Regional Histories

Regional Histories of New South Wales

Heritage Office
and
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
Regional Histories

REGIONAL HISTORIES OF NEW SOUTH WALES

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and
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning
Foreword

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Minister for Planning and Urban Affairs

and Minister for Housing

This book of regional histories has been prepared by the Office of Heritage to assist in the assessment of the environmental heritage of New South Wales.

It is a component of the NSW Heritage Manual prepared by the Department for use by consultants, local councils and property owners involved in the management of the State's heritage. It forms part of the Manual's historical guidelines.

As a unique overview of the history of the State from a heritage perspective, it is also of value as an educational document for the whole community. It is hoped that Regional Histories will help promote a better appreciation of the historical basis of the State's heritage.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR 1990 DRAFT
HISTORICAL GUIDELINES

History and heritage, history and regional identity have been topics debated in many corners of the historical and geographical professions and among those concerned with cultural resource management, under whatever name or auspices. The ideas and conclusions in this report have crystallised from many academic and practical experiences, from many conferences in Australia and overseas, from long experience in teaching and writing Historical Archaeology at the University of Sydney. The origins and stimuli are therefore very diverse and direct acknowledgement is impossible.

Since, however, we were invited to become involved in the challenge of the State Heritage Inventory, there have been more specific persons and occasions which have focused our thought. Our fellow consultants on the State Heritage Inventory, Jocelyn Colleran and Joan Domicelj, have been generous in sharing with us their perspectives and expertise during an exceedingly crowded and compressed schedule.

The discussion group on 31 August 1989 and the workshop on the following day organised by Joan Domicelj were helpful: it was valuable to have a chance to assemble in one room Jim Kerr, Meredith Walker, Peter Bell from Adelaide, Jane Lennon from Melbourne, Michael Pearson from Canberra and others. The workshop specifically on the historical guidelines, held on 11 December 1989, gave valuable reactions from, in particular, professional historians with experience in heritage studies. Those present on 11 December were: from the Department of Planning, Rob Black, Sheri Burke, Helen Godfrey, Meredith Hutton, Rob Power, Tony Prescott and Helen Temple; our fellow consultant Joan Domicelj; heritage consultant Meredith Walker; landscape architect Helen Armstrong; historical geographer Graeme Aplin, and historians Ken Cable, Terry Kass, Carol Liston and Duncan Waterson.
Practical, professional critiques of draft sections of the report came not only from the State Heritage Inventory Advisory Committee, to whom we were consistently indebted, but also from Anne Jeans and Aedeen Cremin. Suganthi Singarayar gave valuable and cheerful assistance with the bibliography. The support facilities of the Departments of Geography and History at the University of Sydney were gratefully exploited throughout the project. Deborah Edward and Ruth Bennett shouldered the bulk of the word-processing. The ready compliance of the holders of copyright for various illustrations is acknowledged with thanks.

(R.I. Jack and D.N. Jeans)

ADDITIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS FOR THIS VERSION
This publication of an amended version of the draft State Heritage Inventory Historical Guidelines was edited and prepared by the Heritage Office. Additional acknowledgements for this edition are due to Deborah Edward who edited and proofread the regional histories and to the History Advisory Panel of the Heritage Council of New South Wales, whose members commented extensively on the original draft Guidelines and this edited version (particularly Panel members Shirley Fitzgerald, Beverley Kingston and Carol Liston).
Introduction

This publication is derived from the draft Historical Guidelines prepared for the New South Wales State Heritage Inventory Project in 1990. The draft Historical Guidelines identified a set of broad themes of the history of NSW and seventeen regions of the state based on geography and historical development since 1788. The bulk of those draft Guidelines was devoted to a set of regional histories and bibliographies designed to assist the process of heritage analysis in NSW.

Subsequently, the Historical Guidelines have been recast. Discussion of the themes and their use will be incorporated in the New South Wales Heritage Manual (in print). The bibliographies have been converted from a static resource to a computer database which can be regularly updated — details are given in Appendix A. The regional histories are published here because it is considered that they are unique in providing a consistent historical geographical overview of the State of NSW in its present form.

