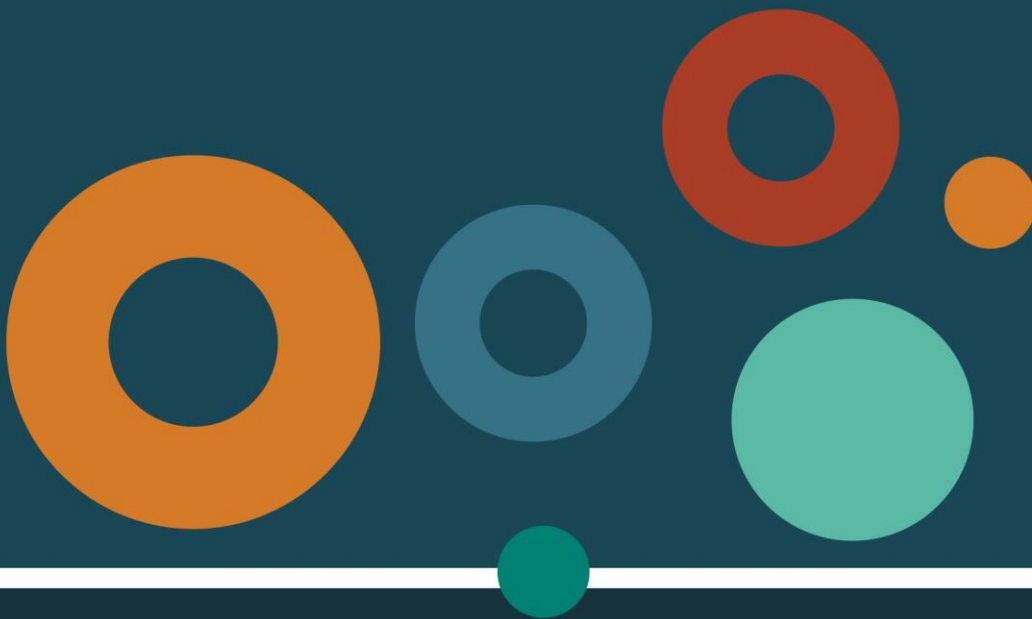


Land 101

Historical land research in Queensland

February 2020



This publication has been compiled by Kaye Nardella of Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying DNRME.

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Summary

To conduct historical land research in Queensland, knowledge of three components of land administration is critical. These components, **administrative areas**, **property descriptions** and **land tenure** are described. Examples are provided of where to locate them on cadastral maps and survey plans, and in land records, Queensland Government gazettes and digitised newspapers.

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1. Map showing original County boundaries in 1890:
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2. Map showing new County boundaries from 1901:
https://gisservices.information.qld.gov.au/arcgis/rest/directories/historicalscons/cad_scans/cad-map-queensland-colony-map-no2c-counties-1900.jpg
3. List of old and new county prefixes for crown surveys:
<https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands/maps-plans/historical-survey/county-prefixes>
4. Map showing Land Agent's Districts in 1967:
https://gisservices.information.qld.gov.au/arcgis/rest/directories/historicalscons/cad_scans/cad-map-queensland-state-map-q6h-key-map-and-lad-1967.jpg
5. Map showing Pastoral Districts in 1886:
https://gisservices.information.qld.gov.au/arcgis/rest/directories/historicalscons/cad_scans/cad-map-queensland-map-pastoral-districts-1886.jpg
6. Original run boundary maps available through Open Data:
<https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/historical-cadastral-map-seriesqueensland/resource/df69e531-2c08-4367-8c85-bbffbcbfcb0f>
7. Consolidated run boundary maps available through Open Data:
<https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/historical-cadastral-map-seriesqueensland/resource/53199ee8-df2a-4b6a-a3e4-82fb38597d74>
8. South east Queensland run boundary maps available through Open Data:
<https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/historical-cadastral-map-seriesqueensland/resource/dce5efdf-3e10-47bf-9887-fe5573e67865>
9. Cadastral parish maps available through Open Data: <https://data.qld.gov.au/dataset/historical-cadastral-map-seriesqueensland>

10. The Queensland Parish directory: <https://publications.qld.gov.au/dataset/historical-parish-directoryqueensland>
11. The Queensland Place names database: <https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/place-names/search>
12. Historical maps and plans: <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands/maps-plans>
13. Historical Map series available through Open Data: https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset?q=historical+%22map+series%22&organization=natural-resources-mines-and-energy&sort=score+desc%2C+metadata_modified+desc
14. Survey Plans: <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands/maps-plans/historical-survey>
15. Land records available through Queensland State Archives: <https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/archives>
16. Titles documents: <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/building-property-development/titles-property-surveying/titles-property/searches-copies>
17. Qld Government Gazettes (1859 to 1900) available through Text Queensland: <http://www.textqueensland.com.au/gazette>
18. National Library of Australia guide on finding Qld Government Gazettes: <https://www.nla.gov.au/research-guides/finding-government-gazettes/finding-government-gazettes-queensland>
19. National Library of Australia's Trove: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>

Land administration

Land administration is the way the rules of land tenure are applied and made operational. It involves determining, recording, managing and disseminating information about tenure, financial value and use of land. When conducting historical land research, there are three key components to land administration in Queensland that will assist, administrative area, property descriptions and tenure.

Administrative areas

The early administrative areas included **pastoral districts, counties, parishes** and **land agent's districts**.

Counties

Counties were administrative divisions created to assist in the development of unique property descriptions. Each county was usually 40 miles square in size and made up of a number of parishes. For example, the County of Cavendish was made up of 22 parishes.

In 1901, to assist with land administration, the number of counties increased from 109 to 319 resulting in some boundary changes.

The main impact was that the county plan prefixes allocated to Crown surveys changed for all counties. For example:

Figure 1: County of Cavendish

- Prior to 1901, the county plan prefix for all Crown surveys done in the County of Stanley was **S31**.
- From 1901, the county plan prefix for all Crown surveys done in the County of Stanley changed to **SL**.

