

## QUEENSLAND 1898-1908 PICTORIAL POSTAL CARDS

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For many years after postal cards were first introduced by Austria and Hungary in 1869, only postal stationery cards could be used to obtain the special postcard rates. During the 1890s, however, countries began allowing private postcards to be used provided they met the strict regulations applying to postcards. While most of the early postal cards were plain cards without illustrations, the 1890s also saw the introduction of illustrated cards, some on postal cards but many on private postcards especially in Europe and the USA. For example, the 1893 cards for the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago (Figure 1) and the 1897 New Zealand postal cards with coloured views on the reverse (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Illustration for the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago on the Reverse of US Postal Card.



Figure 2 Illustrated Reverse of 1897 New Zealand Postal Card.

The use of illustrated cards occurred later in Australia. In 1898, however, the Queensland Government saw the opportunity of promoting the colony's agricultural and mining industries through the issuing of pictorial postal cards. To this end the Department of Agriculture worked with the Post Office to provide a series of views which could be used on the cards. During this period, the Department appointed two 'illustrators', Frederick Willis and Henry Mobsby both of whom were also versed in the still relatively new art of photography. Henry Mobsby<sup>1</sup> went on to be appointed to the Queensland Intelligence and Tourist Bureau (QITB) where he played an important role in the issue of the QITB unstamped postcards and the 1910 view postal cards.

The Postmaster General's Report for 1897 (released 1 July 1898) comments on 'Pictorial Post Cards':

*The desirability of bringing the Colony, together with its products and scenery, under the observation of people residing beyond its limits has been recognised by me, and the advantages to be derived from utilising the machinery of an institution like the [Post Office], with exchanges penetrating every part of the world, for the purpose of assisting in the work of what might be termed advertising the Colony appeared to be beyond question. It has, therefore, afforded me much pleasure to introduce the first of a series of pictorial post cards, with views illustrating the various phases of settlement and of life appertaining to Queensland, together with some of its most attractive scenery. These cards, which have been produced wholly within the Colony, and at very little expense, are sold for the face value of the postage stamps thereon. They have already attained a large circulation which bids fair to increase to much greater dimensions. The advantages to the Colony arising from the circulation of these cards cannot be over-emphasised, and it is my intention to considerably enlarge and improve the series.*

Rather than place the illustrations on the reverse of the postal card, the Post Office decided to place them on the left-hand side of the front of the cards in order to leave the reverse of the cards free for correspondence as at that time the postcard regulations allowed only the address to be written on the front of the cards. Queensland was the second country to issue postal cards with views on the front of the cards after Argentina

(1897). Countries such as New Zealand (1901), Cape of Good Hope (1898), South Australia (1909), South Africa (1941) and Peru (1898) followed but the largest number of such cards were issued by European countries such as Austria and Switzerland which continuing issuing cards of this type long after Australia had stopped.

The 1988-1908 pictorial postcards have been quite well documented through the writings and collections of Collas<sup>2</sup>, Beston<sup>3</sup>, Griffiths<sup>4</sup>, Butler<sup>5</sup> and Michael Bockisch<sup>6</sup>. This article seeks to summarise the available information on the cards and to place them in the context of the time.

## Essays and Proofs

Two essays were produced on light green card with the heading *Post Card, Queensland, Australia* and the text *THE ADDRESS ONLY TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE* at the bottom left-hand corner of the card. One of the essays had a 1½d indicium based on the indicium used for the 1888 postal cards (Figure 3) with an untitled view on the left of sugar cane while the other essay had a 1d 1897 Queen Victoria with numerals in four corners indicium with an untitled view later used on an issued card with the title *Bullock Ploughing, Darling Downs* (Figure 4).

Further essays were produced on light green (Figure 5) and cream card (Figure 6) with an indicium based on essays prepared for an adhesive stamp issue for the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. The indicium is denominated 1d and has Queen Victoria in her 'widow weeds' and the dates 1837 and 1897 using a die produced in October 1897<sup>7</sup> (Scudder Die 2 with coarser shading on the Queen's face than the original die). A modified version of this design without the dates was later used on newspaper wrappers. Both essays have headings in English and French as required by the UPU, the view *Barron River, Cairns Railway*, and the inscription *From Photo*]. The four-line heading reads *UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION. UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE CARTE POSTALE, POST CARD, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA. The Address only to be written on this side.* A similar essay but with the 1897 Queen Victoria with numerals in four corners indicium (Figure 7A) was also produced.



Figure 3 Essay with 1½d '1889' Sideface Indicium, One-line Heading and view of sugar-cane



Figure 4 Essay with One-Line Heading and 1d Queen Victoria with numerals in four corners indicium.

