool room and storage area. Timber for the extension was cut on the hill above the shed and sent to Baradine to be milled. New yards were also constructed using timber posts and surplus landing mesh sheets. Shearing ceased in the Strathmore woolshed during the 1950s when all shearing was moved to the larger and better-equipped shed on *Belougery*.[212]

The stories of many other pastoral properties are included in **Section 4.2 Land Tenure.**

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[204] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.192
[205] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.77
[206] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the beginning*. p.78
[207] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.34
[208] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.35
[209] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.36
[210] Hadfield, J., 2007. *The Best of Times*. p.36
[211] Information provided by Boyd Blackman. 1 April 2008.
[212] Information provided by Boyd Blackman. 1 April 2008.

3.13 NSW Historical Theme: Science &
3.14 NSW Historical Theme: Technology

The application of technology and its impact on the cultural landscape is illustrated throughout this thematic history. Examples include the implementation of machine shearing in the pastoral industry (refer to **Section 5.1 Labour**), improvements in transport technology (refer to **Section 3,15 Transport**), advancements in agriculture (refer to **Section 3.1 Agriculture**), and developments in the provision of utilities to the towns and countryside of the shire (refer to **Section 4.4 Utilities**).

3.15 NSW Historical Theme: Transport

The earliest transport in the region was on foot. The Aboriginal people moved about this way, as did the early shepherds who moved at the same pace as the sheep they cared for. European settlers brought the horse and bullock drays or horse drawn wagons for heavy transport. As settlement developed in the area bullock and horse tracks developed. Some of these were later improved to become roads for heavier vehicles.

Early road routes tended to follow the lines of creeks and rivers. The area covered by the Coonamble Shire was traversed by a number of tracks. One of the main connections to the outside world followed the Castlereagh River from Gilgandra. Another route to the eastern side of the region passed through Coonabarabran and Goorianawa. These routes were used by wool drays on their way to the coast via Mudgee, Dubbo or the Liverpool Plains. Tracks also radiated out from the river crossing at Coonamble to areas north of the town.

In his memoir, *Time Means Tucker*, Duke Tritton, renowned swaggie, shearer and bush balladist, described the work of the bullocky. He noted two Coonamble region bullockies who were working in the early 20th century. Ned Inglis of Baradine, aged almost 70 in 1905, had been driving bullocks all of his adult life. Before the railway was constructed over the Blue Mountains in the 1860s he had carted 'wool from Tondeburine to Circular Quay. His father had two teams and Ned at fifteen was driving one'[213]. While fencing the boundary between Gumin and Goorianawa Tritton met Billy Harlow, 'a professor in the art of bullock driving'[214]. He described how Harlow cared for his bullocks and how he drove his teams.

> *He never used a whip though he had one tied under the dray, and seldom spoke to his team above a normal voice. If he got into a tight place he would say in a reproving manner, "Well, what a useless lot of cows a man's stuck with," straighten them up and say, "Now then, you blanky blankards, show us what you can do." And I never saw them let him down.*[215]

Tritton noted that 'poor, patient bullocks … played a mighty part in making Australia a good place to live in'[216]. Bullock teams handled bulk transportation around the country well into the 20th century.

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[213] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.68
[214] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.55
[215] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.55
[216] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.55

Tritton, who spent years on the roads in the early 20th century, also recounted a journey between shearings at two woolsheds by a group of shearers:

> *Dave had a sulky and Jack a bicycle and both had pens at Guntawang. ... So we put all the swags in the sulky and I rode with Dave. Jack rode the bike a few miles then leaned it against a tree and started walking. Dutchy ran behind the sulky till he came to the bike. Then he mounted it and rode past Jack. When he caught him up he got in the sulky and I ran behind, till we came to the bike. Then Jack took over and the performance was repeated. This method of travelling was used a lot in the bush. Two men with one bike could do fifty miles a day without much trouble.[217]*

As late as the 1870s the roads of the district were still being referred to as 'bush tracks'. A programme of government road building resulted in improvements in the condition of roads and the creation of new road routes. The road gangs employed to construct and maintain these roads helped to expand the population of the district.[218]

On the black soil plains coaching roads became almost impassable in wet weather. In some places sections of corduroy road were laid to provide an all-weather surface. Corduroy involved the placement of small cut logs or saplings side-by-side across the direction of travel to provide a relatively stable, if rather bumpy, surface for the mail coaches. A section of corduroy road with an associated milepost and gateway survives on the Back Coonamble Road between Curban and Gulargambone. This was evidently built by Charles Law, owner of the nearby Wattle Park selection from 1895[219]. Different solutions were applied in other places. A flagstone causeway exists near the present Castlereagh Highway approximately 35km north of Coonamble. This was evidently constructed to allow passage of a boggy creek bed by coaches.

Duke Tritton recounted an uncomfortable journey across a section of corduroy road located east of the Bourbah Hotel. He noted that four or five miles on from the hotel "the road ran through a cypress pine forest. It was like driving through a tunnel with the tops of the trees meeting overhead." The road through the forest had been corduroyed with cypress logs about nine inches in diameter to stabilise a very sandy section. 'Had the upper side been squared, it would have made a good job, but the logs had been left round and it made the surface incredibly rough. The bump, bump, bump, was hard on the nerves and it was a great relief when we bumped for the last time. The horses could travel only at a slow walk and it took over an hour to negotiate the four miles."[220]

In 1872 the contractor on the mail run from Mudgee to Coonamble 'was using a four wheeled coach with two horses to carry the mails. This service had been replaced by Cobb & Co in 1876.[221] As Cobb & Co expanded their coaching routes across New South Wales the company obtained a growing number of mail contracts. Between 1874 and 1880 they established twice-weekly mail services linking Coonamble and Walgett to Dubbo and a service from Gulgong to

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[217] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.65
[218] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M. 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. pp.115-116
[219] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.87
[220] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*, p.87
[221] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.48

Gilgandra via Cobbora and Mendooran then on to Curban, Gulargambone and Coonamble.[222] This service was later expanded to three days per week. Well-known drivers were James Brown, Paddy Murray and William Walden.[223]

In the mid 1870s Jessie Lloyd of *Terembone* caught the Cobb & Co. coach from Walgett at *Bundy* station to travel via Mendooran to the railhead at Wallerawang. She later penned a vivid account of the trials of travel by mail coach.

> *Coach travelling is not the most delightful mode of conveyance, especially in the state that many of the roads are in – namely almost a state of nature, - and the construction of the coaches, built with such a singular disregard for comfort; but there is something about it that makes people more friendly than any other means of locomotion. A number of people are packed together, irrespective of station or sex; there is no first or second class to set up the barrier of caste, and after you have been splashed with the same mud, have swallowed the same dust, have been jolted on the same seats, to say nothing of having your heads knocked together on the same coach roof for several days, dining at the same table off the same goat or stagy beef, there is a bond of sympathy and union amongst you all that no other association gives.[224]*

Wayside changing stations were established at regular intervals along the coaching routes. These provided fresh horses for the coaches and refreshments and accommodation for their passengers. Inns established at changing stations included the Buggil Inn located on a rise near the Castlereagh River on the road between Coonamble and Walgett and Murphy's Pine Grove Hotel or the Australian Arms located between Coonamble and Gulargambone. The Pine Grove Hotel had a dining room 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. This room was lined with hessian plastered with newspapers.[225]

Mail coaches travelling between Gilgandra and Coonamble in the late 19th century arrive at Ironbark Coach and Horse Hotel north of Gulargambone about 5:00am, three days a week reaching Coonamble at 8:00am. The inn's horse change yards were down on the river by a big mulberry tree and giant kurrajong tree.[226]

 A road linking Coonamble to Walgett via Nugal was surveyed in 1876 and a coach service between the two towns was commenced by Cobb & Co in 1877. This route was initially troubled by Frederick Wolseley's refusal to allow coaches to cross his *Euroka* run. Services eventually extended from Walgett into Queensland. Coaches travelling from Coonamble to Walgett stopped to change horses at Yowie Inn, Buggil, Wingadee, Combogolong and a stop just north of the Nugal Swamp.[227]

As railways snaked out across the colony from the 1850s onwards they both revolutionised and supplanted earlier transport options. Coaching lines modified

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[222] Page, J. & Nicholls, H., *Cobb & Co. Story Education Resource Kit*. 2.4
[223] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra*. p.15
[224] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf*. p.84
[225] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.48
[226] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.125
[227] Ferry, J., 1978. *Walgett Before the Motor Car*. pp.144-146

routes and opened new routes to adjust to the development of new rail termini. Coach operators appear to have been keen to establish routes to railheads developed under the ambitious 1879 railway expansion program of the Parkes-Robertson government.[228]

The Western Railway reached Wellington in mid 1880 and by 1881 Cobb & Co had extended its coach services via Mendooran and Dubbo to the railway. A connecting service from Mendooran was also available to Mudgee.[229] Duke Tritton recorded a time around 1907 when he worked briefly as relief driver on the mail coach running between Gulargambone and Baradine.

> *The coach was one of the famous Cobb & Co. coaches. … I picked up the mail at Gular at three in the afternoon and came back to Box Ridge, stayed the night, left for Baradine at eight, dropping mail at about twenty four roadside mail boxes, changed horses at Goorianawa, then on to Bugaldi (sic) and Baradine, reaching there around four. The trip was just seventy miles. I did a round trip twice a week and found it somewhat boring unless I had passengers to yarn away the time.*[230]

Cobb & Co services through Gilgandra to Coonamble ceased around 1898. Bill Rowley tendered a lower price than Cobb & Co for the mail service on this route and was granted the contract.

> *Mr Rowley quickly got into trouble with schedule difficulties through having insufficient horses for the Dubbo to Coonamble run, and insufficient sheds and grooms for the 'change overs'. … The contract was taken over by Mr Adam Nolan, who saw this contract to the end, and incidentally, the end of Cobb & Co. in Gilgandra.*[231]

Coach services from Coonamble to Walgett continued beyond this time. One of the last official mail coach services in the region was operated between Coonamble and Coonabarabran until 1923 by W. Hogan[232].

A proposed railway line to Coonamble was included in the Government Railway Policy of 1886. In 1899 a Parliamentary Committee considered four possible routes for the railway. These were:

- Dubbo to Coonamble,
- Mudgee to Coonamble,
- Narromine to Coonamble,
- Warren to Coonamble.

The Dubbo to Coonamble route was eventually chosen as being most 'in the public interest, as well as in the interests of the districts most concerned'. The committee also decided that the route would pass through Gilgandra.[233]

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[228] Lee, R., 1988. *The Greatest Public Work*. p.97
[229] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. p.117
[230] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.96-97
[231] Smith, W.&S., 1964. *A Flashback to Gilgandra of the Past. James Collison Born Gilgandra 29th June 1870*.
[232] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it was in the Beginning*. p.118
[233] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.44

The first was turned on the construction of the new railway line on 20 August 1900 by Premier William Lyne[234]. The first passenger train ran from Dubbo to Coonamble on 29 July 1902. Goods operations commenced in August 1902.[235] As the railway opened up the district to broad scale agriculture roads were constructed to the new railheads to allow for the transport of crops and other commodities. The impact of the railway is illustrated by the increases in traffic that occurred between 1903 and 1936.[236]

Item carried	1903	1936
Passenger journeys	7,590	23,997
Goods - tonnage	19,469	62,167
Wool - bales	20,821	47,436

In 1906 2,214,000 sheep and 86,723 cattle were carried on the line and 'by 1908 Coonamble was the terminus for one of the best-paying branch lines in the State'. Rail lines were proposed between Coonamble and Walgett, and Coonamble and Wee Waa[237]. These lines were never constructed although a route was surveyed between Coonamble and Wee Waa. Sections of this route survive as roads in the Pilliga Forest.

In his book Duke Tritton recalled what he had been told of the construction of the railway. He noted that the line from Dubbo to Coonamble was built by American contractor Whitely King.

> *He paid no wages, but each man received a slip of paper at the end of each day. This voucher entitled him to collect food and goods to the value of five shillings from a store nominated by Whitely King. All the goods were of the highest price and the lowest quality. When the job was ended, the men who had worked for as long as twelve months were in the same position as when they had started and Whitely King was the only one to show a profit.[238]*

Passenger train services were replaced by road coaches in 1975.[239] These coaches operate from Lightning Ridge and Walgett through Coonamble to Dubbo.

Roads were continually improved during the 20th century with ongoing advances in road construction techniques and funding for road improvements. After its foundation in 1906 Coonamble Shire Council was pre-occupied with improving the district's roads. During the inter-war period roads were constructed to provide for travel by motor car between major centres in the region.

In 1931 solo aviator Arthur Butler, on a record-breaking flight between England and Australia, landed his tiny Cowper Swift monoplane in the main street of Tooraweenah to refuel. Butler had a special connection to Tooraweenah and returned to develop Australia's first registered regional airport. In November 1938 Butler developed a 5,000 foot gravel and grass airstrip on land acquired from local grazier Alf Yeo. From this strip Butler developed an air transport

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[234] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.98

[235] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.44

[236] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. pp.44-45

[237] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.19

[238] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.60

[239] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.19

service taking passengers and mail to Sydney via Cunnamulla, Bourke, Coonamble and Tooraweenah. Feeder car services brought passengers to and from Gilgandra and Coonabarabran. The original hangar for the airline's De Havilland Dragon bi-planes was a converted shearing shed.[240]

By 1947 the aerial service had expanded and 104 passengers per week were transiting through Tooraweenah. By this time airport facilities included a small terminal building, hangar and workshops. Flights to Sydney were undertaken by Douglas passenger planes and feeder services being provided by the Dragon bi-planes.[241] Joan McKenzie described

> *The hedge-hopping flight from Coonamble to Tooraweenah with sheep and cattle scattering in all directions not far below, was an exciting experience. Occasionally as the plane approached the Warrumbungle Range, it was caught in a fierce updraft of air. The bruised knuckles on hands which protected the heads of the startled, unbelted passengers from the ceiling framework, verified the tale of the sudden rise or fall of the aircraft. Brown paper bags were essential for the trip.[242]*

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[240] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[241] Rohr, K. Notes on the History of Tooraweenah.
[242] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* pp.157-158

4. Australian Historical Theme: Building settlements, towns and cities

Although many people came to Australia in search of personal gain, the realised the need to co-operate in the building of safe, pleasant urban environments. Australian urbanisation and suburbanisation have special characteristics which set them apart from similar phenomena elsewhere in the world.[243]

4.1 NSW Historical Theme: Accommodation

The district has numerous examples of the dwelling places of the Aboriginal people. Caves and rock shelters have been recorded in a number of places (refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**).

Many of the early settlers built huts of bark and shingle, split slabs or wattle and daub. Rolls described the process of curing bark and setting it as roofing material:

> *When the sheet of bark was lifted off (the tree) it immediately rolled up. Two men straightened it and held it to soften over a low fire. Then they spread it flat and weighted it to dry. The overlapped sheets were held on the roof by crossed saplings known as 'outriggers' or 'over purlins' lashed to the purlins... On earlier roofs they were lashed with greenhide. Sometimes they were pegged down with wooden pegs. Ironbark pegs, round or square, dried slowly over a fire were almost as long lasting as nails.*[244]

Many early houses were roofed or clad in shingles. The development of corrugated galvanised iron in 1847 revolutionised building design and construction in Australia. Cash constrained selectors, however continued to build houses of traditional materials well into the 20th century.

In some fringe communities materials for houses were scrounged from the refuse of the developing industrial economies of Britain and Australia. Packaging materials such as wooden crates and kerosene tins were used to build the houses of the poorest well into the 20th century. Marie Dundas described the house her family built behind the showground in Coonabarabran. This would not be dissimilar from homes constructed in Tin Town at Coonamble:

> *We built the house of whatever we could find ... If we had a piece of good tin, we'd think we was the best kids in the scrub. Cardboard – we built it out of tin first – then they'd go chop the poles... then the tin on the roof, then we'd go down to ... the goods shed and get every cardboard box 'e 'ad, then buy a packet of tacks, that's our walls, cardboard walls ... if it rained too much we had to throw the walls away and go down the goods shed and get more walls.*[245]

As the post industrial revolution world impacted more and more on the Coonamble district housing styles grew to reflect national and international trends. The towns of the area tend to reflect the patterns of house construction

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[243] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[244] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.292
[245] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.151-152

that have prevailed across Australia at various times, although regional variations are quite strong.

Towards the end of World War II communities began to consider needs for future housing. Government housing schemes were established in the late 1940s and early 1950s (refer to **Section 7.4 Welfare**). Some vignettes of domestic life are covered in **Section 8.2 Domestic life**.

4.2   NSW Historical Theme: Land Tenure

Prior to European settlement land tenure across Australia 'was based upon birth and kinship rights subtly melded into a complete cosmology of life, birth, death and existence, which did not depend on separating land from person'.[246]

European settlers envisaged a totally different relationship to the land. They came with doctrines that saw land as a resource to be used for profit. The first pastoralists moved sheep and cattle into the area, beyond the boundaries of the colony to supplement the pastures of their landholdings in other areas. Some of these people never saw the land on which their stock were pastured.