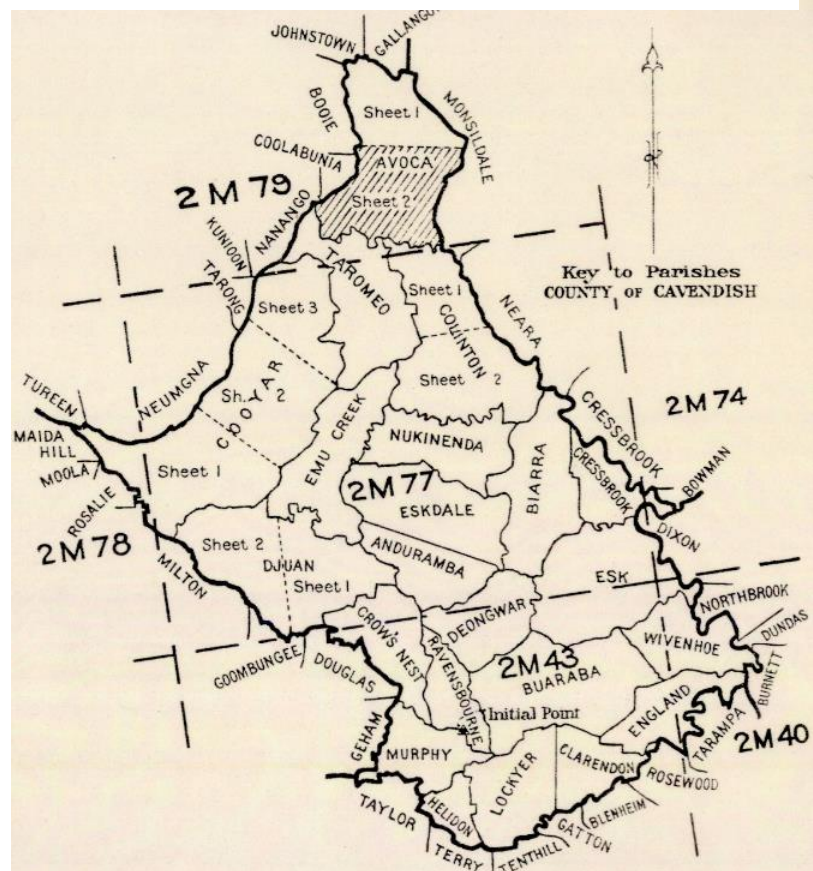
Resources

- Map showing original **County boundaries in 1890**
- Map showing new **County boundaries from 1901**
- List of old and new **county plan prefixes** for crown surveys

Notes

Knowing a county name can be important for historical land research as the same parish names can be found in different counties. For example:

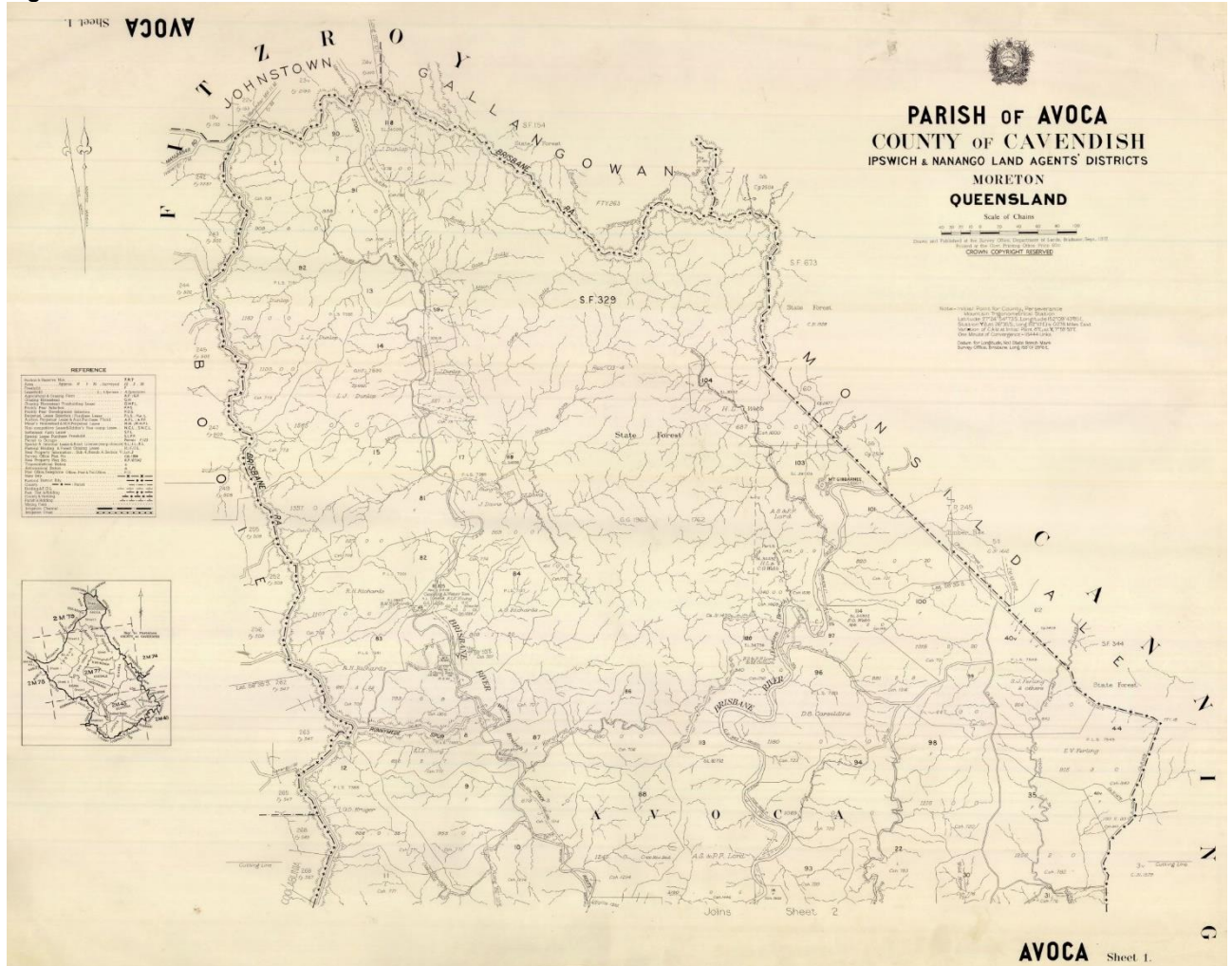
- Three parishes of Marathon (Counties of Cardwell, Cook and Rodney)
- Two parishes of Conondale (Counties of March and Lennox)



Parishes

Parishes were formed by subdividing counties into smaller administrative areas, usually about 25 square miles in size. The parish name was an intrinsic part of a property identifier in the original property description system.

