

## Eureka Sawmilling Company

### *Location*

At the end of the Old Eureka Sawmill Road (which is signposted as such); the road branches off the Childers-Biggenden Road about six kilometres from Childers (GPS 25 deg 17 min 19 sec S 152 deg 12 min 48 sec E). The road runs about two kilometres to a gate which lead to cattle yards made largely of the side of cane bins (GPS 25 deg 18 min 7 sec S 152 deg 14 min 0 sec E) which are at the northern boundary of the site.

### *Recommended Heritage Boundaries*

The recommended boundaries cover the whole sawmill site from the Gate at the northern end to the lagoon with boundaries possibly following the fence on the eastern side and drawn on the western side to include all the building remains. Given the scattered building remains which may all be associated with sawmilling operations on the site or have been worker residences, precise boundaries were difficult to define.

### *History*

Other sawmillers at Childers included C. Anderson (1897-1899), F. Eales (1911) and George H. Skillington (1914 and 1915). In the 1940s, L.A. Prossen, the Eureka Sawmilling Company and later J.T. Cox, G. & E. Slack and F.C. Heaton had sawmills. There were also sawmills at Cordalba (Ware Brothers from 1896), Booyal (William Day and also Benjamin Worklamn from 1914), and Dallarnil (W. Elliott and G.W. Elliott from the 1920s).

Although the Eureka Sawmill site is now occupied by the Panda Motel, this was its second site. The original site was about 10 kilometres south west of Childers in the direction of Eureka station, and is still marked by a 3 kilometre spur road off the Childers-Biggenden Road bearing the name Old Eureka Sawmill Road.<sup>1</sup>

When the mill was moved into Childers, it would appear that all the equipment and buildings were dismantled. What remains, however, are the posts embedded in the ground and the brickwork. These are sufficient to delineate the layout of the principal structures, including the main sawmill shed, and there are also the timber pieces which held the axles for the main belt drive attached to the posts in a line. The brickwork indicates the site of the boiler. The site includes office, houses and stacks for sawn timber.

### *Site Description and Condition*

The site may be described as ruins, but only the ruins of what was left after all the useable equipment and building material had been moved away. It is a typical abandoned site in Queensland, one that appears never to have been cleaned up like so many have. There are tall posts which supported the sawmill shed and some fittings to some posts showing how belting was used to drive the saws and benches. There is brickwork where the boiler(s) and engine(s) were set and posts or stumps which supported buildings (all removed).

### *Assessment of Significance*

The extent of the remains provides a picture of an isolated sawmill, which appears to have existed as a semi-self-contained settlement. Its significance derived from being an example of this class of sawmills (Criterion d) and also for its rarity given the small number of such remains (criterion c), despite its ruinous state.

### *Recommendations*

The site requires further study to assess whether it achieves the threshold for significance on one or more criteria. It may do so, given the small number of surviving sites with any evidence of sawmilling activity of this nature.