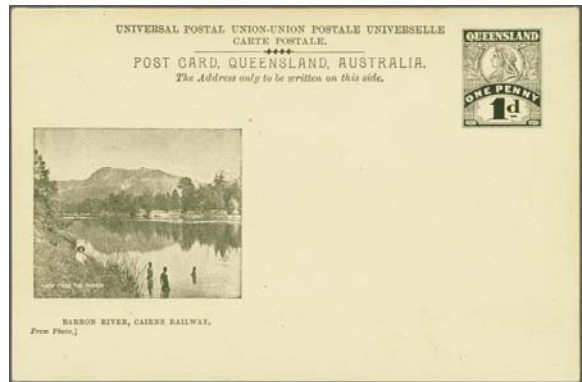
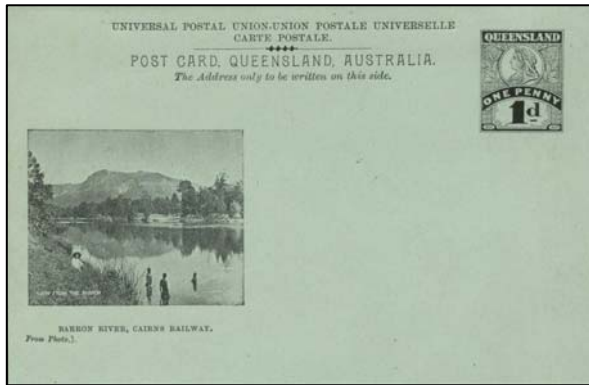


Figure 5 (left) and Figure 6 (right) of Essays with Four-Line Bilingual Heading, View of the Barron River and 1d Indicium based on Adhesive Stamp Essays for Unissued Queen Victoria Jubilee Issue on light green and cream card.



Figure 7A Essay with Four Line Heading and 1d Queen Victoria with numerals in four corners indicium.



Figure 7B Essays with manuscript corrections to the headings for 1d cards (left) and 1 1/2d cards (right).



Figure 8 Proof of 1 1/2 d 'Medallion' Indicium

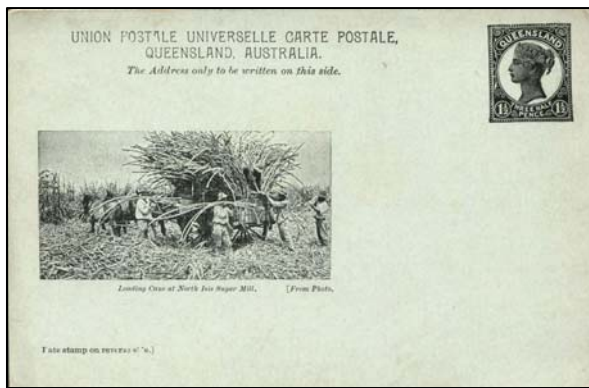


Figure 9 Proof on Light Green Card with View Loading Cane at North Isis Sugar Mill

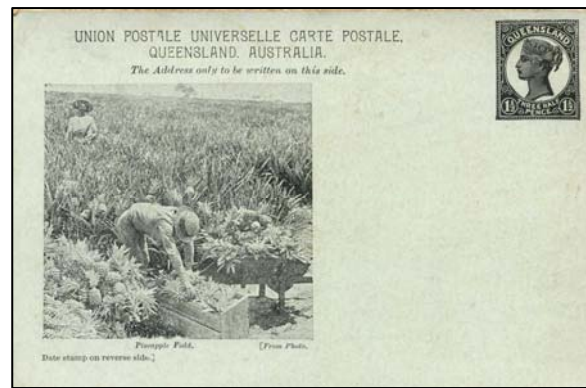


Figure 10 Proof on Light Green Card with View Pineapple Field

For the issued cards it was decided to use an indicium with a ‘medallion’ design based on the 2½d adhesive stamp of 1895. A proof of the 1½d indicium in black on this white paper is shown in Figure 8.

The heading was changed to two lines for the 1d cards and three lines for the 1½d cards. Figure 7B shows two essays from the Archives<sup>8</sup> with the changes marked in manuscript for the 1d cards on the left and the 1½d cards on the right.

A number of proofs of 1½d value on light green or light blue card are shown in Figures 9-12. These proofs have the heading changed to three lines *UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE CARTE POSTALE, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA. The Address only to be written on this side.* The inscription *Date stamp on reverse side*] has been added in the bottom left-hand corner. The views shown, *Loading Cane at North Isis Sugar Mill, Pineapple Field and Cane-field and Selector’s Home, Mulgrave River, North Queensland* were used on the issued cards.