Figure 2: Parish of Avoca Sheet 1



Resources

- Cadastral [parish maps](#) available through Open Data.
- The [Queensland Parish directory](#), last published in 1986, contains 80 maps showing parish boundaries.
- Search the [Queensland Place names database](#) to discover more information about specific parishes.

Notes

In some instances, parish boundaries were adopted from pastoral run boundaries and named for the pastoral runs, as they were similar in size.

Pastoral Districts

Pastoral districts were created to assist in the management of land dealings for leased pastoral runs / pastoral holdings.

A **run** referred to a large area on which sheep and cattle were depastured without the need for a lot of fencing.

A total of 15 Pastoral districts were gazetted from 1842 to 1873. These include:

- Moreton
- Darling Downs
- Wide Bay
- Burnett
- Maranoa
- Leichhardt
- Port Curtis
- North Kennedy
- South Kennedy
- Warrego
- Mitchell
- Cook
- Burke
- Gregory North; and
- Gregory South

Figure 3: Mitchell Pastoral District



Resources

- Map showing [Pastoral Districts in 1886](#)
- [Original run boundary maps](#) available through Open Data
- [Consolidated run boundary maps](#) available through Open Data
- [South east Queensland run boundary maps](#) available through Open Data

Notes

Pastoral run maps are the earliest map series covering Queensland.

Knowing the Pastoral district is important because the same run name could be used in a number of Pastoral districts. For example:

- Two Auburn runs (Burnett and Warrego Pastoral Districts)
- Four Delta runs (Burke, Darling Downs, Gregory South and Mitchell Pastoral Districts)

The name and boundaries of some pastoral districts changed over time e.g. initially there was just a Pastoral District of Kennedy but then it was split into North Kennedy and South Kennedy.

Pastoral districts could be classed as either **Settled** or **Unsettled districts**, e.g. there was a period when there was a *Settled* District of Port Curtis and an *Unsettled* District of Port Curtis. The type of district influenced the type of leases and their conditions that could be issued in the district.

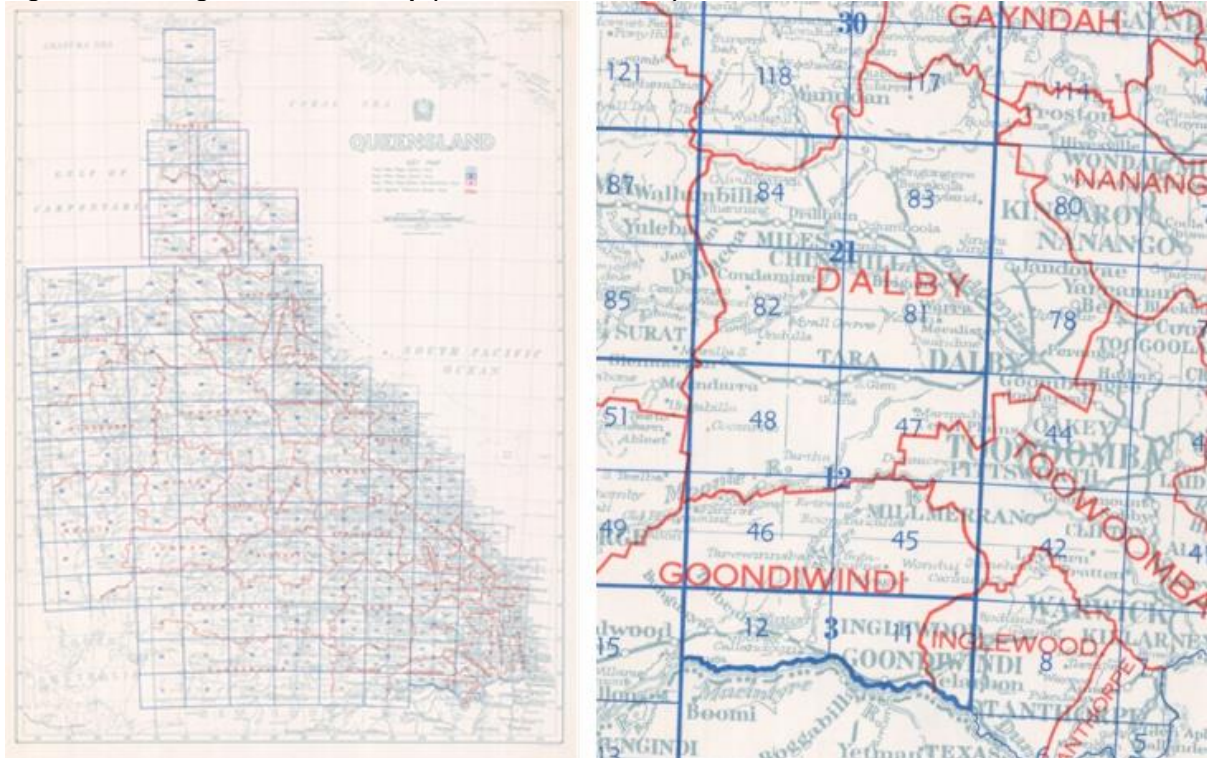
Land Agent's Districts (LADs)

Land agent's districts (LADs), also known as 'Districts', were created to help administer crown leases / leasehold land dealings, e.g. Agricultural Farm leases, Grazing Homestead leases etc.