### *References*

1. Personal Communication, John Bunn, Childers.

## Eureka Sawmill Site south of Childers

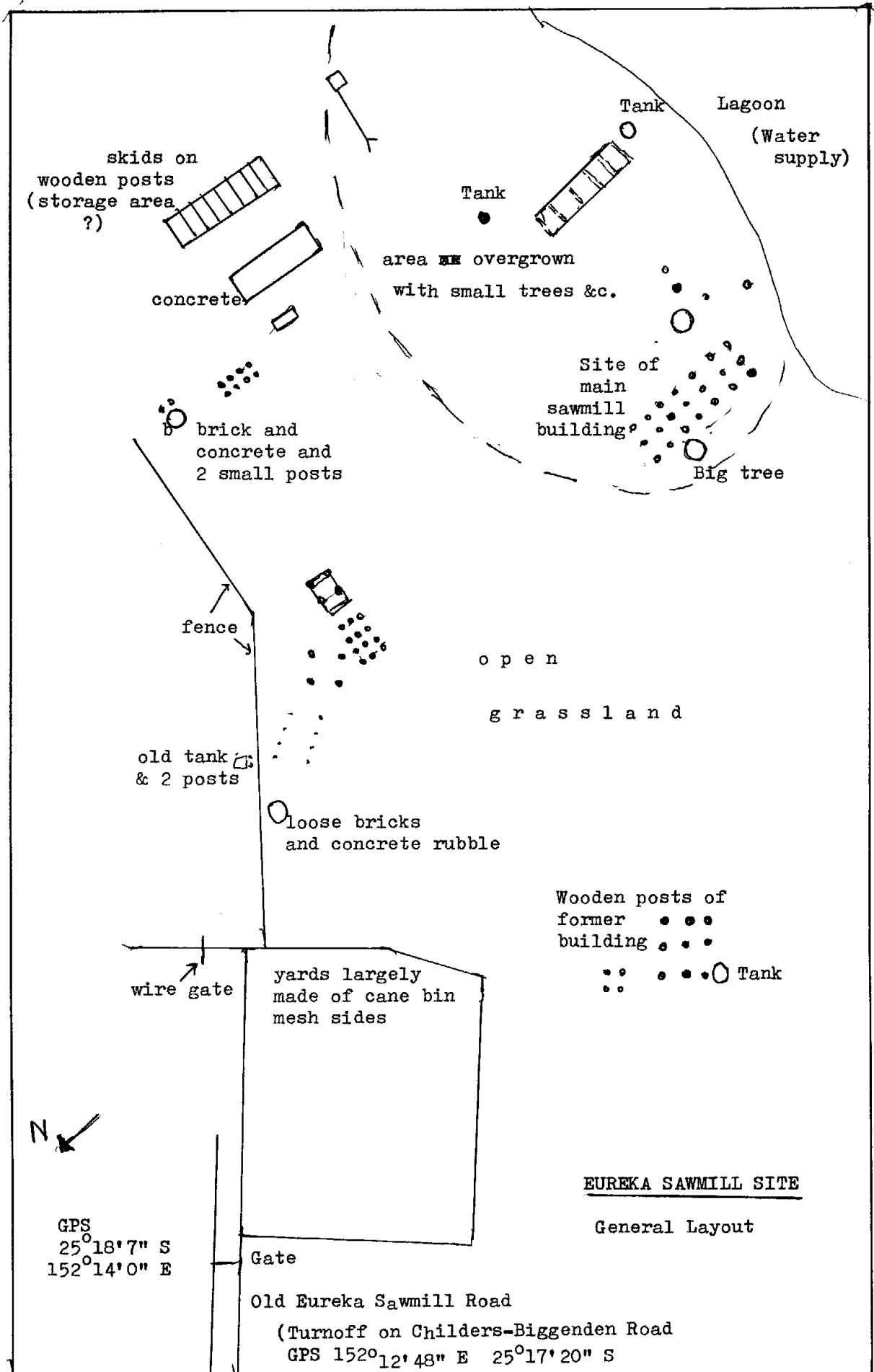


Series of main posts of sawmill shed with fittings for pulleys and belt drives



View of standing posts from former buildings at sawmill site

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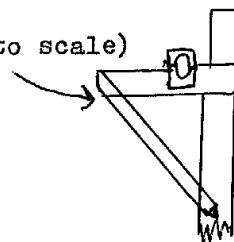
EUREKA SAWMILL

Scale 1:100

This area is obscured  
by undergrowth and  
no machinery remains

Area of  
main  
sawmill shed

Posts with bracket to support  
main driving power axle and  
pulleys with belting.  
Remains (not to scale)



rail

bricks  
overgrown

rails ≡

(Probable area  
of boiler and  
engine)

Disturbed  
Area







## Fraser Island



Section of road along formation in cutting of original steam tram up Bogimbah Creek Valley

## Mungar Tramway

### *Location*

The tramway ran from the Mungar Sawmill (formerly located on land immediately east of Mungar railway station) south west and then north west terminating about 1 kilometre south of Mungar Railway Station. The coordinates for the sawmill were 25°36'12" S, 152°35'36" E.

### *Recommended Heritage Boundaries*

The tramway crosses numerous freehold properties and parts are no longer extant, especially at the Mungar end. The recommended boundaries where the formation has survived are five metres either side of the centre line of the formation.

### *History*

Hyne and Son bought the Mungar mill in 1889 and from about 1894 to 1897 also milled at Mungar.