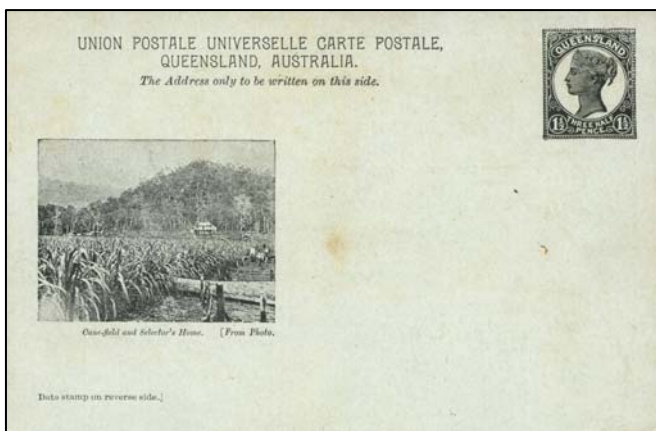


Figure 11 Proof on Light Green Card with View Cane-field and Selector’s Home

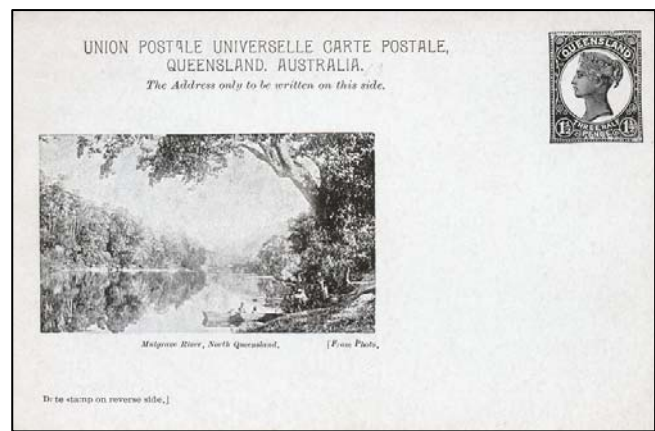


Figure 12 Proof on Light Green Card with View Mulgrave River

### June 1898 Pictorial Postal Cards

On about 25 June 1898, Queensland issued postal cards with illustrations on the left-hand side of the front of the card, eighteen cards at 1d and eighteen 1½d cards. The 1d cards paid the postcard rate to the Australian colonies as well as New Zealand, Fiji and British New Guinea while the 1½d cards paid for delivery to the United Kingdom and all other members of the UPU.



Figure 13 1d Card with view Charleville Bore

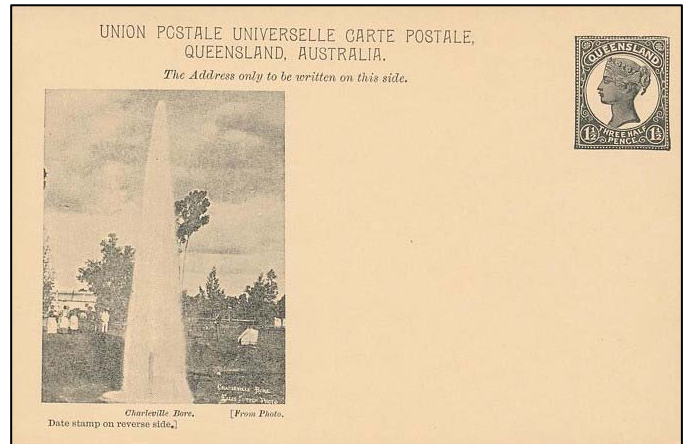
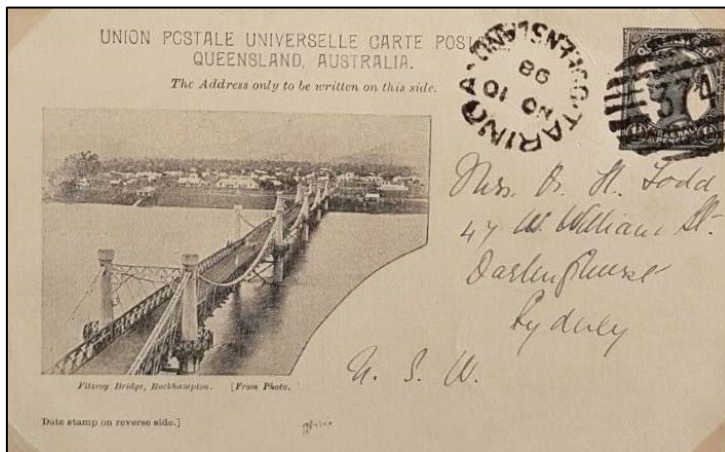


Figure 14 1 1/2d Card with view Charleville Bore

The 1898 1d cards (Figure 13) had the heading POST CARD QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA in one line with a second line *The address only is to written on this side* while 1 1/2d cards (Figure 14) had the heading UNION POSTALE UNIVERSELLE CARTE POSTALE QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA in two lines in addition to *The address only is to written on this side.* on the third line.