Introduced in 1868, LAD's were divided based on an area that the Land Agent would be responsible for.

Knowing the Land agent district is important for historical research as the same lease number could be allocated in a number of Land agent's districts. For example, GF.1435 Toowoomba and GF.1435 Gympie.

Figure 4: Land Agent's Districts map (LADs outlined in red)



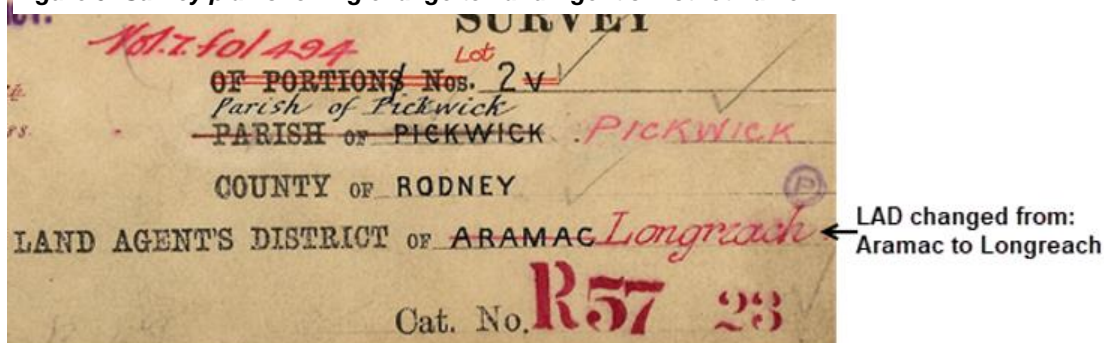
Resources

- Map showing [Land Agent's Districts in 1967](#)

Notes

The boundaries of LADS could change over time. In the example below, you can see the Land agent's district was changed from Aramac to Longreach.

Figure 5: Survey plan showing change to Land Agent's District name



Property descriptions

Property descriptions are how each block of land in Queensland is uniquely described. Two systems have been used in Queensland:

- Original property descriptions, and
- Current property descriptions

Original property descriptions

The system used to describe properties was influenced by where a property was located, the size of the block and type of tenure.

Property descriptions for rural / country blocks

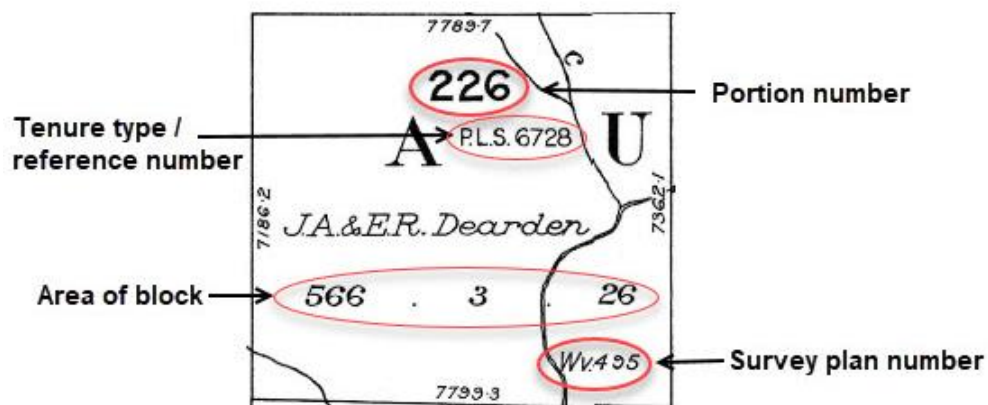
Smaller blocks of land in a rural setting were described based on parishes and counties.

Portion

When blocks of land were surveyed within a parish, they were given a unique portion number. The unique identifier for the block would be the portion number and the parish (and county) name.

- Example: *Portion 226 Parish of Beaufort (County of Waldegrave)*

Figure 6: Portion 226

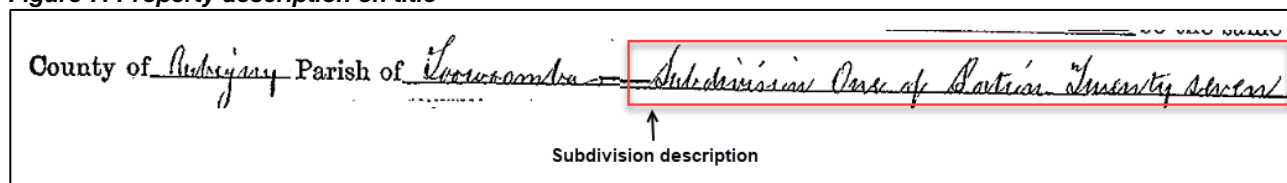


Subdivision

When freehold blocks were subdivided for the first time, the resulting blocks were described as subdivisions (subs) of the portion.

- Example: *sub 1 and sub 2 of Portion 27 Parish of Toowoomba (County of Aubigny)*

Figure 7: Property description on title



Re-subdivision

If subdivisions were in turn subdivided, the resulting blocks were called resubdivisions (resubs) of the sub.

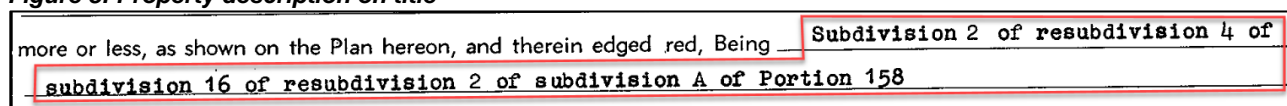
- Example: *resub 1 and resub 2 of sub 1 of Portion 56 Parish of Blenheim (County of Churchill)*

Subdivision of a re-subdivision

Resubdivisions could be further subdivided in which case the description of sub was again used. The next subdivision of this block would use the resub description and this pattern would repeat.