This publication has been prepared by the Heritage Office and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, but it is important to acknowledge that the texts of chapters 1 and 2 and the regional histories (chapter 3) were written by the consultants for the draft Historical Guidelines, R. Ian Jack, Associate Professor in History at the University of Sydney and Dennis Jeans, then Associate Professor in Geography at the University of Sydney. Minor editing of the regional histories to take account of public and professional comments received was undertaken in 1994 by consultant historian Deborah Edward. The original text by Jack and Jeans has been retained fundamentally as written but the format and context of this publication are significantly different from that of the draft Historical Guidelines originally prepared by those consultants.
In addition, it is emphasised that the interpretations placed on the history of the state in these regional histories are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by the Heritage Office or the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. This is not a judgement on their quality but a statement that history, like any discipline, is subject to professional interpretation. This document should not be used to restrict interpretations made by any other professional historian or historical geographer undertaking professional analysis for heritage work. [See chapter 1 for a discussion of this issue by Jack and Jeans.]

Of all the regions, inclusion of the Sydney region in this publication was the one which generated most professional discussion and a special preamble for that section (region 1) has been prepared by Dr Shirley Fitzgerald, a member of the Heritage Council’s History Advisory Panel. Basically, the description of the Sydney region has been edited and retained in this publication to maintain the logic and completeness of Jack and Jeans’ geographic division of the state. However, the description provided here is necessarily on a far more general level than that for other regions. Practitioners undertaking projects dealing with this region (and local areas within the region) are advised to consult the wide range of scholarly publications available on the region - commencing perhaps with the publications of the Sydney History Group, particularly:


The seventeen regional histories are in chapter 3, preceded by discussion of historical interpretation in chapter 1 and analysis of regional definition in chapter 2. A key map defining the regions follows this introduction.

When undertaking a regional or local heritage study it is recommended that the relevant regional histories be consulted prior to commencing research. They are intended to be contextual summaries and not a substitute for thorough research into the history of an area. They also have value in providing a comparative view in relation to other regions (excepting Sydney). The bibliographic database and a specially-compiled folio of historic state maps also provide starting points for research [see Appendices A and B].
MAP 2: ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES UNDER THE CROWN LANDS ACTS

EASTERN AND CENTRAL DIVISION ADMINISTERED THROUGH THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

IRRIGATION AREAS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

LOCATION OF REGIONAL DISTRICT OFFICES

WESTERN DIVISION ADMINISTERED BY THE WESTERN LANDS COMMISSION

MAP 2
ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES OF NEW SOUTH WALES FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE CROWN LANDS ACTS
MAP 3: STATISTICAL DIVISIONS OF NEW SOUTH WALES
The system was first built to draw the trade of strategic border regions to Sydney, and only later as feeder lines opening up new agricultural land. A railway to Brisbane via Grafton was completed only in 1932.

USES AND ABUSES OF THE PAST
The past answers only such questions as are posed: it is neither self-explanatory nor an objective truth. Successive generations of historians have asked very different questions about the past and have sought out appropriate evidence from the enormous quantity that haphazardly survives. Despite the evocative work of archaeologists interpreting the past from physical evidence, the use of physical evidence by historians of modern periods is still disturbingly rare. The questions asked by modern historians have therefore been different from those put by historical archaeologists or heritage professionals today.

Nonetheless, history is read by a very wide lay public, which has formed its own views on the past as a result of the issues addressed by document-based historians. This lay public, particularly those involved with local history, local societies and local museums, has shown a greater interest in the way in which the past is intensely relevant to the present environment. There are at least six uses of the past common in Australia.

- The past as a source of community identity. People of a nation, state or regional community can identify with the struggles and achievements of their forebears through facts and objects which objectify their community past. In a multicultural Australian, care must be taken to avoid communicating an 'Old Australian' identity above that of post-1945 identity. This use of history is not without its possible abuses for political reasons.
- The past as exemplar. It is said that communities learn little from past errors, and this is borne out in the way Australian settlement has time and again thrown itself against the arid barriers that defeated past generations, only to be defeated again. Lessons, however, are slowly being learned
from soil degradation, deforestation and salinity. Perhaps the chief lesson to be learned from the past is the inevitability of change and the difficulty of forecasting it. This may be a lesson needed by some extreme heritage conservationists: the past and present cannot be frozen.