In 1836 Governor Brisbane legalised squatting beyond the limits of the 19 Counties[247]. The following decades saw a transition in the economy and governance of New South Wales. The first steps to responsible government were taken under the Constitution Act of 1842, transportation of convicts ceased and land ownership laws were amended to allow for the purchase of improved crown lands. These and subsequent changes saw an increase in the occupation of smaller landholdings and a gradual increase in the number of pastoral properties owned and occupied by families.

An Act 'for regulating the Waste Lands belonging to the Crown in the Australian Colonies' was passed by the British Parliament in 1846 and brought into effect in 1847 through Orders in Council. These Orders in Council divided New South Wales into three districts:

- Settled Districts – the original 19 counties plus the counties of Macquarie and Stanley.
- Intermediate Districts – runs of up to 1600 acres could be leased for eight years with additional fees for larger holdings.
- Unsettled Districts – comprising much of New South Wales. Leases of 14 years could be granted for each run of 3,200 acres.[248]

During the term of these leases the lessee 'had the right to make a pre-emptive purchase'. By the 1840s most of south-eastern Australia had been leased under these arrangements and the squatters were quickly perceived as having 'locked up' the land.[249]

The Coonamble district in the 1840s a bizarre game relating to the land laws was played out by Jeremiah Reardon. Exploiting a clause relating to occupation of leased lands Reardon, who was overseer for John Patterson on *Bimble*, took over

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[246] Kass, T., 2003 *A Thematic History of the Central West*. p.52
[247] Morrisey, S. 1978, 'The Pastoral Economy 1821-1850'. p.59
[248] Stuart, I., 2007. 'The surveyor's lot: making landscapes in New South Wales'. p.43
[249] Stuart, I., 2007. 'The surveyor's lot: making landscapes in New South Wales'. pp.43-44

the run during Patterson's long absence in 1847 while he was seeking medical treatment in Sydney. On his return Patterson moved his stock to Caigan and sought positions in station management. Using similar tactics Reardon absorbed James Walker's *Yurramee* into *Bimble*, forcing Walker to take legal action to protect his *Canamble* run. Reardon also managed to acquire parts of John Hall's run on the eastern bank of the Castlereagh.[250]

Various legislative actions by the New South Wales Parliament during the late 19th century attempted to break the hegemony of the squatters over pastoral land and break the large landholdings of this group. The Robertson Land Acts of 1861 allowed for the selection of blocks of land from 40 to 320 acres. This legislation was intended to encourage immigration and create a class of landed yeomanry similar to that which existed in England. Many squatters used dummy purchasers to secure parts of properties over which they already held leases.

The free selection system allowed people with very little capital to take up landholdings at a cost of £1 per acre with a deposit of only 5 shillings per acre being required.

> *They had the option of completing the purchase after three years or of paying five percent interest more or less indefinitely on the balance. … In the short term, free selectors were tenants of the Crown on very favourable terms. At least in theory but, in practice, selectors often had little capital beyond the deposit.[251]*

In an attempt to pre-empt selection many holders of large runs on Crown leases undertook improvements such as well sinking, construction of dams and erection of sheds and fences. These improvements gave the leaseholders a right to purchase. In 1875 George Lloyd of *Terembone* secured several portions of his run located along watercourses. Fencing of these areas was required fence and straight fence lines were marked at night using fires to guide those setting out the route of the fence. Fences were constructed using split box posts "sunk at least two feet into the ground with split belah or bull-oak rails morticed into them".[252]

The Crown Lands Resumption Act of 1884 was another government-sponsored attempt to break up large landholdings. It required the halving of large properties leased from the Crown. Many large runs were broken up and portions subdivided for sale.

The history of land tenure in the Coonamble Shire can be illustrated through the stories of a number of the shire's properties. The large *Wingadee* run comprised *Tunda, Buggil West, Gungalma, Bullarora, Gidginbilla East, Cooyah, Warrah, Bulgah, Tahrone, East, Tahrone, Buggil, Dahomey, Merriossay, Pier Pier East, Upper Merriosay, Dahomey No.2, Yarraman North, New Bullarora, Gidginbilla, Gidginbar, Yarraman* and *Gungalma*. The land comprising most of these properties was originally licensed to John and William Blackman during the

[250] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. pp.11-12
[251] Townsend, N., 1993. Living on the Land: An Enterprising Selector. p.176
[252] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf*. p.72

1830s.[253] Elizabeth Blackman is buried in a small private cemetery located near the Castlereagh River on Mowlma.

In 1849 William Blackman was listed as holding *Bularora*, *Gungalma*, *Gidginbilla* and *Pier Pie*r. By the 1860s the Blackman properties, including *Combagreny*, *Gungalman*, *Warragan* and *Dahomey* were managed for S & W Blackman of Mudgee by Messrs. Allison and Downey from a head station at *Bullarora*. In 1876 Andrew Tobin purchased a number of the Blackman properties and developed *Wingadee*. Bores were sunk, tanks excavated and drains scoured to supply water to most paddocks.[254] *Wingadee* was resumed for closer settlement in 1967. Most of the purchasers of the subdivided blocks were neighbours of the property.[255]

It is possible that James Walker's *Yarrambee* run used the area later occupied by *Willaaga* and *Mowlma* before 1848. This area was first formally leased a *Mowlmah* by Grant Sheridan and Christopher McRae. At that time Mowlmah consisted of five blocks on the Mowlmah Creek totalling 60,000 acres. The property was purchased by John Hellman in 1868. At that time it carried 6,500 head of cattle, 230 horses, had five dams, a house and huts. The Hellman family held it until 1898 when it was purchased by Hain and Hayes. Hain and Hayes paid £37,500 for the property, "including a big new homestead, 20 stand woolshed, eight large tanks, 3300 sheep, 200 horses, 150 head of cattle and 23 paddocks".

W.L. Wilcox purchased the property in 1911 and formed a company to develop an irrigated settlement. Six bores were sunk and large storage tanks constructed. The property was subdivided into 100 acre blocks for lucerne production and orcharding. The venture failed and in 1920 W.M. Angliss purchased the property in conjunction with Riverstone Meat Company. Marra Pty Ltd purchased the property in 1949 and sold it as eleven blocks.[256]

In 1854 George Tailby held 20,000 acres on the northern side of Merry Merry Creek. He still held leases in this area in 1869. "In 1861 M. McGuiness transferred his lease on the Upper Merri Merri to C.E.S. McDonald and in 1862 Edward Flood held Upper Merri Merri. Flood transferred his lease to John Thomas Neale in 1863 and Neale transferred it to Alfred Davis in 1865. Neale held the lease again in 1866. By 1863 Frederick William Buchanan acquired James Walker's runs east of the Castlereagh between Coonamble and Gulargambone from Walker's widow. William Connell, possibly one of Buchanan's in-laws, leased the *Merri Merri* runs some time in the 1860s under mortgage to John Neale. [257]

In the 1870s William Moore Connell held the *Avoca* section of the *Merri Merri* runs. "William Moore Connell was born in 1835 and died at *Avoca* in 1904. He married Elizabeth King and they had three sons and one daughter." In 1882 William Connell held up to 90,000 acres west of the Castlereagh River. Much of this land was resumed for closer settlement and at the time of William's death

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[253] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.93
[254] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.94
[255] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.96
[256] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. pp.79-80
[257] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.135

Avoca was 40,000 acres in area. William and Elizabeth's eldest son Harold, born at *Avoca* in 1876, held *Avoca* after his father's death.[258]

A homestead was built during the boom times of the 1880s. This consisted of four buildings connected by covered walkways. The large complex included a ballroom. In 1917 *Avoca* was divided between William Connell's four children. Harold had *Murrimbong*, Norman (tug) had Back Avoca, Lesley (Lal) took Brinawa and "Vera drew the homestead block. Current owner Jenny Anderson is Vera's granddaughter. Jenny's parents Joyce and George Morris built a new homestead on *Avoca* and the old homestead fell into disrepair. [259]

The property known as *Geanmoney* has previously been called *Quonomoona* and *Quonmony*. It was one of a string of runs on the western side of the Castlereagh River held by William Charles Wentworth. It was situated between Wentworth's runs of *Combarah* and *Tooloon*. In 1840 Wentworth apparently sent William Michael McMahon across from the Macquarie River to establish runs on the Castlereagh.[260] Quonmony was valued by Michael McMahon for William Charles Wentworth as having an "estimated area of 22,000 acres" and grazing capacity for 640 cattle[261].

Michael McMahon married his wife Catherine at Kildysart, Ireland in 1829. The couple left Limerick on 19 September 1837. Michael worked for William Charles Wentworth in the Hunter River area before moving to the Macquarie District. He took over the *Kialgara*, *Cambora* and *Budgeon* runs from Wentworth in 1859, and *Quonamoona* and *Tooloon* in 1861. In 1867 he also held the *Balagula* run.[262]

By 1865 *Budgeon*, *Comabara*, *Eurimie*, *Quonmoona* and *Tooloon* were listed in the name of John Thomas Neale. In 1873 *Quonmoona* was held by Patrick McMahon. It was mortgaged to the trustees of the McMahon estate, Hermann and Cox, in 1889.[263]

Geanmoney was reported as having the first fenced paddock in the district. An area of 7,000 acres was enclosed with chock and log fences. Remains of this fence were still in place in 1900. A 16 stand blade shed was located on the property near the Castlereagh River. This shed was used until about 1903.[264]

By 1908 *Geanmoney* and *Comabarra* were held by Goldsborough Mort & Co. By this time the combined properties had fenced paddocks and were managed by Mr. L.J. French. Twenty large tanks on the property and many of these could be fed from the river by engine and pump.[265] It was subsequently sold to the Hon. John Morrissey, Victorian MLA and was subdivided. The Keady family purchased the homestead block and continue to occupy this portion.

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[258] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. pp.135-136

[259] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. pp.135-136

[260] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.86

[261] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.87

[262] McKenzie, J., undated Coonamble Memorial Wall Pioneer Profile.

[263] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.86

[264] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.87

[265] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On. Coonamble*. P & A Association, Coonamble. p.87

4.3   NSW Historical Theme: Towns, suburbs and villages

The stories of various towns and villages in the Coonamble Shire are included below in alphabetical order.

4.3.1   Combara

When the railway was constructed from Dubbo in 1903 a station was built at Combara, 'mainly for the convenience of the fettlers who were required to service the line at regular intervals'. The first store in Combara was established by Mary Readford. Mr Golsby purchased the store in 1921. By 1939 Combara had 'stores, two churches, a hall, post office and several sawmills. Schools were located at Weetah, Bennetts Flat, Brightling and one near the village.

4.3.2   Coonamble

In early 1840 a party set off from James Walker's Wallerawong property under the leadership of John Ross Patterson to establish "the best and nearest available grazing country … on the lower Castlereagh". The party, consisting of Patterson, George Gibson and two others named Lawson and Hedghill, travelled northwest with "a pack train of donkeys, twenty seven saddle horses … (and) a mob of young breeding cattle". Travelling downstream from Walker's Illamigulliah run they found well-watered country and decided to form two stations. They built stockyards and a hut on the western side of the Castlereagh River downstream from Yurammee Creek, and stockyards and a larger building on the eastern bank. These two outstations were located on either side of a river crossing suitable for bullock teams. The western run was known as Yurammee and the eastern as Canamble.[266]

The crossing over the Castlereagh River and a large waterhole established the place as a crossroads for the tracks that developed after European settlement. A crown reserve named Coonamble Reserve, covering land on both sides of the river, was declared on 5 July 1855. A post office, operated by Sarah Burts, was established within the reserve in 1859. In the same year a town was surveyed by District Surveyor Lewis Gordon. Gordon's plan established the town between the Castlereagh River and Magomadine Creek. Allotments in the newly created village were auctioned at Coonabarabran on 12 February 1861.[267]

Early development of the town occurred near the southern bank of Magomodine Creek and later shifted to higher ground closer the eastern bank of the Castlereagh River. During the 1860s a number of hotels, stores and smithys were established in the town.[268] A permanent police station was established in 1871 and a court house constructed in 1879[269].

By 1878 the town had a public school, two churches, a hospital and a newspaper, the 'Coonamble Independent'. A Municipal Council was established in May 1880 and a new brick post office constructed in 1881. Coonamble finally secured a reliable water supply in 1894. The sinking of a major bore provided the impetus for further growth. A School of Arts building was constructed in 1897 and by 1898 the population of Coonamble was 1,000.[270]

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[266] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. pp.8-9
[267] Stephens, J. (ed.), 1955. *Coonamble Centenary 1855-1955*. p.16
[268] Stephens, J. (ed.), 1955. *Coonamble Centenary 1855-1955*. p.17
[269] Stephens, J. (ed.), 1955. *Coonamble Centenary 1855-1955*. p.21
[270] Hickson, B., 2000. Coonamble Main Street Study. p.4

By 1906 the population of Coonamble had grown to 6,000 and a building boom was underway by 1908. The Commercial Hotel was rebuilt in 1912. Development was slowed by World War I and some building occurred during the 1920s, including construction of a large Commercial Bank building. On a very hot day on 6 February 1929 a fire broke out beside the School of Arts on the eastern side of Castlereagh Street. It raged out of control down the street until a wind change pushed it onto the western side. After three hours 38 of the town's buildings had been destroyed. Fortunately most insurance payments were cleared before the Wall Street crash and many buildings were reconstructed. New buildings constructed after 1929 included Eason's, Coroneo's, Feehan's The Bank of New South Wales, the School of Arts, Tattersall's Hotel and the Plaza Theatre. In compliance with new Council policies commercial buildings were reconstructed in non-combustible materials, including brick, reinforced concrete and steel.[271]

4.3.3 Gilgooma

The village of Gilgooma developed at the point where the road from Coonamble to Pilliga crosses Weetalibah Creek 'on Crown Land reserved for travelling stock and teams'[272]. In the late 19th century a wayside inn was established on the southern side of the creek crossing by a Mr. Kelly on land later held by A.H. Hall. A village comprising 18 blocks was surveyed south of the site of the inn in 1902. According to Joan and Wal McKenzie 'it is doubtful if more than six were ever used'.[273] Lots were reserved for churches, a post office and a school. The village was originally known as Weetalibah and the post office, opened in 1908, carried the same name. This created some confusion as a village named Weetalibah already existed on a siding of the railway line between Binnaway and Werris Creek. The post office was renamed Gilgooma after the name of a nearby property and this name was applied to the village.[274]

Like many rural hamlets Gilgooma grew in the mid 20th century and remained viable until the 1980s. Following a period of decline little remains of the village and many of its buildings have been relocated to other sites.

4.3.4 Gulargambone

George Tailby was the first European to settle in the Gulargambone district. In 1840 "his name was recorded on a list of individuals who had obtained licences to depasture stock in the area'. By 1849 he held the licence for the *Geralgambone* run. In the 1841 census two people were resident at Gulargambone. These were possibly on of Tailby's overseers and a shepherd. By 1861 William Skuthorpe had established an inn with a stables and garden on Gulargambone Creek in the vicinity of the present Bourbah Street. Skuthorpe obtained a condition purchase of 50 acres at the confluence of the Castlereagh River and Gulargambone Creek.[275]

During the 1870s a general store was established by Thomas Polin and John Kearney. In 1878 a plan of a village was prepared by surveyor Edward McFarlane. This was approved on 11 November 1878 and twenty-two blocks

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[271] Hickson, B., 2000. Coonamble Main Street Study. p.4
[272] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. p.1
[273] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. p.8
[274] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. p.8
[275] Gulargambone Historical Society, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.71

were measured for sale in November 1879. These were offered for sale at Coonamble on 28 July 1880. In 1883 Skuthorpe's land was subdivided and the Village of Gulargambone proclaimed on 20 March 1885.[276]

By the 1920s the town had 'a CWA, hospital, police station, court house, two bakers, three barbers, three billiard rooms, two halls, two hotels, two banks, two butchers, two picture theatres and four stores'.[277] In 1938 the town of Gulargambone had a population of 750 and the surrounding district a population of 1,424. At that time the town hosted a doctor, two banks, Walker's Hotel, three auctioneers, two bakers, a butcher, a blacksmith, two billiard rooms, four carriers, two fruiterers, two hairdressers, four general stores a saddler, three stock and station agents, three motor garages and two skin buyers.[278]

4.3.5 Gular Rail

With the construction of the railway from Dubbo to Coonamble passing west of Gulargambone a separate village, known as Gular, was surveyed in 1903. The plan for the new railway village was ambitious with blocks set aside for public buildings, public recreation areas, a hospital and a cemetery. On 1 March 1904 110 blocks were offered for sale at auction.

Land was purchased for a post office, and by the Bank of NSW and Permewan Wright who operated a store in the village. Land for shops was also purchased by H.J. & Isabella Lewis, by Charles Hamen Namey an Indian hawker and by Charles Simpson. Charles Simpson operated a blacksmith shop in the town. A post office was operated in the village for years by Mrs Lou Smith.

Gular Rail was proclaimed an urban area in 1908. Much of the land in the village had been purchased by speculators hoping that a population shift from Gulargambone may occur. This did not eventuate and by the 1930s the general stores in Gular Rail had closed.

Wheat was railed out of Gular Rail for many years. Initially all wheat shipments were bagged with bags being stacked out by wheat lumpers. Bulk silos were eventually constructed in the 1950s.