- Example: *Sub 2 of resub 4 of sub 16 of resub 2 of sub A of Portion 158 Parish of Dixon (County of Stanley).*

Figure 8: Property description on title

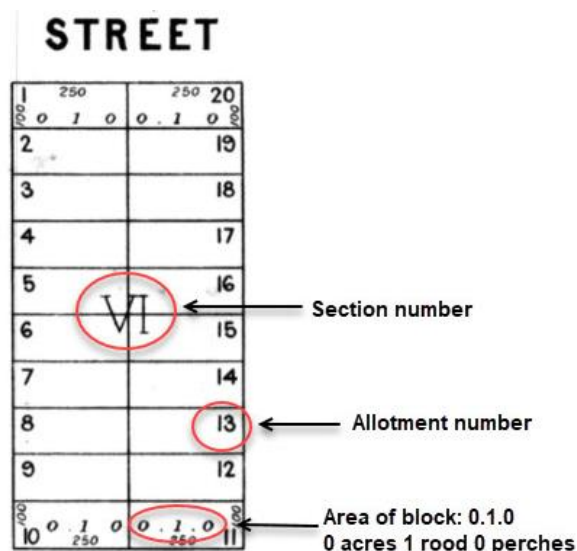


Property descriptions for town / city blocks

When blocks of land were surveyed within a town or city area, they were usually given a unique allotment of section number. The unique identifier for the block would be the allotment of section and the town / city name. Any subdivision would follow the process as outlined above.

- Example: *Allotment 13 of Section 6 Town of Ebagoola.*
- Subdivision example: *subs 1 and 2 of Allotment 13 of Section 6 Town of Ebagoola.*

Figure 9: Town allotment (Ebagoola 1926)

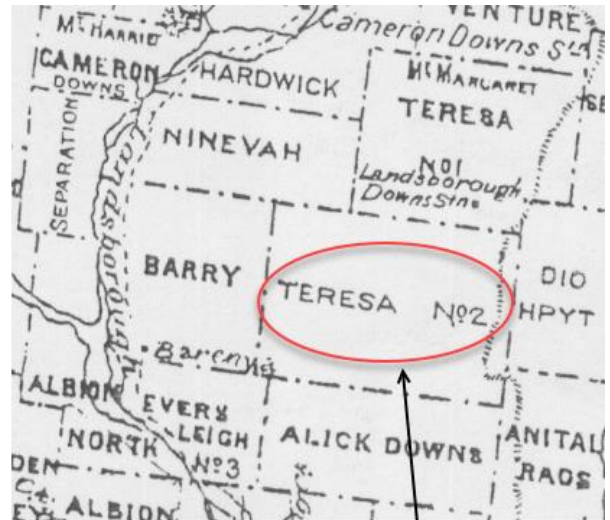


Property descriptions for pastoral runs / pastoral holdings

Large properties (known as runs) were identified by the name of the pastoral run / pastoral holding and the pastoral district that the run fell within.

- Example: *Teresa no.2 run, Mitchell Pastoral District*

Figure 10: Pastoral runs, Mitchell Pastoral District



Pastoral run name:
TERESA No.2

Notes

There were exceptions to these types of property descriptions and they included:

Use of letters for subdivisions.

- Example: *Subs A and B of Portion 15 Parish of Enoggera.*

Use of letters after the numeric portion number.

- Example: *Portion 10v Parish of Walla.* Initially just numbers were used for Portion numbers. In some parishes however where there were the creation of a large number of blocks, the allocated portion numbers were becoming very high. Because of this, a decision was made to restart the count in allocating Portion numbers at one again and add an alpha character after the number to create a unique identifier e.g. 1v, 2v, 3v etc.

Use of additional options to describe large blocks in town locations.

- Example: *Eastern Suburban Allotment*
Western Suburban Allotment
Suburban Portion
Suburban Allotment
Allotment (no mention of a Section)

Portion numbers were supposed to be unique within a parish, but there are a small number of examples where the same portion number was allocated to two blocks within the same parish.

- Example: *Portion 5 Parish of Capalaba.*

Current property descriptions

With the growing complexity of property descriptions for subdivided blocks, a decision was made in 1965 to introduce a new system of creating a unique property identifier. This system allocates to each block a unique number called **Lot** on the survey plan upon which it appeared and included the **survey plan number**.


- Example: *Lot 2 on RP123423*
Lot 20 on MH473
Lot 16 on MA34119

Over time, established parcels of land were converted from the original description to a lot on plan description.

- Example: *Portion 23v Parish of Rosewood (County of Churchill) was replaced by Lot 23 on C312602.*
Sub 1 of resub 58 of sub A of Portions 76 and 77 Parish of Toombul (County of Stanley) was replaced by Lot 1 on RP34223.
Khartoum Holding South Kennedy Pastoral District was replaced by Lot 5069 on PH495.

This current numbering system does not require the parish association so parishes are now only relevant for historical land searches.

Figure 11: Part of survey plan SP304527 dated 2019

<i>Plan of Lots 1 & 2</i> <i>Cancelling Lots 497 & 498 on RP 13158</i> LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Brisbane City LOCALITY: Hawthorne Meridian: IS 132810 + 4'20"		Scale: 1: 500
		Format: STANDARD
		 SP304537
Survey Records		NO

Tenure

Knowledge of the tenure of a block is important because this allows the most appropriate resource to be searched for relevant information.

There are three main types of tenure.

- Freehold
- Leasehold
- Reserves

Freehold

Freehold tenure is where the land has been alienated from the State and the ownership rests with the individual owner for as estate in fee simple. In 1842, the first freehold titles were issued over blocks in the Brisbane city centre and South Brisbane. Queensland became a state in its own right in 1859.

Historically, two systems have been used in Queensland with regard to freehold titles:

- Old Land System
- Torrens System

Old Land System

The Old Land System was used from 1842 in Queensland. It consisted of:

- Deeds of Grant
- Certificates of Indenture
- Application Packets

Torrens System

The Torrens System was introduced in 1862. It consisted of:

- Deeds of Grant
- Certificates of Title

The Automated Titles System (ATS) commenced in 1994.

