



*17 December 2001 - 9 February 2002*



GLADSTONE REGIONAL  
art gallery  
museum

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Open: 10am - 5pm Monday to Saturday  
Public holidays as advertised

# Waves of Settlement Port Curtis 1983 - 2001 High Water - Looking to the Future

By the 1980's Gladstone - Calliope was a self assured community – its commercial base was secure, jobs were available, the infrastructure of modern living was in place, and there were facilities for education, health and aged care.

All that notwithstanding, everything was a bit raw and there was increasing pressure on all levels of government to upgrade. People wanted a wider range of education and health care services, a cleaner environment in which industry was less physically intrusive, infrastructure for a richer and more diverse cultural and sporting lifestyle.

The last two decades of the twentieth century is largely the story of what has been done to address those issues.

The main impetus for change came from popular demand – demand that was broadly based and sharply focussed. In the early 1980s levels of frustration at underfunding of social amenity and lack of response to their demands was such that citizens threatened to ban further industrial development; demonstrations were not entirely peaceful and clearly something had to be done.

Education and health care were high on the agenda and since that time education has taken several steps forward, with new primary and high schools, the expansion of the Gladstone College of TAFE, (from a small beginning in 1982 to a facility in videoing with Health care and general social infrastructure has similarly expanded, and the appointments of people to community care positions and community development positions have meant an appreciable improvement in the delivery of care to the people. With volunteers filling the gap in the infrastructure, organisations such as the Gladstone Social Development Board, (which met in a room in Tank Street above a fish and chip shop) the Community Advisory Service and others led the way for the expansion and improvement of social services. Opening of The City Theatre now the Gladstone Entertainment Centre have had the same effect on cultural activity, which was further boosted when the Gladstone Regional Art Gallery and Museum and the Gladstone City Library were separately housed (in 1985 the Art Gallery Museum moved next door into the refurbished old Town Hall). Added to these, such community museums as the Calliope River Historical Village which opened in 1984, and the Boyne Valley Historical Society and Gladstone Maritime History Museum, launched with the impetus of Australian bicentenary



Raising the dome for the Engineering Centre building at CQU .  
Central Queensland University  
photograph





Visiting US Marines view *Invisible Voices* by Fiona Foley  
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery & Museum  
photograph

celebrations c1988, and commercial galleries like the Potter's Place and the Cedar Galleries, and what you have is a vibrant and diverse cultural life.

A further response to community criticism was the establishment in 1983 of Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited, with members from various authorities, the commercial sector and businesses of the Gladstone, Calliope and Miriam Vale communities. The main task of the organisation has been the promotion of the Port Curtis area, establishing links into Australia's tourist network,

and encouraging citizens to take personal responsibility for their surroundings.

Popular pressure and the efforts of the Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited, the Gladstone Council Open Space Development Control Plan and other organisations such as Gladstone Area Water Board and the Gladstone Port Authority, has lead to several large developments. The Gladstone Green Belt park and sporting facilities, Tondoon Botanic Gardens, the Rotary waterfall and park developments on and around Auckland Hill, the very popular marina and parks on Auckland creek as well as park developments at Barney point. Together with the picnic facilities at Lake Awoonga and the Millennium Esplanade at Tannum Sands and the Gladstone Port Authority's new Spinnaker Park. Add to these a myriad of smaller projects and the increasing use of cleaner more environmentally friendly industrial methods, and it appears that some of the demands of the early 80s have been well met.

At the interface of industry and the community, there have also been improvements. New industrial developments have been constrained by environmental concerns and established plants have been induced to up-grade facilities, so that accusations of pollution and despoliation levels are fewer. As well, water and power supplies, rail connections, and port facilities have all been up-graded. The arrival of natural gas and the dredging of the Golding By-pass Channel in the Harbour (adding flexibility and speed of handling to the Port facility) must also be mentioned. Steps have been taken to lower air and water pollution levels and some areas of degradation have or are being rehabilitated. While the destruction of mudflats and mangroves continue unabated in others.

Wharf and rail facilities, reliable power and water supplies, continue to attract industries while many



Cassy Lives, skate park  
Photograph by Bryan Jordan 2001



Dave Robinson at the Millennium Esplanade Tannum Sands

others investigate the possibility of establishing here –sometimes taking more than a decade to make the decision. The phrase ‘ghost industries’ has been coined to describe them.

Changes to local government and electoral boundaries have not always been happy ones-and the possibility of an amalgamation of Gladstone and Calliope dominated the news headlines during 1991. The merge was fiercely resisted by Calliope residents-who feared the loss of their industrial giants. Though vocally represented at the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (EARC) by their elected leaders a referendum ultimately gave Gladstone and Calliope residents their say on amalgamation. In 1984 a proposed coke plant on land west of the Calliope River provoked heated exchanges between the Councils, as Gladstone tried to subsume the land in

question. The relationship between the two local authorities is not often antagonistic, though rivalry is often expressed. In 1990, for instance, one resident of Calliope explained that she was a “Happy Calliopeite” because Calliope ‘has the lot, but doesn’t have the coal dust or the industrial pollution’.

By 1995 the region had changed so much it failed to return an ALP candidate. Liz Cunningham had been a Calliope Shire councillor and was elected Shire Chairman in 1994 before successfully contesting the State seat of Gladstone in 1995. She has retained the seat, sometimes by nail bitingly slim margins (as in 1995, when Leo Zussino stood on the ALP ticket), and has played a pivotal role in State politics. As Labour Premier Wayne Goss found to his cost she can be truly independent, and straight to the point.



Mangrove interpretation tour Environmental Protection Agency photograph



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