The cards were printed by lithography in shades of brown (1d) or black (1 1/2d) in sheets of 18 (3x6) on cream card with the indicium being the 'medallion' design (Figure 8) based on the 2 1/2d adhesive stamp of 1895. The views on both the 1d and 1 1/2d cards were the same so there were 18 different views in all. The views were rectangular (Figures 13 and 14), although some of the larger views had a circular 'cut away' (Figure 15, left). However, the title of the view 'Charleville, S. and W. Railway' on the 1d was changed to

'Charleville, Terminus of S. and W. Railway' on the 1 1/2d card (Figure 16) although a small number of mint cards are known with the title the same as the 1d card (Figure 17). The change in title on the 1 1/2d card may have been the results of complaints about the original title.

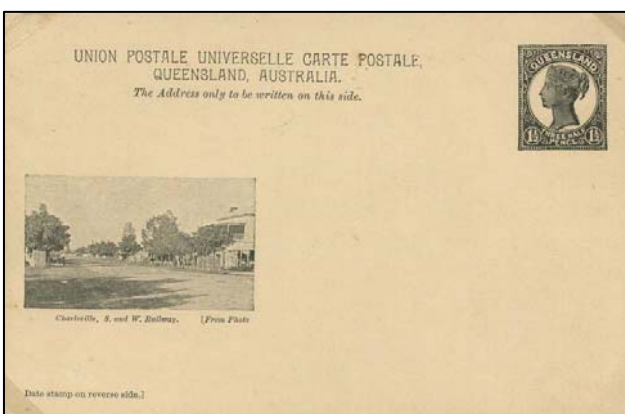


Figure 16 1 1/2d Card with view 'Charleville, S. and W. Railway'

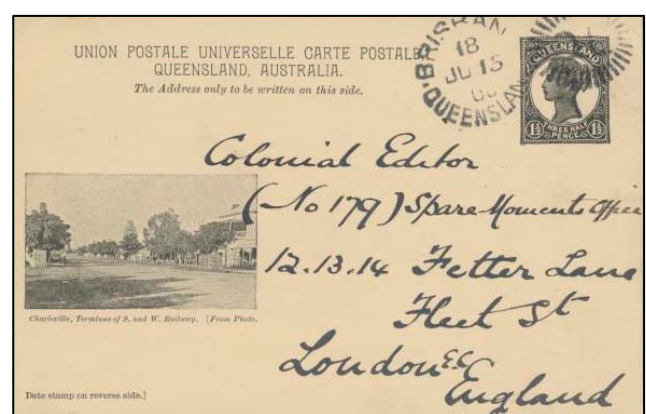


Figure 17 1 1/2d Card with view 'Charleville, Terminus of S. and W. Railway'

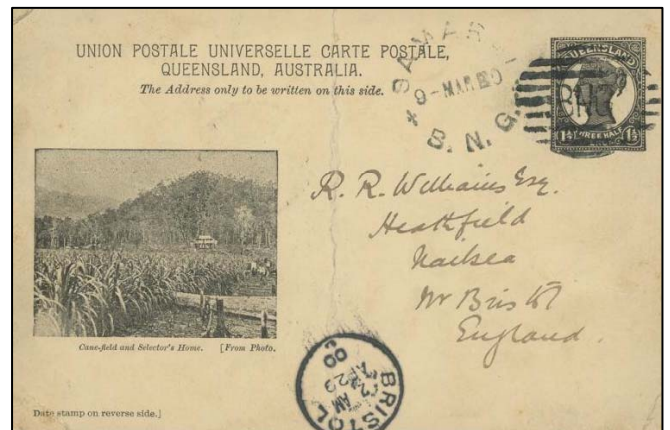
The views on the cards of the June 1898 Issue were:

- a. A Queensland Schoolhouse.
- b. A Queensland Station.
- i. Fitzroy Bridge, Rockhampton.
- j. Loading Cane at North Isis Sugar Mill.

- c. A Western Station.
- d. Barron River, Cairns
- e. Bullock-ploughing, Darling Downs.
- f. Cane-field and Selector's Home.
- g. Charleville Bore.
- h. Charleville, S. and W. Railway. (1d and 1½d cards)
- h1. Charleville, Terminus of S. and W. Railway. (1½d cards only)
- k. Mulgrave River, North Queensland
- l. On the North Coast Railway Line.
- m. Overshot Dam, Mount Morgan.
- n. Pineapple Field
- o. Sheep Drinking at an Artesian Stream.
- p. Sheep under a Bottle-tree, Western Queensland.
- q. South Brisbane and Coal Wharves.
- r. View of Works, Mount Morgan.