A bus service carried school children from Gular Rail to Gulargambone from at least the 1920s.[279] In 1938 the general bus fare between Gulargambone and Gular Rail was 2/-.

4.3.6 Quambone

Charles Doyle leased a run on the western side of the Macquarie marshes prior to 1848. He named this run Quambone.[280] During the 1860s J.T. McLean's Merri Merri run was purchased by wealthy pastoralist Edward Flood. Flood held many properties in New South Wales and Queensland, including the Berida run on Marthaguy Creek. The name of Merri Merri was changed to Quambone and the run was managed by Flood's son Walter.[281] By 1874 this run had grown and a

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[276] Gulargambone Historical Society, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.71
[277] Gulargambone Historical Society, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. pp.71-72
[278] Gulargambone 1938
[279] Gulargambone Historical Society, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes and Holdings*. p.76
[280] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.21
[281] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.35

large complex of buildings had been constructed at the head station located on Merri Merri Creek. The creek had been dammed near the head station to conserve water flowing down the intermittent watercourse. The head station consisted of:

> … a large dwelling … an extensive general store and post office … , then the men's quarters … , the Quambone hotel, …. Edghill's large building with stables, … saw mill, blacksmith's shop , etc.[282]

The Floods had established a large sheep wash and a woolshed with 22 stands. A separate wool store had been constructed to store 2,000 bales of wool. Quambone station was carrying approximately 50,000 sheep.[283]

Some time around 1899 the run was purchased by William Cooper and Nephews[284]. Cooper and Nephews made a number of improvements to the property, including establishment of a large orchard from which citrus fruit was exported to England. A new machine woolshed was constructed on the property in 1906. Quambone Station was purchased by William Wentworth Bucknell in 1913.[285]

The name Quambone appears to have been first allocated to the post office in the area in 1871. During the late 19th century a village developed near Quambone Station. This included an inn, butcher, baker, saddler and storekeepers. Hermann & Nelson of Coonamble established a branch store in the village and a school was established in the 1890s. Banks and churches were also constructed in the town and a sawmill and cordial factory established. The village prospered in the early 20th century and remained a viable centre when other villages fell into decline.[286]

4.4   NSW Historical Theme: Utilities

4.4.1   Fire Brigade
A volunteer fire brigade was formed in Coonamble in 1887. Fires were initially fought using a hand pump with hose placed in the nearest available water supply. The spread of fire was often arrested by the demolition of buildings adjacent to the burning structure. In 1899 the government allocated land for the construction of a fire station. In 1910 a permanent fire brigade was established under the auspices of the Board of Fire Commissioners. This brigade had a full-time 'captain and nine partially-paid firemen'.[287]

4.4.2   Water
As Coonamble developed individual property owners were responsible for the supply of water. Traditionally water was obtained from water tanks, wells or pits dug into the bed of the Castlereagh River. From 1884 the New South Wales Department of Mines and Agriculture began exploring the possibility of establishing a system of government bores across the extent of the Great

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[282] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.50
[283] McKenzie, J. 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.50
[284] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.95
[285] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.130
[286] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. pp.204-205
[287] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. pp.58-59

Artesian Basin. This was intended to supplement the existing network of government tanks and wells that were staffed by paid caretakers.

In 1890 the government began to advertise tenders for a series of drilling operations. Contractors were required to provide all "necessary plant, tools, power, wood and labour" to undertake boring operations. Bore casings were provided by the government and delivered to the bore site. The seventh round of tenders covered the drilling of bores between Collarenebri and Angledool, and between Moree and Boggabri. As an adjunct to this round of tenders a contract was let to William Watkins for two bores located at Nyngan and Coonamble.[288] At this time it was estimated that livestock traffic through Coonamble was 331,014 sheep, 912 horses and 18,511 cattle[289].

Watkins experienced great difficulty with the Nyngan bore and by the end of 1891 had only reached a depth of 700 feet at this site. He finally completed the bore at Coonamble in 1894.[290] This bore, identified as No.14 on an 1891 Department of Mines and Agriculture map, became known locally as No.1 Bore.

Following the sinking of the bore Coonamble Municipal struggled to obtain government assistance for the provision of a reticulated water supply to the town. During a dry period in 1896 Council excavated 'a drain to carry surplus water from the bore down Dubbo Street to the Magomodine Creek'. This carried 10 miles down the creek supplementing the supply of the water.[291] The initial town water supply was provided by Coonamble Municipal Council from No.1 Bore and a bore bath was later established on this site. A second bore was sunk in 1907 and a third in 1924.[292]

During its early years Quambone obtained water from a dam built across Merri Merri Creek in 1894 by the owners of Quambone Station. In 1901 Quambone Station sunk its No.1 Bore to a depth of 650.8 metres. During the severe drought of 1902 water from Merri Merri Creek became unfit for human consumption. Agreement was reached with the manager of Quambone Station to arrange for a transfer system from Quambone No.1 Bore to provide a water supply for the town. Government funding and private donations were obtained to provide piping and volunteers from the community dug ditches for the installation of the water supply. Gangs of locals worked on Saturday afternoons and by moonlight to complete the ditches and install pipes. School boys even worked on the project after school. A reticulated water supply including standpipes and a self-filling horse trough were installed.[293]

By the 1930s, when the Quambone No.1 Bore was falling below a flow level agreed between Wingadee Shire Council and the owners of Quambone Station, the Council made arrangements to develop a town bore. This bore was completed in October 1938. The bore, sunk to a depth of 589.1 metres, yielded 6.863 litres per second. Trouble was experienced with this bore in the late 1960s

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[288] Report by Mr J. W. Boultbee on Artesian Boring, 1892. pp.312-313
[289] Report by Mr J. W. Boultbee on Artesian Boring, 1892. p.320
[290] Report by Mr J. W. Boultbee on Artesian Boring, 1892. p.313
[291] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.88
[292] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.40
[293] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994.* pp.36-37

and in was abandoned and plugged in November 1969 following the completion of Quambone Town Bore No.2, which was sunk to a depth of 609.6 metres. [294]

4.4.3 Electricity

The early decades of the 20th century saw the development of isolated electricity supply networks in the northwest of New South Wales. Before 1950 electricity generation and supply in the state were the responsibility of local councils. In some areas power generating plant built for large industries or mines was used to supply local towns. In other places individual business proprietors installed electricity generating plant to supply their own premises and this supply was expanded to the town.

In the late 1890s Coonamble Municipal Council called tenders for the installation of a street lighting system. At this time the installation of kerosene lamps was proposed. The cost of electric lighting was investigated but 'was found to be prohibitive.[295] The kerosene lamps were later replaced by stand-alone acetylene gas lamps.[296] Prior to World War I Coonamble Municipal Council resolved to replace acetylene gas street lighting with electricity[297]. In 1916 a contract was arranged with the Australian Electric Supply Co. to supply electricity to the town[298]. 'Poles were erected in Castlereagh Street between Aberford and Tooloon Streets and by 1916 the Council's agreement with the lamp lighter, Thomas Evans, was terminated'[299]. The installation of the electricity supply was commemorated on a plaque attached to the front wall of the Council Chambers in January 1917.[300] Coonamble Municipal Council acquired the town's electricity supply assets, including a powerhouse in Castlereagh Street, from the Australian Electric Supply Co[301]. A plaque was inserted into the front wall of the powerhouse to commemorate the handover in 1926.

The Coonamble Municipal Council planned to connect its electricity supply to houses in the town. These plans were curtailed during the Great Depression of the 1930s when Council was forced to cut its expenditure. One economy measure adopted by Council was to disconnect street lights on moonlit nights.[302]

Gulargambone's first electricity supply was provided by the Majestic Theatre. This cinema operated a small generator powered by a steam engine. The generator operated from 5:00pm until 10:00pm each day and also operated two half days each week 'for the women of the town to do their ironing'. The steam engine was replaced by a diesel in 1950.[303]

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[294] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994.* p.37

[295] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* pp.88-89

[296] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* p.39

[297] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* p.137

[298] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* pp.39-40

[299] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* p.137

[300] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* p.137

[301] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* p.40

[302] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid.* p.153

[303] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited.* p.75

By February 1953 70 customers in Gulargambone and 12 in Armatree had been connected to the Gilgandra Shire Council electricity supply[304]. The Macquarie County Council was formed in the late 1950s and took over electricity transmission in the region[305].

Quambone was not connected to the electricity grid until 1959. Prior to this the village did not have street lighting and houses were lit by candles, tallow lamps, kerosene lamps and Tilley lights. The Quambone General Store was lit by carbide gas and some buildings, including the Post Office Hotel, Community Hall and Bakery had 32 volt electric lighting generators.[306]

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[304] Curran, J. 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.74
[305] Gilgandra Shire Council, 1958. *Commemorating Opening of New Council Chambers at Gilgandra*.
[306] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994*. p.40

5.   Australian Historical Theme: Working

Although a lot of what we call work is related to the economy, most of it is not undertaken for profit. A great deal of the work is done in the home is neither paid nor counted as part of the national economy. Some of the most interesting recent social history written about Australia concerns work and workplaces.[307]

5.1   NSW Historical Theme: Labour

The diversity of work in a regional area is as diverse as the industries and communities that reside in that district. Coonamble Shire is home to a wide range of occupations linked to the land and servicing the industries that rely on the land, whether these are pastoral, agricultural, forestry, the sciences or tourism. The transport infrastructure of the region has also required labour for maintenance and operations. Road maintenance workers once were engaged to maintain particular sections of roads and railway fettlers lived along the lines they were engaged to maintain. Others experiences of the transport industry are covered in **Section 3.15 Transport**.

A number of writers have documented historical experiences of work in the Coonamble district and surrounding areas. The accounts of these writers have been drawn upon to provide a sketch of labour in the region for this thematic history.

Life and work in the pastoral regions of Australia are governed by the rhythms of the seasons and the cycles of rain and drought that affect the southern continent. The demands of work vary with the development of pasture, growth of crops and growth of wool.

Patterns of obtaining labour for rural work varied throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Many of the early squatters were able to access the relatively cheap labour available through the system of assigning convicts to settlers. From the 1840s free labour replaced the virtual slavery of the convict system and squatters started to seek other workforces. In various parts of New South Wales in the 1840s squatters experimented with workers from India, China and the South Pacific with varying degrees of success[308]. In many areas Aboriginal people proved to be the most reliable workers[309].

Each pastoral station maintained its core staff members who undertook or oversaw maintenance or domestic work on the property. The ongoing employment of these people, overseers, shepherds, cooks, gardeners, domestic staff, stable hands etc depended on the prosperity of the station.

In the early days sheep were shorn with blades in open-sided woolsheds, which often had bark or bough roofs. Before shearing sheep were washed to remove dust and grass seeds from their fleece. At *Terembone* in the 1870s sheep were washed in a waterhole in the creek that flowed through the station. The waterhole had been created by damming the creek.

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[307] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[308] Buxton, G., 1967. *The Riverina 1861-1891 An Australian Regional Study*, p.19
[309] Cain, M. 1923. 'Coonabarabran in the 'Sixties'. pp.370-371

> *Sheep were thrown from a small yard on the bank to washers in one of two pens erected across the creek. Soaped and scrubbed until reasonable (sic) clean they were passed on by ducking them under a spar to the second pen and then were allowed to clamber out onto a wooden ramp to proceed along a race corduroyed with poles to the shed. They were penned on a roughly grated floor until they were dry enough to shear.[310]*

The rural labour force was supplemented at various times of the year by itinerant workers who tramped between stations following the flow of work. Duke Tritton, who spent years on the roads of the New South Wales northwest in the early 20th century as an itinerant worker, left detailed accounts of the life of the travelling bush worker. He recalled that stations issued travellers' rations to these itinerants 'as a means to ensure a plentiful supply of casual labour'. The travellers' rations prescribed by the Pastoralists' Union consisted of 'ten pounds of flour, ten of meat, two of sugar and a quarter of a pound of tea'. Most squatters added extras such as 'a tin of jam or baking powder, sometimes a plug of tobacco or, in the case of a sick man, some of the rough medicines of the period'. Pastoralists noted as providers of generous handouts were popular and, according to Tritton, always had a plentiful supply 'of men to choose from, but the tight ones were always avoided by any self-respecting swagman.[311]

The various tasks required to undertake a successful shearing were allocated before a shed started. The workers would elect an A.W.U. representative and then 'put in' a cook who then nominated his assistants. Other tasks around the shed, as described by Tritton, included:

- *The "penner-up" was an important man in a shed. When the musterers brought the sheep from the paddocks to the shed, the penner-up took charge of them and was responsible for keeping the catching pens full.*
- *Pickers-up took the fleece as it fell on the board and spread it skin-side down on the wool table.*
- *Wool-rollers, two at each table, would strip three inches of skirting around it, roll the fleece, throw it in a bin where the classer would examine it and place it in a bin according to its class. The skirting went to another table where the piece-pickers would sort it into grades, clean, stained and burry.*
- *The pressers were kept busy. They worked on a contract system at so much per bale, and the rules of the shed did not apply to them in regard to working hours. It was not unusual to see them working long after the shearers had finished for the day.*
- *"The expert" is another important man in the shed. He is responsible for the smooth running of the machinery and has to have a thorough knowledge of everything mechanical in the shed.[312]*

The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw many changes in the working lives of shearers. The change from hand to machine shearing changed the atmosphere of the sheds. Tritton described the last season of blade shearing at *Conimbla* station on the Castlereagh in 1905:

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[310] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* p.46
[311] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker.* pp.19-20
[312] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker.* p.40

> *After the noise of the machines it was very quiet. Contrary to general opinion and well known song, shears do not click. The gullets of the hand-grips are filled with soft wood or sometimes cork. This stops the heels of the blades from meeting, so the sound is a soft "chop, chop" … The machines of the time were no faster than the blades but they cut closer and a fleece would weigh up to two pounds heavier…. There seemed to be more rhythm in a "blade-shed", possibly because of the lack of noise. A big "machine-shed" sounds like ten thousand locusts on a hot day, with the whirring of the machines and the hum of the overhead gear and friction wheels. [313]*

Shearers worked bent over with heavy strain placed on their backs. 'It was not unusual to see a man making his way on his hands and knees to his bunk. No one offered assistance as it was a point of honour to be able to reach one's bunk under one's own steam.'[314]

Prior to the beginning of the 20th century shearers worked on terms dictated by the squatter. Terms were harsh and the squatter had complete control over judging the quality of shearing and consequently the level of pay received by the shearers. A shearer not completing his contract was 'liable to a fine or even imprisonment'[315]. Shearers began organising by the 1880s to achieve improved conditions. The Australian Shearers' Union began staging strikes from 1888 and by 1891 were in full-scale conflict with the pastoralists and colonial governments[316]. The drought and economic downturn of the 1890s, Federation in 1901 and a large-scale shearers' strike in 1902 created circumstances leading to improvements in working conditions.

By the early 20th century pastoralists were required to provide improved accommodation for their shearers. In the 19th century 'accommodation was rotten .. huts built of bark or slabs, with leaking roofs, no windows, earth floors, bunks in three tiers and bare boards to sleep on'[317]. Following the Shearers' Agreement stations set about building better quarters.

Small landholders, taking up the increasing number of blocks opened up for closer settlement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, provided a more stable labour source for many large properties. Many free selectors found their small properties alone could not provide a sustainable living for a family and were forced to seek outside employment. Selectors along Rocky Creek and in other places provided a ready source of labour for adjoining properties.