- The past sanctions the present, providing tried and tested ways of doing things and representing the values of society evolved over a long period. Those sites representing a democratic form of government give strength to the historic roots of that government. The town may be proud of its origins in the efforts of early settlers and miners, and with signs of progress exhibited in old buildings. The dangers here are of ‘old fogyism’ and the selective use of the past to justify a conservative and unequal society. Early historical conservation was over-concerned to preserve an upper class gracious past which was quite unrepresentative but which bolstered contemporary pretensions.

- The past as a reservoir of unexhausted ideas. The clothing fashion industry demonstrates this well. The past contains aesthetic, cultural, social, even technological features which can be rehabilitated and made to serve again. This is demonstrated in gentrification and the demand for antiques, but also in the ideas of ‘plaza’ and ‘mall’.

- The past as a source of aesthetic satisfaction. There is an attraction about the patina of age, but many old buildings are attractive in themselves, and lend variety to an increasingly placeless form of modern and post-modern architecture. Old buildings more often reflect a human scale of living lost in the present day. Care must be taken, however, to prevent present-day aesthetic preferences interfering with the conservation of a fully representative stock of past building: tastes change.

- The past as an economic resource. Full heritage conservation can only be achieved with this recognition. Firstly, many old buildings are solidly constructed, and are cheaper to convert to new uses than would be the construction of a new building. Secondly, tourists can be attracted to old buildings and precincts, and many represent a significant source of income to the owners of the building and surrounding businesses. This argument for conservation of the past’s built fabric is most likely to prevail in local communities.

What is missing from these uses of the past is any widespread realisation that the heritage item, the cultural landscape, the archaeological site, the museum artefact are all just as valid evidences of the past as an official document or a pioneer’s memoirs. This realisation is growing, but it will not reach maturity among the general public without more widespread encouragement from the historical profession.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

Academic historians of Australia have been preoccupied almost exclusively with the library and have rarely ventured into the field. The material remains of European society in Australia have only recently become the object of informed concern. The doyen of Australian historians of mining began his classic book, The Rush that Never Ended:

Across Australia are ruins and scars of a lost age. Amidst anthills a Cornish boiler lies in the sun, in low red ranges an iron chimney spreads its long evening shadow. Long tropical grass conceals a barrow wheel and the rubble of a miner’s fireplace. On old goldfields small holes and mounds of clay cover river flats like a vast graveyard.

It is evocative prose, but none of this evidence is used in the book. No one reading Geoffrey Blainey would discover what survives on any of the mining fields whose history is so magisterially analysed. Nor would anyone be persuaded that such mining heritage constitutes a major resource for further historical study.

This attitude of indifference towards material evidence was paralleled by a similar reluctance to establish criteria for using visual evidence (maps, plans, drawings, photographs) as more than mere illustrations to a documentary history. It was also
paralleled by a patronising attitude towards local and regional history in general. For a variety of reasons, colonial and early Federation Australia did not produce the clergy, lawyers, squires and schoolmasters who created the British tradition of local history-writing. Only in the past twenty years have the universities in Australia begun to see the validity of a local or regional approach to historical problems. The geographer R.L. Heathcote blazed a path Back of Bourke in 1965, but the pioneer at the regional level in the historical profession as such was Sir Keith Hancock of the Australian National University, who in his retirement in 1972 published the only great history of any Australian region to date, Discovering Monaro, subtitled a study of man's impact on his environment.

Hancock's major book appeared a year after the establishment of the Australian UNESCO Committee for the programme on 'man and the biosphere', which in subsequent years examined the 'dimensions of environmental quality' in relation to 'the social, natural and man-made environments' as its project 13. The symposium on 'man and landscape in Australia: towards an ecological vision' held in Canberra in 1974 as part of this UNESCO project was of cardinal importance. Its published papers, taken in conjunction with Hancock's Monaro two years earlier, constitute foundation texts for attitudes and methodologies in studying the cultural landscape. It is sadly significant that out of the twenty-seven Australian participants in the Canberra symposium only one (Geoffrey Bolton) was an academic historian and one other an historical geographer (R.L. Heathcote). Bolton surveyed the influence of environmental factors in the writings of Australian historians and concluded:

There is a need for further regional studies of the impact of man on the Australian environment; not forgetting Aboriginal man, whose use of fire and hunting techniques is now thought to have had a much more profound effect on the vegetation than has been commonly acknowledged. It would be particularly useful if some intrepid scholar were to venture upon a history of Australians acting upon their environment.

