

Land tenure in Queensland

'Land tenure is the legal regime in which land is owned, leased, reserved or unallocated to a defined purpose in Australia. Land tenure defines who can hold and use resources, for what length of time, and under what conditions.' [Australian Government Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry](#).

When the British settled Australia the land was considered 'terra nullius,' nobody's land, open to be claimed by those who occupied it. First Nations Peoples ignored; land was said to be owned by the Crown, and it was controlled by the government.

Two important factors affected the early use of the land which eventually became Queensland. Firstly, it was originally a convict settlement from 1824, and settlers were unable to purchase land until 1842, two years after transportation officially ceased. By then, squatters had already expanded into the Darling Downs. Secondly until Separation in 1859, New South Wales land legislation applied and most land records for that period are held by the State Archives of NSW. [Queensland State Archives](#) holds some records prior to Separation and those from 1860. Check their [guides on land](#) to research their records. See also [Lands, Mapping and Surveying Museum](#) for a range of historical maps and other land information. See also family history guide [Land records](#).

Books

- [History of Australian Land Settlement 1788-1920](#) by Stephen H. Roberts, 1924. **Open Access level 4, J 994 ROB**
- [A Pastoral Romance: the tribulation and triumph of squatterdom](#) by Maurice French, 1990. **Open Access level 4, J 994.3 FRE**
- [The Call of the Land: A history of Queensland to the present day](#) by W. Ross Johnston, 1982. **Open Access level 4, J 994.3 JOH. Request then collect from level 3 SBG14742**
- [Socialism at Work: how the Queensland government succeeded in profitably establishing state ventures here the needs of the people called for state competition or state monopoly](#) by Joseph Edward Broadbent, 1918. Chapter 16 includes a comprehensive account of the soldier settlement land scheme. Request then collection from level 3 G 338.9993 1918. **Request to access from level 4**
- [Early history of land tenure 13.01.0 year book of Australia 1911](#) online via **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

Use the online catalogue [One Search](#) to find local histories describing settlement of a particular area, or more specific topics such as Soldier Settlement Schemes.

Government publications

- Legislation concerning land is located in the *Queensland Statutes 1963-1989* **Open Access, level 2 REF 346.9431**
[1828-1962](#) online via **Supreme Court Library Queensland**
- [Queensland land legislation 1833-1910](#) for historical legislation
- [Queensland consolidated acts](#) Land Act of 1994

Crown lands law reports

- [Crown land law reports 1859-1973](#) include all cases of importance affecting the application of the Statutes of Queensland relating to the occupation and alienation of Crown lands. The volumes include an alphabetical and chronological index to the cases reported. **Request to access from level 4**
- After 1974 the reports are known as [Reports/Land Court](#)
1974-1997/98 **Open Access, level 2 REF 346.405**
1998-current **Request to access from level 4**
1974-1999 [Available online via Lexis Advance](#)

Annual reports of the Department of Lands

The Annual Reports of the Dept. Of Lands were published in the *Queensland Parliamentary Papers* (1860 to present). The Reports include material on occupation and selection, land legislation, maps, photographs and information on specific topics such as soldier settlements, forestry etc.

- [Votes and proceedings Queensland Legislative Assembly](#). 1860-1901. **Open Access, Micrographics level 3, MFL 328.9431**
- Parliamentary Papers
[1902 – 2000](#) **Open Access, Micrographics level 3, MFL 328.9431**
[2000-2011](#) **Request to access from Level 4**
[1990-current](#) **Online via Queensland Parliament**
- [Votes and proceedings of the Legislative Council](#). Pre-1860. **Open Access, Micrographics level 3, MFL 328.944 & FILM 0096**
- [Managing the land: An Index to the Lands Department Papers, Queensland Votes & Proceedings 1880-99](#) W. Ross Johnston, Helen Gregory & Jennifer Harrison, 1992. **Request to access from Level 4** Provides an index to the Queensland Lands Department papers published in the *Parliamentary Papers* between 1880 and 1899

Queensland Government gazettes

Information in the *Queensland Government Gazettes* (1859 to present) covers land open for selection, the reservation of land for cemeteries, schools, courthouses etc., notices of land sales and the gazettal of road closures and openings. The index for each year may be consulted under the general heading 'Land' which is then subdivided.

For information about available formats and access options see State Library [website](#).

For information prior to 1859 consult *NSW Government Gazettes* online at [Trove](#).

Royal Commissions

The Checklist of Royal Commissions includes an index which may be consulted under the heading 'Land'. Entries provide a summary of the Royal Commission or Inquiry and list members of the commission as well as the source of the full inquiry in the *Queensland Parliamentary Papers*.