On top of the tasks required to provide food for a family women worked hard to keep households functioning:

> *There was the weekly wash – water to be fetched from the well, a fire lit under the copper clothes boiler and a small mountain of soiled clothes to be rubbed and scrubbed by hand in the big zinc washing tubs, the hanging out and taking in, the problem of getting clothes dry enough to wear in rainy*

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[313] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.47
[314] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.41
[315] Freeman, P., 1980. *The Woolshed: A Riverina Anthology*. p.60
[316] Freeman, P., 1980. *The Woolshed: A Riverina Anthology*. p.60
[317] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.39

weather, and the nightly toil of pressing them with flat-irons in front of the fire.[318]

Itinerant workers and selectors sought other work when the sheds weren't shearing. Duke Tritton recounted bouts of rabbiting, dingo hunting, tent boxing, gold prospecting and fencing the boundary between *Gumin* and *Goorianawa*:

> *At Box Ridge we met two brothers, Alf and Bill Freeman, who wanted a couple of mates on a fencing contract. The fence was part of the boundary between Gumin and Goorianawa. … Starting on the flat country at Goorianawa we climbed a watershed and followed it to the top of Mount Bulaway (sic.), the second highest peak in the Warrumbungles. There was no surveyed line … we had to pick our own line going from one peak to the next highest, gaining height all the way til we reached the top. When the completed job was measured we were paid for fifteen and a quarter miles; as the crow flies it would be about five. Four feet high, three foot netting, three plain and three barbed wires, it was supposed to be dingo and rabbit-proof. We had to clear the line and cut the posts as we went.[319]*

Duke Tritton also recalled the work associated with clearing the rabbit plague that occurred from the 1890s onwards. He and his friend Dutchy were engaged to carry out such work on Gumin while they were waiting for shearing to start. Tritton described Gumin as "the kind of run shearers pray for … three sheds and all adjoining. And all three were two-thousand-per-man sheds." Duke and Dutchy did well killing rabbits, initially using strychnine baits to take "two to three hundred a night". Tritton claimed that he and Dutchy were the first in the Coonamble district to use black thistles as bait for rabbits. While working on Tongy near Coolah they had noticed that rabbits favoured these plants and had great success with these.[320]

Professional hunters, known as 'doggers', were employed by Pastures Protection Boards from the late 19th century to control dingo and wild dog numbers in the northwest of New South Wales. In his memoir of rural work in the northwest Duke Tritton described dingo-hunter Tom Varty, whom he encountered at Salty Creek on the slopes of the Warrumbungles some time around 1907:

> *Tom was something of a character. Six feet tall and broad in proportion, he sported a red beard that he said had never been cut. His hair hung down to his shoulders, he never wore boots, and was seldom without his rifle.[321]*

Dog hunters like Tom received a bonus from the Pastures Protection Board for each dog scalp and were also paid by property owners for the destruction of wild dogs. Duke Tritton, who was building a rabbit and dingo proof fence 15¼ miles long on the slopes of Mount Bulaway between Goorianawa and Gumin Stations at the time briefly described the process of fence construction:

> *There was no surveyed line. When the two stations had been taken up it was agreed to take the watershed as a boundary and use the highest peak as*

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[318] Meredith, J., 1986. *King of the Dance Hall*. p.13
[319] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.53
[320] Tritton, H.P. (Duke). 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. pp.89-90
[321] Tritton, D, 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.54

> *markers. So we had to pick our own line going from one peak to the next*
> *highest, gaining height all the way until we reached the top. … We had to*
> *clear the line and cut the posts as we went. Wire was to be laid on the line by*
> *Gumin bullock team.[322]*

In the 1940s the Narrabri Board employed Harry Williams as a Dogger. Harry
was paid by the board:

> *… to poison, trap or shoot any dingoes or wild dogs reported in the board's*
> *district. Before that date Mr. H. Williams had been for many years in the*
> *board's employ as a casual burr cutter.[323]*

According to his nephew Danny Trindall Harry worked along the Barrier Fence,
poisoning, trapping and shooting dingoes. He concentrated on destroying
animals in areas adjoining pastoral properties. Harry would take dingo scalps
back to Baradine to receive his bonus.[324]

After its formation in 1946 the Pilliga Scrub and North West Dingo Destruction
Board (P.S.N.W.D.D.B.) employed doggers who were paid a full-time wage plus a
bonus for each adult dingo or dingo pup destroyed. Doggers were employed in
1946 as follows:

- Charles Antaw – Pilliga Forest
- Frank Shelley – Coonabarabran Section
- F. Fordham – Willala Area
- H. Williams – Narrabri Area

Two special doggers were also employed as assistants to Charles Antaw 'to
poison dingoes in the breeding grounds in the heart of the Pilliga Scrub'. A. Bailey
and G. H. Stafford were also employed.[325] Most dingo kills appear to have
occurred along the dingo fences[326].

As railways spread across New South Wales gangs of workers undertaking the
heavy work of forming the railway bed and laying track moved with their
families across the landscape. These people were often instrumental in
establishing small villages along the line of the railway. Large groups of railway
workers camped at various places along the route during the construction of the
Gilgandra-Coonamble railway line in 1902-1903. The work of some of these men
was described as follows:

> *Ten men were engaged with horses to plough the land on either side of the*
> *pegged track. They then scooped the earth up to form the bed for the line.*
> *These men were paid 15/- per day for a man and horse.[327]*

In his books Eric Rolls provides some personal insights into work in the
agricultural industries during the early and mid 20th century. This includes his

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[322] Tritton, D, 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.53
[323] Brooks, J., 2002. *130 Years On – Still Going Strong*. p.103
[324] Interview with Danny Trindall, Narrabri. 22 January 2008.
[325] Brooks, J., 2002. *130 Years On – Still Going Strong*. p.109
[326] Brooks, J., 2002. *130 Years On – Still Going Strong*. p.110
[327] Dormer, M., 1983. *The Bushman's Arms*. p.67

description of the process of sewing and tipping wheat bags in the years before bulk handling of grains:

> *Until the 1960s farmers still bagged wheat on their farms. Carriers loaded the bags on their trucks and took them to the silos where contract tippers emptied them down the elevator chutes. The itinerant bag sewers ... skewered the top of a loosely-filled bag with a needle thirty-five centimetres long, threaded it with a length of binder twine, drew the needle back, then tied the ends of the twine across the top of the bag. They devised quick methods for cutting the twine. Most rolled it round twenty-three litre oil drums, slashed it down one side, and tied the lengths together in bundles. They came into the paddocks about daylight, the twine dangling from keepers on their hips. They left at dark. Some sewed up to 1,200 bags a day. Bag sewing and tipping employed a lot of men in country towns. Then farmers equipped their header boxes with augers, carriers fitted bins to their trucks, and the grain was carried in bulk from paddock to ship.[328]*

Loading and trans-shipping wheat bags required large numbers of labourers. Stacking and lumping wheat were seasonal tasks that provided employment for many. The process of stacking wheat at the Murdoch McLeod flourmill was described by Cheryl and John Mudford.

> *In the early years the farmers came into the Mill with their bags of wheat loaded on their horse drays or waggons. Each bag was lugged onto the stack, one at a time, on the back and shoulders of the stackers. One sack was placed on top of another so that the stacker had the bag at a better height to throw over his shoulders.[329]*

Rolls also noted the post World War II push to increase the amount of land under crops:

> *Farmers fitted their old tractors with rubber tyres or bought new tractors already equipped with rubbers. They fitted old generators, batteries and lights and drove night and day. The cold at seven or eight kilometres an hour on an open tractor on a frosty night is unbelievable. I've taken off two pairs of gloves and slapped my hands together till my fingers had enough feeling to open my penknife to cut the twine on the bags of seed. My toes pained through two pairs of socks and boots thrust inside a cocoon of wheatbags seven thick. I've thought of knocking off but the lights of other tractors whose drivers were braving it have kept me there. Stupefied by noise and cold we sat and spiralled round our paddocks sowing wheat.[330]*

Colin Head who operated the Ceelnoy and Gilgooma sawmills with his family recalled some of the accidents that illustrated the dangers faced by forestry workers. During his working life 'he burned his hand when he fell into the scantling fire at Round Plains' and also lost half a finger in a planning accident at Ceelnoy. When the Head family was operating the sawmill at Gilgooma two of the brothers suffered serious injuries.

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[328] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.220

[329] Mudford, C. & J., 1989. *"Clocking On" with Murdoch McLeod and the Castlereagh Flour Mill*. p.35

[330] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. p.220

> *"When Dummy, (Norman, the quiet brother), was up felling a tree, and he stood on a log to knock a limb off, the log slipped and so did the axe, which hit him in the middle of his back and split one of his kidneys. Neville … picked him up and got him into town but it was touch and go for a while." … In 1984 … Colin … came to grief while felling a tree out at Mrs Harris' place at Gilgooma. He broke his back.[331]*

As noted in **Section 2.4 Migration** the latter half of the 20th century saw major changes in the technologies applied to work, and in the nature of local industries. These changes have had profound effects on the job skills required in the region and on the total number of persons employed. Much of the earlier seasonal work has gone with stations employing fewer hands and less opportunities for contract work. Smaller communities have consequently suffered declines in population and levels of commercial activity.

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[331] Hadfield, J., 2006. *The Best of Times*. p.33

6. Australian Historical Theme: Educating

Every society educates its young. While European education places a great emphasis on the formal schooling system, education encompasses much more.[332]

6.1 NSW Historical Theme: Education

Literacy and education were generally valued in societies of the British Isles from which many of the early settlers of the district came. Scotland in particular maintained quite high levels of literacy in the early 19th century. In the frontier areas of New South Wales schooling of children was often carried out by members of households. Churches also played a role in educating young people. The Sunday School movement had originally commenced in the early 19th century by evangelical sects such as the Primitive Methodists to provide basic literacy and a knowledge of the Bible[333]. The establishment of schools in many areas was subject to sectarian divisions and sectarianism and religion have continued to play a major role in the politics of education in New South Wales. (Refer to **Section 8.4 Religion**)

The government took the greatest role in education from the mid 19th century and dealt with applications from growing communities for the establishment of schools. A government school was established in Coonamble in the 1870s. The first teacher, Mr Palmer, was apparently quite unpopular and resigned after a brief period. He was followed by James Beatty who also resigned after a short period of service. Mr Beatty was replaced by W. Liardet and his wife. The original school site was flood prone. This caused many problems. The Liardets helped to raise funds for a new school constructed on the corner of Aberford and Maule Streets. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Maitland forbade adherents of the Roman Catholic faith from sending their children to this school and a Roman Catholic School was commenced in the Catholic church building.[334]

During the 1870s school classes were commenced in the Roman Catholic church in Coonamble. The Bishop of Maitland forbade adherents of the Roman Catholic faith from sending their children to the fledgling government school.[335] On 21 June 1883 a group of six Sisters of the Brigidine Order, under the leadership of Sr. M. John Synan, arrived in Coonamble to commence instruction at the Catholic School. This was the first group of Brigidine nuns to arrive in Australia from Ireland.[336]

The sisters commenced classes in the church and convent buildings 17 days after arriving in Coonamble and by February 1884 a dormitory block had been constructed to accommodate 14 children from outlying properties. A new convent building was constructed in 1910. This building accommodated 13-15 sisters and up to 50 boarders. By 1924 the school was teaching classes up to Leaving Certificate level.[337]

A foundation stone for a new school building was laid by the Most Reverend John Norton, Bishop of the Bathurst Diocese of the Catholic Church on 11 September

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[332] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[333] O, Brien, G., The Primitive Methodist Church.
[334] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. pp.43-44
[335] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. pp.43-44
[336] St Brigid's School, 2008
[337] St Brigid's School, 2008

1938. The new building was officially opened in 1939. Bishop Norton's leadership of the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst in the 1930s was marked by the construction of new Catholic school facilities across the region. These buildings were constructed in accordance with standards set down by the English Board of Education 'to open up every part of the building to air and sun, to provide free cross-ventilation, natural lighting and a suitable temperature, and to ensure ease of supervision and economy of working'.[338] Buildings demonstrating similar design characteristics were constructed in the 1930s at schools conducted by the Sisters of Mercy in Bathurst, Binnaway, Dubbo and Wellington.[339]

The Catholic school population peaked in 1966 when a new high school building, known as the Brigidine College, was constructed. In 1974 the secondary school was closed and high school students transferred to Coonamble High School. Sr. Helen Connolly obtained part-time employment as a teacher at the high school and continued religious instruction outside school hours. She was the first Religious to be employed in a state school in Australia. The buildings of the Brigidine College were converted for use by the primary school and the 1938 school building was converted for use by the infants school.[340]

A new Intermediate High School was constructed in Coonamble in 1929. During the Great Depression many school children were kept away from school to assist their families earn income. During this period the headmaster of the Coonamble Public School conducted evening lessons by kerosene light from 7:00pm to 10:00pm for these students.[341]

A provisional school was established in Quambone in April 1898 with 18 students in attendance. This school was located on the western side of Tucca Tucca Street. The present school in Mungie Street was opened on 20 October 1908 with an enrolment of 23 children. A school residence was built alongside the school building in 1909. Additional classrooms were moved to the school site as small schools in the region have closed. The Ellimeek School building was relocated to Quambone in 1975/76 and the formed Gilgoin School in 1978.[342]

In isolated areas the New South Wales government supported education through a system of subsidised schools. Under the subsidised school system parents provided a school building, a teacher and the teacher's board and lodging. The Department of Education subsidised the teacher's wage and provided school supplies. Subsidised schools were established at many locations throughout the Coonamble Shire. Children in very isolated places were educated at home 'by their mothers or governesses' using lessons provided by the Blackfriar's Correspondence School, which was established in 1924.

In 1895 the Misses Weakley moved to Coonamble and established Highgate College, a private school[343]. This private school was established under the auspices of Anglican Minister Rev. J.A. Cooper and classes were initially held in

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[338] Christison 2002. St Mary's Primary School Bathurst, Assessment of Significance. p.11
[339] Sisters of Mercy, 1966. *Sisters of Mercy-Bathurst 100 years – 1866-1966*
[340] St Brigid's School, 2008
[341] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.154
[342] Quambone Centenary Committee, 1994. Quambone. *A Village of 100 Years*. p.16
[343] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.17

the Anglican Church Hall. They were later moved to dedicated premises.[344] Highgate College was a boarding college hosting girls from properties around the region. Other students from around the region attended the convent school as boarders or lived in hostels located around the town.[345]

A supported school was operating on the Gilgooma holding in the early 20th century. When a Provisional School was established in the village of Gilgooma in 1909 it was named Urungie after another nearby holding. Urungie was a tiny school that was affected by small fluctuations in the population of the area. It was forced to close for short periods in 1914, 1915, 1926 and 1934. It finally closed on 8 August 1941. Following the closure the school building was purchased by Oliver Goldsmith and relocated to the nearby Gilgooma Methodist Church where it was used as a Sunday School.[346]

As the town of Gulargambone grew the community considered the most cost effective options for establishing a public school. A committee was formed in November 1880 to make a formal application for the establishment of a school. Members of the committee were John Payne, James Patrick, Alexander Ferguson and James and William Skuthorpe. In 1881 the Department of Education proposed the establishment of a Provisional School and offered a teacher on condition that the community could provide a school building. Innkeeper William Skuthorpe made "a small weatherboard building on his property" available for this purpose.[347]

By the end of 1881 29 children were attending the school. Gulargambone Provisional School became a Public School in February 1882 and was moved to "a room in a building owned by Mr. McGregor". In September 1882 a school tent provided by the Department of Education was erected. This was replaced in late 1883 by a standard Department of Education designed "beehive" school building.[348]

In 1891 four Aboriginal children presented for enrolment at the school and were enrolled as students. The parents of European students objected and petitioned the Department of Education for the removal of the four. When this was refused they withdrew their own children from the school. A separate school for Aboriginal children was eventually established in 1899. This school was located near the entrance to the Gulargambone Showground and Racetrack. It was unique in New South Wales as it was constructed by the parents of Gulargambone's European children. Gulargambone Public School teacher Ernest Atkinson resigned in October 1891 in protest at what he saw as the weakness of the authorities in relenting to pressure from European parents over the segregation of public education in the town.[349] The Aboriginal school appears to have been operated under the control of the Aborigines Protection Board[350]. It was abolished when the Aboriginal community of Gulargambone was forcibly

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[344] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.75
[345] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.155
[346] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. pp.12-13
[347] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School*. pp.19-20
[348] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School*. pp.21-22
[349] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School*. p.27
[350] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School*. p.32

relocated to Burra Bee Dee Mission in 1909 (refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**).

A reserve for a new public school located in Yalcogrin Street was gazetted in 1901 and a new school building constructed in 1910 after some years of bickering between residents of Gulargambone and Gular Rail about the most appropriate site for this building.[351] By 1916 the school was attended by 15 Aboriginal students who appeared to be attending with no objections from any parents. This situation continued until 1919 when objections from the European community again led to the establishment of a segregated Aboriginal school.[352]

The separate Aboriginal school operated in rented premises until a dedicated site in Warrie Street was made available in 1938 and a new building erected by the Aborigines Protection Board. The Public School had been expanded in 1928 and again in the 1950s. The Public School and Aboriginal school were formally merged in 1958.[353]

[351] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School.* pp.30-31
[352] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School.* pp.35-36
[353] Lockley, T. (ed.), 1981. *Celebrating one hundred years of Gulargambone Central School.* pp.37-38

7.   Australian Historical Theme: Governing

This theme group is as much about self-government as it is about being governed. It includes all the business of politics, including hostility to acts of government.[354]

7.1   NSW Historical Theme: Defence

The Coonamble district does not occupy a strategic geographic position in Australia and has not been a place where defence works, fortifications or defence manufacturing have played a prominent role. Memorials and honour boards throughout the district remember people from the towns, villages and properties of the area who served in Australia's conflicts. Soldier Settlement communities throughout the district also recognise this service.

The area has been involved in preparations for the defence of Australia. Local rifle clubs have long held an ancillary role in defence preparations[355]. Almost every town in New South Wales had a Rifle Club, 'the result of a movement which started up in 1840'. These clubs were considered to be part of the defence capability of the colony. Following Federation in 1901 Rifle Clubs were brought under the control of the Commonwealth as part of a philosophy of creating a citizen army. During World War I there were 1,550 Rifle Clubs in Australia. These provided 26,000 volunteers for the A.I.F.[356]

Following the outbreak of war in August 1914 J.M. Rees, Shire Clerk and captain of the Coonamble Rifle Club assisted in recruiting the first groups of volunteers to enter the armed forces from Coonamble. In the early days of the Great War over 60 men and 78 horses left the district to join the Sixth Light Horse. During that conflict at least 603 men enlisted from the Coonamble district and one Red Cross Nurse, Miss A. Veech of Quilbone. Sixty four men from the district died during the conflict.[357]

During World War I the Bucknell family of Quambone Station offered a cottage next to their homestead to the Red Cross Society for use as a convalescent home. It was dedicated for officers suffering from rheumatism. The facility 'was opened in July 1916 and was filled immediately' with six officers at a time being accommodated. Inmates used the station's bore bath.[358]

Local people remember motor vehicles fitted with gas producer units during World War II to reduce dependence on oil, which was a precious strategic resource. Local communities worked in many capacities to support the war effort during that conflict.