Some years later, in 1981, Bolton himself, intrepid as ever, published Spoils and spoilers: Australians make their environment, 1788 - 1980, but this bracing and pioneering work is short and many more substantial studies are still needed, just as most regions of New South Wales await their historian. Only New England, the Manning Valley, the Pilliga scrub, the Riverina and the Western Plains have commanded real regional histories to shelve beside Hancock's Monaro.

To put heritage items within regional and wider contexts, therefore, more general works on Australian history have to be used.

There is no agreed single interpretation of the history of Australia, of which New South Wales is a part. Rather, several schools can be identified.

An older generation of historians whose books are still in use can be identified as Liberal Progressives, telling the story of Australia as a movement from overseas rule to self government and an increasingly benevolent welfare state. Examples are G. Greenwood, W.K. Hancock and R.M. Crawford. Largely concerned with political history, these stories are products of an era which believed in 'progress'. The life of the common man was largely ignored, and the political links with Britain emphasised.

This school can be contrasted with the Old Left, which first placed Australia and its class relations within the context of economic imperialism, with B. Fitzpatrick and has recently turned its attention, by way of neomarxist analysis, to the oppression built into the development of Australia, as with R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving. The romance of developing a new country is lost in the story of class struggle, and the improvement, if it can be recognised, is seen not as the product of liberal democracy acting benevolently, but as the hard won gains of proletarian pressures. The 'Labour historians' such as Gollan present segments of these overviews.

The attack on the liberal view, which much supports the status quo, is continued by the feminist historians such as M. Dixon and A.
Summers. Women are seen as a particularly oppressed group in Australian society, whose history has been suppressed by conventional, mostly male historians. There is certainly a case for considering women more predominantly in heritage conservation.

Less critical of Australian society are the Populists who view the history of the country from among the ‘people’ broadly interpreted, being less concerned with politics than with manifestations of ways of life or with a distinctive Australian way of life. This school may have begun with C.E.W. Bean, but it was given full expression by R. Ward’s The Australian Legend and subsequently in the writings of K. Inglis and D. Denholm. P. Spearritt’s contributions may be said to lie within this tradition, which is unearthing the story of Australian life through the history of ordinary people and their institutions, often using oral history. Except for Spearritt’s Sydney since the Twenties, contributions to regional history have been very limited.

This may also be said of the New Radicals who write anti-establishment history of long-standing institutions such as education while pursuing a multitude of hidden groups such as homosexuals. The populists display no such tendencies, being content to chronicle upper class everyday life as part of the general scene, while the radicals exorcise such ways as imported and pretentious. The significant publication so far was edited by Burgmann and Lee.

Historians can thus be seen to share no common view of Australian history. Heritage conservation cannot simply adopt one of these views, for inevitably other interpretations will follow. Historians and heritage conservation have however in common a shift in the last thirty years to the compilation of a less ‘establishment’ more wide-ranging view of the Australian past, including the lower orders and more of economic activity. Whether a particular building is seen as a triumph of aesthetic sensibility or technology or as a symbol for working class oppression cannot be determined by the heritage conservationist, who must leave it to the historian, curator or educationist to determine how to interpret the building. It does present problems however if the conservationist wishes to add a text to the building, either in the form of a justificatory statement for its conservation or in the form of an educational guide. A problem-free history is not stimulating, and can be interpreted as a conservative attempt to maintain the status quo. Heritage history cannot be entirely neutral.

5 B. Fitzpatrick The British Empire in Australia. Melbourne, 1941.
Historical Regions

APPROACHES AND CONTEXT
New South Wales has a spatial arrangement that is determined by its membership of the capitalist world economy. The country was developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to deliver raw commodities to the core countries of the international system, at first mainly Britain, and it was supplied with capital and labour attracted to do so. Despite this peripheral role, investment and the very high productivity of labour in the resource industries enabled high wages to be paid, so avoiding the poverty of the typical peripheral country and making possible the rise of diverse local specialities, some of which, like dairying and sugar-growing, became themselves export staples supporting regional economies. For a time in the twentieth century, with political support and protection, even manufacturing employed a significant part of the work force, but global restructuring has removed much of this element.