The 1898 cards were also notable because of the use of photo-Zincograph process to transfer photographs on to a printing plate to produce the view rather than the use of drawings with the inscription '[From Photo.]' recorded under each illustration. This was unusual at the time with most illustrations on European cards still based on drawings for some years to come. There was some commentary at the time, however, that the process gave an inferior image than the collotype process which was used for some commercial postcards.

All cards carry the remark 'Date stamp on reverse side' at their lower left sides. This was contradictory to the usual instructions as the Post Office wanted to ensure that the viewer's impression of Queensland created by the view was not affected by a heavy postmark. In practice this instruction was at times ignored, especially by foreign post offices.



As Queensland stamps were in use in British New Guinea from 1885 to 1901, these cards were also valid for use in British New Guinea (Figure 18, right).



Figure 19 November 1898 Card with View Corner Queen and Edward streets Brisbane

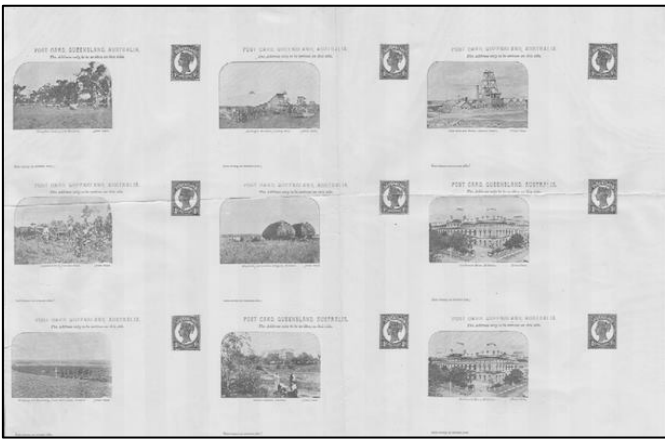
Figure 20 November 1898 Card with View Pineapple Plantation, Nundah near Brisbane

The 1d cards issued in June quickly sold out and a second set of 1d cards with 17 different views were issued in November 1898 (Figure 19 and 20). For this issue, all the views had rounded top corners.

The views were:

- a. Arrowroot Drying, Coomera River.
- b. Arrowroot Field, Coomera River.
- c. Arrowroot Field, Pimpama.
- d. Botanic Gardens, Brisbane.
- e. Brisbane River from Parliament House.
- f. Corner Queen and Edward Streets Brisbane.
- j. Harvesting, Green Hills Farm, Warwick.
- k. Haystacks, and Lucerne Strippers, Warwick.
- l. Jondaryan Woolshed, Loading Wool.
- m. Parliament House, Brisbane
- n. Pineapple Plantation, Nundah, near Brisbane.

- g. Glengallan Station, near Warwick
- h. Gold Mine and Works, Charters Towers.
- i. Hambleton Sugar Mill, Cairns.
- o. Ploughing and Harrowing, Green Hills Farm, Warwick.
- p. Vineyard, Nudgee.
- q. Wheat Stripping, Canning Downs, Warwick.



The use of additional views was also related to the opinion of the Government Printer that the first set of views were not as good as they might have been as they were based on the limited selection of photographs that were available at the time. While the cards were still printed in sheets of 18 (3x6), the card depicting Parliament House appears twice on the sheet so there were only 17 different views. This is illustrated by an uncut sheet of 18 in the Butler collection<sup>9</sup> which showed duplication of the Parliament House view on the right (Figure 21). Two different versions exist of the Parliament House cards (Figure 22), one with the letters of 'AUSTRALIA' in the heading complete while the

other has the letter 'L' without the horizontal stroke and damage to the letter 'A'. The cards were printed on cream paper although later printings were on a very poor-quality buff stock. The 1½d cards were not issued with these views, presumably because there were sufficient 1½d cards to meet the postal needs at the time.



Figure 22 Parliament House Card with Broken 'A' and 'L' of 'AUSTRALIA' with no Horizontal Stroke

Some philatelists of the day were somewhat less complimentary with the "Australian Philatelist" reporting on 25 November 1898 that: *We are informed that the first series of illustrated postcards, which comprised 18 different views, has been exhausted, and a fresh series numbering 17 new pictures has been issued. For philatelic purposes we consider it should be sufficient to chronicle only the two cards themselves. To catalogue each separate view of a possibly indefinite number of successive series would be altogether too much for our philatelic patience.* Perhaps the writer was fearing a never-ending range of views, however, in the end the number of views remained at thirty-five, although there were subsequent changes in the headings of the cards over the following years. It is unlikely there would be many collectors today who would be happy with only a single 1d and a single 1½d card. The Queensland Government did go on to produce a range of postcards with many hundreds of views of Queensland through the QITB unstamped postcards<sup>10</sup>. As they were unstamped, the philatelists of the time were unconcerned with them and the number of different cards produced but they have become popular in recent times with collectors of picture postcards.