7.2   NSW Historical Theme: Government and administration

The earliest forms of government administration in the district came through the Commissioners of Crown Lands who controlled the occupancy of rural properties and administered justice along the frontier from 1839. The Commissioner:

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[354] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[355] Carmichael, D., 1991. *Timor Valley*. p.16
[356] Meredith, J., 1981. *The Coo-ee March*. p.11
[357] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.134
[358] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994*. p.45

> *… was in charge of the Border Police. His duties were also to collect the fees, check on the boundaries of the runs and settle disputes. He was generally to see the smooth running of the affairs in his district. The powers given to these men were very wide. They had the right to grant licences or terminate them at any time. In their district their word was law.*[359]

Graham 'King' Hunter was the first Commissioner appointed to the Land District of Bligh. In 1839 he cancelled the depasturing licence of the Cox brothers' superintendent Roger Heenan, and cancelled the ticket of leave of one of their employees for taking an Aboriginal woman at gunpoint. He is also known to have cancelled the licence of a man named Pearce for 'living in adultery with a white woman' and to have given 'the middle of one of James Walker's lightly stocked runs to somebody else because he found no stock there'[360].

As the European settlements developed during the 19th century increasing numbers of government services moved into the district. These included policing and courts (**Section 7.3 Law and Order**), postal and telegraphic services (**Section 3.3 Communication**), education (**Section 6.1 Education**) and health (**Section 3.9 Health**). Other services such as Aboriginal welfare (**Sections 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures** and **7.4 Welfare**) and forestry management (**Section 3.8 Forestry**)

The Municipality of Coonamble was created on 3 May 1880. The first Council meeting was held in the Coonamble Court House on 15 July 1880. In 1882 a small office was rented in Namoi Street and later premises in Tooloon Street were leased by Council. Municipal Chambers were constructed in 1902.[361] After its establishment Council commenced a program of upgrading streets and pavements and securing a water supply for the town.

Prior to 1906 small towns and rural localities depended on the New South Wales Government for many services. 'The police were the custodians of law and order, and attended to matters concerning sanitation and health'.[362] In 1906 Shire Councils were formed across New South Wales after the passage of the Local Government (Shires) Act in 1905[363]. Wingadee Shire Council was gazetted on 7 March 1906. The name was adopted from the pastoral property *Wingadee*. The shire originally included Tooraweenah, which was later transferred to Gilgandra Shire. [364]

A temporary Council was appointed in 1906 to undertake preparations for a council election. Temporary Councillors were W. Keogh, E. Whitney, H. Blake, D. Fletcher and J. Peacock. W. Keogh was elected President and J.M. Rees appointed as Shire Clerk. The first elected Council met on 8 December 1906.[365] After the conduct of elections Mr. W.M. Keogh became Shire President and Mr. J.M. Rees

[359] Pickette, J. & Campbell, M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. pp.22-23

[360] Rolls, E., 1982. *A Million Wild Acres*. pp.131-132 & 150

[361] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.40

[362] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.7

[363] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.8

[364] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. pp.35-36

[365] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. pp.35-36

was appointed as Shire Clerk. Among those elected to Council was John Landers. John Landers served as a Councillor for 46 years and was Shire President for 23 years.[366] Council Chambers were erected in 1908 as a private venture. Council acquired these premises in 1917. These offices were also occupied by the Pastures Protection Board.

Quambone was proclaimed a village in 1902 and Gulargambone was declared an urban area in 1908. Initial water supply to Quambone was obtained from a bore on Quambone Station by arrangement with Council.[367]

The Coonamble Municipality and Wingadee Shire were amalgamated to form Coonamble Shire in 1952[368]. R.W. McKenzie was the first President of Coonamble Shire[369].

7.3   NSW Historical Theme: Law and order

For thousands of years the various Aboriginal groups who lived in the region administered justice according to traditional law. With the coming of the Europeans this system of laws was broken down. The early European settlers had moved beyond the limits of settlement and civil authorities were not initially stationed in the region to regulate their activities. Despite this British law was considered to operate in the region. A punitive expedition by the NSW Mounted Police in 1837 appears to have been the first formal exercise of British law in the region (refer to **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures**).

Government control in the region gradually increased as settlements grew and administrative centres were established. Despite this settlers in outlying areas were often required to hunt down and capture criminals. When mustering sheep in 1870 George Lloyd of *Terembone*, his brother-in-law Harry Bell and neighbour John Colwell were bailed up by bushrangers Charles Maxwell and John Dawson. They stripped the three men of valuables and useful objects, including John Colwell's riding boots then tied them to trees and left them to die. George eventually worked himself loose and, after recovering their horses the three headed for nearby *Bullaroora* station.[370]

Enlisting the services of a local Aboriginal man the party then tracked the bushrangers by moonlight. At dawn the following morning they surprised the bushrangers in their camp and captured them. One later escaped and, after delivering the remaining captive to the police, they tracked his mate to within 20 miles of Coonabarabran'. Prior to being captured the pair had been busy robbing stations in the district.[371]

Women on isolated stations were occasionally required to show immense bravery in dealing with lawbreaking itinerants who travelled the country looking for easy pickings. At times vagabonds would camp near a homestead and wait for

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[366] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.

[367] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* pp.35-36

[368] Quambone Centenary Committee, 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years.* p.31

[369] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.43

[370] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* pp.55-57

[371] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* pp.55-57

the men to go out mustering before sneaking in to steal supplies and valuables. Jessie Lloyd of *Terembone* came close to shooting one such intruder with a pistol before he and his mate were scared off by the sound of riders, including her husband, returning to the homestead late at night.[372]

Bushranging continued to be a problem in the region for some decades. Perhaps the most celebrated bushranging incident concerned the capture of notorious criminal Johnny Dunn. Dunn, perhaps the most vicious member of the Ben Hall gang had headed north after the shooting deaths of Johnny Gilbert and Ben Hall in 1865. He apparently teamed up with Captain Thunderbolt and committed a number of robberies across the region. Dunn escaped capture by mounted police on the Wammerawa Creek north of the Macquarie Marshes in December 1865.

In Late December 1866 Dunn was staying at Walton's hut on the Marthaguy Creek. Police Constables McHale and Hawthorn from Cannonbar and Constable Elliot from Coonamble went to the hut to execute a warrant for the arrest of a George Smith known as Yellow George. On being challenged by police Yellow George bolted and was chased by Constable McHale. Rounding the side of the hut he saw a second man running from the place whom he identified as Johnny Dunn.

McHale chased Dunn, challenging him to stop. On being threatened by Dunn's pistol he took a shot at him, hitting him in the groin. As McHale approached Dunn he was shot in the leg. McHale's fellow officers came to his assistance and attempted to subdue Dunn. A second shot from Dunn's pistol grazed Hawthorne's hat and Dunn, having used all of his ammunition, tried to club the constables with the butt of his weapon.

McHale and Dunn were taken to Coonamble for medical treatment. Dunn was transferred to Dubbo and then to Bathurst where the bullet was removed from his back. After a brief convalescence he was transferred to Sydney where he was tried for the murder of Constable Nelson at Collector in 1865. He was found guilty and hanged on 19 March 1866.[373]

The bushranging pair Angel and Thurston were active in the area around the west and south of the Warrumbungle Range in the 1880s. Accounts of their exploits vary, but there is a consensus in Tooraweenah that Thurston, a young man from a local family, was lured into crime by Angel. According to Duke Tritton the pair 'had been doing a lot of cattle duffing and a little bushranging on the side' before being arrested and locked up at Coonamble[374]. Another account suggests that Thurston, 'using the alias Billy White was flung into prison in Coonamble for supposedly forging a cheque'. According to this account he came into contact with hardened criminal Thomas Hobson, who used the alias Mark Angel, in the Coonamble lockup.[375]

On the evening of 3 March 1885 Angel and Thurston broke out of the gaol. The plan, apparently hatched by Angel, went awry when the pair were confronted by Constable John Mitchell. Mitchell was shot and died the next day from his wounds. Mrs Canham, an elderly lady who was nursing Mitchell's wife, 'ran into

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[372] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* pp.74-75
[373] Brennan, R. & White, G., 1980. *Keep the Billy Boiling.* pp.60-67
[374] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker.* p.66
[375] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984.* p.8

the passage to try to block the two men'. The two apparently told her to get out of the way or they would blow her bloody brains out. She retorted: "You cowardly villains. Shoot and be damned to you!"[376]

Duke Tritton recounted that despite being leg-ironed and handcuffed the pair managed to travel 22 miles to Mungerie Station where they 'got rid of their irons' in a timber-getter's camp. The pair took refuge in the Warrumbungle Range near Box Ridge. Their hideout is still known as Angel's Gap. Sympathetic locals from Box Ridge alerted them of police movements using a system fires and smoke signals.[377] Joan McKenzie indicated that 'according to local legend Angel and Thurston made their way to Budgeon wool shed where they struck off their hand cuffs and leg irons'[378]. Apparently one of the servants at Dooroombah would hang a red sheet on the clothesline when the police were about, thus warning Angel and Thurston not to approach the station[379].

A force of mounted police was sent to Dooroombah in the hunt for Angel and White. The pair crossed the range into Belar Creek where they hid for two months while most of the valley's men were away taking their wool clip to Mudgee. Angel and White (Thurston) tried to escape to Mudgee but were caught by police near the Belifante Bridge close to Gulgong. A gun battle ensued in which White was shot dead. Angel died later of shotgun wounds.[380]

Quambone Police Station was established in 1876 with a strength of two mounted police, Sergeant Gannon and Constable Cullen. Land was reserved for a police paddock in the Village Plan of 1894 and a police station, lockup and court office erected in the following years. Police were withdrawn from Quambone in 1944.[381]

7.4   NSW Historical Theme: Welfare

The concept of welfare as a function of government developed from liberal and socialist philosophies of the 19th century. The desire to create a society characterised by fairness and a just allocation of resources was one of the defining notions of the federated nation that was established on the Australian continent in 1901. This was a utopian notion that, in the eyes of many, failed to eventuate.

During the 19th century and much of the early 20th century welfare was provided by benevolent institutions, the churches and friendly societies such as the Order of Oddfellows. During the 20th century government became increasingly involved in the provision of welfare services.

Aboriginal Australians experienced one of the earliest exercises of a government sponsored welfare system. The NSW Aborigines Protection Board was established in 1883. This was the instrument of a philosophy that encouraged separation of Aboriginal people from mainstream society. The Board established Aboriginal reserves where Aboriginal people in residence were provided with

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[376] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.71
[377] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.66
[378] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.71
[379] Information provided by Kath Rohr, Tooraweenah.
[380] Willott, B., 1984. *A Hundred Years of Education in Tooraweenah 1884-1984*. p.8
[381] Quambone Centenary Committee, 1994. Quambone. *A Village of 100 Years*. p.14

rations[382] and given separate schooling. This system has been described by Aboriginal people as a way of putting people away 'out of sight and out of mind'[383]. This was a system of control. Aboriginal people were not permitted to drink in hotels and a curfew applied to their visits to towns such as Coonamble.

From the mid 20th century this system of exclusion and separation was gradually broken down as prevailing government philosophies changed. From the late 1940s the system was altered to encourage Aboriginal people to move to town. Aboriginal people were forced to live on the fringes of towns until well into the 20th century.

The catastrophic drought of 1902 and 1903 and a resultant typhoid outbreak (refer to **Section 3.9 Health**) created great need in Coonamble. 'The Sydney Lord Mayor's Relief Fund donated £200 to Coonamble and the Government Works Department another £100 for relief work. Dame Nellie Melba donated the proceeds of her concert to the Relief Fund'.[384]

The Great depression, which began in 1929 and led to massive unemployment across the country, led governments to develop systems for the delivery of social welfare and to utilise unemployed people on infrastructure projects. Local councils were actively involved in the delivery of 'emergency relief work in lieu of the dole'.[385] Men from Gulargambone district received relief clearing the road to Box Ridge:

> *They grubbed all that road out from the Ten Mile towards Warrumbungle on the main road. They did it with pick and shovel, they grubbed the trees to form the rim for the road. There were many fellows who had never had a shovel in their hands in their life that to work on the roads in those days. It was a pretty drastic affair I can assure you.[386]*

The community of Coonamble has provided assistance to many affected by natural disasters. In February 1978 the town of Collarenebri was inundated by flood waters. On 20 February 157 evacuees were flown from Collarenebri to Coonamble. They were accommodated in the large pavilion at the Coonamble showground for three weeks. The evacuees were provided with food and assistance by the Department of Youth and Community Services and the Coonamble Branch of the Red Cross.[387]

[382] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. pp.135-136
[383] Somerville, M. et al, 1994. *The Sun Dancin', People and Place in Coonabarabran*. p.172
[384] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.13
[385] Curran, J., 1991. *Gilgandra Shire Council*. p.36
[386] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.25
[387] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.67-68

8. Australian Historical Theme: Developing Australia's cultural life

Australians are more likely to express their sense of identity in terms of a way of life rather than allegiance to an abstract political ideal. One of the achievements of this society has been the creation of a rich existence away from the workplace. While some of the activities encompassed in this theme are pursued for profit – horse racing and cinema for instance – the reason for being is the sheer enjoyment of spectators. While many people could not pursue careers in art, literature, science, entertainment or the church without being paid, those activities do not fit easily into categories of economy or workplace.[388]

8.1 NSW Historical Theme: Creative endeavour

Creativity has no formal boundary. Our society generally recognises a divide between the professionally creative and amateurs. In the working communities of regional areas creativity has often been expressed as an extension of daily life. Some residents of these areas have followed creative professions while many members of the community have worked beyond their normal occupations to provide pleasure and entertainment to others. **Section 8.3 Leisure** includes description of community activities such as dances and balls, which involved creative endeavour.

Banjo Paterson's 1892 ballad 'Travelling Down the Castlereagh' succinctly captures the massive changes that occurred in rural work patterns in the late 19th century. In this song Paterson mentioned the issues of Chinese non-union labour being used in woolsheds 'along the Marthaguy'.

A town band was established in Coonamble prior to 1878. An Eisteddfod Association was formed around 1909.[389]

8.2 NSW Historical Theme: Domestic Life

A number of histories of the region recall the rhythms of domestic life and the recurring task required to maintain a household. These rhythms swing around the relentless battles to feed families and maintain an acceptable level of cleanliness and hygiene. Scientific discoveries of the 19th century highlighted the need for domestic cleanliness to fight disease or the possibility of disease. During that century cleanliness came to be associated with moral virtue. The most despised in society were most often assessed in terms of perception of their cleanliness with 'moral sensibility' being presumed to be 'governed by the same mechanisms a physiological health'. Under this paradigm 'a poor or sick person' was considered 'likely to be a evil person'[390]. The antithesis of this was the notion that 'cleanliness next to godliness'.

Regardless of circumstances most women took great pride in the presentation of their houses. The women involved in the research of Somerville's history of Burra Bee Dee had many memories of the daily routine of washing bedclothes,

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[388] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[389] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week.* p.86
[390] Upton, D., 1992 'The City as Material Culture'. p.61

scrubbing floors and scrubbing tables. Children were co-opted to assist in tasks that contributed to domestic maintenance.

During the early years of European settlement women in outlying areas suffered many privations and challenged in keeping house. Fresh vegetables were often in short supply until substantial gardens were established. When she first arrived at *Terembone* in the early 1870s Jessie Lloyd was confronted with a neglected vegetable garden and no fresh vegetables. Edible plants such as Boggabri, pigweed and wild spinach were used to supplement the diet. She recalled that:

> *No-one knows, who has not experienced it, the difficulty it was to get supplies from any town, with no roads, flooded rivers and creeks. Even in a good time, and especially with no water in a bad time, carriers did not care to face the terrors of the road … Once a year was the only chance – in the wool season – for they could get back loading. During the twelve months, flour would become almost uneatable, for the climate was so intensely hot, and, most lively the flour was not new when it arrived, so the damper baked from it would look as if plentifully besprinkled with carraway seeds – so full of weevils. It was impossible to make the bread dry, it would be so sticky and a most disagreeable odour.*[391]

In these circumstances rural women supported each other with valuable resources and domestic advice. Not longer after her arrival at *Terembone* Jessie Lloyd was presented with the precious gift of a bottle of yeast and was taught how to make yeast. This allowed her to commence baking her own bread. A cool room was created near the *Terembone* homestead by digging out a depression and building an earthen mound over it. The walls and roof of this room were reinforced with wooden poles and bark and an entrance created on its southern side. This cool space was used to store milk and butter.[392]

There are many accounts of cooking with camp ovens on open fires well into the 20th century. Relative prosperity translates into the sophistication of domestic working arrangements. The wealthy have always employed servants or contractors to handle difficult or unpleasant domestic tasks. Retailers have long prospered selling appliances to reduce the drudgery of domestic toil. The advent of electricity in the 1930s created markets for newer innovations and introduced much of the gadgetry of the 20th century to the area.