Percy and John Ramsay came to Maryborough from Sydney in 1870 to take over the Lindah sugar plantation and built the Mungar sawmill. Both ventures failed financially. Henry Armitage who came to Queensland in 1861, was later joined by his brother Edward who had experience pit-sawing on the Herbert River before coming to Mungar to manage Mungar for the Ramsays.<sup>1</sup>

Ramsays chose a site closer a site for the sawmill well away from the river. Consequently they decided to lay a tramway nearly two miles from the river bank to the site.<sup>2</sup> Both mill and tramway were completed by the end of 1873, although the river wharf was still under construction and sawn timber had to be manhandled from the tramway on the bank down to the river craft. The tramway was built with wooden rails and wooden sleepers, kept firm by wedges in the squared notches cut in the sleepers at three feet intervals and without nails. Spotted gum rails of 3 x 5 inches cross-section standing on the narrow edge, provided a fair margin for wear. Horses hauled the sawn timber to the river. Henry Armitage, as first manager, had a mill beside the creek with cottages and humpies for 40 men and timber supplies close by. With 47 employees it was labour intensive.<sup>3</sup>

As the timber close by was exhausted, Ramsays decided to build a tramway, same gauge as the government line then about to be built from Maryborough to Gympie, to tap timber to the west, an area now known as Yerra. The initial plan was for a line four miles long worked by locomotive.

At the same time the mill was enlarged with two new boilers 32 feet long, brick furnaces to burn waste timber and sawdust, and a brick chimney 65 feet high.<sup>4</sup>

The first section was reported as complete in August 1878 and awaiting the engine. The official opening was on 22 November when the engine named the *Dragon* was ready, made by John Walker and Co. of Maryborough. The mayor and Mr Walker sat on the buffers on the opening run up the line (so the newspaper report claimed) and others were seated on the log trucks. The locomotive reportedly ran at about 10 miles per hour, climbed inclines of 1 in 40, and went through cuttings and along embankments four feet high. The major structure on the line was the bridge over 18-Mile creek, 26 feet high, 255 feet long and 19 spans with two hardwood piles for each span, diagonal braces and hardwood sills. The locomotive was reversed on a turntable. The original terminus was named Kingston in honour of parliamentarian W.E. King. Walker referred to the *Dragon* contemptuously as a mere piccaninny as his firm wanted to build much larger locomotives for the government railway instead of their being imported.<sup>5</sup>

The *Dragon* was rebuilt in 1881 and hauled loads up to 30 tons, usually 20 tons, the steepest grade being 1 in 30; on the government line the engine was able to haul 84 tons and run as fast as 25 miles per hour on a test run. By this time, 1883, the Ramsays were in financial difficulty, but when creditors agreed to accept 10 shillings in the pound, work resumed in November.<sup>6</sup>

The sawmills were auctioned in 1885 including 2813 acres of freehold but there were no bids. The mortgagees, the South Australian Land and Mortgage Company, took possession but the mill and its 6 miles of tramway remained closed. The river line had presumably been abandoned with the opening of the railway when sidings were provided for the sawmill, linking with its bush tramway.<sup>7</sup> It appears the mill remained closed until after its sale to Hyne and Son in 1889 and subsequent use in the 1890s after Hyne's mill was damaged in floods.

Inspection in 1969 found nothing of the sawmill but the tramline formation basically intact from the sawmill to near Yerra (an extension of the line opened in 1878 making it 6 miles long).<sup>8</sup>

### *Site Description and Condition*

Close inspection of the sawmill site found no identifiable remains of the sawmill, either in 1970 or in 1997. A railway maintenance depot has obliterated the section of tramway visible in 1970 between the main North Coast Railway and the fork line linking the Brisbane side of the North Coast Line to the Gayndah branch. Rural residential home sites and dams associated with them have destroyed some of the formation particularly at the Mungar end. Sections of the tramway formation remain intact. Even in 1970 the main bridge was in an advanced stage of decay.

### *Assessment of Significance*

The tramway was second only to Pettigrew & Sim's Cooloola Tramway in the sawmilling industry. These two tramways, and the Yengarie Sugar Refinery Tramway (just to the north of Mungar) had a major influence in the standard of railway building in Queensland. The cheapness of these lines led to strong agitation to reduce the cost of construction of government lines. This led to a number of cost-cutting measures which proved to be extravagant in the long term - light rail which had quickly to be replaced, excessive curvature and poor gradients, using road alignments. In addition, the railway from Maryborough to Gympie was specially diverted to the west of the Mary River to serve the Mungar Sawmill and the Yengarie Sugar Refinery. Both enterprises lasted a comparatively short time but gave Maryborough the permanent legacy of a dead end railway and consequently it is not served by through trains on the North Coast Line. Plans to rectify the mistake never came to fruition. The tramway is significant (criterion a). The tramway was also important in the evolution of the timber industry although the loss making record of Mungar and its excessive costs meant that it provided a model that was avoided rather than followed.