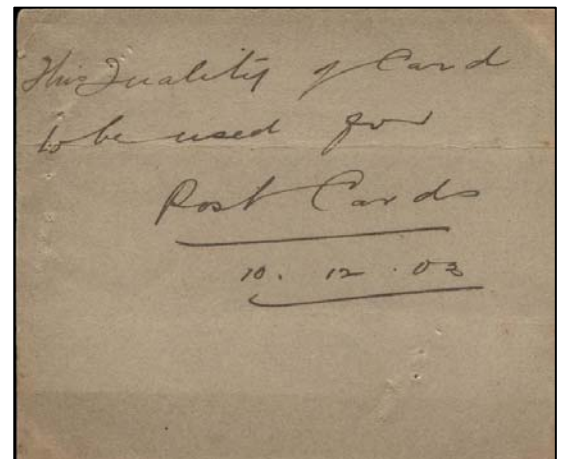
The Queensland Government was very pleased with the issue of the pictorial postal cards. The Report of the Government Printer for 1898 (dated 12 July 1899) stated: *The desirability of making the outside world better acquainted with the abundant and varied resources of the Colony has made it advisable to avail ourselves of the large use now being made of various photographic and other processes of illustration .... To this end and that the illustrations may be of first-class order; a new machine has been specially ordered - a Cottrell for this fine process illustrative work. One of the contributing causes of our success in this Department has been the appointment of a Lithographic Artist and the appointment of an Official Photographer in the Department of Agriculture.*

The Postmaster-General at the time, the Hon H W Wilson, was very proud of the issue commenting in a speech given in 1899 that: *The continental cards had the views on the side reserved for writing, which left very little room. The Queensland cards had the views on the same side as the address. This was a distinct improvement. A thing that struck [Wilson] was that Sir Horace Tozer [Agent-General for Queensland in London] was endeavouring to advertise this colony through pictorial representations, but that gentleman had not the audience that [the Post Office] had, and he adopted the pictorial card system to show people abroad what life in Queensland was like. He knew that in England many people had not the least idea of what our life was like. They were delighted to see loads of wool drawn by bullocks. The cards had been sent throughout the United Kingdom. If he had done nothing else during his term of office he had done something for [the Post Office] by this departure.*

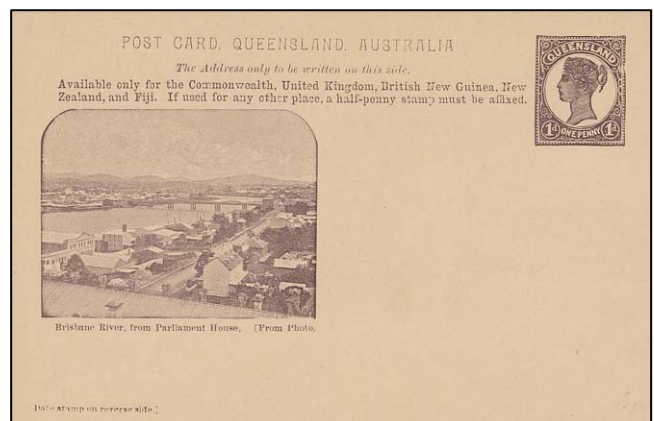
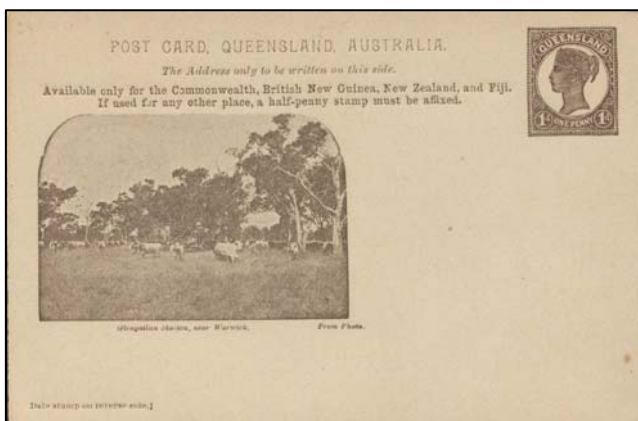
Later printings of the 1d cards of November 1898, that were originally issued on cream card, were on a poor-quality buff card which often deteriorates as a result of age, light and moisture. All 35 views used on the 1898-1908 cards are illustrated in Table 1 on page 128 and the back covers of this issue of PSC.

**1904 Cards with Inscription Added: Available only for the Commonwealth, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji.**

In 1904 an additional line of text was added to the heading of the 1d cards which stated that *Available only for the Commonwealth, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji. If used for any other place a halfpenny stamp must be affixed* (Figure 23). The Commonwealth refers to the Commonwealth of Australia as the post card rate to the United Kingdom and other British Commonwealth countries was 1½d, the same as the rate of all other members of the UPU.