Much analysis of gendered spaces within homes has been undertaken in recent decades. Whilst informative many of these analyses seem to come from an upper class perspective that failed to recognise the role of the back door as the 'normal' entrance to most Australian homes or the importance of the kitchen as a gathering place. Sound archaeological analyses of the use of space within the homes of working people recognise the importance of the kitchen as a place of warmth in winter and a place of light for all kinds of close work.[393]

The district's homes were often places of domestic innovation. During the 1890s Coonamble businessman Mark Herrmann installed hessian blinds on his house

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[391] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* p.44
[392] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf.* p.45
[393] Casey, M., 2004. 'Falling through the Cracks: Method and Practice at the CSR Site, Pyrmont'. pp.35-40

and cooled it 'on the principle of the drip safe'. On hot days water was run over the hessian blinds to cool the house. 'It is reported that during the very hot days he spent as much time as he could at home, clad only in silk pyjamas'.[394]

In most Australian homes the front door was a place to meet the representatives of authority, the policeman or the minister and the parlour or lounge was only used to entertain such figures, or to lay out the bodies of the newly deceased.

The introduction of the radio, whether powered by mains electricity or a car battery, tended to reinforce the role of the kitchen as a gathering place. Over time the radio tended to move into the living room and television, when introduced, was often regarded as such a status symbol that it was given pride of place in the living room.

House design in the 20th century tended to alter to reflect the advantages of domestic innovations. Kitchens moved into the main building and by the 1920s housing designers were promoting the 'servantless' house that included the modern innovations of electric or gas hot water and cooking, and electric house cleaning. The Californian Bungalow of the same era invariably included the innovation of a low-walled sleepout or sleeping porch to facilitate the Australian practice of sleeping on camp beds outside an oppressively overheated house on hot summer nights.[395]

8.3   NSW Historical Theme: Leisure

Much of the recorded local history of the Coonamble district recognises the importance of leisure activities that were often communal occasions. Such activities included picnics, sporting events (refer **Section 8.6 Sport**), amateur theatricals and dances. In the days before mass media people tended to make their own entertainments that were often seasonal or planned around specific events such as Christmas, Queen Victoria's Birthday (later Empire Day) or community organised carnivals. Balls and dances played an important role in bringing communities together.

The published histories of the area all tell of dances where the participants danced all night to the sound of local musicians including Fred Hawkins and Ollie Armstrong[396]. Well into the 20th century groups of musicians would gather to play for dances and other entertainments.

A hall was built in Gulargambone some time around 1914. After this timber building was destroyed in a wind storm a new building was constructed in concrete. This building was regarded as one of the best dance halls 'in this part of the country.' This hall became the cinema in Gulargambone and, like many in the region, functioned as an indoor and outdoor cinema. Prior to this George Leman had conducted a picture show in Coonamble Street.[397]

The Majestic Theatre in Gulargambone was owned and operated by Mr and Mrs Rayner prior to 1947. Electricity for the cinema was provided by a small generator powered by a steam engine (refer to **Section 4.4 Utilities**). In 1947

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[394] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.93
[395] Butler, G., 1997. *The Californian Bungalow in Australia*. pp.18-19
[396] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.22
[397] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.22

the cinema was purchased by Bill and Jack Irwin who had moved from Tooraweenah.

> *The movies were screened mid week and on Wednesday evenings with a change of programmes for Friday and Saturday evenings. They were held indoors in winter and outdoors in the summer. Summer screenings were the most popular with patrons enjoying a relaxing evening reclining in the deck chairs watching the movie.[398]*

In 1965 the cinema was leased by Ian and Narelle Irwin who operated it until declining audiences forced its closure in 1968[399]. The cinema in Gulargambone was segregated along racial lines. (Refer **Section 2.1 Aboriginal Cultures and Interactions With Other Cultures**.) It was a popular game of Aboriginal children to sneak into the 'whites only' seats in the dark[400].

Dances and community events were held in all kinds of venues, including halls, shearing sheds and in houses. Many of the recorded leisure activities were held to raise money for the hospital or other community ventures.

Travelling boxing troupes were a regular feature of Australian shows. The beat of a drum ringing out across the showground was a clarion to the call "Who'll take a glove?", leading young men to try their strength, courage and skill against young hopefuls or former champions[401]. During hard times the prize money from tent bouts was a much sought after. For more information on boxing shows and local boxers see **Section 8.6 Sports**.

From the late 19th century the Warrumbungle ranges became a popular recreation place for residents of the region. During the 1890s Ernest Drocker, also known as Judge Drocker, travelled to the Warrumbungles region and took a series of stereographic photographs of the area[402]. Drocker's photographs not only have wonderful landscape value but also include images of persons who trekked into the mountains with him.

From the early 1930s the area attracted the attention of Sydney bushwalkers and rock climbers, including the members of the 'Mountain Trails Club and Dr Eric Dark and Dot Butler, the 'barefoot bushwalker'. In 1937 Myles Dunphy, Secretary of the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, lodged a proposal for the creation of a 'Warrumbungles National Monument Reserve'. Some concern was expressed that substantial parts of the proposed area were held under Crown Leases. This concern was partly allayed when Alfred Pincham, offered to donate a substantial part of his property 'Strathmore', including some of the most spectacular features of the range, to facilitate creation of the reserve.[403] When the Warrumbungle National Park was eventually gazetted in late 1953 'it consisted of a total area of 3,360 ha, extracted from the leases held by A.J. Pincham and his neighbour, Leo Gale[404].

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[398] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.75
[399] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.75
[400] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.23
[401] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. pp.75-76
[402] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.196
[403] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.63
[404] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.66

A Trust was established to manage the Park, with trustees being appointed from the Department of Lands, the National Parks and Primitive Areas Council, Coonabarabran, Coonamble and Gilgandra Shire Councils and the local community. Norman Bruce Pincham also represented landowners.[405] The trust set about with the tasks of park management, including developing visitor facilities and walking tracks.

As part of this strategy the Trust resolved in August 1956 to develop campsites once maps were available. In December 1956 Keith Blackman offered land for the development of a camp site on Wambelong Creek. This was later developed as Canyon Camp. By February 1957 a decision had been made to proceed with the development of Wambelong Camp, just upstream from the site offered by Blackman. [406]

On 26 May 1957 £500 was allocated by the Trust for the construction of No 2 Camp. This site was later to be named Camp Pincham after the late Alfred Pincham. In August 1957 it was decided to construct a road from Wambelong (Burbie) Camp to Camp Pincham. In November 1957 the Trust agreed on the location at Camp Pincham of a memorial for Alfred Pincham, and on wording for this monument.[407] A shelter shed at Camp Pincham was completed in November 1957. The Trust noted in its minutes that the shelter needed a more secure roof and a water tank.[408] By May the following year the shed had been completed by volunteers from Coonabarabran[409].

In 1959 four tram bodies were acquired at a cost of £150 each to provide accommodation within the national park[410]. These were modified to provide two accommodation units in each tram, having been fitted with extended roofs and ex-Railways Department washbasins. By 1960 six of these trams were in position at Canyon Camp[411]. The Warrumbungle National Park Trust held meetings in one of the trams[412].

The condition of the trams deteriorated by the late 1960s and in 1967 it was recommended to the Trust that they 'be closed for six months because of a shortage of funds and staff'[413]. By 1973 the trams were in very poor condition and from 7 October 1973 Warrumbungle National Park Trust meetings were transferred to the Pincham Woolshed[414]. According to John Whitehead:

The Warrumbungle National Park Trust had its early meetings in the various Council Chambers and when the trams were installed, when vacant, the meetings were held in one of them. … The trams were very uncomfortable so when the former Strathmore woolshed became available, it was set up as a meeting and camp venue. The new Tourist information centre was used until the area became

[405] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.237
[406] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. pp.239-240
[407] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.240
[408] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.240
[409] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.241
[410] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.244
[411] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.250
[412] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.295
[413] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.283
[414] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.295

a District. The woolshed was used for six meetings up to the end of 1975. ... A swag on the floor of the woolshed after a few reds around the camp fire are memorable.[415]

The Trust appointed Carl Dow as Park Ranger in September 1958. By December that year Dow had commenced track building in the Belougery Split Rock area. Trust Secretary Alick Gould of Coonabarabran was so impressed with his progress that he recommended the appointment of an assistant.[416] By 1959 the track from the Breadknife to Dagda in the Grand High Tops had been completed. Dow's talent for track building was described as follows:

> *I could do no more than marvel at the dedication of this man and the magnitude of the work he was performing. No matter what size the rock that blocked his path, he and his assistant were capable of removing it with a minimum of damage.* [417]

While working in the Grand High Tops area Carl Dow camped in a sheltered valley with a permanent creek below the site of the present Balor Hut[418].

During the 1950s and 1960s a number of huts were constructed at various points around the Grand High Tops. Dow's Hut, named in June 1959[419], appears to have been the first of these. Carl Dow resigned as Park Ranger in 1962 and was replaced by his brother-in-law, Henry Innes who was appointed as a full-time ranger. Huts were constructed at Danu and Ogda Gaps in 1963[420] and Ranger Hut at Camp Pincham in 1966[421]. Whitehead noted that 'all huts except Balor were eventually removed because of pollution problems'[422].

8.4   NSW Historical Theme: Religion

At the end of the 19th century religion in regional New South Wales was generally an identifier of the place from which individuals had emigrated, or in which their parents were born. '... Scots tended to be Presbyterians, the English Anglicans and the Welsh, Methodist while 70 per cent of the Irish were Catholics, the remainder being Anglican or Presbyterian. Some Germans were Catholics, some Lutheran.'[423] Old enmities from reformation era Europe and from the English conquests of the British Isles tended to create a Protestant-Catholic divide that lasted well into the 20th century.

Various denominations worked to create their own education structures to reinforce their doctrinal position to young adherents (refer to **Section 6.1 Education**). Perhaps the most successful of these was the Catholic education system which relied heavily on the sacrificial service of members of the teaching orders such as the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St Joseph. In celebrating the centenary of the work of the Sisters of Mercy in the Catholic Diocese of Bathurst in 1966 Bishop Albert Thomas said:

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[415] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.298
[416] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.242
[417] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.244
[418] Information provided by Arthur Dow, Warrumbungle National Park. 26 February 2008.
[419] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.244
[420] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.254
[421] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.257
[422] Whitehead, J., 2008. *The Warrumbungles*. p.329
[423] Cremin, A., 2001. *1901 Australian Life at Federation: An Illustrated Chronicle*, p.74

> *The pattern has not varied much, the duties have always been the same and the performance of the duties likewise the same. Children to be taught the Love of God, adults to be brought back from the wayward path, charity expressed for the love of Christ – these were and still are the purposes why the Sisters came, why they worked ...*[424]

In the 19th century and though much of the 20th century the practice of Christianity was considered by many to be a vital aspect of citizenship. Much effort was made to bring Aboriginal people and immigrants from non-Christian countries under the influence of Christian teaching. Traditional aboriginal belief systems and practices demonstrated an inextricable link between land, people and belief. As mentioned in **Section 2.1 Aboriginal cultures and interactions with other cultures** these links were largely broken during the period of European colonisation of the area. 'In many cases, white settlers and missionaries actively expunged Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi (Gamilaraay) cultural traditions in an attempt to 'civilise' and 'assimilate' Aboriginal people into white society.'[425] Aboriginal people also ministered to their communities with missions and other church organisations. In the early 20th century Sam Smith from Burra Bee Dee near Coonabarabran travelled around the region on such missions. During the 1950s Pastor Naden travelled the region from the Lachlan to Gulargambone in his red two-ton table top truck fitted out with a bed, table fridge and camping gear covered with a solid roof and sides.[426]

Special missions were also established in Western New South Wales to bring Christianity to Chinese immigrants. In the late 19th century the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican churches appointed Chinese-speaking ministers to carry out missionary tours throughout the colony.[427]

The existence of places to worship was of equal, if not greater, importance to many of the people of New South Wales. As communities were established moves were made to create spaces and buildings for the practice of religious observances. Early settlers experienced isolation from the clergy of all Christian denominations. The first clergyman to visit the Castlereagh region was the Presbyterian Rev. Colin Stewart who made regular visits from his home in the Lithgow Valley from 1839[428]. As Stewart was under the patronage of Andrew Brown of *Cooerwull* it is not surprising that he included the Brown and Walker properties of the Castlereagh on his itinerary.

The Roman Catholic community was visited regularly by travelling priests from the 1840s. Father Dunphy from Bathurst is known to have visited the region at this time. From 1852 Father Rigney visited from Singleton and 'a French priest, Father Castenog, who said Mass at Field's Hotel' at Nandi near the site of the town of Coonabarabran.[429] From 1876 to 1886 Coonamble was part of the Diocese of Maitland. Prior to 1876 and after 1886 it was included in the Diocese of Bathurst. A small Catholic church was constructed in Tooloon Street in 1870

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[424] Sisters of Mercy, 1966. *Sisters of Mercy – Bathurst 100 years – 1866-1966*, Foreword
[425] Fox, P., 1996. *Warrumbungle National Park*. p.48
[426] Kabaila, P., 1996. *Wiradjuri Places The Lachlan River Basin*. p.75
[427] Wilton, J., 2004. *Golden Threads: The Chinese in Regional New South Wales 1850-1950*, pp.99-101
[428] Pickette, J & Campbell. M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. p.95
[429] Pickette, J & Campbell. M., 1983. *Coonabarabran as it Was in the Beginning*. p.96

and around 1874 Father Meagher became the first resident priest in the district. He was accommodated in a dwelling built on Geanmoney by the McMahon family.[430]

Anglican services were first conducted by priests visiting from Mudgee, Coonabarabran and Dubbo. 'In the early 1870s the Rev. Henry Dicker of Coonabarabran periodically conducted services in the dining room of McCullough's Exchange Hotel. Services were also held in private homes including the residence of Arthur Willmott who had acquired an 'organ or harmonium'.[431]

The first Anglican rector was the Rev. W. Coombes who was appointed to the Parish of Coonamble in 1877[432]. The Church of St Barnabas was constructed in 1876 on the corner of Namoi and Aberford Streets. It had a slab walls and a shingle roof and replaced 'a very rough, temporary building, which had been walled and roofed with bark'.[433] This building had been constructed by 'Messrs Christian, Broad and Cochrane'[434] Coombes was followed by the Reverend George Oakes who rode from Bathurst to Coonamble in 1879 to take up his post. George Oakes travelled the district administering services in homesteads and woolsheds. Jessie Lloyd described one such service held in the woolshed at Terembone where 'three bales of wool will be arranged into a temporary pulpit and the parson may deliver his sermon to a generally attentive audience'.[435]

After its formation in 1903 the Anglican Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd was quite active in the region with its missionaries regularly travelling to outlying communities to minister the faith. In 1911 three bush brothers based in Gilgandra 'served 4,000 Anglicans in an area between Moriguy to Gulargambone, Collie to Mendooran, and from the Coboco Creek to the Warrumbungle Mountains. Each month they visited twenty six bush schools and eighteen centres for Sunday services, travelling on horseback along rough and poorly marked tracks.'[436] Prominent members of the Brotherhood included John Oliver Feetham, The Bushman Saint.

A Methodist Church was constructed in Maule Street, Coonamble in 1891[437]. During the late 19th century land was granted for the establishment of a Presbyterian Church in Coonamble. This property was considered to be too far 'from the residents of West Coonamble'. In the early 20th century 'Mr Peter Ferguson, a staunch Presbyterian', purchased this block from the church 'at an exceedingly high price in order that a more suitable site for a Church could be purchased in Namoi Street. The church building was completed in 1917.'[438]

Chris and Adam Hall of Gilgooma erected a hall on land in that village owned by the Church of England in 1907. This hall was used by the major Protestant denominations in Gilgooma until 1958. A Methodist Church had been constructed on the Terembone run in the early 20th century. This building was

[430] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.42

[431] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.42

[432] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.47

[433] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf*. pp.102-103

[434] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.43

[435] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf*. pp.102-103

[436] King, K., 2005. *Church in the Australian Bush*. p.20

[437] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.85

[438] McKenzie, J., 1988. The Vision Splendid. p.136

relocated to Gilgooma in 1958 and re-dedicated on 30 September that year. St Joseph's Roman Catholic Church was constructed by Chris Hall and consecrated by the Rev Dr. Dunne, Bishop of Bathurst in 1908. This building was destroyed by fire in September 1972.[439]

The built heritage of the Coonamble Shire reflects the ascendancy of Christianity in its towns and villages. The district has collection of Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches that were built by public subscription and community effort. Small church buildings dot the rural landscape. Coonamble also features places of worship of non-conformist Protestant denominations.

8.5   NSW Historical Theme: Social Institutions

Australian communities share common threads of community endeavour. Social organisation, social services and social cohesion have long been supported by societies established for the good of their members and/or the good of the community. Volunteer effort drives and sustains many of these institutions. The built environment is studded with buildings, monuments and works which stand as testament to the development and impact of these organisations.

