Longreach Station
97 Galah Street, Longreach 4730
In an emergency, dial Triple Zero (000).

www.police.qld.gov.au

Area and History

The Guwa Aborigines are thought to have occupied the Longreach area before European settlement. In 1860 two men - William Landsborough and Nat Buchanan explored the country around the Thomson River, searching for suitable grazing land. (This River had been so named by the explorer, Edward Kennedy in 1874, after Mr Edward Deas Thomson of Sydney.) In 1863, a lease was granted to the "Landsborough River Company" for what became "Bowen Downs".

Mr Atkins was subsequently placed in charge of overlanding about 10,000 head of cattle to the Thomson River country. These cattle were pastured on Mt. Cornish a part of the "Bowen Downs" holding. Mt. Cornish (named after Edward Cornish, the first general manager of "Bowen Downs") covered an area of approximately two and a half million acres, reaching to the south for about 145 Kilometers. The Thomson River flowed through its centre. In the vicinity of 72,000 cattle were run on Mt. Cornish in later years.

The total was progressively reduced from 1887 when resumption of the pastoral holding of "Bowen Downs" (of which Mt. Cornish was a part) commenced. A number of smaller blocks (40,000 acres was considered adequate) which when thrown open to selection would barely have occupied one paddock of the original "Bowen Downs". Many of these selections have changed ownership a number of times since then, but descendants of the original selector families such as Avery, Coxon, Coade, Atkins, Hayward and Blume can still be found in the district.

In 1885 the first sale of land at Arrililah (a settlement south west of Longreach) was conducted, as it was thought by many that the approaching railway being built from Rockhampton to service the central interior would continue in that direction. Surveys conducted for the railway in 1886 pointed favourably to the present site of Longreach as being suitable for the Terminus of the rail line.

In November 1887 the township of Longreach was gazetted. The name "Longreach" had been used previous to the establishment of the town, by an outstation of Mount Cornish, which was located in the vicinity of present day "Nogo"Station. This station, like the town, may have derived its name from the 'long reach' of the Thomson River.

In December 1887 the first land sale of Longreach town allotments was held. Initially, these town lots attracted very little attention, but following the purchase of a corner block by the Queensland National Bank for 107 pounds, the bidding became livelier. A
block of land opposite the bank was purchased for 103 pounds by Savages (the site is presently occupied by the CES Office). A further settlement was surveyed and gazetted in 1892 at West Longreach.

Following the completion of the rail link in 1892, the growth of Longreach accelerated. By 1893 the town boasted a Post Office, Court House, Police Station and lock-up, State School, Churches, Business houses and other buildings.

As well as being the administration centre, Longreach is the largest station in the district. It is 709 kilometres due west of Rockhampton. Townsville is 650 kilometres away, 300 kilometres of which is unsealed road. The division has an area of 23,517 square kilometres and a population of 4,419. The population growth for the past five years is 0.5%. Temperatures range from -2°C in winter to 45°C in the summer. The annual average rainfall is 400mm. The country is flat, open grazing land most of which is unfenced so care is needed when travelling the roads, especially at night. Sheep and cattle production are the mainstay of industry in the area, but in the past five years the tourism industry has grown by 50%, and 20% of employment is based in tourism. Projections for the next five years indicate that the industry will expand by another 20%.

**Retail Outlets**

Longreach is catered for by an IGA and a Foodworks. Prices are marginally higher than regional centres and fresh produce is reasonably fresh (Depending what day you purchase). There is also a Retravision and Betta Electrical which sell all products at coastal prices. The town also has 2 butchers and a baker. The town has numerous restaurants, including a couple of cafes and a Chinese takeaway.

**Banking**

Full banking facilities are available at Westpac, National, Commonwealth and ANZ banks, Pioneer Building Society and Suncorp Metway Rural have offices in Longreach. There is an agency for the Teachers Credit Union, but the nearest QPCU branch is in Rockhampton.