### *Recommendations*

The remaining sections of the tramway remain under threat and action is needed in conjunction with Woocoo Shire Council to safeguard the remaining formation.

### *References*

1. P.J. Mathis, pp. 7-9, 27; R.K. Morgan, "The Mill at Mungar", *Light Railways*, No. 56 pp. 17-20; J.D. Kerr, "The Mungar Timber Tramways", *Light Railways*, No. 104 (April 1989), pp. 1-10.
2. MC 28 October 1873.

3. MC 3 January 1874.
4. MC 29 September 1877, 11 May 1878.
5. MC 26 November 1878.
6. Queensland Parliament, *Votes & Proceedings*, 1883-84 p. 1675; MC 23 October, 13 November 1883.
7. *Queensland Parliamentary Debates* 50, 1512-4.
8. D.G. Bailey, *Sunshine Express* April 1969 p. 22, July 1969 p. 71.

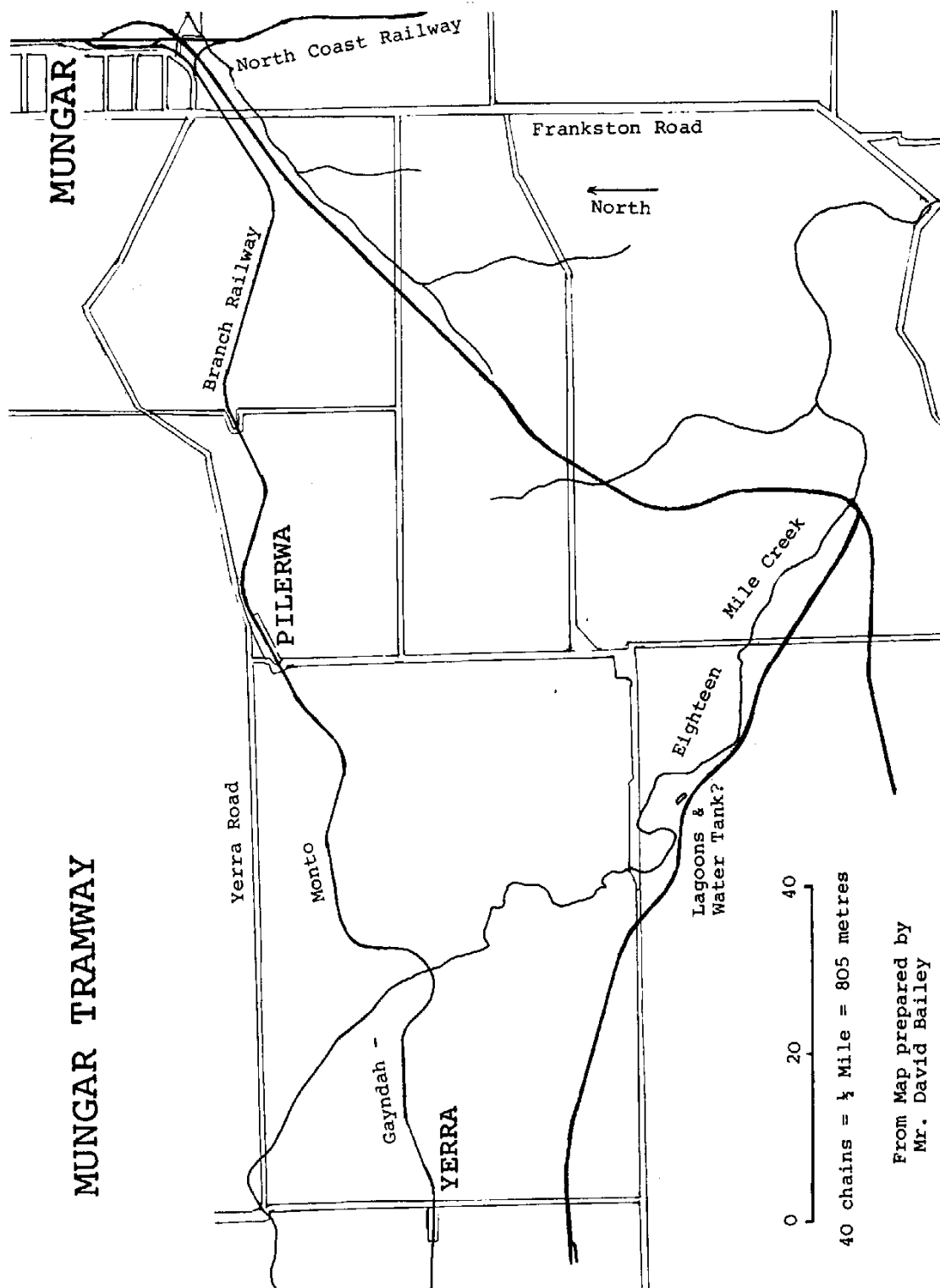


Section of former Mungar Tramway between dams, 2 kilometres from Mungar towards Yerra



Cutting on Mungar Tramway 3-4 kilometres from Mungar towards Yerra, Nov. 1976

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## Tiaro Sawmill

### *Location*

Adjoining the northern side of Hopper Street, bounded on the west by the railway line, at the northern outskirts of Tiaro. GPS 25 deg 43 min 18 sec S 152 deg 34 min 54 sec E.

### *Recommended Heritage Boundaries*

The fenceline on Hopper Street, the boundary with the North Coast Railway and lines at right angles to the railway fence and running five metres to the northern extremity of the sawmill buildings and a line at right angles to Hopper Street running five metres on the eastern side of the sawmill buildings.

### *History*

The township of Tiaro predated the railway, being for some years the head of navigation on the Mary. The Wide Bay Sawmill Company Limited was registered on 14 July 1882, a year after the railway opened. The company was unusual as it had many local shareholders including about twenty timber getters and sawyers. The company was not successful and was wound up in 1884. The Wide Bay sawmill continued to operate for another decade.