A number of friendly societies and social welfare institutions were active in Coonamble in the late 19th century. A Lodge of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows (MUIOOF) was formed in Coonamble in 1876 as the Loyal Western Star Lodge of Coonamble. By 1913 the Lodge had 210 members on its roll.[440] Masonic Lodge Castlereagh No.72 was inaugurated on 28 December 1878. A lodge room was built in 1901 by Mooy Bros.[441] A branch of the Hibernian Australian Catholic Benefit Society was formed in Coonamble in September 1902[442] and the Coonamble branch of the Independent Order of Oddfellows was formed in October the same year[443].

The Country Women's Association is one of the most enduring social institutions. It was founded in New South Wales in April 1922. Formed to foster the 'community spirit' and a sense of 'self help'[444], the CWA has branches in almost all communities and is active in providing a focus for the women of the country. Early campaigns of the CWA included ongoing lobbying and agitation to improve women's health services and create maternity and mother care facilities in public health facilities[445]. CWA Branches continue to raise money for charities and community projects, as well as catering for social functions. The CWA was established in Coonamble in 1925. Mrs Buttsworth was the first President, Mrs W.G. Taylor, Secretary and Mrs Keif, Treasurer.

The Coonamble CWA immediately began to undertake projects consistent with the aims and priorities of the organisation. They were instrumental in

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[439] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. pp.18-21
[440] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. pp.62-63
[441] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. pp.61-62
[442] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.64
[443] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.63
[444] Kingston, B. (ed.), 1977. *The World Moves Slowly*. p.36
[445] Kingston, B. (ed.), 1977. *The World Moves Slowly*. p.36

establishing a maternity ward at the Coonamble Hospital in 1929. This was the third unit of its kind established in New South Wales. Having achieved this outcome the Association worked to establish rest rooms in Coonamble 'where mothers could rest and wash and feed their children when they came to town for the full day needed when travel was so much slower. Mr T.A. Field of Warrana donated a block of land and the C.W.A. Rooms were opened in 1937.

A branch of the Red Cross Society was formed in Coonamble on 17 August 1914. This is believed to have been the first branch of the society formed in New South Wales following the establishment of the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society in Sydney on 11 August 1914. The meeting to establish the Coonamble branch was hosted by Mr & Mrs Cuthbert Featherstonhaugh with the initial intention of forming a sewing circle. The Coonamble branch of the Red Cross provided "money, food parcels, articles sewn and knitted and sheepskin vests" for the troops in World War I. The branch also furnished a ward at the Randwick Military Hospital in Sydney. A junior branch, including children from the Convent, Public Schools and Highgate College, undertook fundraising and sewing activities. "Mrs Victoria Featherstonhaugh received an MBE for her services to the Red Cross in Australia and overseas."[446]

A number of friendly societies and lodges have operated in Coonamble. In the days before large-scale government funded co-operative social welfare societies provided health and sickness benefits to members. These societies were also a point of social networking for people moving between communities. Lodge and society members often found referrals for employment or other assistance through these groups.

During the early part of 1879 a number of pastoralists from the Coonamble district, including G,D, Lane, J. Lorimer, George Ibbott, D.D. McMahon, David and Joseph McCullough, Mark Hermann, Peter Polin Barney Streglin and Rowley Hill met in Coonamble to organise a show. The group formed a Pastoral and Agricultural Association with D.D. McMahon as Chairman and Barney Streglin and Honorary Secretary. The association planned to conduct the first show in Coonamble in 1880, however an adverse season forced a postponement. Plans to hold a show in 1882 were disrupted by the death of Barney Streglin. The first Coonamble Show was held on 4 June 1883 on a portion of the Coonamble Race Course. The show was reported as a great success, despite the fact that the weather was bitterly cold. Silver and bronze medallions were presented as prizes.[447]

Shows were originally conducted in an area of about 10 acres located at the north-eastern corner of the Race Course. This area was leased from the Coonamble Jockey Club. It was fenced 'and cattle and sheep pens and a small pavilion erected'.[448] In 1889 22 acres of land adjoining the Coonamble Hospital were dedicated for show purposes. The first show on this site was held in 1890 and a grandstand built in 1891. The Race Course 'moved to its present position on Eurimie Creek in 1890.[449]

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[446] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.134

[447] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.6-7

[448] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. p.7

[449] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.9-10

The conduct of shows in the later years of the 19th century and early years of the 20th century appears to have been partly dependent upon economic and financial conditions. Severe droughts often resulted in shows not being held.[450] Despite some early setbacks the Coonamble Show developed rapidly into a week-long event. By 1906 the Coonamble Show Carnival had become the main social event of the year. It consisted of the show, a Show Ball, smoke concert, dog trials and races. Circuses and other travelling entertainments were also regular features of the show.[451]

8.6 NSW Historical Theme: Sport

Human beings have always engaged in competitive activities that have been designed to train members of society for work or war. Team sports have also been used to enhance social cohesion and redirect individual attention away from social or economic hardships.

Masman and Johnstone relate accounts games played by Aboriginal people in the region. These included wrestling, trials of skill and tests of endurance. Competitions included climbing the highest in the least time, throwing spears and throwing toy boomerangs. A football game was played by young people of both sexes in groups of up to 50 at a time. This game was played with a ball 'made of possum-skin, with the fur side outwards. It would be filled with pounded charcoal and tied hard round and round with kangaroo sinews'.[452]

In regional areas sports have provided opportunities for communities to connect with neighbours and with persons in other communities. Tennis provides a powerful example of the role of sports in community development within the Coonamble Shire.

Tennis courts, and the remnants of tennis courts, dot the landscapes of almost all current and former communities. It is also unusual for pastoral properties to be without a tennis court. Tennis was particularly popular from the 1920s to the 1970s. A tennis club was formed in Coonamble around 1890. By the mid 1920s the town boasted four clubs. The parent club had courts in Aberford Street.[453]

Cricket has long been popular with communal cricket grounds being developed in many places. In the days when rural stations retained large numbers of hands many properties fielded their own cricket teams. Rugby League became very popular in the 1920s under the leadership of the Coonamble League Football Association[454].

In 1907 Coonamble had a Boys' Club that was inaugurated to promote "moral, social, intellectual and muscular development. Such clubs were popular in the early to mid 20th century.[455]

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[450] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.6-12

[451] McKenzie, J. et. al., 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.16-17

[452] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.29

[453] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.90

[454] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.90

[455] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.113

Informal horse racing events have been held in the region from the early days of European settlement. A Jockey Club was formed in Coonamble during the 1870s. The clubs first meetings were held on *Geanmoney* station. By the early 1880s this organisation had established a racetrack encircling the town's burial ground at the end of Warrena Street. The alignment of the racetrack is suggested by the layout of the streets around the former burial ground. In 1890 a new racecourse was established in West Coonamble.[456] This course was constructed on 225 acres near Eurimie Creek that were dedicated for this purpose on 16 August 1890[457].

Quambone has hosted horse races since at least 1874 when an event was held over three days. This event was regarded as one of the grandest in the region. The Marthaguy Picnic Race Club was formed in 1905 and operated until 1973. It was re-formed in 1973 and annual races continue to be held at the Quambone Racecourse. The racecourse is also home to a Pony Club and the Quambone Polocrosse Club, which was formed in 1959. [458]

Following a meeting held at G.D. Lane's property *Youie* early in 1879 a committee was formed to organise a show in Coonamble. The committee included landholders J. Lorimer, George Hart, J.J. Ibbott, D. McMahon of *Tooloon*, David and Joseph McCullough, Mark Hermann , Peter Polin, Stock and Station Agent Bernard (Barney) Streglin and Rowley Hill. They were later joined by Donald Fletcher of *Balagula*, H.J. Blake of *Conimbla*, Thomas Bloodworth of *Neinby* and J. Helman of *Beanbah*. A show was arranged for 1880 but was postponed as that year had poor seasons. Subsequent plans to hold a show in 1882 were abandoned following the death of Barney Streglin. The first show was eventually held in 1883 on the racecourse that encircled the original Coonamble burial ground. About 10 acres on the eastern side of the racecourse was leased from the Jockey Club. It was fenced and cattle and sheep pens, and a small pavilion constructed.[459]

In their early years the conduct of shows in Coonamble was dependent on the productivity of seasons. The second show was not held until 1885. The 1887 show was a great success and subsequent shows continued at a high standard. In 1889 a 22 acre site adjoining the Public Hospital was dedicated for show purposes. The show was first held on this site in 1890. (McKenzie 1983:9) A Poultry and Horticultural Club was formed on Coonamble in 1899 and in 1911 the Coonamble Sheep Breeders Association and Coonamble Shorthorn Breeders Association formed.[460]

Polo was played in the district from the early 20th century. E. Beveridge of *Tuglands*, Gilgandra established a polo club in that town in 1922. The club held annual tournaments for many years with players competing for the Gilgandra Challenge Cup and the Warrumbungle Cup. The Gilgandra Challenge Cup was sponsored by Mr W. Dowling of *Gumin*.[461] Gulargambone had its own polo team that appears to have competed in these events[462].

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[456] Stephens, J. (ed.), 1955. Coonamble Centenary 1855-1955. p.24
[457] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.91
[458] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994.* pp.47-48
[459] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.6-7
[460] McKenzie, J. et al, 1983. *The Show Goes On*. pp.10-12
[461] Back to Gilgandra Committee, 1937. *Back to Gilgandra Souvenir Booklet*. p.47
[462] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.24

Rifle shooting has long been popular. This activity was supported by colonial and Commonwealth governments as part of the country's defence infrastructure (refer to **Section 7.1 Defence**). The Coonamble Rifle Club was formed some time around 1908 and originally boasted over 100 members. Space on the Coonamble Common was allocated for the establishment of a rifle range. Man club members enlisted in the armed forces during World War I.[463] In the early 20th century the Coonabarabran Rifle Club conducted interclub shoots with Binnaway, Tooraweenah and Coonamble'.[464]

Cycling was popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and in Gulargambone local businessman Cap Lemon and others formed a cycle club. The club had a bicycle track located at the town's sports fields.[465]

Other sports have been more closely linked to the skills required on the land or in the forests. Horse-pulls, wood chopping, camp drafts and polocrosse have all provided opportunities to demonstrate skills and abilities linked to the occupations of the contestants. These sports have grown beyond the occupational area to become pastimes in their own right.

Boxing was once considered an important element of developing character and physical ability. 'Boxing was taught in YMCA gymnasiums, in Police Boys Clubs, by priests and in the armed services.'[466] These young men tested their skills in the tent boxing shows that travelled the country. The first boxing shows toured New South Wales from the 1840s and boxing was a popular entertainment during the gold rushes[467]. Jimmy Sharman, the greatest of the travelling boxing show promoters, relied greatly on his own showmanship and the bravado of young men to build the popularity and success of his shows. His shows featured boxers with grandiose titles, including Rud Kee who was billed as the Champion of China[468]. His boxers often mingled with the crowd, pretending to be locals keen for a fight.

Cricket games had been held on the Urungie run since at least 1902 and by the 1930s the Gilgooma cricket team had developed facilities on the Gilgooma Recreation Ground. Tennis courts had been developed in Hall's paddock between the Wall Brothers general store and Weetalibah Creek. In 1933 new tennis courts were constructed in the northwest corner of the recreation ground. After World War II a bough shed was built to serve as a club house. A more permanent building and additional courts were later erected. The tennis courts were a popular sporting venue until well into the 1970s. Local residents also developed a five hole golf course at the recreation ground and polocrosse was also played in the vicinity.[469]

In 1935 the Coonamble Municipal Council constructed a bowling green in MacDonald Park as part of an unemployment relief scheme. During a grasshopper plague in 1936 the bowling green was flooded with water from the

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[463] Executive Committee Back to Coonamble Week, 1925. *Official Souvenir "Back to Coonamble" Week*. p.90
[464] Carmichael, D., 1991. *Timor Valley*. pp.16-18
[465] O'Brien et al, 1999. *Gulargambone Revisited*. p.24
[466] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. p.87
[467] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. p.76
[468] Corris, P., 1980. *Lords of the Ring. A History of Australian Prize Fighting*. p.83
[469] McKenzie, J&W, 2000, *Gilgooma Memorial and Memories*. pp.22-27

river to protect in from the predators. A bowling club was formed in 1937 and a club house erected in the same year.[470]

During the 19th and early 20th centuries swimming holes in local creeks and rivers were popular places to cool off. Public baths were constructed near the Castlereagh River at Coonamble. Rules for use of these baths reflect prevailing notions of public decorum:

> *School children under supervision could use the baths free on separate days for boys and girls. Other responsible members of the community were issued with a key for the yearly payment of £1. The hours from 6pm to 11pm on Tuesday nights were set aside for the use of ladies only.*[471]

During World War I a caretaker was not retained for these baths. They fell into disrepair and became quite unhygienic. They were demolished and new public baths were constructed in 1919 on the site of Coonamble's first bore. It was supplied with water from this bore. This was a timber-sided pool with sand base that 'in time became the home of thousands of carp and crayfish'.[472]

Coonamble Shire Council constructed two swimming pools at the Quambone Recreation Ground between 1966 and 1968[473].

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[470] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. pp.160-162
[471] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.141
[472] McKenzie, J., 1988. *The Vision Splendid*. p.141
[473] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994*. p.40

9.   Australian Historical Theme: Marking the phases of life

Although much of the experience of growing up and growing old does not readily relate to particular heritage sites, there are places that can illustrate this important theme. Most of the phases of life set out below are universal experiences.[474]

9.1   NSW Historical Theme: Birth and death

Birth and death mark the beginning and end of life. The rituals and beliefs surrounding both are markers of culture. During the period since the European occupation of the Young district birthing practices have changed dramatically with a shift from traditional Aboriginal birthing and European home birthing guided by the wisdom of midwives to 20th century notions of assisted and medically supervised birth.

The isolation of many women in regional areas, and the distances from which help had to be called, led to the death of many women due to the complications of childbirth or post-natal crises. In colonial times women on average 'had a baby every 18 months to two years'[475]. Local histories contain tragic stories of early female deaths associated with childbirth.

Many women who survived childbirth unattended by midwives or doctors were left with health problems that plagued them for the rest of their lives. In her book 'Silverleaf' Joan McKenzie recounted the effects of Jessie Lloyd's fourth childbirth at *Terembone* in 1872:

> *Jessie never totally recovered from the birth of Charles. She had no more children and suffered from various women's complaints, which she endured stoically for the rest of her life. There was no alternative, as, at that time, there was little knowledge or understanding of the female anatomy. Women's particular health problems did not receive special recognition by the medical profession until later in the century.*[476]

Mary Gilmore's observations of the Wiradjuri people indicate that their midwives had very sophisticated approaches to birthing that ensured the safety of the mother and child. In accordance with tribal traditions older Aboriginal women selected special places for women to undergo labour. These places were screened off, the ground swept clean and fresh eucalypt leaves methodically laid to create a soft, clean and antiseptic carpet. Children were born on this mat.[477]

During the early years of European colonisation of the region the skills and care of Aboriginal midwives saved many otherwise isolated European women and their babies. Up to 80% of European births in this period 'took place on eucalyptus leaves in the manner of the Aboriginal tradition'.[478] Aboriginal birth practices also increased the efficiency of labour in ways not embraced by European society until the advent of the Active Birth movement of the 1980s.

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[474] Australian Historic Themes Framework, 2001.
[475] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.27
[476] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf*. p.62
[477] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.18
[478] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.18

> *In traditional Aboriginal society, the woman adopted the squatting position to give birth whereas non-Aboriginal women were restricted to lying flat on the bed. Research has shown that any position other than lying flat on the bed increases the pelvic outlet by 28%. Labouring women are now encouraged to birth in any position which suits them.[479]*

As the European population increased midwives from England, Scotland and Ireland began to practise in the various settlements of the region. These women were on call day and night to attend births in towns and on farms. As the 19th century progressed lying-in hospitals were established by midwives in country towns. A brief account of these hospitals is included in **Section 3.9 Health**.

During his travels around 1907 Duke Tritton boarded at the home of Granny Ingles (Inglis[480]) at Box Ridge (Warrumbungle). He described her as follows:

> *.... a little grey-haired woman who was known for a hundred miles around. Where there was sickness, or babies to be born, Granny Ingles would be on the spot, and no distance was too great. Rain, hail or shine, she would answer the call. She claimed every man, woman or child of thirty years or younger in the district as "one of my babies".[481]*

Tritton recounted the events of one evening during his stay at Box Ridge. A man arrived at Granny's house 'driving a pair of knocked-up horses' and said his wife was having a baby. Granny quizzed him then ordered her buggy to be readied for travel. She went 15 miles over rough tracks to birth 'a beautiful girl' in a 'boundary rider's hut, just about one class above an aboriginal's gunyah'.[482]

Country women, led by the Country Women's Association, began to agitate in the 1920s for improved birthing facilities and mothercare support to 'save the babies for Australia'. The Association asserted:

> *... that five hundred nursing mothers were lost in 1924 in New South Wales through the lack of proper accommodation and nursing ... 'Women are no more born mothers than they are born lamplighters,' says a prominent worker of the Association. 'All women need to be taught to be good mothers. The city provides ample facilities, and it is the Country Women's Association's aim to provide suitable enlightenment to the women of the west.'[483]*

In Quambone prior to the 1920s midwifery services were provided by competent local women such as Margaret Doyle, Sarah McCaskill and Polly Jones. A Bush Nursing Association Centre was established in the village in 1926. It operated from rooms in the former Quambone Hotel until a dedicated Bush Nursing Home was opened in 1928. This building provided birthing and general care services

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[479] Gaff-Smith, M., 2004. *Riverina Midwives from the Mountains to the Plains*. p.23
[480] Gulargambone Historical Society Book Committee, 1992. *Gulargambone Homes & Holdings*. p.14
[481] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.95
[482] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker*. p.96
[483] Kingston, B. (ed.), 1977. *The World Moves Slowly*. p.36

until it was replaced by a new Community Health Centre was constructed in 1968. [484]

The CWA in Gulargambone was also very active in establishing birthing and healthcare facilities for women. After its formation in 1923-24 the Gulargambone Branch resolved to build a cottage to accommodate a nurse. Following the arrival of a doctor in the town in 1925 it was decided to build a hospital. A grant of Crown Land was arranged and the organisation began an active fundraising programme. The hospital was opened in June 1927. From then until 1934 it was leased to a matron when, following difficulties obtaining a tenant, the CWA decided to take an active role in managing the facility. The facility was conducted in this way until the CWA offered it to the Hospitals Commission in 1948.