Figure 12: Deed of Grant/ Certificate of Title



Leasehold

Leasehold tenure is where the State allows individuals or parties to lease land from the government on the proviso that the specified rent is paid and any conditions imposed on the lease are met.

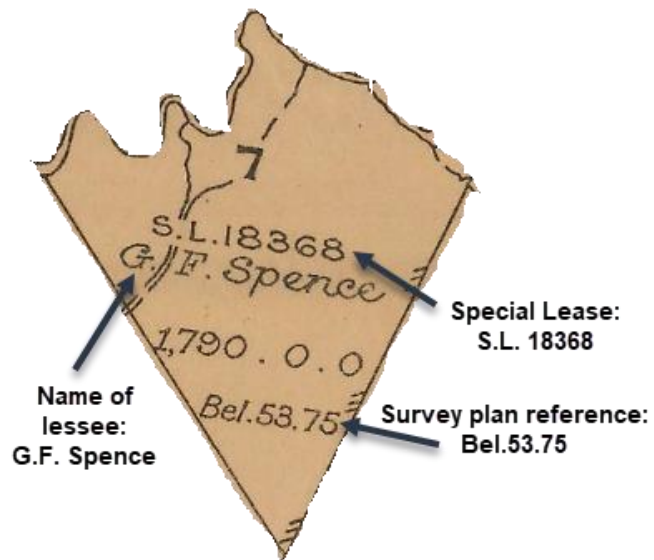
In Queensland there have been a number of different types of lease issued through time:

- Pastoral runs / pastoral holdings
- Selection leases 1868 – approx. 1885
- Named types of leases 1885 – current
 - Could require just a lease number e.g. **Special leases**
 - Could require a lease number within a specific Land agent's district e.g. **Agricultural Farm leases**

Types of leases included:

- *Special leases (SL)*
- *Unconditional selections (US)*
- *Agricultural Farms (AF)*
- *Grazing Homesteads (GH)*
- *Prickly Pear Selections (PPS)*
- *Occupation Licences (OL)*

Figure 13: Special Lease (2m16 dated 1954)

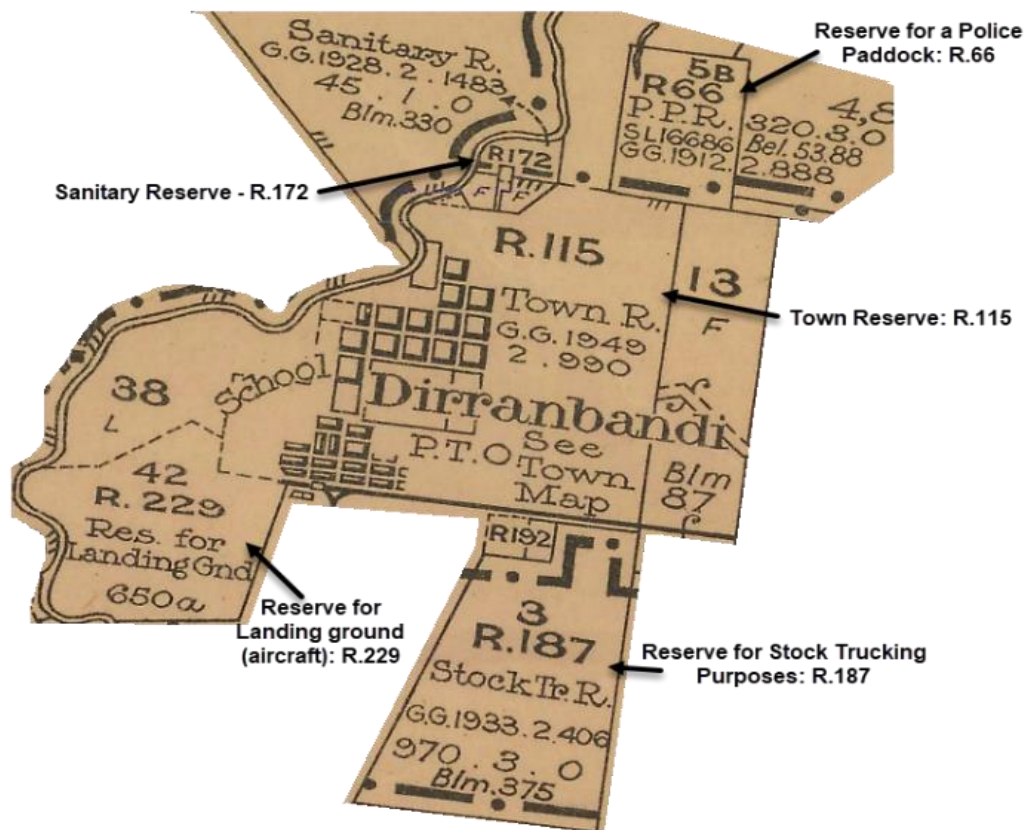


Reserves

Reserves tenure is where the State sets aside a block of land to be administered for a specific purpose.

For example land set aside for; water, school, sanitary, camping, quarry or police paddock etc.