- [Checklist of Royal Commissions, Select Committees of Parliament and Boards of Inquiry, Part V, Queensland 1859-1960](#) by D. H. Borchardt, 1978. **Open Access, level 3 FAMHIS 016.35494 1960-1978 or Request to access from level 4**
- [Checklist of Royal Commissions, Select Committees of Parliament and Boards of Inquiry : Commonwealth, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria, 1960-1980 and South Australia, 1970-1980](#) by D.H. Borchardt with the assistance of Wilma Atkins and Julie G. Marshall, 1986. **Request to access from level 4 016.3549409 BOR**

- [Supplement to checklist of royal commissions, select committees of parliament and boards of inquiry, 1856-1980](#) / by D. H. Borchardt, 1990. **FAMHIS 016.35494 1990**
- See also [Persons called before government committees 1860-1920](#) for minutes of evidence provided by individuals. Minutes of evidence links online to the collection of reports, and indices related to the inquiry in the parliamentary papers

Queensland post office directories

[The Queensland Post Office Directories](#), published regularly from 1868-1949, include directories of Queensland stations. The listing is alphabetical by station name and includes the name of the owner, district, nearest post town and in some years the number of cattle or sheep on the property. The 1874 Directory also includes a listing of squatters in Queensland. These directories are also useful for establishing land use patterns in urban areas, giving a block-by-block indication of residential occupancy. **Access from level 3, FICHE/B 919.43 QUE.**

See also family history guide [Directories, almanacs & gazetteers](#)

Maps

On level 4 a large collection of historical and contemporary maps document land usage within the state. Maps covering a particular locality may include information about roads, railways, topographic features and property boundaries.

- **Parish maps** depict land ownership of a particular area showing land in private ownership, land allocated for schools, churches etc, state forests and special reserves and crown land (vacant or under lease). Each leased area shows the name of the original occupant. **Request to access from level 4**
- **Real estate maps** provide detail about residential subdivisions. Search One Search using the suburb name, adding the word, 'estate' and selecting the maps option. Be aware some suburb boundaries have changed. Some real estate maps for Brisbane, Redcliffe and Ipswich are held on L4 Many estate maps have been digitised and are available on [One Search](#)
- **Maps on specific areas** may be located through the computer catalogue, [One Search](#) by either a subject search (by locality) or a keyword search (e.g. Gayndah and cartographic)
- [Queensland State Archives](#) holds an extensive collection of government maps

Newspapers

Clippings from Queensland newspapers were collected from the 1970s to 1990s and include categories for land ownership, land settlement, land tenure, soldier settlements and prickly pear. An index of newspaper clippings is available to view at the JOL Reading Room desk on level 4. Speak to staff to view the index and request clipping files.

Indexes and reference

- Johnston, W Ross & Zerner, Margaret, [A guide to the history of Queensland](#), Brisbane: Library Board of Queensland, 1985 **REFJ 016.9943 JOH**
This bibliography includes sections on *Land, the Pastoral Industry and Agriculture*. Materials indexed include published works, journal articles and manuscripts and draw on Fryer and John Oxley Libraries.
- [Johnston Index to the Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journals](#) **REFJ 016.9943 JOH**
This subject index to the journals of the society up to 1983 includes land orders, land legislation, squatters, as well as the names of stations and other localities

Original materials

- [Australian Pastoral Company Limited, 1894-1952](#). The collection (49.49 shelf metres) contains correspondence, accounts, ledgers, journals, letter books and other company records relating to stations. **Collection guide available. Request to access from level 4**. As well as Library records, check [James Cook University, Townsville](#) for their [listing of station records](#)
- [David Ferdinand Longland Papers, 1849-1867](#). This collection includes letters, receipts, specifications and other documents which relate to Brisbane land sales and leases to which David Longland was a party. **Request to access from level 4**
- [Paling & Eildon Hill Estates, 1910-1911](#). Mainly lists of persons who purchased the allotments in these estates. The estates include the blocks surrounded by Kedron Brook Road, Days Road, Constitution Road and Fifth Avenue in the Brisbane suburb of Wilston. Two plans of the subdivisions are located in the map collection. **Request to access from level 4**

Images

Find **original photographic collections and artwork** relating to land including images of stations, station life, farm life, towns, soldier settlements and prickly pear using the catalogue [One Search](#), searching by subject, author or title and selecting images from the options. There may be a collection guide describing the contents and sometimes, a direct link to the images.

- [Bell Photograph Albums, 1910-1950](#). The albums include aspects of Bowen, Cairns, Cloncurry, Innisfail and Rockhampton. **Request to access from level 4**
- [George Balsillie Photographs, 1902-1904](#). Photographs showing people and scenes of town and station life in the Charleville district. Includes images of Old Mangalore, Dillallah, Bando and Mount Morris Stations. **Request to access from level 4**
- [Copy print collection](#). These photographic prints are organised by location or subject. Request using [One Search](#) and adding 'cpc' in the search box e.g. 'Bundaberg cpc'. **Request to access from level 4**

Land ballots

'The Queensland Government released land to build communities in the fledgling state, wishing to encourage more intensive use of agricultural land to increase food production. When demand for land outstripped supply, the government used a lottery to allocate land fairly.' [Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying land ballots](#).

2018 John Oxley Library Fellow, Dr Jennifer Moffat:

- [Queensland's land ballot oral history project](#)
- [Research Reveals: Land ballots in Queensland](#)
- [Queensland land ballots blog series](#)

Need further information?

(07) 3840 7810 | slq.qld.gov.au/ask

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