In her assessment of the contribution of the CWA Hospital to the community of Gulargambone Evelyn Simpson wrote:

> *In spite of all these years of hard work and worry we feel it was well worth it, our young mothers have their babies born near home, many extreme cases of illness have demonstrated its value, lives are saved because they are treated quickly, and have not to be transported long distances, many of our aged have spent their last days there in comfort and close to their families, we only hope it will never have to be closed ...*[485]

Rituals of death vary from culture to culture. Hamilton Hume, who accompanied Charles Sturt on his 1829 journey of exploration, recorded an Aboriginal burial ground in the area near the Macquarie River. He noted that these graves were marked by earth mounded up into a conical shape. The Reverend Riley noted that Wayilwan persons of status would be buried in a hollow tree. 'The body would be enclosed in bark, and dropped into the hollow tree as those nearby made a 'whirring' sound of wind rushing upwards.' Riley interpreted this as representing the flight of the soul to the sky.[486]

According to Masman and Johnstone:

> *Burials were usually in sandy ground, close to a creek or river. The carving of one or more trees, known as taphoglyphs, near the grave of an important man, such as a chief or warrior, was a custom. The carving would be cut deeply into the undersurface leaving a lasting design which may have identified the social or totemic connections of the dead person.*[487]

When writing of the customs of the Aboriginal people of the Castlereagh in the 1880s Jessie Lloyd noted the customs of burial she had been informed of. She noted that some groups encased bodies in bark, 'neatly and carefully bound together'. The bundle was then placed in the branches of a tree. Some buried their dead in varying positions, either wrapped in bark or blankets, and accompanied by possessions such as spears and clothing. According to Jessie Lloyd burials were undertaken at night by the light of smoky torches. Trees near the burial site were marked with what Jessie Lloyd referred to as 'hieroglyphics'.

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[484] Quambone Centenary Committee. 1994. *Quambone. A Village of 100 Years 1894-1994.* pp.41-43
[485] Simpson, E. Notes on Gulargambone CWA Hospital.
[486] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.46
[487] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 1999. *Reedbed Country*. p.51

After the burial the last camp site of the deceased was burned and was not revisited for a long time. As a mark of mourning relatives of the deceased smeared themselves with mud.[488]

Coonamble Shire contains many sites in which the dead have been interred or remembered. These range from Aboriginal burial sites to isolated European graves and small cemeteries on various properties, village and town cemeteries such as those at Coonamble, Gulargambone and Quambone. These cemeteries and isolated graves provide testament to the practices of burial prevalent during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the early 20th century George Skinner, undertaker in Gulargambone, was engaged to transport the bodies of deceased Chinese men to the cemetery at Warren. As they were transported to Warren rice was sprinkled in their path in accordance with Chinese tradition.[489] The graves of these men were marked with footstones indicating the name of the deceased, date of death and place of origin. These details were intended to assist with exhumation and repatriation of the remains to ancestral cemeteries in China as funds were available. The tombstones were possibly paid for by the Chinese Reform Government after the 1911 Revolution.[490]

9.2   NSW Historical Theme: Persons

Many people have played a role in the development of Coonamble or have achieved great things either within the shire or as residents of the shire. A selection of stories of the shire's achievers is included in this section.

9.2.1   John Alexander Buckley VC

John Buckley was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in 14 December 1918 for 'most conspicuous bravery and self sacrifice'[491]. Prior to enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force he lived at *Homebush*, Armatree.

On 1 and 2 September 1918 Buckley's company of the 54th Battalion AIF were involved in operations at Peronne on France. They were pinned down by a German machine gun nest. Buckley and one other man rushed the emplacement, 'shooting four of the occupants and taking 22 prisoners'. Moving forward the company reached a moat with another machine gun nest covering the only available bridge. As some troops gave covering fire Buckley attempted to rush the bridge and take the post. He was killed by enemy fire.[492]

> *Throughout the advance he displayed great initiative, resource and courage, and by his effort to save his comrades from casualties he set a fine example of self-sacrificing devotion to duty.*[493]

Buckley is one of four men whose names are recorded on the war memorial at Armatree. His name is also recorded on the roll of honour at the Coonamble Hospital Soldiers Memorial Chapel and on the Coonamble War Memorial.

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[488] McKenzie, J., 1986. *Silverleaf*. pp.134-135
[489] Dormer, M., 1979. *Settlers on the Marthaguy*. pp.98-100
[490] Golden Dragon Museum Bendigo, 2001. *Chinese Memorials and Memories*. pp.10-11
[491] Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Letter 13 September 1919.
[492] Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Letter 13 September 1919.
[493] Military Forces of the Commonwealth, Letter 13 September 1919.

9.2.2   Edward Flood (1805-1888)

Edward Flood was born the illegitimate son of Irish convict Joseph Flood on 24 June 1805. He married Charlotte Hannam at St James Church, Sydney on 22 May 1826. Flood commenced the development of a pastoral empire in 1841 with the purchase of *Narrandera* station.

Flood was an Aldermen of the City of Sydney and was a public philanthropist. He was a founder of the Sydney Mechanics' Institute and a member of the committee of the Benevolent Society. He was also active in politics and a colleague of William Charles Wentworth.

By 1851 Edward Flood had expanded his pastoral holdings to include runs on the Clarence River, Lower Darling and the Lachlan. By 1866 he had disposed of most of his Riverina runs and had begun to acquire 25 runs further north. He also held large runs on the Warrego and Maranoa Rivers in Queensland in partnership with Samuel Gordon. By 1871 Flood held 31 runs in New South Wales and 19 in Queensland. In 1875-76 he sold 'a large amount of property' but retained Narranderra, Quambone, Nimben and other runs.

Flood was an extremely successful self-made businessman who was active in the politics of New South Wales and a close friend of Henry Parkes. He died in 1888 and was buried at Waverly Cemetery.[494]

Flood's Quambone Station on Merri Merri Creek covered 120 square miles. It consisted of the *Ningenar*, *Ningenar East*, *West Carabear*, *Back Carabear Block A*, *Bearbone Waterhole* and *Narrabone* runs. Most of these had been purchased from J.T. Neale between 1861 and 1872.[495]

9.2.3   George James Gibson and Edith Aldridge

George Gibson was transported to New South Wales on the convict ship Guildford at the age of 17 years. He was transported for life for his involvement in the theft of four copper plates. He was assigned to John Oxley and worked at his *Kirkham* property at Camden as a shepherd. After leaving Oxley's service her was assigned to a stone quarry. [496]

By 1831 he had received a ticket of leave and in 1833 he obtained employment with James Walker of Wallerawong. Working with Walker's overseer Andrew Brown Gibson evidently "became an expert cattleman".[497] He first travelled to the Coonamble district in 1836 when he assisted Andrew Brown to overland cattle to Brown and Walker's runs on the Castlereagh[498].

In 1840 George Gibson was sent by Walker in a party led by John Ross Patterson to occupy good grazing country on the lower Castlereagh River. The party located and occupied two runs in the vicinity of Coonamble on behalf of James Walker. These runs were named *Canamble* and *Yurammee*.[499]

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494 Flood, Edward (1805-1888) [Online]
495 Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000. *Reedbed Country*. p.98
496 Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000. *Reedbed Country*. p.102
497 Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. p.2
498 Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000. *Reedbed Country*. p.102
499 Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. pp.8-9

Gibson received a conditional pardon in 1841[500] and in September 1843 he took up the Bimble run west of *Canamble* and north of *Yurammee* in partnership with John Angus[501]. George Gibson married Edith Aldridge at Andrew Brown's *Cooerwull* homestead on 4 January 1844[502]. Edith had come to New South Wales in 1841 and was recruited by Andrew Brown as a companion for his new wife Christina Henderson[503]. The couple settled at Bimble where their first child, George, was born on 23 October 1844. Young George, the first child born to European parents in the Coonamble district, was quite a curiosity.[504]

George Gibson senior and John Ross Patterson took up the *Tooloon* run to the west of Bimble in partnership. When this partnership dissolved the run was sold.[505] In search of his own run Gibson followed the advice of local Aboriginal people and headed west towards the Macquarie Marshes. In 1845 he took up a run which he named *Wallamgambone*. He moved his family to *Wallamgambone* along with his Aboriginal friend Natty Brown, 'several other Aboriginal families and a teamster'.[506]

During George's absences from the home station Edith learned to protect the property and became quite proficient in the use of firearms. The couple had five children. George died of gangrene at *Wallamgambone* in 1862 following an accident on the property.[507] At the time of his death George owned a row of houses in Mudgee and a town house in Petersham. Edith died at Petersham in February 1896.[508]

9.2.4   Sir Edward John Lees Hallstrom (1886-1970)

Edward John Lees Hallstrom was born on 25 September 1886 at *High Park* station near Coonamble. He was the eighth of nine children born to William Hallstrom, saddler, and his wife Mary Ann nee Colless. Mary Ann was a descendent of John Lees of the New South Wales Corps.

When Edward was four his father's farm failed and the family moved to Sydney where they settled at Waterloo. Forced to leave school at the age of 13 Edward continued to study while undertaking an apprenticeship as a cabinet-maker. By 1909 he had established his own furniture-making business. He became interested in refrigeration and, after studying developments in this area and experimenting on designs in his back yard at Dee Why, produced his first Icy Ball absorption refrigerator in 1923.

He eventually developed the Silent Knight refrigerator and by the 1940s was manufacturing 1200 units per week. Hallstrom made a considerable fortune from his business. He became a great philanthropist and also a major benefactor of Sydney's Taronga Park Zoo. Among other projects he donated land and money to the Commonealth Government to establish a Bird of Paradise sanctuary in the

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[500] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000. *Reedbed Country*. p.102
[501] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. p.9
[502] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. p.10
[503] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. p.5
[504] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. p.10
[505] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. pp.10-11
[506] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000. *Reedbed Country*. p.102
[507] Masman, K. & Johnstone, M., 2000. *Reedbed Country*. p.102
[508] Leslie, J., 1979. *From Stockyards to Streets*. p.11

Papua New Guinea. Hallstrom was also a benefactor of the Coonamble Museum. The bridge carrying Aberford Street over the Castlereagh River is named for Sir Edward Hallstrom.[509]

9.2.5 Jessie Georgina Lloyd (1843-1885)

Jessie Lloyd of *Terembone* station gained notoriety from 1878 writing periodicals for newspapers such as the Echo and Illustrated Sydney News under the nom-de-plume of 'Silverleaf'. Her novel *The Wheel of Life* was published in 1880.[510] Jessie drew from her experience of life at *Terembone* to chronicle the challenges and joys of station life.

Jessie was born at Longford Farm near Launceston, Tasmania on 4 June 1843, the daughter of Joseph William Bell, auctioneer, and his wife Georgina nee Ford. On 6 September 1866 she was married to George Alfred Lloyd at Glenorchy, Tasmania. After George had worked for some time as an overseer on *Goolhi* station near Mullaley he bought a share in the *Terembone* run near Coonamble. George and Jessie moved there in the late 1860s with their daughter. Three sons were subsequently born to them at *Terembone*.

> *'Silverleaf' was popular as a pleasant and cheerful narrator of outback life. A contemporary described her as a 'graphic and graceful writer, possessing the faculty of presenting her characters in a clear and unmistakable light … The tone of her novels is always high and moral'.[511]*

Her works included *The Wheel of Life: A Domestic Tale of Life in Australia*, *All Aboard. A Tale for Christmas*, *Glimpses of Station Life*, *Seasons of Drought*, *Town and Country Housekeeping*, *Squatters Versus Selectors*, *Christmas in the Bush* and *Natives*.

Jessie was a keen gardener and musician who played piano and 'had a sweet contralto voice'. She died at Terembone on 30 July 1885 after a six-week illness. She was buried on the property and a memorial service was held at St Barnabas' Church in Coonamble on 16 August 1885. 'at her request 80 volumes from her private library were given to the local Mechanics' Institute and to St Barnabas' Church Sunday School'. George left *Terembone* not long after her death. He remarried in Sydney in 1887 and died on 8 February 1921.[512]

9.2.6 Harry Harbord Morant (1864?-1902)

Harry Harbord Morant was a colourful character who arrived in Queensland in April 1883. He claimed to be the son of Admiral Sir George Digby Morant and is believed to have been born in England on 9 December 1864. In March 1884 a man named Edwin Henry Murrant (believed to be Harry Morant), a groom at Fanning Downs station, married Daisy May O'Dwyer. Daisy O'Dwyer later became known as Daisy Bates. Morant separated from Daisy after being acquitted of a charge of stealing pigs. He went to Winton and later travelled south, overlanding cattle. Morant developed "a reputation as a horse breaker, drover, steeplechaser, polo player, drinker and womanizer".[513]

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[509] Hallstrom, Si Edward John Lees (1886-1970) [Online]
[510] Lloyd, Jessie Georgina (1843-1885) [Online]
[511] Lloyd, Jessie Georgina (1843-1885) [Online]
[512] Lloyd, Jessie Georgina (1843-1885) [Online]
[513] Morant, Harry Harbord (1864?-1902) [Online]

He is known to have worked on *Gumin* station with other famous horsebreakers including Lance Skuthorpe, described by Duke Tritton as "one of the greatest riders and showmen in Australia", Billy Waite and Bob Brewster. *Gumin* was renowned as a breeding place for 'Walers', horses sold to the Indian Army as remounts.[514]

Morant enlisted in the 2nd Contingent, South Australian Mounted Rifles at the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899. He later joined the Bushvelt Carbineers, one of the irregular units formed to fight against the guerrilla tactics of the Boer commandos. In January 1902 Morant, and Lieutenants Peter Hancock and George Witton were court martialled for the murder of Boer prisoners. Morant and Hancock were convicted on 26 February 1902 and executed by firing squad on 27 February. These events and accompanying public outcry led to the Australian Government passing the Defence Act (1903). This act limited the offences for which soldiers could be executed and requiring that any such convictions must be approved by the Governor-General.[515]

9.2.7   Rev John Patrick O'Farrell (1863-1946)

John Patrick O'Farrell was born at Warrnambool in 1863. He was the eldest of eleven children born to James O'Farrell. Having completed his education John taught for some time in a school established by Dean Slattery in Warrnambool. Following a call to a vocation in the Roman Catholic Church he enrolled to study at St Charles' Seminary in Bathurst. He was formally inducted into the priesthood in April 1888. Following three months in Molong John moved to Coonamble on 27 July 1888.[516]

Father O'Farrell committed himself to Coonamble and, in a manner not typical of most clergy, remained in the town for full 57 years of his service to the church. Delivering a panegyric in memory of Father O'Farrell at Coonamble on 11 February 1946 John Norton, Bishop of Bathurst commented on John O'Farrell's commitment to the Coonamble district:

> *How much better would Australia be if his fellow countrymen had become similarly rooted and, by developing a local patriotism, enable us to expunge from our vocabulary such expressions as "selling out" that are linked with our fatal rural depopulation.*

Bishop Norton recounted the difficulties faced by Father O'Farrell when he came to Coonamble. His nearest priestly colleague was located in Dubbo, "100 miles away, or 24 hours by horse and buggy". Travelling by or horse or buggy in all weathers O'Farrell was responsible for three large parishes[517]. He ministered to the Roman Catholic population of the present Coonamble Shire and to places as far north as Walgett.

Described by Bishop Norton as a wise, quiet and patient man O'Farrell is credited with having the vision and perseverance to construct the very fine Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and the neighbouring St Brigid's School in the 1930s.

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[514] Tritton, D., 1964. *Time Means Tucker.* pp.90-91
[515] Morant, Harry Harbord (1864?-1902) [Online]
[516] Norton, J., 1962. *Occasional Addresses.* p.72
[517] Norton, J., 1962. *Occasional Addresses.* p.73

> *For years, slowly and laboriously, he raised the fund from which this impressive church and school were built. Some with shorter vision, would have had him begin much sooner and be content with something less worthy … These parochial buildings … should be an abiding witness to the faith, the perseverance, the patience and ability to overcome difficulties of the man who built them.*[518]

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[518] Norton, J., 1962. *Occasional Addresses.* p.76

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