SUBMISSION 41

I have lived in the Thirlmere area for most of my life and as a local frequented the Thirlmere Lakes often from the early 1950’s for swimming, fishing (at about age 15, I was a member of the local fishing club that had stocked the lakes with trout), bushwalking and abseiling with boy scouts.

I have also worked in the area for over the past [ ] years while working for the [ ] and now [ ]/carrying out a variety of catchment works in the Lakes area.

I will declare that that my comments are as a private citizen and I am NOT representing my employer in any way shape or form.

From an historical point of view, I think the information from “Sydney Water Supply, report by the Commission Appointed to inquire into the supply of water to Sydney & Suburbs 1869” may have something to offer the inquiry.

At the time of the report, 1860’s, Thirlmere Lakes were known as “Couridjah Lagoons” (the lakes also had several other names over the years).

The commission interviewed a local man on 11 February 1868, Edwin Baron.

The report also has a plan of the lake system, presumably about 1868-9?

On the plan it appears there are only three lakes.

Lake one (1) consisting of what we now know as Gandangarra, Werriberri and Couridjah. (in the DRAFT report, figure 5.9 July 1955, the aerial photograph also seems to indicate this).

Gandangarra is noted as being 20 to 30 feet deep (6 to 9 metres) with a “shallow” area connecting Werri Berri that is also listed as 20 to 30 feet deep, then an area that is noted as “fordable” into Couridjah.

Lake two being Baraba, noted as being “shallow water”. then a channel leading into:

Lake three being lake Nerrigobang, listed as “deep water”.

Although Gandangarra is now quit shallow (even when the lakes are full), it has probably had the most development in its catchment that drains from the rail line near and to the north of Slades Road where clearing for farming has occurred.

In the past there were also 2 cottages built near the road close to the lake edge, near the junction of Slades Road and Dry Lakes Road, some foundations and a power pole were still evident just a few years ago (I’ve not been back to check in recent years). There was also a jetty into this lake opposite the cottages, used for canoeing. The clearing of land in this catchment and construction of Slades and Dry Lakes Road and the many bushfires may have contributed greatly over the past 140 years to the sedimentation of this lake. Severe erosion of Slades Road and Dry Lakes Road had often occurred and prevented vehicle access until repaired.

Sedimentation of the other lakes might most likely also be attributed to mans influence over the past 140 or so years.
Local names for the lakes were/are as follows: Gandangarra (Reedy Lake), Werri Berri (Boating Lake), Couridjah (Swimming Lake), Baraba (no name know), Nerrigobang (Racklyeft's Lake), these all drain into Blue-Gum Creek. There was another lake near the junction of Bonds Road and Dry Lakes Road, it was known as Dry Lake. It was a large shallow reedy area, later cleared and drained and a dam constructed in the drainage line. It drained to the north into Cedar Creek.

Lake Nerrigobank water level may have been lowered in the very early days due to clearing, track construction and later a creek crossing. Blue-Gum creek may have eroded back toward the lake due to clearing.