The line of text may have been added due to an increase in the number of cards to the UK posted underpaid. The cards were issued with the same seventeen views with circular edges to the top corners used on the November 1898 cards. The issue appears to have occurred in about 15 June 1904. Figure 24 (right) illustrates a sample of postcard paper with the annotation on the reverse *The Quality of Card to be used for Post Cards 10.12.03* (ex Butler). The card stock used was very poor with many of the cards having deteriorated with age due to the poor-quality card stock. Later printings were on a better-quality stock.



*Figure 23 Cards with Inscription: Available only for the Commonwealth, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji*

*Figure 25 Cards with Inscription: Available only for the Commonwealth, United Kingdom, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji.*

**1905 Cards with Additional Line in Heading: Available only for the Commonwealth, United Kingdom, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji.**



In 1905, the post offices of Australia and the United Kingdom agreed to exchange postcards at the 1d rate with the 1d rate becoming effective on 1 April 1905. The pictorial cards were reissued (Figure 25) with the inscription changed to read *Available only for the Commonwealth, United Kingdom, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji. If used for any other place a half-penny stamp must be affixed.* There were further changes to postal rates to 4 July 1905 extending the 1d postcard rate to some additional British Empire countries, Canada, Ceylon, Hong Kong and British Agencies in China, India, Lord Howe Island, Natal, Norfolk Island, Orange River Colony and Straits Settlements, rendering the new heading obsolete, however, it wasn't changed. While no date of issue can be ascertained early dates of use include 18 December 1905. The cards again had the same group of seventeen views with circular edges to the top corners used on the November 1898 cards. The cards were printed in brown on dark brown card stock and (in my view) are quite unattractive. Many of the cards can be found uprated to the UPU rate of 1½d as presumably the 1898 1½d cards were not reissued. The 1904 and 1905 cards appear considerably scarcer than the original 1898 cards.

### 1906-08 New Heading with 'Commonwealth of Australia'

In 1906, a new heading was introduced for the 1d cards with POSTCARD QUEENSLAND and "COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA in three lines with *Available only for the Commonwealth, United Kingdom, British New Guinea, New Zealand and Fiji. If used for any other place a half-penny stamp must be affixed on the fourth line.* an ornament. The cards (Figures 25-28) again had the same group of seventeen views with circular edges to the top corners used on the November 1898 cards. The cards were issued in a colours ranging from chocolate (Figure 26), many shades of purple-brown/maroon/plum (Figures 27) and chestnut/orange-brown (Figure 28). Cards in chocolate appear to have been from the first printings issued from late 1906, plum printings from late 1907 while orange-brown cards from the later printings. The colours of the card are affected by the card stock and ageing of the cards. Given the range of chases in the middle period, the colour of the card stock and the effect of ageing, the many shades of the purple-brown/maroon/plum cards may not be philatelically significant. The inscription COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA is usually 60 mm in length but on some views is 56 mm. Both lengths occur on cards with the Parliament House view (Figures 29 and 30) distinguishing the Parliament House view cards from the two different positions on the plate.



Figure 26 Parliament House View in Chocolate



Figure 27 Pineapple Plantation View in Plum



Figure 28 Plothing and Harvesting View in Chestnut



Figure 29 'COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA' 60 mm (left) 'COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA' 56 mm in length (right)

The pictorial cards remained on sale until the release of the single 1d cards in 1910-1911 including the 1d cards with black and white views on the reverse. While the 1898 cards when they were issued were regarded with pride and included some innovative features, by 1909 the cards were seen as old-fashioned and had not kept up with the changes that had occurred in private postcards including cards with multi-coloured illustrations produced by chromo-lithography in Germany for the Coloured Shell Series of postcards or the cards issued by the Queensland Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau from 1907.

### Flaws and varieties

Not surprisingly given the length of issue and the various printings, many of the cards exist with defective or missing letters, full stops, and square brackets as well as other flaws. Some of these are described in Collas and Bockisch<sup>11</sup>.

**TABLE 1: VIEWS ON THE QUEENSLAND 1898-1908 PICTORIAL POSTAL CARDS**  
**August 1898 1d and 1½ cards: views with square top corners**