**Hospital/Medical**

Longreach is served by a modern 40-bed Base Hospital. Some specialist medical services are available, and there are a number of visiting specialists who conduct clinics on a regular basis. There are five general medical practitioners, and one private dental practitioner. Should referral to a specialist service which is not available in Longreach be required, free air fares paid by the State Health Department are available to Brisbane. The Flying Surgeon and the Flying Obstetrician visit regularly, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service provide emergency medical evacuation when necessary. There is also a newly opened private medical practice in the Longreach Township.
The Queensland Ambulance Service have four full-time staff who work out of a modern centre. There are private dental practitioners, who do both private and public clinics. Medical insurance claims must be made by mail, as there is no local office or agency in Longreach.

**Education**

Many children of secondary school age attend boarding schools in larger centres, however state education facilities provide for children from pre-school to Year 12. Our Lady's Catholic School has facilities for pre-school to Year 7. The School of Distance Education operates in Longreach and also caters for outlying areas. Child minding is available at the Longreach Day Care Centre.

The nearest university is Central Queensland University in Rockhampton which has a campus offering first year subjects at Emerald. There is also a TAFE and an Agricultural College in Emerald.

**Sporting/Leisure**

A variety of public sporting facilities and venues include squash and tennis courts, a 50 metre swimming pool, 25 metre indoor heated pool, softball, netball, athletics, touch football, rugby league and rugby union, pistol club, motorcross, lawn bowls, golf course, and darts club. The equestrian sports are catered for with horse racing, rodeos, and polocross.

Longreach Police Station, with the assistance of the Queensland Police Health and Recreation Association, has purchased new Gym equipment which will cater for the most avid enthusiast. There is also a public Gym in the township which runs daily aerobic classes.

Four television channels broadcast to the Longreach area - 7 Central, Imparja (N.T.), ABC, SBS. Reception may vary depending on location. There are three video hire outlets in town and the local cinema operates on a number of nights each week.

Holiday accommodation ranges from four star motel to backpackers, six hotels, five of which have accommodation, two caravan parks, and holiday cabins. There are six restaurants and four licensed clubs.

The Stockman's Hall of Fame, brings visitors to Longreach, but it is not the only attraction of historical significance. QANTAS began it's operations in this area and their original hangar and office still exist, and both are still operational although not by QANTAS. The QANTAS Founders Outback Museum opened in April 2002 and is expected to complement the Stockman's Hall of Fame as another tourist attraction in Longreach. The Powerhouse Museum adds an important dimension to the history of the area and gives some insight into the pioneering spirit which overcame the hardship of living and working in an isolated community.

The annual show is held over three days in May and later that month the Annual Drovers Reunion. In July there is the Annual Diamond Shears and Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame Rodeo and Race Meetings are held from March to October. Easter in the outback is an event which sees an influx of tourists into the region until mid spring.
Transport and Communication

Telstra and Australia Post provide telephone and postal communications almost exclusively. Telstra Next G covers Longreach and surrounding areas. Optus has limited operation and Vodaphone does not operate. ADSL Broadband is available.

Airlines provide a bi-weekly service to Townsville and a daily service to Brisbane. The Spirit of the Outback train travels to Rockhampton twice weekly, there are two daily bus services to Brisbane and Mt Isa, and three weekly bus services to Rockhampton. A taxi service operates within a reasonable area around Longreach. Overnight freight and security services operate between Longreach and Rockhampton.

General Comment

Longreach is a friendly and pleasant place to live and work. Although the Outback is no longer as isolated as it once was with the improvements in communications and transport, the distance is still a factor which impacts on all who live there. It is not necessary to venture too far out of the township to be sharply reminded that the country is harsh and not to be taken for granted.

The limited specialist medical services may prove trying for those who have long-term health problems, especially where children are concerned, but generally young families agree that it is a good place to bring up children, as it is fairly safe and most needs are catered for.

The police community in the Longreach District is well bonded and friendships are forged for a lifetime.

Further information regarding the area can be located at www.longreach.qld.gov.au

Policing

To telephone this station or to contact police regarding any non-urgent matters, please call Policelink on 131 444. In an emergency, contact Triple Zero (000).