The geography that has emerged facilitates the transfer of Australian resources and surplus to the core countries. Dominant here is the role of Sydney as head-link in the transfer of resources and capital, reflected in Sydney's urban primacy. Sydney's share of the New South Wales population was 45% in 1821, but then fell as inland resources were exploited, to 27.3% in 1851. Sydney's share then rose to 37% in 1911, 59% in 1971, and 57% in 1986. Various reasons have been offered for this primacy. One factor is the sparsity of resources elsewhere, which has prevented large settlements getting established but, primarily, Sydney in the nineteenth century was the major port. It had no competition or alternatives. The transport system, which in the days of railway building deliberately set out to channel traffic to Sydney, continues to do so in the more mobile period of automotive travel. For this to happen, it seems that a large city reaches a stage of self-sustaining growth, where innovations, thresholds and amenities contribute to an ever-increasing share of population in an urbanising world. Before railways, government made roads with the aim of decentralising wool
export to Eden, Jervis Bay, Kiama and Port Macquarie; these never succeeded, due to poor port facilities, little shipping, and the attractions of Sydney financial and mercantile houses even in the days of months-long dray travel. It may be argued that urban primacy is the most usual state for peripheral countries, and indeed it is widely seen. All that is wanted inland is the small service town which will supply retail goods and local services. This is how the country town developed, with some of them turning into incipient regional centres only recently. The affluent society, with its desirable consumption in the big city, has reinforced past trends.

REGIONAL DIVISIONS
Various sets of regions have been identified in New South Wales over the years for sound practical reasons. Today there are, for example, thirteen land board districts (plus the western Division), which exist for the purposes of the Crown Land Acts, as shown on Map 2. The state is also divided into twelve statistical divisions, different from other groupings: Map 3 shows these arrangements. Tourist regions were evolved to assist in the organisation and dissemination of tourist information and to co-ordinate services, but these have recently been abandoned by the Tourism Commission of New South Wales. Christian churches have divided the state into ecclesiastical regions: at present there are seven Anglican dioceses and ten Catholic dioceses in the state. Many local councils have formed regional organisations in a loose confederation: the eight non-metropolitan groupings are shown on Map 4. Oldest of all there are the Aboriginal cultural divisions, which have very few features in common with any of the subsequent attempts at regionalisation.

Seventeen heritage regions are now proposed. Most of their names are familiar, but their boundaries do not necessarily coincide with previous regions. Regions are conceptual tools. They are an intellectual creation to fulfil certain specific purposes. In this case the purposes are those of heritage planners and managers and historians interested in the tangible evidence of the state's development.

The identification of regions is dependent on the use which will be made of them. Definitions are instructive but capable of different applications, for example:

'a geographic area unified culturally, at first in economic terms, and later in a consensus of cultures which distinguishes it from other areas'. (Young)

'An area where there has grown up a characteristic pattern of adjustment to environment'. (American Society of Planning Officers)

'An area in which the combination of environmental and demographic factors have created a homogeneity of economic and social character'. (T.J. Woofter)

Professor McCarty has focused attention on individual regions falling into two broad categories: single-feature and multiple-feature. Professor Andrews' agriculture regions of eastern and central New South Wales, defined by 'similar crop associations and a similar stage of agricultural development' are examples of single-feature regions, or perhaps more accurately, of regions defined by concentrating on a single feature. States such as Victoria might be regarded as single-feature regions defined by central political control; and the state of Tasmania has been treated as a region primarily because of its geographical isolation as an island. But the more relevant definition of region is one which combines geographical and physical features with the changing society of the area and the exploitation of the environment. Professor McCarty's discussion of this social environment dynamic view of the region is worth quoting at length.