**a. A Queensland Schoolhouse.**



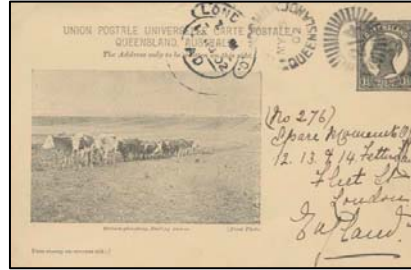
**b. A Queensland Station.**



**c. A Western Station.**



**d. Barron River, Cairns**



**e. Bullock-ploughing, Darling Downs.**



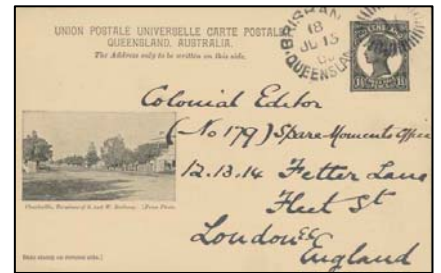
**f. Cane-field and Selector's Home.**



**g. Charleville Bore.**



**h. Charleville, S. and W. Railway. (1d and 1½ d cards)**



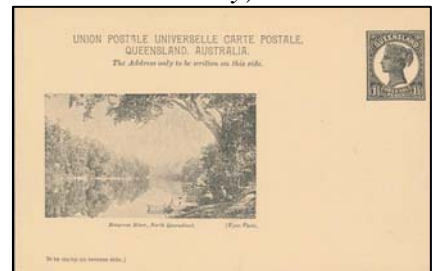
**h1 Charleville, Terminus of S. and W. Railway. (1½d cards only)**



**i. Fitzroy Bridge, Rockhampton.**



**j. Loading Cane at North Isis Sugar Mill.**



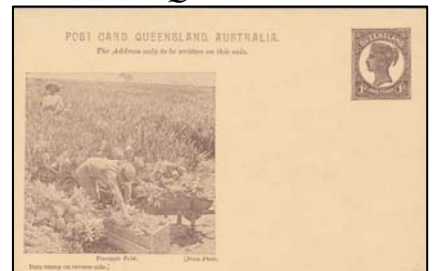
**k. Mulgrave River, North Queensland**



**l. On the North Coast Railway Line.**



**m. Overshot Dam, Mount Morgan.**



**n. Pineapple Field**



*o. Sheep Drinking at an Artesian Stream.*



*p. Sheep under a Bottle-tree, Western Queensland.*



*q. South Brisbane and Coal Wharves.*



*r. View of Works, Mount Morgan.*

**November 1898-1908 Issues 1d cards only: views with rounded top corners**



*a. Arrowroot Drying, Coomera River.*



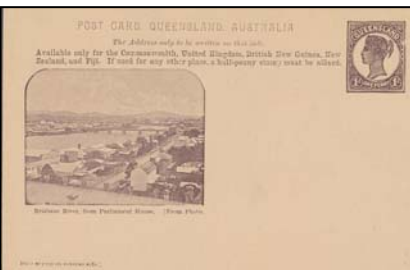
*b. Arrowroot Field, Coomera River.*



*c. Arrowroot Field, Pimpama.*



*d. Botanic Gardens, Brisbane.*



*e. Brisbane River from Parliament House.*



*f. Corner Queen and Edward Streets Brisbane.*



*g. Glengallan Station, near Warwick*



*h. Gold Mine and Works, Charters Towers.*



*i. Hambleton Sugar Mill, Cairns.*





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<sup>1</sup> *Henry William Mobsby (1860-1933) "...a most valuable officer"* Kaye Mobsby Self-Published 2017

<sup>2</sup> *Queensland Postal Stationery* P Collas The Hawthorn Press 1979 and additions and amendments published in *Philately From Australia* Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria June 1982 and March 1984

<sup>3</sup> Charles Leski Auctions Public Auction No 468 27 June 2021; See *Literature on Queensland Postal Stationery* Ian McMahon PSC November 2020 and references authored by Bernie Beston listed therein.

<sup>4</sup> Abacus Auctions Public Auction No 240 February 2020; *The Postal Stationery of Queensland* Alan J Griffiths The British Society of Australian Philately 2018

<sup>5</sup> *Australian States and Commonwealth Featuring the Ron Butler Collections*. Sale No. 4028. London: Spink & Son Ltd., 29 Jun 2004.

<sup>6</sup> *The Postal Stationery View Cards of Oceania, Asia, Africa and the Americas* Michael Bockisch Self-published 2019

<sup>7</sup> *Queensland Postage Stamps 1879 to 1912* Kenneth Scudder Royal Philatelic society of Canberra 2013 pp 218-226

<sup>8</sup> National Archives of Australia *Scrapbook containing proofs and specimens of Queensland postal notes, postcards, postage paid letter cards, various sizes and denominations, registered letter envelope* J3088 QPT45

<sup>9</sup> *Ron Butler Collection, Australia* 99

<sup>10</sup> Phil Collas *Postcards of the Queensland Intelligence and Tourist Bureau 1907-1915 Philately from Australia* Vol XLI (2) June 1989 pg 29-34 and later parts.

<sup>11</sup> *Queensland Postal Stationery* P Collas The Hawthorn Press 1979 and *The Postal Stationery View Cards of Oceania, Asia, Africa and the Americas* Michael Bockisch Self-published 2019