Figure 14: Reserves (2m16 dated 1954)



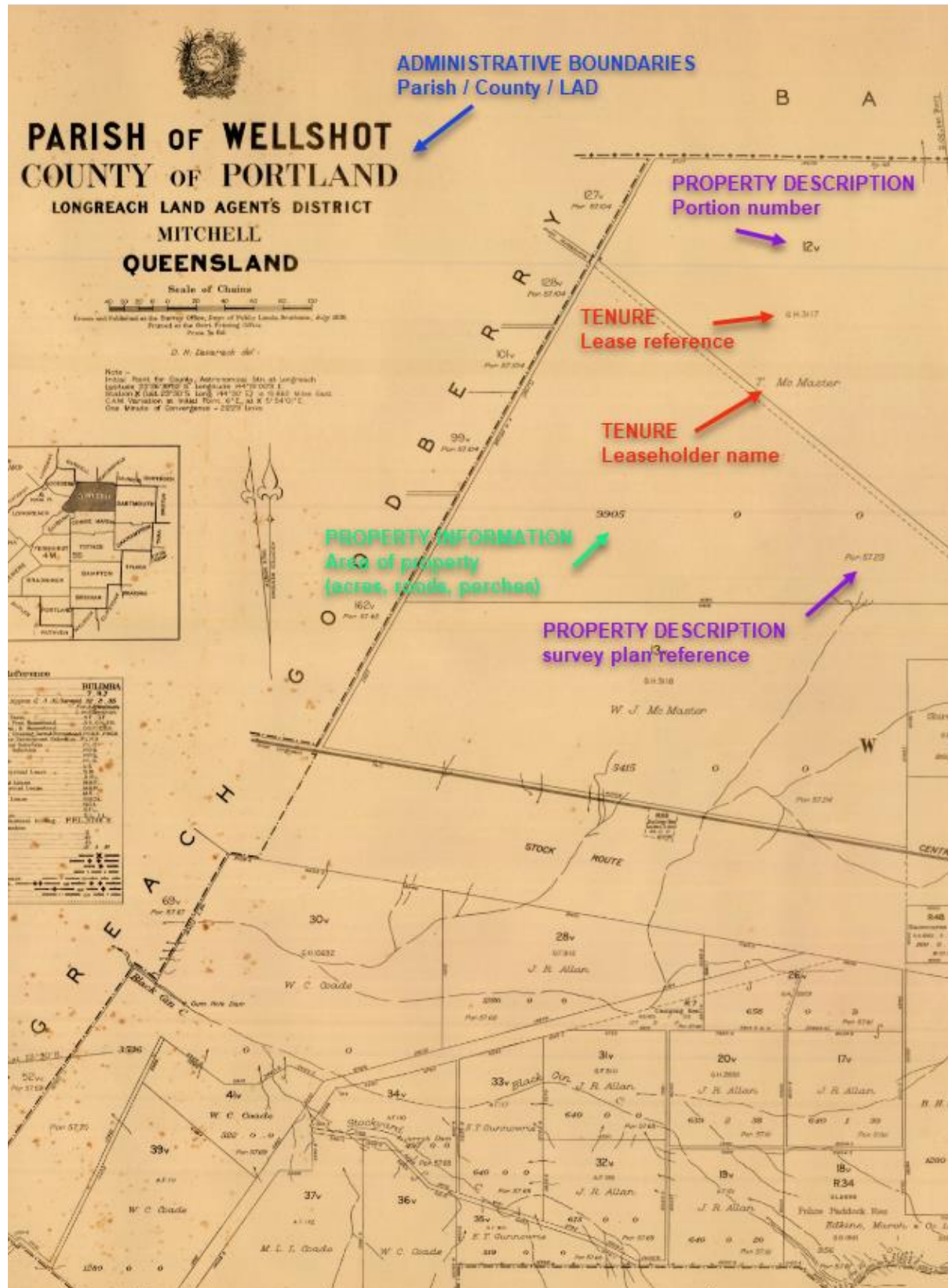
Where to find these components

These components can be found on:

- [Cadastral maps](#)
- [Survey plans](#)
- [Land records](#) – large number held at Queensland State Archives
- [Titles](#)
- [Queensland Government Gazettes \(1859-1900\)](#)
- [Trove digitised newspapers](#)

Cadastral maps show the network of property boundaries and land tenure information including property descriptions.

Figure 15: Part of 40 Chain Parish of Wellshot dated 1936



ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES
Parish / County

NARVES

County Names	NARVES	Pastoral District Boundary	Holding Boundary	Telephone Lines
Parish	DHRRAN	State	Parish	Homesteads
Holding	BANANA	County	Parish and Holding Boundary	Triples
Block	ARCHER	District and Holding	Block	Roses • Domes →
Forest Grazing Leases	FOLS	County and Holding	Gold and Mineral Fields	

REFERENCE

Fences - Rabbit Board	Rabbit	Rabbit Board and Dog	Rabbit and Dog
G.F. denotes Grazing Farm	G.H. denotes Grazing Homestead	L denotes Leasehold Land	F denotes Freehold Land
Astronomical Stations & Trigonometrical Stations	Latitude Stations	Calculated Stations	

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION
Portion numbers

TENURE
Freehold

TENURE
Type and number of lease
Leasholder

PROPERTY INFORMATION
Area of property
(acres, roads, porches)

Figure 17: Survey plan POR5761 dated 1894



Examples of land records include freehold titles and files for leasehold tenure.

FULLY CANCELLED X
 Form No. 6.
 QUEENSLAND.
 A. DEED OF GRANT FOR CONDITIONAL PURCHASE SELECTION.
 WHEREAS, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith
 and so forth:—
 WE HEREBY to whom these Presents shall come, Granting.
 WHEREAS, in conformity with the Laws and Regulations in force for the Alienation of Crown Lands in Our Territory of Queensland,
William Mackley of _____ day of June 1889, made application to select the Land hereinafter
 described by Conditional Purchase, and his application having been duly approved and confirmed, a Lease of the said Land for a term of
 ten years was afterwards issued to him, reserving an annual rent of eight pounds fifteen shillings
 Sterling: And whereas the said William Mackley has since become entitled to a
 Deed of Grant in Fee-simple of the said Land: Now Know Ye, That in consideration of the premises, And in further consideration of the
 Quit-Rent hereinafter reserved, We, with the advice of Our Executive Council of Queensland, have granted, and for Us, Our Heirs and
 Successors, do hereby Grant unto the said William Mackley his Heirs
 and Assigns, subject to the several and respective Reservations hereinafter mentioned, All that Piece or Parcel of Land in Our said Territory,
 containing by Admeasurement Three hundred and fifty acres be the same more or less, situated
 in the County of Marshall Parish of Tasmania
Section 3258 Spanish Point Port Phillip Three hundred and twenty-two
Being the land selected under the 25th Section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876
Commencing at the South West Corner of Section sixty eight and bounded thence on the North by that Section
 TENURE Freehold
 COUNTY Marshall
 PARISH Tasmania
 AREA 350 acres
 TENURE Freehold title holder
 ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES Parish / County / LAD
 TENURE Previous lease reference
 PROPERTY INFORMATION Area of property
 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION Portion number

Figure 10: Document no. 10 for Leases of 20 portions Land Agent's District dated 1907.