It is in the form of land use - whether the Gippsland forests remain the preserve of aboriginal food-gatherers or timber-cutters, or are cleared for dairy farms - rather than the land itself that defines the region. A leading theme in Australian history, the occupation of the open grasslands, has given
rise to many excellent regional histories. Margaret Kiddle’s western district of Victoria and Buxton’s Riverina are formal regions defined mainly by the characteristic of pastoral dominance; D. W. Meinig’s region is the expanding South Australian wheatbelt from 1869 to 1884. The main theme of Waterson’s history of the Darling Downs - the struggle to establish farming in a pastoral region suggests a multiple-feature region. Both Kiddle and Buxton, however, use the political feature of colonial boundaries to delimit their regions, Kiddle on the South Australian border and Buxton on the Victorian, and Buxton’s northern boundary is arbitrary in that there is no clear break in pastoral land use. The inconsistency is resolved if one accepts that both historians are concerned primarily with the social identity, and unity, of a [pastoral] region ....

For a regional social history to achieve coherence, and significance, it is most important that the historian recognises that the dominant characteristic is the regional society itself, rather than the economic activity, such as wool-growing, on which it is based.\(^\text{17}\)

The full realisation of regional society calls for the skilful integration of rural and urban experience. Professor Weston Bate has been much more critical than McCarrt of the failure of most regional historians in Australia to integrate town and country. The strictures which he levelled at Margaret Kiddle’s history of the Western District of Victoria, where the single chapter devoted to towns is “set apart from the core of her work”\(^\text{18}\) might just as appropriately have been applied to Professor Walker’s *Old New England*. In Walker’s chapter on the “townsmen” of nineteenth-century New England, integration starts and ends with the observation: “Yet by the time the clock struck midnight [in Armidale] the lights had dimmed, the excitement abated and the countrymen had set out for home over the rough well-rutted tracks.”\(^\text{19}\)

As a means to an end, the coherent organisation of information into a story, the regional worker needs:

- to encompass the whole area under examination,
- to realise that some areas have great distinctiveness while others are less coherent, so that treatment at a subregional scale is often indicated,
- to avoid a mere catalogue of contents. There is a need to demonstrate continuity over time and an interdependence of commodity and culture,
- to avoid determinism. Human choices are contingent and operate in a wider world context than the region itself,
- to accept popular regional identity.

A regional study can make use of statistics, but is essentially concerned with qualitative and literary analysis seeking out character and culture.

**HERITAGE REGIONS OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

Heritage regions have been distinguished in New South Wales at first in terms of topographic identity, but taking into account popular identity (Monaro, New England, Riverina, Illawarra) and the processes of occupying the country already outlined. Common processes and patterns of settlement have developed within certain regions, while others present varied patterns in which there is both unity and complementarity. No part of New South Wales is left outside the regional system, and all regions coincide with local government boundaries as at 1996. The limits of location of 1829 and the Western Division boundary of 1884 are preserved virtually intact.

The Sydney region is defined by the present commuting boundaries of Sydney, which have extended to the Blue Mountains, central coast and the corridor leading southwest to Mittagong and Bowral. Mostly this region is bounded by sandstone uplands. [See the Preamble to Region 1: Sydney for comments on the distinctive nature of the Sydney region.]

The Lower Hunter region has a unified history as the old coalfields area centred on Newcastle, its port and industries. The history of this region is sufficiently complex to separate it from the other more unitary parts of the Hunter Valley.
These however form a region, surrounded by uplands except in the Cassilis Gate, and united by the river and its associated lowlands. Intensive agriculture, dairying and grazing have been the chief land uses since early European times.

The Manning Valley and Great Lakes region is given unity by the Manning River, and its twin towns of Taree and Gloucester. The southernmost of the northern river valleys, it has not shared their semi-tropical character, and is much more a complementary mixture of upland and lowland.

The northern rivers region comprises a series of river valleys with extensive alluvial soils given unity by a common history and industries, from cedar to sugar, maize and dairying. Resort and retirement development have been important. Residents probably identify with their own valley rather than with the region as a whole.

The New England region has a local identity firmly embedded in its history and rather clear topographic boundaries. An early area of grazing expansion, its attitudes, pastures and Scots ancestry give it a physical and cultural unity.

Broken country separates New England from the level Darling Plain to the west. Defined by aridity on its western boundary, signified by the shift from woodland to scrub and bushland, it extends over the plains draining rivers to the Darling, including subregions such as Liverpool Plains and the Pilliga Scrub.