Norm Armstrong was listed in 1941-43 as milling at Tinana Creek, Tiaro and in 1947 and 1949 as N. and N.K. Armstrong, Magnolia Saw Mills. The sawmill was operating in and presumably before 1936 judging by its registration number (50), later 1269 and now 2749. N. and N.K. Armstrong were listed as proprietors in 1947 and 1949, and the trading name was altered to Magnolia Saw and Planing Mills, presumably when planing facilities were added. The original site of Portion 55, Parish of Bidwell gave rise to the name Magnolia which appears to have been retained with the move to Tiaro (Parish Gundiah Section 7 (as 1269) or Section 2B, Town of Tiaro (2749). The ownership changed to Hedera Pty Ltd trading as Tiaro Sawmills, and by 1997 it was Vetall Pty Ltd trading as Tiaro Timbers with Mr G. Starkey, Receiver and Manager, the mill having closed.<sup>1</sup> It seems to have been unable to serve the debt resulting from the extensive modernisation and rebuilding.

### *Site Description and Condition*

The sawmill had apparently been closed suddenly as a result of action by creditors. When inspected

it was an intact comparatively modern and fully equipped mill with new steel and concrete buildings adjoining the older buildings of the original sawmill. Some superseded equipment including pulleys and belt drive remained. The Canadian log handler, saws, benches, electrical equipment, compressor and tramways were intact.

### *Assessment of Significance*

The mill is an example of an enterprise in transition from old to new equipment, and representative of existing sawmills of the 1990s. It is both rare (criterion b) as an example of contemporary sawmilling which, being unlikely to reopen, provides an insight into both current and past sawmilling practice. It is an example of sawmills of the late 20th century and being complete and of moderate size, a good example of present sawmilling practice (criterion d).

### *Recommendations*

The timber industry has been a major element in Tiaro for most of its history and this site presents an opportunity to retain an example of both present day and past practices. The nature of sawmill sites necessitates a caretaker to prevent theft and vandalism and a commitment from the local community and/or the industry to retain it. Such possibilities should be explored.

### *References*

1. Copy of Register of Sawmills, Department of Environment; *Queensland Post Office Directory*.

## Tiaro Sawmill

General view of  
sawmill from  
northern side



View of modern  
log handling gear  
and log carriage  
under new steel  
building



View of  
remaining part of  
old sawmill  
section including  
overhead gear





