Name: *Queensland Past and Present: 100 Years of Statistics, 1896–1996*

Section name: Chapter 2, Climate and Environment, Endnotes, Section 4.

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QUEENSLAND PAST AND PRESENT

of world importance under the international Ramsar Convention. In 1995–96 Shoalwater Bay, Corio Bay and Currawinya National Park were also listed as wetlands of international importance under this convention.

World Heritage listing
The World Heritage Convention was adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization at its seventeenth session in Paris in 1972, and came into force in 1975. Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the convention in 1974. Of the 10 sites in Australia on the World Heritage List in 1993, three are in Queensland. They are the Great Barrier Reef which was added to the World Heritage List in 1981; the Wet Tropics covering 900,000 ha of far northern Queensland’s rainforest area and added in 1988; and Fraser Island, the world’s largest sand island, which was added in 1992.

SUMMARY

Queensland is the second largest State of Australia and covers an area of more than 1.7 million km², nearly twice the size of France and Germany combined. Its boundaries were set in the nineteenth century and mainly follow the 138°E longitude, the 29°S latitude, and the eastern and northern coastlines. Apart from the Great Dividing Range near the eastern coast, the terrain is flat or undulating. There are large areas of desert or semi-desert in the west.

The State has a variety of climatic types ranging from warm to hot and wet along much of the coast, to hot and dry in the interior and temperate in the southern highlands. Climatic extremes are a feature. Summer temperatures inland can exceed 37°C for weeks at a time, while winter frosts are common in the southern highlands. Average annual rainfall varies from several metres along parts of the tropical coast to less than 300 mm in the far west. Cyclones, floods, droughts and bushfires occur from time to time, causing immense damage and economic loss, and occasional loss of life.

A combination of natural phenomena and human activities has led to environmental problems. Various legislation and regulations have been introduced to try to protect the environment. Air quality is monitored at 20 sites throughout Queensland, while water quality is addressed by various government bodies. National parks, conservation parks, environmental parks and other reserves have been established to conserve the environment.

Endnotes

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22. Bureau of Meteorology, Queensland, *Climatological Summaries*.
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