The Central Tableland region is an area of older settlement on solid geology which made gold mining an important phase in its development. Mostly within the Limits of Location, it has older towns and settlement than areas further out. Significantly it includes the Lithgow coalfield and associated industries, though Bathurst is the chief centre.

To the west lies a marginal area, invaded by wheat grazing rather later, and still marginal for farming in the west. Urban development centres on the old mining towns of Parkes and Forbes, but Condobolin and Hillston are important centres.

The Southern Tableland represents another area of early settlement as pioneers entered the grassy plains from Goulburn. The limits of location provide its approximate western boundary and it is separated from the coast by a steep scarp with few passes.

To the west is the northernmost of two regions which together comprise the ‘Riverina’ broadly interpreted. This Murrumbidgee Region comprises the middle and lower Murrumbidgee river, terminating sharply in the west by intensive cultivation in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area which gives way to an extensive pastoralism. In the east it is safe wheat-sheep country.

The southern part of ‘Riverina’ is in the Murray region. On the east this comprises the more rugged areas of the upper Murray, giving way at the Hume Weir to rolling grazed hills, and to the east by wheat-sheep and pastoralism. Both the Murrumbidgee and Murray region are tied together by their past usage for river navigation and their present usage for irrigation.

The Monaro Region is clearly defined by surrounding rugged topography as a grassy plain, with its northern entrance at Cooma, but consists of two distinct subregions, the plain itself and the Kosciusko Massif with its National Park and Snowy River Scheme.

The South Coast region has a unified history in its grazing, dairying, tourism and fishing industries. It consists of areas of good land on alluvials and granites, separately by wide areas of unproductive sandstone and much forest.

The Illawarra Region is one of those recognised by early settlers as distinctive, comprising fertile lowlands, easily accessible by boat to Sydney. The western boundary is clearly marked, as is the South Coast, by a steep scarp rising inland. The southern boundary is fixed by the extensive Shoalhaven shire southwards of what is desirable on historical and topographic grounds. There are distinctive subregions in the coalfield and industrial areas of the Wollongong - Port Kembla district, in the Jamberoo Valley and Kangaroo
Valley, in the dairy country and Berry, and the sandstone country south of Nowra with its coastal resorts and fishing ports.

In the far west the Western Plains Region takes in what was defined as the Western Division in the 1884 Crown Lands Act, so far as shire boundaries permit. It is semi-arid extensive grazing for sheep and to a lesser extent cattle, managed as to its land tenure by the Western Lands Commission. River navigation has been important, as has mining, in providing the few urban settlements found here.

This regional division, with its physiological, vegetational and historical distinctiveness is suggested as a basis for coherent regional histories.

Regional Histories

The regional histories which follow have been prepared in order to help achieve an overview of the State's history, on a regional basis. They aim to redress a geographical imbalance in existing analyses of the State's history though, in doing so, they necessarily tend to suppress the complexity and significance of the dominant region, Sydney.

The regional histories were originally compiled as part of the State Heritage Inventory Project draft *Historical Guidelines* to provide an historical context for the task of heritage identification. Since there is still no history of the State of New South Wales and there is also an acute shortage of regional studies, this set of histories, state-wide, is a long overdue aid to the comprehension of the State's heritage. The draft Guidelines also included a bibliography, a specially-compiled folio of maps and a series of themes relating to the settlement of New South Wales.

The Guidelines have been revised following testing of the State Heritage Inventory tools in four pilot heritage studies, and receipt of comments from consultants undertaking the pilot studies, some professional bodies, other practitioners and a number of councils and historical societies across the State. The historical themes and bibliography are now separate components of the project (see Introduction).

Seventeen heritage regions based on historical and geographical criteria have been identified in this report. Within a restricted time, two consultants have written histories of each of these regions. Dennis Jeans has been responsible for regions 1 to 7 and region 15, Ian Jack for regions 8 to 14, 16 and 17.

No single formula for a regional history has been used throughout, although all the histories rely on a blending of the chronological and the thematic. Because of restricted time, annotations have been provided for only seven of the regions and maps and other illustrations have been added to clarify the development of nine of the regions.

At the beginning of each regional history is a list of the 1996 local government areas within the region and a brief geographical description of the region. Map 1 on page three shows the location of the regions.