FORM D. S.

NOTE.—In the case of Conditional Selections, the Land Agent will see that the Lease issued is returned before the balance of **TENURE** Purchase Money is received. **Applicant name**

Application by Johann Sippel **Applicant name**
to purchase a portion of Land leased under 48 in 102-5

RECEIVED this 30 day of Oct 18 91
C. P. Jamison Land Agent
Glewich
30 Oct 18 91

Sir,

Being desirous of purchasing the portion of Crown Lands hereunder described, and which is now held by me under _____
I herewith tender you the sum of _____
pounds _____ shillings and _____ pence, as
the balance of the _____ year's rent, including the fees on the deed.

ADMINISTRATIVE
BOUNDARIES
Parish / LAD

Land Agent's District: Glewich **TENURE**
Register No. of Selection: 26 **Lease number**
Parish: Rosewood
No. of Portions: 116, 117, 118
Under what section of Act: 74

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION
Portion numbers

Finding information in Queensland Government Gazettes

The Queensland Government Gazettes are annual listings of Queensland government business. They include material relating to land.

Figure 20: Qld Government Gazette for 1899 - G.G.1899.1.590

TENURE
Lease type
Lease numbers
Leaseholders

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES
Parish / LAD

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION
Portion numbers

TENURE
Lease details

THE CROWN LANDS ACTS, 1884 TO 1886—MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT—continued.

Register No.	Lessee.	Portion No.	Parish or Resumption.	Rent per Acre.	Commencement of Term.	Area.	Year.	Rent.	Survey Fees, &c.
						A. R. P.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
GRAZING FARMS—continued.									
149	Fisher, George J.	5	Dunmora	1	1-1-92	2,523 0 0	8th	10 10 3	
71	Kidd, Robert	7	Woocoo	1½	1-7-90	367 3 32	10th	2 6 0	
5	Mant, George B.	1345	Miva	2	1-1-86	1,101 0 0	14th	9 3 6	
4	Pitt, George	1380	Cowra	1	1-1-86	1,280 0 0	14th	5 6 8	
72	Rich, Henry A.	8	Woocoo	1½	1-7-90	640 0 0	10th	4 0 0	
580	Ditto	10	ditto	0¾	1-1-98	660 0 0	2nd	2 1 3	3 1 2
73	Simpson, Mark	6	ditto	1½	1-7-90	640 1 0	10th	4 0 1	
22	White, Sarah	15	Kulloguna	1	1-7-87	1,088 0 0	13th	4 10 8	
29	Ditto	17	ditto	1	1-7-88	785 0 0	12th	3 5 5	
THE LAND ACT, 1897—MARYBOROUGH DISTRICT.									
AGRICULTURAL FARMS—									
775	Doran, John	56	Glenbar	4½	...	350 0 0			
641	Flint, John	13	Walsh	4½	1-1-99	34 0 0			
729	Fowler, William	24	Mungore	4½	1-1-99	160 0 0			
755	Gilebrist, James	156	Glenbar	4½	...	330 0 0			
773	Hibbett, William T.	61	ditto	4½	...	160 0 0			
721	Jones, Frederick W.	49	Mungore	3	...	315 2 25			

Finding information in digitised newspapers

Digitised newspapers can be searched via the National Library of Australia's [Trove site](https://trove.nla.gov.au/).

Figure 21: The Beaudesert Times Friday 24 May 1935 page 8

Tambourine Shire Council.

Balance of Report

PLANS.

A plan of Subdivision being for Re-sub. 2 of Sub. 5 of Resub. 1, of Sub. 2 of Port. 103, Ward and Tamborine, was approved of on the motion of Clrs. Geissmann and Plunkett.

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES
County / Parish

Figure 22: The Courier Mail Saturday 15 December 1934 page 24

AUCTION SALES AND PROPERTY LISTS

NEXT MONDAY, AT 11 O'CLOCK
POST OFFICE AUCTION MART, ADELAIDE STREET.

**Under instructions from The Union Trustees Company
of Australia, Limited**

400 Queen Street, Brisbane, and Mrs. G. L. Fowles, Executors and Trustees under
the Will of Edward Percy Fowles, deceased. Solicitors to the Estate, Messrs. J.
F. Fitzgerald & Walsh, Brisbane.

**Absolutely the Best River Site
in Brisbane**

**Commanding Beautiful Views of River, Situated on
the Corner of Hamilton and Crescent Roads, Hamilton,
UPON WHICH IS**

"BLAIR LODGE"

**A COMMODIOUS HOME with LARGE AIRY ROOMS
THROUGHOUT AND EVERY CONVENIENCE.**

IT IS AN IDEAL FAMILY HOME AND COULD BE VERY EASILY CONVERTED
INTO A BLOCK OF FLATS OR LARGE RESIDENTIAL.
THE TRUSTEES ARE DESIROUS OF DISPOSING OF THIS PROPERTY TO CLOSE
ACCOUNTS and IT PRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOME-BUYER
OR SPECULATOR.

Resub. 7 of subs. 8/10 and resub. 1 of sub. 11 of resub. 1 of sub. 14 of subs. 12/13
of allots. 8, 9, portion 1 Toombul, AREA 2 ROADS 13½ PERCHES.

TERMS AT SALE.

Isles, Love & Co. Pty. Ltd.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES
Parish

PROPERTY
DESCRIPTION

END OF DOCUMENT